

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for January 5) Gardening Calendar © 2005

I hope you received a calendar as a gift during the holidays because you'll want to take out your pens or pencils and write down all these dates. The gardening season is starting early this year and you'll have lots of great opportunities.

The Kitsap County Master Gardener Foundation raises thousands of dollars each year to support the WSU Kitsap Extension Master Gardener Program. 2005 heralds in the second year of the "Speakers Series." This year's theme is "Gardening in the Pacific Northwest." Chris Smith (Vegetable Gardener's Top Twelve Crops) and Peg Tillery (that's me)(Butterfly Gardens) are the first speakers on Sunday, February 27, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.; Little and Lewis (Gardening from Within) are on Sunday, March 6 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Marty Wingate (Color Through the Year) is featured on Saturday, March 26 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. and Ciscoe Morris (Ooh La La Gardens) closes out the series on Sunday, April 10 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. All presentations are at the Silverdale Red Lion Inn.

Tickets are available at the following locations: WSU Extension Office (Monday through Friday), 345 6th Street Suite 550 in Bremerton, (the Norm Dicks Government Center)(the office is closed for lunch from 11:30-4:30); Liberty Bay Books on Front Street in Poulsbo; Valley Nursery, Bond Road in Poulsbo; Port Orchard Nursery on Mitchell Avenue in Port Orchard; and Bell, Book and Candle Bookstore on Bethel Avenue in Port Orchard. Tickets are \$12 for individual dates or \$40 for the entire series and will be available at the door on the day of each talk.

A free Kitsap County Master Gardener Foundation sponsored series is the third Wednesday of every month at 1 p.m. at the Fairgrounds Conference site (formerly Eagle's Nest Catering). January's speaker is M.J. Tyler who is an expert on gesneriads. M.J.'s slides of these fascinating, sometimes-delicate, colorful and appealing houseplant will tantalize you to try your luck growing these gardener-friendly indoor plants. Admission is free but donations are happily accepted by the Foundation.

The long-awaited Northwest Flower and Garden Show is February 9 through 13 in downtown Seattle at the Washington State Convention Center. The best part about this year's show is you won't have to stand in line for hours waiting for your favorite speaker. Passes are now available on a first-come, first-served basis two hours before each presentation begins. Passes are distributed two per person from the information booth on the 6th floor near the Rainier and Hood Rooms. Ten minutes before the seminar starts, seats are no longer guaranteed and anyone can enter provided that seats are available. Your favorites, Ciscoe Morris, Val Easton, Ann Lovejoy and Ed Hume are speaking at the show. Don't miss them.

Purchase tickets locally at: Bainbridge Gardens; Bay Hay, Rolling Bay; Berger's Garden and Gift in Bremerton; Country Nursery and Garden, Seabeck Highway; Sacks Feed and Garden in Kingston; Port Orchard Nursery; and Valley Nursery in Poulsbo. Order tickets

toll free 1-800-229-6311 or online www.gardenshow.com. A pass for five days is \$65; Early Bird tickets (purchased through February 1) are \$16 per day and regular admission purchased February 2 through Feb 13 is \$19. Groups of 20 or more have the group rate of \$15 each; call 206-789-5333 for details. Half-day passes are \$13 purchased at the door after 3:00 p.m. and Sunday after 2:00 p.m.

It's not too early to start planning your spring, summer and fall gardens. I've recently discovered a great "Garden Planning Kit" from the Gardeners Guide out of Corvallis, Oregon. Visit the website at www.E-Z.net/garden. You'll be sorely tempted by the Perennial Garden Planning Kit and the Vegetable Garden Planning Kit. Each kit retails online for \$29.50. The Vegetable Planning Kit includes 1800 reusable full-color peel and stick plants; a half-inch scale 32-foot by 68-foot garden planning grid; weekly planting and harvesting schedule; frost data for major cities nationwide; and complete instructions. The box is large enough so you'll easily find it, yet thin enough that you can store everything in it and not lose it from year to year. This great tool won the Garden Writers Association prestigious "Quill and Trowel Award." I have the vegetable kit and next year I'm planning to purchase the perennial kit. Check out the website and see what you think. I recommend this user-friendly and fun-to-use gardener's tool.

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