

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 01-07-04 - Native Plants) , ©2005

The once a year Conservation District Native Plant Sale begins Saturday, January 17. You'll want to attend a workshop to learn about native plants presented by WSU Master Gardener Fay Linger and also order your plants that day. The workshop is 9 a.m. to noon at Eagle's Nest at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds, 1195 NW Fairgrounds Road. Call 360-337-7171 or email www.kitsapcd.org to receive a mailing listing the plants available for this year. You can also stop by the Conservation District office on Sidney in Port Orchard. They're in the same building as the Coroner's Office.

Plants must be ordered by January 23 and will be available for pick up Friday March 5 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday March 6 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds. Plants come in bundles or pots. If you purchase the bundles you'll want to put the seedlings into the ground as soon as possible or plant them in a holding bed or smaller pots with soil until you can get them into the ground. It's usually a good idea to put small twigs, cuttings and bare root plants into a pot with soil, water well and coddle them until they've had time to grow roots (anywhere from three months to one year).

Fay's hot buys for the KCD Tree Sale are: Red Flowering Currant, Mock Orange, Snowberry and Twinberry. She recommends potting them up right away if they are on the small side (under 12 inches) and grows them out until they can be put in the garden safely.

Both Fay and I recommend the Blue Camas (*Camassia quamash*) described in the brochure as "Lily-like plants suitable for wet meadows. Beautiful purple flowers. Grown from bulbs to approximately 2 feet tall." I have some of these bulbs in my own garden and they are beautiful. You'll want several dozen.

Vine maples add color and texture to Northwest gardens. The KCD sale offers them at nine dollars a bundle of 10. These 12-inch bare root plants should be potted up until they are bigger. Pair all these plants with ground covers such as: Sword fern, Kinnikkinnik, Oregon grape both full size and low growing. Salal is offered too and it always makes a great ground cover.

If you miss the KCD plant sale the following Kitsap County nurseries carry native plants: Bainbridge Gardens (206-842-5888), Clear Creek Nursery (360-308-8210), Country Nursery and Gardens (360-478-0288), Heronswood Nursery (360-297-4172), Raven Nursery (360-598-3323), Roadhouse Nursery (360-779-9589), Savage Plants (360-297-8711) and Valley Nursery (360-779-3806). Also try Woodbrook Nursery in Gig Harbor (253-265-6271). On the Olympic Peninsula you can also get seeds through Abundant Life Seed Foundation (360-385-5660) and plants at Shore Road Nursery (360-457-1536).

WSU Extension offers two excellent low cost publications with information about cultivating, selecting and propagating native plants. MISC0274 "Winter in the Woods – a Winter Guide to Deciduous Native Plants in Western Washington) is six dollars plus tax.

MISC0273 “Grow Your Own Native Landscape – a Guide to Identifying, Propagating & Landscaping with Western Washington Native Plants” is \$6.50 plus tax. You’ll also need to pay extra for mailing and shipping. Both of these publications are available at the Kitsap Extension Office at 715 Sidney Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To find out how to order the publications you can call the Extension Office at 360-337-7157 or go online and order directly from <http://gardening.wsu.edu>.

An excellent book to help you put it all together is Russell Link’s “Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest” from University of Washington Press in association with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. This excellent paperback book ISBN 0295978201 is usually available for \$29.95. Link’s book is crammed with helpful information and lists plants for various soil and moisture conditions plus the birds and wildlife that you can attract to your garden by planting natives. You’ll find landscape diagrams and plant lists to use too. If you can only afford one book this is the one to get.

But, if you can afford another book on native plants you’ll want to find “Plants of the Pacific Coast, Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Alaska” by Pojar and MacKinnon, ISBN 1551050404 in paperback at \$19.95 usually. All plants are shown in color, grouped by plant families, and native peoples lore is included too. For example you can read how the native people used the plants for food, clothing and medicinal purposes. Maps show the range of each plant’s ecosystem.

I hope you’ll attend the Conservation District’s educational program on Saturday January 17 from 9 a.m. to noon and that you’ll try your luck at growing native plants in your own gardens. Many folks wait all year for this talk and sale. It’s great! Don’t miss it!

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