

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 2-25-04)(Miscellaneous) , ©2005

Let the gardening season begin! Read on for a plethora of gardening temptations.

Patty Thomas the Horticulture Therapy Coordinator at Martha and Mary Senior Care Center in Poulsbo gave me a tour Wednesday February 18. The residents grow most of their plants, from seeds and cuttings to festoon the home inside and out. They nurture the plants through the winter and early spring to sell at plant sales throughout the year. The proceeds purchase more seeds and plants for enjoyment. The seniors even have a Plant A Row garden where they grow vegetables to donate to Fishline Foodbank. A wonderful gardening calendar with delightful photos also brings in much needed funds for gardening activities. It can be purchased for ten dollars the end of every year and in early January.

One of the ideas I learned from the seniors is a cute tabletop three-tiered strawberry tower. Start with three bowl-shaped plastic planters of varying sizes. To save soil place a four-inch plastic flower pot upside down in the center of each of the three containers. Place the largest container on the bottom with the upside down pot in the middle surrounded by potting soil. The second container rests on top of the upside down pot and the third container comes last also sitting on an upside down pot. Plant strawberry plants around the edges in all three containers. The completed tower ends up a little less than three feet tall. It would be perfect on a picnic table or small table on a patio or deck.

Eric Hunter asked me to tell everyone his wife, Joanne Hunter, is now the chairperson of the Kitsap County Rose Society and can be reached at 360-377-9917. The meeting place was changed too, meeting the third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at Clairmont East in East Bremerton on Claire Avenue about two hundred feet north of Lebo Boulevard.

The first weekend in March is going to be heaven for gardeners. Plan to spend the whole weekend learning fun tips and hanging out with gardeners. Don't forget the Peninsula Fruit Club Show at the Fairgrounds on Saturday March 6. Kitsap County WSU Master Gardeners will have a Greenhouse Class on Sunday March 7 from 1-3 p.m. at Anna Smith Garden in Tracyton near the intersection of Fairgrounds and Tracyton Boulevard. You'll receive all kinds of tips on greenhouse and early spring gardening.

Also on March 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. spring officially begins in Kitsap County with the annual Greater North Kitsap Soroptimists Garden Show at North Kitsap Junior High School in Poulsbo. Take Highway 305 turning east on Hostmark at the light. The show features vendors selling plants, bulbs, shrubs, seeds, baskets, herbs, garden art and more. WSU Master Gardeners will be on hand with information, advice, tips and free educational materials. The Poulsbo Garden club will be selling copper plant tags to fund their grant and scholarship program. The proceeds from the Soroptimist Garden Show benefits Fishline Foodbank.

I'll be at the Show giving a talk on Garden Art at 11:45. The Potting Girls will give you great ideas for colorful summer displays. They'll be featured soon in "Sunset" magazine. At 10:15 the Worm Man, Jerry, will demonstrate vermicomposting. Scott Parr from Scott's Tree Service demonstrates hands-on pruning. A speaker is also featured at 11:00 but at the time I'm submitting my column the speaker remains a mystery. You'll just have to attend the Show and be surprised.

Saturday March 13, Bess Bronstein is at Savage Plants Nursery in Kingston from 10:30 to Noon with "Basic Pruning Techniques." Bess will walk attendees through the nursery giving hands-on pruning demonstrations. I'll be there at Savage Plants on Saturday March 20 from 10:30 to noon with "Early-Blooming Plants and Spring Garden Preparation" giving tips on my favorite plants for early spring along with tips for maximum gardening success. You'll also want to touch bases with Valley Nursery in Poulsbo and Bainbridge Gardens on Bainbridge for a list of their spring offerings. Country Nursery and Gardens on the Seabeck Highway is also going to be offering classes on a regular basis.

The WSU Master Gardeners offer classes on gardening topics the first Sunday of every month at Anna Smith Garden in Tracyton and the fourth Sunday of the month at Northwest College of Arts Walled Garden (entrance is on Highway 305 near Milepost 9 across from the George Fireworks Stand). The Raab Park P-Patch Community Garden has classes the second Saturday of the month May through August. Classes at these three gardens run from 1-3 p.m. You can call the Extension Office at 360-337-7157 for more details. All classes are free to the public.

Contact Peg in care of this newspaper or email [ptillery@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:ptillery@co.kitsap.wa.us) or [gardenmentor@yahoo.com](mailto:gardenmentor@yahoo.com)