

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 1-17-07) Winter Meanderings

I promised I'd report back on the flickers and also on the extending tool we purchased from the company that supplies the "Attack Spider," to scare flickers. Since we had to remove our trees on the north side of the house, our flickers now only come hang out on the side of our house occasionally. The area is too exposed for them now. Therefore, we haven't had to purchase any "Attack Spiders" to frighten Mr. and Mrs. Flicker away. But we did use our special tool ordered from www.attackspider.com to hang up and take down our holiday lights. It worked great. We recommend it.

In columns throughout the years I've shared my husband and my passion for flower carpet roses. These easy care roses now come in shades of pink, peach, red, white and yellow. The flower carpet roses in our garden are sprinkled throughout several areas. Every few years in February (sometimes March) I go out and whack them down to a few inches from the ground. Over the next three to four years the plants grow back into shrubby masses of shiny green stems and leaves festooned with ever-blooming masses of color from March through as late as November. After the wicked winter weather we've had our flower carpet roses have gotten quite sprawly. So, this is the year to whack them back. I'm also thinking about pruning back some of my hydrangeas. These beauties are also leaning precariously towards the ground. After this drastic pruning I may have a year of fewer blossoms on both varieties of plants, but it will be worth waiting until next year when blooms will once again be splendid.

I'm a knitter and a reader, so I've enjoyed being forced to pursue these comforts while sitting inside beside the fire sipping a cup of tea. It's a human form of hibernation perhaps. But now I'm itching to get outside again. It's still pretty wicked out there though (or at least it is while I'm writing this column). For spring inspiration and thoughts of sun kissed, warming days I'm planning to attend the Master Gardener Foundation of Kitsap County's Speakers Series at the Silverdale Waterfront Hotel on Sundays from 1-3 p.m. on February 18 and 25 and March 4 and 8. Tickets can be purchased the day of the talks for \$12 and in advance for the series of four talks at the cost of \$35. They're available at the WSU Extension Office in Bremerton, Liberty Bay Books and Valley Nursery in Poulsbo, Port Orchard Nursery and Bethel Avenue Book Company, as well as Bremerton City Nursery and Bainbridge Gardens. For more information on the topics and speakers visit kitsap.wsu.edu or call the Extension Office at 360-337-7157.

Another perfect way to celebrate winter with springtime fantasies is attending the Northwest Flower and Garden Show Wednesday February 14 through Sunday February 18. The theme this year is the "Living Room." You'll see 25 designer gardens and have the opportunity to choose from more than 110 demonstrations and seminars. If that's not enough to tempt you, the vendors and informational booths are not to be missed. I have to admit I've never left the show empty handed. One year we even sandwiched a weeping pussy willow tree into my small Honda Civic. We wedged it amongst me and three fellow gardener passengers as we sped to the ferry terminal to catch the 9:30 p.m. ferry. It was quite the adventure.