

Winter Vegetable Gardening – Our weather is continuing to be quite mild. If you can find starts in your favorite nurseries it's probably not too late to plant some cole crops. You might still find Swiss Chard, spinach, mustard, Oriental vegetables or other leafy greens, reds and purples to harvest and nibble on through most of the winter. To see a display of winter vegetables with accompanying descriptions drive up to Raab Park in Poulsbo. You'll find two ten by ten-foot plots. Raab Park is on the very south end of Caldart Street. Washington State University Kitsap County Master Gardener Fay Linger created the two plots. You'll find the plots near the new garden shed.

Cover Crops – Cover crops nourish the soil for your vegetable gardens. Crimson clover and annual rye grow quite well at cooler temperatures. In the early spring you'll want to till them into the beds before planting crops. If you've just purchased a new home and can't decide what to do with all those bare areas try these cover crops until spring to prevent and curtail weeds until you get out to work in your garden.

P-Patches - The Raab Park Community Garden still has P-Patches available for next year. The plots are ten by ten and ten by twenty and lease respectively for \$25 and \$35 per year. Call Poulsbo Parks and Recreation at 779-9898 to sign up for your plot. The Community Gardeners are having a work party on Saturday November 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. You can meet the gardeners and site coordinators. Show up that day and sign up for your space for 2003. Soup and coffee will be served to all participants.

The cities of Bremerton and Bainbridge Island also have P-Patches for lease. Contact the parks departments at both cities for details. Bremerton's Blueberry Park is located near the intersection of Sylvan Way and Pine Road. Bainbridge's patch is at Battle Point Park.

BUGS (Bremerton Urban Garden Society) is having a community garden planning meeting on Wednesday October 30 at 6:30 p.m. at the Max Hale Center on Fifth Street. Use the side entrance to the building. The group hopes to be planting up individual garden plots in April of 2003.

The best book I've found so far on winter gardening is called "Winter Gardening in the Maritime Northwest" by Binda Colebrook. Binda offers abundant tips and information for growing "cool season crops for the year-round gardener." This book is available at our local libraries or you can order it from your favorite local bookstore. The ISBN number is 1570611629 published by Sasquatch Books. Start planning now and this time next year you'll be feasting on late fall and winter veggies.

Speaking of winter veggies. If you planted Brussels sprouts and carrots try to delay harvest until after the first frost. The early frosts sweeten and flavor up both Brussels sprouts and carrots. Try to wait and you'll be glad you did.

Mulches and Lawns – Mulches such as bark and compost work great to smother and/or deter weeds in garden beds. Remove as many weeds as you can and then spread the mulches or compost about two to three inches thick. Make sure to keep the bark away from the woody stems. A general rule is: compost works the best in perennial beds and bark works best in herbaceous/woody areas. You can also spread a thin layer (1/2 inch to one-inch) of compost on your lawn raking it in well. Sprinkle grass seed on the bare spots. Some lawncare companies will perform this job for you.

WSU Kitsap County Master Gardener clinics are closed for the winter but you can still bring problems to the Cooperative Extension Office at 715 Sidney in Port Orchard during the hours of 8:30 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday or call the Master Gardener Hotline at 360-337-7158. Master Gardener Dave Kalamar checks this hotline on a regular basis Monday through Friday each week from mid-October through mid-April. If you have access to the Internet key in <http://gardening.wsu.edu> and you can search a myriad of information for solutions to your gardening

problems. You can also call the WSU Cooperative Extension Kitsap Office at 360-337-7157 to talk to Extension Staff.