

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 9-25-02) , ©2005

I begin today with apologies to the dedicated WSU Master Gardeners and especially Master Gardener Mike Shannon at the Anna Smith Children's (and Adults) Garden on Tracyton Beach Road. Their espalier class was last week on September 18 not the 28<sup>th</sup>. Do not despair though. If you call the Extension Office at 337-7157 our staff can send you the wonderfully informative handouts prepared for the event. Mike will be back in the spring to give more demonstrations on growing fruit trees. You will also want to attend this fall's Peninsula Fruit Club fruit tasting and educational weekend coming up in October.

KRL Employee and WSU Master Gardener, Maureen O'Rourke is presenting a class on "Gardening and the Internet" at the Poulsbo Branch Library in the downstairs meeting room on Thursday September 26 from 6:30-8 p.m. Moe will show attendees how to use the KRL website (which is excellent) and will walk you through "Gardening, Master Gardener Style" using the web. She'll also show you how to search through the KRL's horticulture collection funded by proceeds from the Heronswood Open Houses.

Speaking of fruit and gardening I had the privilege this last week of meeting organic gardeners Laurence (Larry) and Bea Price and their constant companion, Pansy the garden cat. The Prices garden on a small lot in Manette. I was so inspired by their handiwork I thought you'd like to hear a bit about it. Larry is also an author whose most recent book is "Make Landscaping Your Business," available for \$9.95 plus shipping by calling Botany Books at 360-337-6489. Even though the title would lead you to think the book is only for landscapers the information is great for any gardener.

If you have a new yard or are thinking about some redesigning, this book tells you how to do it from the very beginning planning stages to the finished product. You'll discover how to select and best utilize plants needed and how to estimate costs and materials. Helpful tables and charts are abundant. This book is great. I, of course, have a copy myself.

Larry also specializes in growing hoyas. The flowers are exquisite and look like porcelain. Several of Larry's plants were in bloom in shades of palest pink, white and purple. Many Kitsapers may remember Larry from the days of Value Giant in East Bremerton. There was a mall area between Value Giant (a.k.a. Merit Mart) and Albertsons and one of the shops was a candy and houseplant shop run by Larry. I actually remember buying houseplants from him back then, but had to part with them when we moved out of state for several years.

The secret to growing hoyas according to Larry and Bea is to keep the plants in small pots for a very long time. One of their hoyas has been in the same pot for twenty-five years. "Hoyas love to be potbound," said Larry. Bea fertilizes all her houseplants with a mixture of one-half teaspoon fish fertilizer to one gallon of water. The hoyas bloom every

year. Their other tip is, “Be very patient.” I agree, it’s worth it. The flowers are amazingly beautiful.

When Bea and Larry bought their home it came with a carport that was soon converted into a greenhouse using discarded windows. The greenhouse is covered with kiwi vines. An outside potting and work area is screened using twigs and small branches trimmed from their many fruit trees. Price’s garden contains trees bearing: peaches, Asian pears, walnuts, filberts, apricots, plums, figs and cherries. They also have blueberries, grapes, red currants, lingonberries and three kinds of kiwis. One is an Arctic kiwi with square shaped fruit.

Years ago Bea’s uncle visited from California and brought persimmons. Bea planted two seeds and grew a persimmon tree bearing orange fruit around Christmas every year. “Everybody thinks it’s a Christmas tree,” said Bea. The leaves turn colors of red, yellow and orange too.

Prices have a small lawn area, “for the grandkids,” said Bea. The rest of their garden is planted with abundant perennials, hardy fuchsias, ferns, shrubs, fruit trees and is full of whimsy too. Clematis and other vines festoon numerous trellises and screens made from the yearly tree prunings. Bird feeders, birdbaths, and other treasures mingle in the garden. I’m so glad I had the opportunity to meet these inspiring gardeners. Thank you Bea and Larry for sharing yourselves and your garden with me and for letting me share it with my readers.