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# MASTER GARDENER Gazette

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Master Gardener Gazette* — a joint publication of Island County WSU Extension and the Island County Master Gardener Foundation. We look forward to keeping you informed of Master Gardener news and events on Camano and Whidbey Islands.

The *Master Gardener Gazette* will be issued quarterly in the months of January, April, July, and October. The newsletter's primary audience is our Master Gardener community. Our goal is to provide a forum to share information on our upcoming events and volunteer opportunities, community projects we support, and gardening resources across Island County.

A special thanks goes to Kristine Vannoy, who submitted the chosen name of our newsletter. We appreciate all the creative and humorous submissions.



The newsletter team invites all Master Gardeners to contribute, whether through information on relevant events or suggestions for future articles. Please contact me with your ideas.

*Carol Ann Leonessa*  
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*Education Garden volunteers gather to share ideas*



*MGs hosting a plant clinic at Tilth Market*



## Plant Clinic Detectives *Camano Edition*

On Camano Island earlier this summer, a client stopped by the “Ask a Master Gardener” Plant Clinic table outside the Ace Hardware store to ask what might be causing the leaves of her Stewartia to turn brown. Because she did not have actual samples of the leaves or photos to share, the team — consisting of Cathy Lofton-Day, Kristine Vannoy, and Amy Noel — asked her to email pictures when she returned home. They asked her to provide a close-up of the damaged leaves, some healthy leaves (to help with positive plant identification), and the tree situated in the landscape.

The team also had more questions for the client that could give them additional clues as to what was happening. They asked questions from the OSU diagnostic resource “[20 Questions on Plant Diagnosis](#)”.

While waiting for the photos, Amy Noel volunteered to learn more about the cultural needs of Stewartia and responded to the client. Understanding “what is normal” for the plant helps determine if the problem is biotic or abiotic, or a combination of both due to cultural needs not being met.

First, Amy wanted to verify that the plant was indeed a Stewartia by looking at a description of the plant’s key characteristics from the [OSU Landscape Plants website](#). Then, she consulted a second resource on the [cultural needs of Stewartia](#) from an arboretum with an extensive collection.

When the photos arrived, she was able to verify that the plant was correctly identified. Although she could not determine the exact variety, she learned that each variety had similar cultural needs.



This photo showed the damaged leaves — brown, curling edges on light green leaves with darker green veins. The second photo showed the tree growing adjacent to a two-story house with many understory plantings.

Amy contacted the client and made two recommendations. The first was that sun scorch of leaves is a problem in some Stewartias, and that sun reflecting off the bay windows during a hot spell could have made the problem worse on tender spring growth. She told the client that this may continue to be a problem as the tree grows larger and closer to the house windows. She reminded the client that Stewartia need regular water and to make sure the tree has sufficient water during times of extreme heat, especially when putting on new spring growth.

Second, she mentioned possible chlorosis of the leaves, and suggested the client test the soil pH since Stewartias prefer acidic soil. Our cool spring weather may also have played a role with uptake of nutrients common in many plants that are sensitive to this problem.

In summary, Amy helped the client understand that a plant can better withstand stresses when its cultural needs are being met. **CASE CLOSED**

## Master Gardeners Around Island County

This column will be a regular feature of the newsletter, highlighting key activities by our volunteers during the months since the previous issue. We depend on you to tell us what's going on, so contact Carol Ann Leonessa with news from around the islands. In this inaugural issue, we go a bit farther back than the previous three months, so that we can mention briefly the two major events that took place earlier in the year.

**The Whidbey Gardening Workshop** was an impressive offering of a tremendous variety of educational events – onsite, online, and field trips. Carole Matthews, Chair of the Workshop, outdid herself, as did the entire team and all of those who volunteered and made it happen. Who knew that Master Gardeners could be simultaneously high tech and hands on? Well done! We are eager to see what our new Workshop Chair, Cathy Lofton-Day, has in store for next year.



