

Melody and Greg Hanson of Seabeck had a visit from the “Surprise Gardeners” this past weekend. Kitsap County’s version of this popular show on HGTV is actually an informational video production funded by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

Partners in this endeavor are: Phyllis Mann and Laura Jull from Kitsap County’s Emergency Management; Derrick Crawley, Kitsap County Fire Marshall; Mike Howard, Carl Cook and Ryan Ike, FEMA; Peg Tillery, Washington State University Cooperative Extension; Jim Trainer and Janet Brown, representing Puget Sound Energy, Asplundh Tree Expert Company and the WSU Kitsap Master Gardener Program. Additionally youth from the Alternatives to Detention Program provided muscle power and were joined by WSU Master Gardeners: Caleb and Robin Summerfeldt, Joanne Weber and Shannon Robinson. FEMA representatives (INSERT NAMES) came from Oregon to help with the project and were especially helpful wielding a sledgehammer to break up a slab of concrete in the back garden area.

Ryan Ike and Laura Jull found the Hanson house after searching all over Kitsap County for “just the right” fire mitigation site. They stopped at the Camp Union (ASK LAURA) for lunch and Laura realized the home they were looking for was right across the street. Laura actually knew the Hansons and made a call to Melody to ask permission to invade their acreage to create a “firewise video.” The video would help other homeowners throughout the United States make their homes safer from the ravages of a forest fire. The Hanson’s gladly and graciously agreed.

Laura and Derrick immediately thought of the WSU Kitsap County Master Gardeners. Since I’m the coordinator I couldn’t turn down this worthy project. The best Master Gardeners for the job were Jim Trainer and Janet Brown, also tree education experts for Asplundh Tree Expert Company and Puget Sound Energy. Trainer and Brown give countless unpaid hours to help everyone throughout Northwestern Washington learn how to care for their trees and to also select the best trees for any given situation.

Jim also works with Mike (INSERT HIS LAST NAME) and the crew of youth from the County Alternatives to Detention Program. The kids in this program volunteer their time to work on numerous projects throughout the county. They’ve assisted the Master Gardeners at the Anna Smith Children’s Park, helped restore riparian habitat, work for the Kitsap Parks Department and many other projects throughout the county. Several graduates of this program have gone on to work in the landscaping industry.

Local husband and wife team Jonathan and Billy Stratman of Reel Life Productions captured on video the yard cleanup and installation of the new landscape. Roger Faris will narrate the video. Landscape Designer Kate Easton of Garden Vision donated her time to create the landscape plan. Jan and George Bahr from Roadhouse Nursery donated many of the plants and provided the rest at a substantial discount. The Kitsap Conservation District Native Plant Salvage Project donated native plants and the Puget Sound Energy Tree Nursery provided additional native plants.

Keith Asbury of Asbury’s Topsoil on Newberry Hill Road devoted nearly all day Saturday delivering many of the materials needed for the project. Home Depot delivered materials for the patio and walkways on Sunday. The patio and walkways formed a fireproof and fire-safe surface surrounding the Hanson Home. Plants placed around the perimeter of the home are drought tolerant and were chosen because of their resistance to fire ignition.

If you have Internet access key in <http://www.firewise.org/pubs/fwll/contents.html> for a very user friendly site created by design architects. You can actually use the site to create your own firewise landscape plan. Derrick, Laura, Ryan and I can also provide you with abundant information to make your home resistant to wildfires if

you live near our county's forested areas. The techniques work well for any home landscape design and will increase the value of your home.

The Wildfire Mitigation Product video will run for twenty-five minutes and be used in training sessions throughout Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Montana and Northern California. It will be used in Master Gardener training throughout Washington State. Contact Jull 360-616-5874; me at 360-337-7157 and Derrick at 360-337-4442 for more information. WSU Master Gardeners will present the video and firewise landscaping ideas to interested groups. Laura's goal for the video is national television exposure. Melody Hanson says it all, "Our garden is beautiful and we feel so much safer from fire."

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