

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 12-31-03)(New Year's Resolutions) , ©2005

I rarely make New Year's resolutions but I've thought of several for myself for 2004 and thought you might want to adopt a few of these too.

Resolve to more frequently patronize our local nurseries and greenhouses. Our local nurseries and propagators sell seeds and bulbs too. No need to purchase out of state. Some of the catalogues include noxious weeds and shipped plants sometimes expire before we even get them in the ground. Catalogue plants aren't always adaptable to our northwest growing climate. Buying locally usually ensures the plants will survive in Kitsap County. Plus you can see what you're buying rather than imagining it from the description or photo in a catalogue. Get ideas there, but shop locally.

Resolve to share more plants with my friends. My garden is becoming quite packed with plants and many of my perennials desperately need dividing. I'm resolving to invite a bouquet of friends over to share my plant bounty.

Resolve to get out in the garden at least once a month to do battle with weeds. Last year I was lucky enough to weed at least once a month and now the weeds aren't as invasive as they were in previous years. I've also been treating myself each month to the gift of the most wonderful pair of weeders who come by regularly to weed away. It's amazing how much better my garden looks and I feel so pampered. Thanks "WE2."

Resolve to plant more ornamental grasses this year. Nils Sundquist grows native grasses for many of our local nurseries. Look for his nursery open houses the same day as the Heronswood open houses. Nils also specializes in native plants, crocosmia and wonderful perennials and bulbs. His nursery is on Rova Road and he can be contacted at 360-779-6343.

Resolve to take classes at: Valley Nursery, Bainbridge Gardens and Savage Plants. All three of these nurseries have regular scheduled classes during the year. I'll alert you to classes at these and other nurseries when I can, but you can call or visit your favorite nursery to ask about their offerings.

Resolve to attend classes and seminars sponsored by the WSU Master Gardeners and the Master Gardener Foundation of Kitsap County. In 2004 the Master Gardener Foundation is sponsoring a series of classes featuring: Marianne Binetti (May), Dan Hinkley (June), Ann Lovejoy (August) and Mary Robson (October). I'll give more details about this enticing series in January and February. For a schedule of other classes and seminars presented at the WSU Master Gardener learning gardens in Kitsap call the Extension Office at 360-337-7157 for a schedule. The schedule will be published in mid-February.

Resolve to partake of both Bainbridge in Bloom in July and Gifts of the Garden (South Kitsap) in June. Some of our local Kitsap residents generously open their gardens to raise

needed funds for the Arts and Humanities Council in Bainbridge and the KCCHA Kerry Ogden Scholarship for disadvantaged youth.

Resolve to spend more time in my garden just sitting and communing with the plants, birds, critters and insects. I'll try to take one day a week to walk through my garden and maybe even tuck myself away in a shady corner and read a book.

Resolve to spend more time with my friends having fun in our gardens. A few years ago a group of us would meet about once a month to create garden art and relax and enjoy each other's company. I'd like to reinstitute that luxury again.

Resolve to remember to pick the herbs in my garden and make some baked goods and try out Fay Linger's delicious rosemary jelly and mint jelly recipes. Fay makes them every year and luckily for me shares. I'd like to surprise her with jellies I make.

Resolve to grow even more extra rows in our vegetable garden for PAR (Plant A Row) to donate to our local food banks to share with those who are hungry.

Resolve to try one more time to keep a gardening journal. I'll try to map my vegetable garden and record temperatures and growth records. I'll also try to harvest the zucchini before it becomes monstrous.

These are my resolutions for 2004, but they're to share and I'm sure you can think of many more. All of these won't be chores; they'll be one of the enjoyable things we do as gardeners in 2004. Happy New Year and may 2004 be your best gardening and life year yet!