*Carole Matthews, WGW2022 Chair*

**The Master Gardener Plant Sale** was another great success, thanks to the hard work of Holly Grason, our Plant Sale Chair, and all of *you* – the multitude of plant propagators, contributors, and volunteers that make this festive event happen. This year's sale was both online and onsite, and on both Whidbey and Camano Islands. Next year's sale will be entirely onsite, again on both islands. With gratitude to our outgoing Plant Sale Chair, Holly Grason, we are excited for the newly appointed incoming Chair, Raissa DeArmond. Let's help make her job easy and shower her with interesting plants for the next sale!



*Greenbank Plant Sale Team*



*Camano Island Plant Sale Team*

**This spring and summer, Dave Thomas and Tricia Heimer** with assistance from a few other volunteers helped grade school students in the Oak Harbor area (and their parents!) learn about growing vegetables. They learned concepts of basic botany and plant needs while also encouraging curiosity, outdoor exercise, and healthy eating habits.



*Dave Thomas talking plants with young students*

**Barb Moore** wrote "[\*A Whisper in the Forest\*](#)," a Make a Difference column for the *Whidbey Weekly News* in its July 14-20 issue. Barb's article tells the wonderful story of how trees in a forest create natural microclimates and communicate with each other in the process. Contact Jim Peskuric if you would like to propose topics or write an article yourself for our regular contribution.

**The Island County Fair** in July featured a beautiful Master Gardener Display created by Melissa Evans and her team of volunteers. The theme this year was “Growing a Vegetable Garden on Your Patio.” The booth was replete with a tremendous display of veggies and herbs, including giant sunflowers from Melissa’s own garden. Stand-up presentations on home propagation, pruning, and self-irrigating planters were well attended. Congratulations and thank you to Melissa and the team of volunteers who helped by greeting fairgoers, helping children plant, and answering questions about gardening.



*Ed Hollis guiding young fairgoers with planting*



*MG County Fair Display Team*

**Volunteers at the Lord’s Garden** in Oak Harbor, under the masterful supervision of Dave Thomas, are busy with their end-of-season harvest. Volunteers have met weekly during the growing season, planting and working the extensive vegetable crop, for donation to food banks in Oak Harbor and Coupeville. Dave’s strategy is to grow vegetables and berries that are expensive in stores, for maximum benefit at the food banks.



*Bountiful harvest at the Lord's Garden*



**Thanks to Melissa Evans** for going beyond the call of duty in her role as Social Chair and hosting our end-of-summer picnic at her home. We surprised her with the Star Award for all she has done this year in support of our activities.

**A small crew of Master Gardeners** swung in to help clean up the raised garden beds for teachers at **Utsalady Elementary School** on Camano Island. They chose the hottest day of the summer to show just how tough Master Gardeners are.



*MG crew: Cathy Lofton-Day, Ilze Zigungs, Kristine Vannoy, and Lori Fekkes*

**In addition to these events**, there were many places around Island County where Master Gardeners were helping and educating the public, including the Oak Harbor Public Library, Plant Clinics, Education Garden at Greenbank, Coupeville Community Garden, member meetings of the Foundation, children’s gardens, and much more. To all who organize these events and to all who participate in our outreach, thank you.

## From the Education Garden

The Education Garden at Greenbank Farm has a whole new look as you enter the gardens through the welcome arbor. John Bachert had the idea a few years ago that we should create a more inviting space and replant the area with a more focused design. The pandemic slowed us down, but a dedicated team of interns completed the project this spring. The new plantings were designed as a four-season garden, with signage that describes how each plant contributes to each season.

Sue Moore, Sally Howard, Sarah Van Alstyne, and Rich Yukubousky were the core members of the team, with help from many others and mentoring from Ilze Zigurs and Loren Imes. Support from the Foundation board and membership were essential to funding this project. Thank you to all.

The new entry area is an active educational space. Anza Muenchow taught a class on fall and winter gardening in the new area, as part of the Education Series at Greenbank. Eric Conn shared his depth of knowledge on how to prepare our gardens for winter. A full complement of classes is planned for next year. If you have ideas for topics or want to volunteer to teach a class, contact Susan Dakis.



