

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 4-16-07) Weeds and Water Words © 2008

As gardeners we know all about water and weeds. Today's column is a little bit different spin on these topics.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds have stomped into our gardens in the form of quite striking, tempting or flashy garden plants or were gifts from neighbors or friends who were eager to share. Noxious weeds often start out as something to solve a problem such as ivy to retain and hold banks together. Even our seemingly innocent houseplant ivies and those that are tiny at the onset once they've escaped into the outside world will revert into the big leafed, tree climbing and smothering variety commonly known as English ivy (aka *Hedera helix*).

Many of the noxious weeds in Kitsap County started out as innocent purchases and additions to our landscaping but are now over-running and out-competing native plants and are rapidly invading the world. OK invading the world may be a slight exaggeration. For a weed to be noxious it has to be a hazard, poisonous or dangerous to humans and others; destroy or take over native habitat or threaten livelihood (usually by having a detrimental impact on agriculture). Noxious weeds such as knotweed and purple loosestrife have even choked and restricted water flow in streams, rivers and shorelines. These particular noxious weeds take up tremendous amounts of water that is needed to flow through areas keeping our ecosystems in balance.

Do not despair though, each of us can do our own small part in helping to control the spread of noxious weeds. Each of us is the best resource to help stem the spread of noxious weeds in our county. Here are two tips from Dana Coggon, Kitsap's Noxious Weed Coordinator. "Pull a weed a day and keep a million away," she says. To remove ivy from trees Dana says, "Think eye level down to your toes and the three foot diameter ring of life." These are the areas to remove ivy from trees. Keep these areas clear on a yearly basis and trees will live much longer lives.

To contact Dana for a presentation on noxious weeds or to schedule a site visit call 360-307-4242 or email dcoggon@co.kitsap.wa.us. The Kitsap noxious weed website has a wealth of helpful information at http://kitsap.wsu.edu/noxious_weed/index.htm.

Beach Naturalist Program

Learn more about our Kitsap shoreline sea life. Jeff Adams, University of Washington Sea Grant and I, WSU Extension Kitsap, are very excited about a new program we've assembled for Kitsap County. We were inspired by the Master Gardener Program and the Seattle Aquarium's Beach Naturalist Program to bring this program to Kitsap County. We've been meeting with and receiving support and partnering with representatives from: Seattle Aquarium, Poulsbo Marine Science Center, People for Puget Sound, IslandWood,

City of Bainbridge Island Shoreline Stewardship Program, Kitsap County DCD Stream Team, WSU Extension Shoreline Stewardship Program.

Evening sessions for anyone 14 and older who'd like to become volunteers in the Kitsap County Beach Naturalist Program are the first four Thursdays in May at the Poulsbo Marine Science Center (May 1, 8, 15 and 22 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.). Additionally weekend beach walks and training will be May 10, 17, 24 and June 7. The course materials fee is \$25 payable to WSU Extension Kitsap County. To download an application and register for the class visit http://kitsap.wsu.edu/shore_stewards/pdf/KBN_Application.pdf. If you have trouble accessing the form there is a link in the right hand corner of our homepage at <http://kitsap.wsu.edu>. If you have any questions about the program contact me at 360-337-7224 or email ptillery@co.kitsap.wa.us.