

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 9-17-08) Classes Galore © 2008

Even though the gardening season is winding down, we can still immerse ourselves in garden themed activities.

WSU Extension in Kitsap County is offering Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching Overview Course. Registration forms can be found at http://kitsap.wsu.edu/ag/sustainable_ag_class.htm. This course is for anyone interested in developing a small acreage farm or ranch using sustainable practices. Learn what it takes to have a sustainable small acreage farm or ranch and take a realistic look at goals, resources needed and opportunities available. Guest farmers speak to the class and field trips are taken to local farms.

The course is offered at two locations: Thursdays September 18 through December 11, 2008 at Long Lake Community Hall and Wednesdays September 17 through December 10 at Island Lake Community Center. Classes are held in the evening from 6-9 p.m. The course is open to academic students and community members for continuing education units. Course fee is \$225 for individual, family or farm. The cost includes textbooks and materials. For more information contact Arno Bergstrom 360-337-7225 or awbergstrom@wsu.edu. This course is offered as part of the Cultivating Success Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching Education Program.

The 2009 WSU Extension Kitsap Master Gardener Program volunteer educator training begins on Fridays from January 9 through April 10. The classes are 8:30 a.m. through 4:15 p.m. Master Gardeners (MGs) are volunteer educators who bring WSU research based information and education to the public. MGs are one of the faces of the university in our community. Each person who completes the Master Gardener Program 13-week course completes 72 hours of horticulture education. Course tuition and materials fee is \$225. Scholarships and/or payment options are available.

When classes are complete, between the months of April through October MG interns spend a minimum of 50 hours in their communities teaching people to garden successfully and to utilize environmentally friendly techniques. Additionally, Master Gardeners, learn how to identify plants, insects, plant diseases and plant problems. They also learn about native plants, trees, vegetables, fruits and weeds. MGs don't become overnight experts on plants and the environment, but they do become able resources and researchers of answers for citizens of Kitsap County. They may not always have an immediate answer, but they'll always find the answer or someone who knows the answer.

We have 232 Master Gardeners in Kitsap County ranging from the fairly young age of 20 to the more mature age of 80 plus years. Half of our Master Gardeners work full time and 35 percent of the MGs make their living in the field of horticulture. As the Horticulture Educator for WSU Kitsap County, and the coordinator of the Master Gardener Program here, I am honored to know these 232 individuals. Their energies, ideas, expertise and community service are dedicated to their families, friends, neighbors and residents in Kitsap and Pierce County on our peninsula.

Application packets are mailed out via email (or postal mail for those without email) on October 15 each year. Visit http://kitsap.wsu.edu/hort/mg_application_request.htm to place your name on the list to receive an application. You can also call the Extension Office at 360-337-7224 to be placed on the application request list. If you reach voicemail, please leave your name, address, phone number and email address.