*Anza Muenchow presents in the newly designed entry area at the Education Garden*

The greenhouse contributed dozens of plant starts to the plant sale this year, both flowers and vegetables, including a unique cucumber variety that was a huge hit with customers. If you would like to use the greenhouse to start plants for next year's plant sale, contact Barb Douglas. Pots and soil are available if you need them for dividing and potting plants from your own gardens for the plant sale.



*Barb Douglas in the Education Garden greenhouse*

If you haven't been to the Education Garden for a while, do come and visit. See how the funds that you, the membership, approved have been put to good use, both practically and aesthetically. Sculptures throughout the gardens enhance the design of plantings. The new arch over one of the entry paths will support the Blue Atlas Cedar as it grows. Ideas for new projects continue to be discussed.

Come and visit us — even stay to volunteer some time! Regular Wednesday work parties from 9 am to noon continue through the winter. Thank you to all for your work and support.

## Record Your Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours should be recorded in GivePulse on a regular basis, and all hours for 2022 must be input by the end of December. Not understanding how to do this is OK, but **not** entering your hours is **not OK!** Instructions for using GivePulse have been emailed and are also on the county website. Contact Loren or stop by the office for help.

## Meet the Foundation Scholarship Students

Luke Carlson of Coupeville and Molly Quade of Freeland are this year's recipients of our Island County Master Gardener Foundation scholarship, in the amount of \$1,000 each. The scholarship supports their degree programs in Agricultural Education at Washington State University. Both students will begin their senior year this fall with student teaching assignments — Luke in the Tri-Cities area and Molly in Lakewood. On graduation, each will receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural and Food Systems with a teaching endorsement.

Luke's achievements include five consecutive semesters on the President's Honor Roll at Washington State



University. He has shown leadership as an Eagle Scout, treasurer of the Agricultural Education Club, and house manager of his fraternity. His goal after graduation is to be a shop teacher and small farmer.

Growing up in Coupeville, Luke found his high school shop class and working on a local

farm to be consistently fulfilling. Those two areas became his calling and led to pursuing Agricultural Education as a major. As Luke said, "Putting food on somebody's table meant a lot to me."

Luke is optimistic about the future of agriculture and food systems, even in the face of major challenges that we face. The key challenge he sees ahead is using resources more efficiently — everything from land, fertilizers, pesticides, fuel, and soil conservation. Balancing a growing population with shrinking land will not be easy, but Luke is optimistic that we will meet these challenges. "I'm deeply grateful for the generosity of the Island County Master Gardener Foundation and am honored to have received this scholarship each year of my degree program," Luke told us.



Molly earned an Associate of Arts degree at Skagit Valley College before going on to Washington State University, where she has been active in the Horticulture Club and Agricultural Education Club, as well as working in the Honeybee Research Lab and volunteering at South

Whidbey Tilth. "This scholarship will be super helpful for my senior year," said Molly, "and I am grateful for the support I have received."

Molly is committed to community education in agriculture and getting information and support to people where and when they need it. For example, she has seen people take up hobbies in areas like gardening and beekeeping and believes that if we can provide platforms for people to teach each other what they know, we can generate curiosity and make resources more accessible on a personal, smaller scale.

Congratulations to Luke and Molly, and we look forward to their successes to come!

### ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

The Foundation Scholarship is for students studying or intending to study in horticultural programs. Preference is given to Island County students, but applications are also welcome from Snohomish, Whatcom, Skagit, and San Juan County residents. Applications will be available at the Washington State University Extension Office in Coupeville beginning September 1, 2022.

If you know of anyone who might qualify or be interested, please have them contact the Foundation President at [icmgf.president@gmail.com](mailto:icmgf.president@gmail.com).

## From the President

Last spring, Island County Master Gardeners responded to our member survey and made many constructive suggestions for improvement. This “first in a long time!” newsletter is a direct result of your comments.



