

## Dig This by Peg Tillery (for 04-25-07) Mother's Day Gift Ideas

It's not too early to start thinking about Mothers Day gifts. Here are a few ideas to make your own mom's day special. You might want to double the pleasure with a gardening gift for yourself too.

Bob Dressel, owner of North Mason Fiber Company (south of the Kitsap County Airport) has a new compost product called "Olympic Mountain Compost." This compost with the acronym OMC is created by composting ground yard trimmings, hardwood chips, and fish carcasses (salmon, tuna, shark and halibut) from the fish processing industry in Washington State.

The finished product is odor free and no signs of the fish remain when composting is complete and ready for sale. Each batch is tested for nutrient content as well as parameters such as pH, Carbon to Nitrogen ratio, salinity, and nutrient availability. Growth trials are also ongoing. The latest test results are available by request and with every load of OMC. North Mason Fiber reports the compost does not have any of the residual fish smell people associate with fish fertilizer.

Another way to make mothers happy is to take them to any of our numerous local plant sales going on Mothers Day weekend. The corrected dates and times for the Master Gardener Foundation Plant Sale at the VanZee Building at the Fairgrounds is Friday May 11 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday May 12 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For a splurge you'll want to pick up "Perennials – the Gardener's Reference" by Susan Carter, Carrie Becker and Bob Lilly, published by Timber Press. This book is hot off the presses retailing for \$49.95. It is worth every single penny of the price. If your mom is into perennials she'll love this book and will page through it and enjoy it for years to come. Carter, Becker and Lilly with more than 100 years of plant study and gardening design and work experience between them, have teamed up to create this most complete compendium of information on perennials.

Carter, Becker and Lilly have catalogued and studied more than 2700 species and cultivars in 250 genera making this one of the most comprehensive guides available. Each page has a quote on the attributes of the plants, plus the origin of its scientific name; it's common name; the plant's preferred growing conditions; light and care requirements; and extra notes. Readers will even find information on how to care for the plants, including what time of year to divide, how to divide and when and how to deadhead. Descriptions are also provided for the plant's height and spread, the USDA hardiness zone, when the flowers bloom and descriptions of the foliage. Photos illustrate the plants and show companion and design planting ideas.

This is a large size book with 542 pages, each full to the brim with information on perennials. Photographs are by Lynne Harrison. Carter is a garden and landscape designer whose passion is a quest for “everything there is to know about plants.” Becker and Lilly were two of the original designers of the Northwest Perennial Alliance Borders at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. Reading and browsing through this book gives one a definite feeling of the love and care and enthusiasm and hard work that must have gone into creating and producing this “must have” book for those who love gardening and want to anchor, enhance, or fill portions of their gardens with perennials.