

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 02-01-06) Pruning and Classes © 2006

The first speaker in the Master Gardener Foundation of Kitsap County Speaker Series is Cass Turnbull “Difficult Plants to Prune” on February 19 from 1-3 p.m. at the Norm Dicks Government Center. The program is \$12 at the door or you can purchase the whole speakers series of five for \$35. Parking is in the lot on the east of the building on Sixth Street. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the Extension Office, at Liberty Bay Books and Valley Nursery in Poulsbo, Port Orchard Nursery and Bethel Avenue Book Company in Port Orchard.

Maria Carlos, garden consultant, designer and owner of Agua Mansa Calm Waters is conducting a three-part course “Designing Your Dream Garden” February 4, 11 and 18 at the Poulsbo Parks and Recreation Building, Front Street in Poulsbo. The class is \$61 plus a \$25 materials fee (covering a landscape design booklet and ferry fare and admission to the NW Flower and Garden Show in Seattle on February 11). Class attendees will learn how to assess and evaluate their gardens and determine what to add, edit or design. At the NW Flower and Garden Show Carlos will point out desirable plants and include tips and techniques. Students will create a plan and sketch for their dream garden. Contact Poulsbo Parks and Recreation at 360-779-9898 to register. Visit the Agua Mansa Calm Waters website at www.aguamansacalmwaters.com or phone 360-394-3734 to contact Carlos.

Fruit trees require a longstanding commitment from gardeners. Luckily many smaller-sized and dwarf fruit trees are being developed on a regular basis so home gardeners can reap the benefits of growing fruit trees in containers or small spaces. These smaller varieties still produce normal sized fruit, but require less pruning and less intensive care. Ask your favorite nursery person for recommendations. Sam Rader at Valley Nursery and Steve Minsch at Bainbridge Gardens are two of our local nursery experts who provide assistance and education to Kitsap gardeners on growing fruit and fruit trees. Visit <http://gardening.wsu.edu/text/treef.htm> for links to abundant information about growing fruits and tree fruits. The Extension Office 360-337-7157, 345 Sixth Street, Suite 550, Bremerton, carries publications for fruit and fruit tree cultivation and care.

Our local Peninsula (Kitsap) Fruit Club is an excellent resource for Kitsap gardeners wanting to grow their own fruits and fruit trees. The group meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at Bremerton Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 680 Lebo Blvd in east Bremerton. You can reach President Mike Shannon at 360-373-9489 Mike_58@msn.com and Vice President Joe Machcinski at 360-769-2136 BestHands@aol.com. Another great resource for information on everything about growing, pruning, harvesting and taking care of fruit bearing plants is through the Whatcom County Fruit Research Center in Mount Vernon http://mtvernon.wsu.edu/fit_hort/fruit_horticulture.htm.

Fruit trees need pruning in order to maximize the opportunity to produce fruit. You'll prune more often early in your tree's life than you will as the tree matures. The object of pruning fruit trees is to let as much sunlight in to produce fruit and also to have the

framework of the tree as sturdy, healthy and productive as possible. Espaliered trees require regular pruning and shaping for many years because you're training the tree to grow up against a fence or wall. When homeowners inherit old neglected fruit trees, these trees can often be renovated, but it takes time and patience.

I know I promised we'd cover pruning in two parts. Please stay tuned for one more week and we'll finish up.