The Island County Master Gardener Foundation (ICMGF) was incorporated in 2008. Since then, we have continued with our goals to support our membership, enhance community education efforts, and raise funds to carry out our programs. Our Whidbey Gardening Workshop has steadily grown over the years and has become a popular regional event. We have continued to raise funds with our annual plant sale at Greenbank Farm and now also on Camano, and our Education Garden is attracting more and more visitors every year. For the past 6-7 years, membership has been steady at around 90 members and your volunteerism has been invaluable to our successes.

As we all know, our world was turned upside down in early 2020 with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to cancel our Whidbey Gardening Workshop and our spring plant sale at the last minute. With no fundraising opportunities in sight for 2020, many of you stepped up in 2021 to put together a beautiful 2022 wall calendar that added to our cash reserves. In 2021 we also pulled together a very successful online-only Workshop and succeeded in holding our annual plant sale via online ordering and social-distance delivery. Because of your efforts, 2021 more than made up for our losses in 2020.

So here we are in 2022 and things are looking way up for ICMGF. We have continued to evolve through what has moved on from a pandemic to a manageable part of our lives, and our fundraising events were wildly successful again. Some things have changed forever while others are returning to normal; online meetings are here to stay for some, and others are craving in-person social events.

Looking ahead to the rest of the year and to 2023, let's continue to find new ways to connect with the community and with each other, to carry out our fundraising events, and to have fun while we do it.  
Thanks – *Jim Peskuric, ICMGF President*

## From the Program Coordinator

Many thanks to the small team of volunteers who worked to nurture this newsletter. We hope this will be a useful way of sharing news about the work you are doing in the community. We welcome your ideas and participation.



This year was my 5<sup>th</sup> with WSU Extension. I hope I have served you and the Master Gardener program in Island County well. I have learned much and have enjoyed working with so many talented and dedicated people who share WSU's mission of improving the lives of others through science-based horticultural gardening practices that benefit our community and protect the environment.

As I think back to my first year and the volunteers who introduced themselves and shared the impact of the work we do in the community, one email has always stuck with me. In response to a request for volunteers for a possible new project, this veteran Master Gardener gently reminded me of the concept of “less is more” and the risk of spreading our energy across so many small projects that we lose the impact of our primary educational efforts. It was wise advice.

We should always be open to new ways of sharing our educational mission, like this newsletter for example! We certainly had to be creative during the past few years when the pandemic forced us to isolate. But as we explore new ideas, we should not forget the importance of our main outreach and fundraising efforts. The Education Garden, Plant Clinics, Master Gardener Hotline, Whidbey Gardening Workshop, and plant sale are all very popular and effective, and form the center of our outreach.

As we consider new opportunities, let's continue to weigh the impact on our volunteers who are essential to all the work we do. Thank you everyone for nurturing all our educational projects, both new and long-standing.

Happy gardening!  
*Loren Imes, Program Coordinator*

## Meet Our Newest Master Gardeners



**Shannon Ware**

*Class of 2022*

Lifelong learning combined with fun is probably how I describe my interests in a nutshell. If I can add creativity, that's a bonus. While I'm just a yard gardener, landscaping our yard really focused me on our island environment and provided the opportunity to dig into veggie gardening further — enter the Master Gardener Program. Right now, my specific interest is the mitigation of food insecurity so I'm very proud to volunteer at our community gardens. As to other interests, if I'm not reading stories, especially non-fiction, I'm not breathing. I also enjoy cooking, particularly when I've foraged an ingredient and need to figure out what to do with it. My latest "thing" is yakisugi, which is an ancient Japanese method of preserving wood without chemicals. Our neighbors know (via an 8' Harry the Husky on our deck on game day) that my husband and I are avid Husky fans. OK, no learning there, just fun. And no, I graduated from Wheaton College and the University of Pennsylvania. Professionally, as an analyst, I studied industries and in HR, how organizations work. I love start-ups and still work with them. Learning about the next new thing and the founders who came up with the idea is all kinds of fun. Rad Power Bikes is probably the most notable. See me on my bike or in the garden!



