

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 1-09-08) Native Plant Sale and Education © 2008

This Saturday January 12 from 9 a.m. to noon is the annual Kitsap Conservation District Native Plant Workshop, at the Eagles Nest Meeting Room at 1195 NW Fairgrounds Road. Presenters are Vaughn Everett of Wiltermood and Associates and Dana Coggon, Kitsap County Noxious Weed Coordinator. Sandra Jacobson coordinates this educational and user friendly event. She can be reached at 360-337-7171 Extension 11 or by email at Sandra-jacobson@wa.nacdn.org. The workshop is free to the public.

The Kitsap Conservation District Native Plant Workshop in addition to the excellent education provided, is an opportunity for the public to order native plants for their gardens. The plants are very economically priced. Some are bare root, others are in containers. No payment is necessary until the plants are picked up at the Fairgrounds usually the first Friday and Saturday in March. Jacobson will provide information on how to order and pick up native plants.

Native plants are quite user friendly, but when newly planted require attention just the same as other plants. All new plantings need regular water in their first year or two, especially in the summertime and into fall. Bare root plants need to be put in the ground as soon as possible after receipt. If you cannot plant them in your landscape right away, at least pot them up temporarily; or dig out a holding area in your garden. Group the seedlings and cuttings into the holding area, settled into potting soil or natural soil, water in well and monitor weekly, continuing to water the plants, until you can plant them in their new permanent home in your landscape.

This week, luckily in keeping with the native plant theme, I received a new book to review. "Encyclopedia of Northwest Native Plants for Gardens and Landscapes" by Kathleen Robson, Alice Richter and Marianne Filbert, published by Timber Press is an outstanding reference book for anyone who wants to learn more about native plants, or have as a reference to consult when identifying or selecting native plants. Sections are grouped by the type of plant: perennials, shrubs and trees, grasses etc. The book is large sized – 9 by 11-1/2 and is extremely inclusive at 532 pages. The photographs and line drawings are colorful, crisp and clear, making examination of the flowering stages of the plants very easy to use for identification.

My only criticism is the book concentrates so much on the flowering stage of the plants (which is actually the best way to identify plants) that it could create frustration for a novice exploring the potential of native plants. But those frustrations are easily overcome by the clear explanations provided. The only thing that would make this book better is if there were illustrations showing how the mature plants and groupings of plants would appear in a home garden. But for a native plant geek like I am, and as a temptation for novices, this book is superb. It is an incredible resource and is worth every single penny of its \$49.95 price.

The book's author, Kathleen A. Robson operates Nothing But Northwest Natives Nursery in Woodland, Washington. She holds B.S., M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in botany and has

taught taxonomy, field ecology and conservation. Robson enjoys helping gardeners increase diversity and habitat value in their yards. Richter created the incredible photographs and Filbert created the appealing and helpful line drawings throughout the book. It's a very good thing that Robson, Richter and Filbert teamed up to create such an amazing book for us to read, use and enjoy.