

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 2-18-04 – Pruning Books and Tips) , ©2005

Hello Gardeners. I don't know what twilight zone I was in when I emailed my column to my editor last week, but it was 11:30 p.m. and I had just returned home from the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. I apologize for referring to the 2001 Rose Selection List, but the roses are still available and arriving at all our local nurseries and Eric Hunter is still your contact for Rose Society activities in Kitsap County. He delights in helping rosarians and amateur gardeners.

Today's topic is pruning. Washington State University Extension has two excellent publications available by calling the Extension Office at 360-337-7157 or visiting the office at 715 Sidney in Port Orchard. "Training and Pruning Your Home Orchard" PNW400 (for \$2.50) gives directions on improving the strength and production of fruit trees in home orchards including information on fruiting habits, tools and proper training. Two-color illustrations show which shoots and limbs to cut. "Pruning Landscape Trees" EB 1619 (for \$4.50) is a user-friendly guide on pruning landscape trees. Color photos and drawings illustrate heading and thinning cuts to enhance the health and safety of trees and shows how proper pruning can provide protection from rot, insects, disease and wind damage.

Cass Turnbull of Plant Amnesty fame has finally written and Sasquatch Books has published "Cass Turnbull's Guide to Pruning." This paperback (ISBN 1570613168) retails for \$17.95 and is subtitled "What, When, Where & How to Prune for a More Beautiful Garden." Inside the covers you'll find "how to restore order to an overgrown yard without committing a crime against nature and how to fix the most common pruning mistakes involving a wide variety of plants." Also included is information on pruning and repairing damage to: evergreen and deciduous shrubs, roses, forsythia, bamboo, cane-type shrubs, witch hazel, rhododendrons, witch hazel, camellia; other tree-like plants, hedge plants such as boxwood, laurel and photinia, plus wisteria, clematis, other vines; and finally, trees from dogwoods to weeping cherries. I don't think Cass has left anything out in this book. It's very user friendly especially to fledgling gardeners and long-time gardeners who have been timid or reluctant to prune or repair pruning damage done by previous gardeners or their own inexperienced mistakes from past seasons.

A companion book you must find and review is "The Pruning of Trees, Shrubs and Conifers" originally written in 1972 by George Brown (1917-1980) and thoroughly revised and substantially expanded by Tony Kirkham (from Kew Gardens). It's the second edition of this valuable resource book from Timber Press, the hallmark of well-researched and produced books on horticulture. The back cover of this edition says, "Nothing has been published since the book first appeared which rivals it for in-depth plant-by-plant coverage of the pruning practices for nearly 450 genera." Four hundred fifty genera covers a humongous amount of pruning information. If a plant from our Northwest gardens is not listed in this book I'd be very surprised. Since this excellent book was originally written pruning practices have changed and evolved. Kirkham writes about the practices of years gone by and explains why we no longer use some of the

techniques. The information covers several thousand species. More than 50 new photographs illustrate key pruning points. "The Pruning of Trees, Shrubs and Conifers" (ISBN 0881926132) retails for \$29.95 and is worth every penny of the price.

One of my favorite family of houseplants is the Gesneriads. WSU Master Gardener M.J. Tyler will join Seattle columnist and WSU Master Gardener Marty Wingate at Barnes and Noble this Saturday February 21 at 1 p.m. M.J. will speak on African Violets and other Gesneriads and Marty will talk about and sign her book "Big Ideas for Northwest Small Gardens." I plan to attend and hope you will too.

On Saturday March 6 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Peninsula Fruit Club will present free grafting instruction at Kitsap County Fairgrounds in the Dog Barn across the road from Eagles' Nest Catering. Admission is free and rootstock (apple, plum and pear) with dozens of varieties of scion wood is available at a nominal fee of two dollars for rootstock and one dollar for scion wood. For more information on this great opportunity to start your own fruit trees call Paul at 253-851-4136 or Mel at 360-275-5243.

You won't want to miss a workshop on "How to Rejuvenate an Old Apple Tree with Grafting and Pruning Techniques" presented by WSU Master Gardeners and Peninsula Fruit Club on Saturday March 13 from 1-3 p.m. at the Walled Garden at Northwest College of Arts near Milepost 9 on Highway 305 near Suquamish (entrance to the college is across from the George Fireworks Stand).

Contact Peg in care of this newspaper or email at ptillery@co.kitsap.wa.us or gardenmentor@yahoo.com