

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (Fair Musings) © 2005

Every year at the Kitsap County Fair I always head for President's Hall for the horticulture, arts and crafts and hobby club exhibits. Educational materials and displays abound and volunteers are there to answer questions and give advice. I also make sure I go over to the Pavilion where the commercial exhibits are staged because nestled in amongst the sellers and hawkers are educational opportunities and county displays. I especially always make sure to go up the stairs to the floriculture displays, a sometimes sadly overlooked area.

The various horticulture societies in Kitsap County and the Garden Clubs put together this part of the fair. They have many categories where adults and kids can enter their flowers, shrubs, houseplants and other homegrown and created items from their gardens. Most of the volunteers who keep this part of the fair going and growing are from the Cross Sound District of Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs.

It's not too early to start thinking about 2006 and how to enter items in the Fair. The Fair Premium Book comes out anywhere from April through July each year. In April start checking the Fair Office (on Fairgrounds Road across from the Pavilion). The premium book tells how to grow, make and enter items.

The floriculture display often requires plants on single stems. All you have to do is bring your stems of flowers in to the display area in water and they'll show you how to display and place them in the green bottles. For instance, if you'd like to enter a stem from your hydrangea you would cut the stem a certain length (see the premium book) place it into water in a clear bottle or jar and go to the fair floriculture entry spot and fill out the forms and they'll place the stem into the green display bottles and that's it. The next thing you'll do is collect your ribbons and also walk through the display at the fair and smile because a flower from your own garden won a ribbon. Other categories in this division include floral arrangements, container gardens and ornamental grasses. If you get really adventuresome you'll want to do floral and table arranging.

If you'd like to visit or join a garden club contacts are: Central Valley (Shawna Ward 360-620-8268); Evergreen (Evelyn Savage 360-275-4204); Long Lake (Sarajane Rants 360-769-3994), Poulsbo (Carolyn Gillick 360-779-3466) and the district membership chair Cathy Hall 360-871-5582. Many of the clubs have members who will work with children in the schools to help them grow plants to exhibit at the fair each year.

Here are other plant societies to explore. The Evergreen Bonsai Club meets at Olympic College in the shop area room 114 at 7 p.m. the third Friday of every month. For more detailed information check out the website at <http://www.evergreenbonsaiclub.com>. This year's Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs Association Convention XVI "Back to Our Roots" is September 16 through 18 at the Harborside Conference Center. Kitsap County Rose Society meets at 7 p.m. the third Monday of each month at Claremont East Retirement Center, 2707 Clare Avenue in Bremerton. For more info contact Eric Hunter 360-377-9917 or Sharon Gakin 253-857-6789. Kitsap County Dahlia Society

www.kitsapdahlias.org meets 7 p.m. the third Thursday of each month at Crystal Grange on Paulson Road. Contact Wanda Novak 360-692-4829. Last, but not least, the Peninsula Fuchsia Society meets at 7 p.m. every third Tuesday at the Clearbrook Inn Living Center one mile north of Silverdale on the west side of Silverdale Way. Contact Jean Conyers at 360-692-6632 or Jay Siegel 360-779-3020.

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