

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 8-02-06) Kitsap Fair is Coming! © 2006

My dear gardening friend Aggie Allpress (who is an Assistant Superintendent of Open Class Floriculture) asked me to remind gardeners about the Open Class Floriculture category in the upcoming Kitsap County Fair. And, on the same note Donna Alber, WSU Master Gardener and Open Class Horticulture Superintendent wants me to remind people about entering produce from their garden at the fair too. Our Kitsap County Fair is Wednesday August 23 through Sunday August 27. Entry day is Monday August 21.

Since I'm a gardener by heart, two of my favorite places to visit at the fair are the Floriculture displays on the mezzanine in the Pavilion and the Open Class Horticulture displays at President's Hall. Members and volunteers of Kitsap Federated Garden Clubs, WSU Master Gardeners and assorted family and community volunteers work diligently behind the scenes to make these two divisions of the fair a wonderful, entertaining, and educational place to see. Volunteers must be on hand all hours of the fair to answer questions and provide education and information.

You and your family can experience the excitement and fun up close and personally. All it takes is some produce from your home garden whether its fruits, vegetables, whole plants and flowers. Each year the Fair Exhibitors Guide spells out the rules for entering an item in the fair. The Exhibitors Guide not only spells out the specifics, it also lists phone numbers you can call to have a real person help you wend your way through the rules.

You'll need to purchase an "exhibitor's pass" giving you entry to the fair every day. Your entry cannot be judged until you purchase your exhibitor's pass. Passes are available at the Fair Office on Fairgrounds Road. All the details are spelled out at [www.kitsapgov.com/parks/fair06](http://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/fair06) and you can also pick up the exhibitor's guide at the Fair Office if you don't have internet access.

There is a rule for each type of fruit and vegetable and also each type of flower or plant. You'll want to be sure to read up ahead of time (like now) on the rules. For instance, those lovely green bottles are provided. And, in the veggie and fruit area the volunteers arrange things to give them their best look.

Check in day for both Floriculture and Open Class Horticulture is Monday August 21 from noon through 8 p.m. Volunteers will guide you in filling out your paperwork and please don't rush them because the way they fill out the forms is very important. Meticulous records must be kept. I kid you not!

Both Floriculture and Open Class Horticulture have educational displays researched and prepared by volunteers. The displays are always packed full of helpful and useful information. The displays must meet a certain criteria of size and content and also adhere to the theme of the fair; amazingly the volunteers pull this off each year. This year's theme is "You are the Magic."

You also may have noticed in the past two years that scarecrows festoon the fairgrounds. You might want to build a scarecrow yourself or with your family and enter to win a ribbon. It's really fun to enter something in the fair because nearly every single person wins a ribbon. It's especially great for kids to participate.

I hope you'll try your luck at entering something this year. Please tell Donna and Aggie that Peg sent you.