

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 11-15-06) Get Ready for Holiday Shopping © 2006

Here's a few stress busting ways to celebrate the seasons ahead.

Colleen Minion-Pierce, Kitsap County's Waste Free Holidays program coordinator wants Kitsap County residents to know about the "Waste Free Holidays" program. The program is an opportunity to purchase "experience" gifts at discounted prices of 15-50% off at participating businesses from November 15 through December 31. Gifts include tickets for concerts and sporting events, gift certificates for restaurant meals, bed and breakfast stays, spa treatments, massages and more. Details on all the offers and the participating partners are posted at www.wastefreeholidays.com.

Minion-Pierce says, "We're encouraging shoppers to 'think outside the box' by giving experiences rather than merchandise. It can be a welcome change from the mess and stress of traditional gift giving, and it's better for the environment by reducing waste." Participants will find more than thirty local participating businesses and over a hundred more region-wide (in neighboring counties), through the "Waste Free Holidays" program.

Shoppers wanting to participate in this program need to contact the partners directly. Contact information is available on the Waste Free Holidays website www.wastefreeholidays.com, or contact Colleen Minion-Pierce at 360-337-4568 or CminionP@co.kitsap.wa.us.

One of our family's favorite personal holiday experiences is the Stillwaters Environmental Learning Center Yuletide Auction on Saturday December 2 from 5-8:30 p.m. at the Port Gamble S'klallam Longhouse. Tickets are very affordable at \$20 per person. Attendees feast on "elegant Hors D'oeuvres and desserts." Music is provided by multi talented local groups. I can personally attest that the food is indeed most tasty. The chocolate desserts are enough to keep us coming back year after year. One of my favorite local celebrities Fay Linger has donated her much sought after birdwalk; I've donated a tour of my own garden along with tea and cookies. But there is much much more and celebrities and friends galore. Come on out and party with us for a great cause.

Purchase tickets for the Stillwaters Yuletide Auction at Saks Feed and Garden in Kingston or by calling 360-297-2876 or info@stillwatersenvironmentalcenter.org. While you're at Saks de-stress by hanging out inside and outside the store. It will soothe your nerves and get you dreaming about spring and summer gardening. Saks has abundant gardening and home warming temptations at very affordable prices. You'll find bird feeding supplies, holiday decorations galore, garden art and structures, clothing for gardeners and non-gardeners and a very friendly and helpful staff. Saks is open seven days a week. When you need a gardening fix and other nurseries are closed for portions of the week, stop over at Saks for some gardening help and encouragement. Tell Sue and Dave I sent you.

You can also give the gift that keeps on giving by purchasing a series ticket to the Master Gardener Foundation of Kitsap County Speakers Series. Tickets are \$12 per session or \$35 for all four. All programs are at the Silverdale Beach Hotel from 1-3 p.m. Dates and speakers are: Sunday, February 18, Richard "Dick" Brown (Bloedel Reserve) – Making Plant Names Simple;

Sunday, February 25th, Lorene Forkner (Fremont Nursery) - Dress your Garden with Style and Personality; Sunday, March 4th, Mary Robson (local celebrity) - Northwest Gardens in Four Seasons; Sunday, March 11th, Jan Bahr (Roadhouse Nursery) - Herons, Mosquitoes and Green Water - Oh My!

Tickets are available at the door and locally at: Bainbridge Gardens; Bethel Avenue Book Store; Bremerton City Nursery (formerly Berger's); Liberty Bay Books; Port Orchard Nursery; Valley Nursery; or the WSU Extension Office. Information is listed at both <http://kitsap.wsu.edu> and www.kitsapgardens.org or call the Extension Office at 360-337-7157 for information.