

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 2-06-07) Is It Time to Plant and Prune Yet? © 2008

Bare root plants are starting to arrive at our local nurseries. At the same time you'll find oodles of seed packets to snatch up, purchase, take home and start planting. Spring is waiting around the corner.

February is the month to start seeds indoors and late in the month depending on soil temperatures you can sometimes begin planting peas in your own gardens, even plant a few lettuces and radishes, if you're lucky. Seed packages will tell you when to start planting, as well as how long it takes the plant to mature to picking and eating stage.

Retired WSU Extension Agent, Holly Kennell wrote a piece on seed starting you can access at <http://gardening.wsu.edu/library/vege009/vege009.htm> visit the website to learn about starting your own seeds for summer and fall veggie harvesting.

One all time favorite gardening resources for year-round gardening in Puget Sound is "The Maritime Northwest Garden Guide" produced and published by Seattle Tilth. The publication is available at [www.seattletilth.org](http://www.seattletilth.org) or call 206-633-0451 for ordering instructions. Some of our local nurseries and bookstores even carry the book. Chapters list month by month features including: plants to start from seed, bulbs or cuttings; chores you can begin and finish in your garden during that particular month; plus abundant tips and information. February is usually the month when you'll want to start seeds indoors, in a greenhouse or under cloches.

As we journey out into our gardens more and more in the following months, we'll notice our woody plants, especially now before all the greenery starts sprouting and springing out. It's the time of year when we start wondering about pruning. Another Holly Kennell column with concise and helpful pruning tips is at <http://gardening.wsu.edu/column/11-05.htm>. Holly answers many of the "prune or not to prune" questions.

The WSU Research Center in Mt. Vernon has a thorough explanation on pruning fruit trees at [http://mtvernon.wsu.edu/frt\\_hort/pruning\\_basics.htm](http://mtvernon.wsu.edu/frt_hort/pruning_basics.htm) and a whole publication available through Oregon State University is PNW400 "Training and Pruning Your Home Orchard" at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/pnw/pnw400.pdf>.

All of these online resources are free to view and read or you can print them out on your home printer. For those without computers, our Kitsap Regional Library branches offer computer access to everyone for free. You will have to pay printing costs to print out the publications and articles but the information is very good. You can also purchase printed copies of the publications at our Kitsap Extension Office, 345 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 550, Bremerton.

Perhaps one of the very best pruning guides for all purpose information is Cass Turnbull's "Guide to Pruning" which is now in its second printing. Cass Turnbull founded Plant Amnesty. She's compiled information on pruning: evergreen and deciduous shrubs; roses, forsythia, bamboo and other cane-type shrubs; rhododendrons,

witch hazel, camellia, and other tree-like plants; hedge plants such as boxwood, laurel and photinia; wisteria, clematis and other vines; and trees, from dogwoods to weeping cherries. You'll also find the book at Kitsap Regional Library branches. Also visit the Plant Amnesty website at [www.plantamnesty.org](http://www.plantamnesty.org). Be sure to linger a few minutes looking at all the atrocity-pruning examples in the "Madness Gallery," so you won't make any of those pruning mistakes!