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April abounds with activities for gardeners. Valley Nursery in Poulsbo, Savage Plants in Kingston, Bainbridge Gardens, and Clear Creek Nursery in Silverdale all have numerous classes for gardeners with stellar luminaries such as: Bess Bronstein, Ann Lovejoy, Maria Carlos and many more. Call the nurseries and ask for a list of upcoming classes. Valley Nursery and Bainbridge Gardens have been offering classes for several years and now Clear Creek and Savage Plants are doing the same. Each nursery has great offerings – you'll want to visit them all.

Plant Sales are upcoming too. The earliest one that I know of is in South Kitsap on April 26 at Givens Center on Sidney Road in Port Orchard. WSU Master Gardeners are the sponsors and they'll also have seminars that day too. The WSU Master Gardener much-anticipated annual plant sale is scheduled for Mothers Day Weekend from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11. In past years the sale began Friday but this year it's Saturday and Sunday. This way those who work during the week can attend too. Don't miss this sale.

Poulsbo Garden Club has a plant sale with garden art and other temptations on Viking Fest Saturday every year and this year it's May 17 at the Poulsbo Library. I'll list all the other garden club sales in a column in the near future. We have more than ten garden clubs in Kitsap County and nearly all of them have sales running every weekend in May. It's an affordable and wonderful way to add plants to your gardens. You might even want to become a member of one of these groups.

Earth Day and Arbor Day events are also available throughout the county. The Raab Park Community Garden P-Patches opening day for 2003 is Saturday April 12 starting at 9 a.m. The Poulsbo Tree Board will be planting a tree and hosting an Arbor Day event April 12 at Betty Iverson Park. Call Poulsbo Parks and Rec at 779-9898 for details on both of these events.

Stillwaters in Kingston is sponsoring another not-to-be-missed Eco-Fest on Saturday April 19. In conjunction with Eco-Fest the Kingston Farmer's Market will have an early kick-off spring sale at Gordon Elementary School. Parking is available for both events at the school. A horse drawn wagon will ferry passengers between the two locations. Earth friendly groups from all over the county have booths and tables at Eco-Fest. The event provides education and fun for all from birth through antiquity. (I can say that because I'm an antique myself.)

Saturday April 26 you'll find Earth Day events at Central Market, Poulsbo Market and Bainbridge Town and Country Market. Mark your calendars for this day – one of these markets promises to have composters on sale that day. More details to come.

April also brings on the season of lawn mowing, fertilizing and all things green. Next week's column will be on lawn care. I was recently quoted on lawns and there were

several inaccuracies in the quotes so I'd like to clear up some of it. Dr. Gwen Stahnke from Washington State University Research Center in Puyallup lives for lawns. She has been called the guru of lawns. Each year Gwen publishes a listing of grass seed that is certified for use in our Pacific Northwest and guaranteed to produce great results. Call the Extension Office at 360-337-7157 and we'll send you a copy of Gwen's listing. If you're really into turf and want to know the secrets of golf courses and athletic fields visit www.puyallup.wsu.edu/turf.

The final tip for today is about septic systems. The University of Washington SEA Grant Program has offices in Mason County and Kitsap County. Kitsap's SEA Grant shares space with us at the Extension Office. SEA Grant's Website at www.wsg.washington.edu has abundant information about keeping your septic system healthy and offers tips on how to landscape for the various systems. You can also access information about obtaining an owner's manual for your system. Our County Health Department works closely with SEA Grant and is an excellent resource for information on septic systems. I'll write more about septic systems and gardening in a future April column.

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