**Jaci Mach**

*Class of 2022*

I've so enjoyed the training and meeting all of the wonderful and friendly Master Gardeners. Getting my 60 intern hours gave me a good variety of activities to explore and find my niche. One major change has

been to implement water conservation into my garden. Our consumption went from 2101cf in the 3rd quarter last year to 453cf in the 3rd quarter this year! Having a brown lawn makes me proud but I'm contemplating turning the front yard into a native and drought tolerant plant garden. I'm also enjoying my new worm bin and mason bee house.

## What's Going On Here?



While cleaning out some old planters at his parent's home in August, ICMG Program Coordinator Loren Imes noticed some honey bees that were attracted to one particular planter. Each planter had wet soil and the only visual difference between them was that the soil contained more undecomposed wood chips than the others which were mostly potting soil. Some online sleuthing led to a blog post about "nutritious water."

From a study done in 2017, bees "showed a preference for water sources containing calcium, magnesium, and potassium, all of which are found in pollen. This demonstrated that honey bees have the ability to switch water sources to compensate for dietary nutrient deficiencies."

To learn more, [read the post at the UC Davis Bee Gardener blog](#).

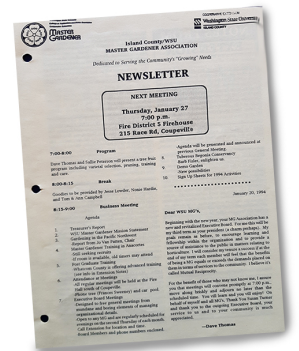
### Have you seen something puzzling?

Send us your photo for an upcoming issue.

[icmgf.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:icmgf.newsletter@gmail.com)

## WANTED!

Veteran Master Gardeners — do you have copies of the Master Gardener Newsletter from before 2000? Let us know. We would like to make copies for the archive.





## Upcoming Events

For details on events, go to the Foundation website, [icmgf.org](http://icmgf.org) or the WSU Extension [website](#)

<b>October 15, 2022</b>	Orca Recovery Day <a href="http://whidbeycd.org">whidbeycd.org</a>
<b>October 27, 2022</b>	ICMGF Board meeting and Member meeting
<b>December 9, 2022</b>	ICMGF holiday party
<b>January 15, 2023</b>	Registration opens <a href="#">WGW 2023</a>
<b>January 19, 2023</b>	ICMGF Board meeting
<b>January 26, 2023</b>	ICMGF Member meeting

## LOOKING FARTHER AHEAD

<b>March 3-4, 2023</b>	Whidbey Gardening Workshop
<b>May 13, 2023</b>	Master Gardener Plant Sale
<b>July 13, 2023</b>	Regional Celebration of 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Master Gardeners



*SIP presentation at Coupeville Community Garden*

## ICMGF OFFICERS

President – Jim Peskuric  
Vice President – Ilze Zigurs  
Secretary – Barb Moore  
Treasurer – Paul Rowe

## AREA REPS

South - Christine Dimm  
Central - Holly Grason  
North - Krista Hanson-Walker  
Camano - Adena Ray

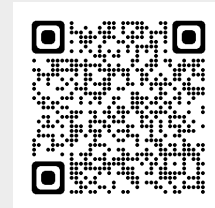
State Foundation Rep - Paul McKenna

## RESOURCES LINKS

The WSU Extension Island County Master Gardener Resources website contains links to

- approved resources
- MG Roster
- GivePulse instructions
- and much more

Visit [island.wsu.edu](http://island.wsu.edu) or point your smartphone camera at the QR code. If you need the password, contact Loren.



[ICMGF Member Login](#) page of the Foundation website has:

- member picture book
- minutes of foundation meetings
- updates on Education Garden
- more info on activities

Need the password? Contact Ilze.

[GivePulse](#) website for recording your volunteer hours.

**We welcome your ideas and submissions for future articles.**

Please contact the newsletter editor, Carol Ann Leonessa at [icmgf.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:icmgf.newsletter@gmail.com)