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MASTER GARDENER Gazette

As Master Gardeners, we talk a lot about how we love to spend time in our gardens, and summer is a great time to be out among our plants. What I enjoy hearing about is the myriad of gardens and gardening projects. Are you planting your winter vegetables? Or are you harvesting the fruits, veggies, and herbs that you nurtured throughout the spring? Did you walk through your garden today listening to the birds and insects that help our gardens grow? Or did you watch the rabbits and deer frolicking in your yard? (And hopefully not eating your flowers!) If you are like me, you purchased lots of plants at our Camano or Whidbey plant sale to add to the beauty of your own garden.

As I read about all the garden projects and ideas Master Gardeners take on throughout the year, I'm amazed at the variety of gardens we cultivate. From the Cottage Garden to the Coupeville Community Garden to teaching children at the many school gardens to nature walks in a Camano park, Master Gardeners are working to spread knowledge and love of gardening throughout Island County.

I find that no matter what projects I have or complete, there is always more to do and learn. Hope to see you at the 50th Anniversary Event in July or the Advanced Education Conference in September!



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, Editor, Master Gardener Gazette
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... on Whidbey

It takes a village to run a plant sale!
 Many thanks to all the volunteers.



... and on Camano

Plant Detectives

Several questions have come to the office this year regarding the health of conifers, with residents describing shrubs and trees with dead foliage or where the plant has completely died. One recent question was asked by the groundskeeper for the Central Whidbey Sportsman's Association, who stopped at the Extension office with a branch from one of the trees that surround their property along the highway just east of Coupeville and north of the Navy OLF.

The branch was a mix of green and light brown scales spread randomly along the branchlets and he said it was typical of most of the older trees on the property. These signs showed up within the last six weeks.

If you are not familiar with this location, there are between 100-200 of these trees in two rows along the property boundary. One row was planted within the past five years and the second row about two years ago. There is no irrigation, and the site is exposed to full day sun.

He was not sure of the name of the tree and called them "cedar cypress" so the first step was to make a positive identification which was determined to be Leyland Cypress (*Cupressocyparis leylandii*). The second step is to know what is normal for the tree and its cultural needs. Leyland Cypress prefers full sun, well-drained soils, and medium water, and will grow in USDA Zones 6-10. It is commonly grown as a screen.

Because conifers have needles or scales, which do not easily show problems other than browning, it can be useful to look at the sample under a microscope. Doing so immediately revealed lots of insect frass (or poop). Additionally, small holes were seen in the dead scales. Continued investigation showed small, papery cocoons.



With this evidence in hand and turning to WSU Hortsense for common problems, Cypress is not in the list of conifers. So, knowing that the PNW Handbook has a broader selection of plants, a search there brought up "[Cypress Tip Moth](#)" which matched the observations under the microscope.

An additional search found [photos from Oregon State University](#) and a fact sheet from WSU ([PLS 60](#)) that verified the problem.

The small moth lays eggs on new growth in the spring which then hatch and tunnel into the needles. The larvae feed through the winter until spring when they exit and spin a papery cocoon, from which a new moth will hatch in May and June. The lifecycle of the insect suggests that the damage was done over the fall and winter and only became visible in the spring, making options for control challenging.

The insect also damages Junipers and Arborvitae, which are included in Hortsense. Recommendations were given from Hortsense that included [both cultural and chemical options](#), with the advice that feeding damage in most cases does not kill the tree but can weaken it.

The office has two microscopes, a stereoscopic microscope for magnification up to 50x and compound microscope for magnification up to 1000x. Feel free to bring samples to the office and use these tools to help with your next diagnosis.

Master Gardeners Around Island County

Many thanks to Melissa Evans for hosting our annual **Spring Social** at her lovely home and garden. An impressive array of raffle items was donated, with many cheers for the winners. Everyone contributed to a delightful feast, as always at our MG events. We look forward to our next social event at the summer picnic in August.



Our **Plant Sale** on May 13 was a tremendous success, in both locations on Whidbey and Camano! A big thank you to our Plant Sale Chair, Raissa DeArmond, and her more than 40 volunteers who logged over 350 hours in order to make this event happen. Our volunteer propagators contributed over 2,300 plants including more than 300 from Camano Island. Melissa Evans and other volunteers contributed beautiful garden art for sale. We received many positive comments on the free seed exchange.

Cathy Lofton-Day was the Camano site organizer for the Plant Sale, and the group created 12 hanging baskets mainly from plants donated by the Whidbey team, along with the other plants from Whidbey. Camano sold nearly all its inventory, making a significant contribution to overall success. Loren Imes joined the Camano team for a productive and fun day. The Camano Master Gardeners were especially appreciative of Whidbey's support for the Camano site.

We donated leftover fruit and vegetable plants to the Coupeville School Garden and the Good Cheer Food Bank. We took in over \$7,000 including a number of monetary donations. Thank you to all who contributed to making this year's Plant Sale such a great success!



Ann Holmberg and Paul Rowe
tally the proceeds

Deer-Resistant Garden Display. This spring, Master Gardeners Dawn Hawkins, Tom Lucido, and Susan Wilcox refurbished the 24-foot planter in front of the WSU Extension office. The objective was to have a site-appropriate and attractive educational display of plants, garden support structures, and water conservation techniques for office visitors.

Susan and Dawn researched and selected plants that are deer-resistant, and shade and drought tolerant. Existing plants were removed and repurposed, soil samples were tested, and the soil was amended with City of Langley Waste Treatment Plant compost.

Tom Lucido designed and built cedar lattices and an obelisk, with lumber provided by Melissa Evans, which will provide support for climbing Clematis. A 50-gallon rain barrel with drip irrigation was installed and mulch applied to help reduce evaporation.



Susan and Dawn, with Tom's lattice and obelisk in the deer-resistant garden

Plants and mulch were provided at cost by Dawn Hawkins of Rain Shadow Nursery. Plant labels were added by Kathy King, and educational signage is being developed. The newly renovated planter provides a new pleasing entrance to the WSU Extension Office's building—come take a look!



This year's **Master Gardener Education Series** kicked off on May 21 with a presentation by Bobbi Peskuric on "The Organic Garbage Disposal - Worms." Although the weather was not kind, forcing us to gather in the cottage rather than outdoors, members of the public joined MGs in hearing how easy it is

to start a worm bin. Bobbi has plenty of red wigglers to share if you want to start your own worm bin.

...continued on next page

The series continued on June 11 with Lisa Phillips' talk on bees. The talk was especially timely, given that June is National Pollinators Month.



Dave Thomas and Tricia Heimer held weekly **Learn to Grow Vegetables** classes for elementary school youth at Crescent Harbor Elementary school garden in Oak Harbor. Each week, the kids worked in the garden while Dave and Tricia stretched the boundaries for elementary school age garden education, teaching the “budding”

scientists about the [wonders of meristematic cells](#) and [extracting DNA from strawberries!](#)



Classes will continue through the summer at the Lord's Garden.

Camano Master Gardeners have kept very busy, rotating monthly meetings at members' homes. April found them at Judy Coddington's home where they were bedazzled with around 2,000 tulips in bloom. Judy started with 700 tulip bulbs three years ago and today her home is a site for gawkers from all over the island.

May's monthly meeting was held at Cathy Lofton-Day's home in Ferndale. After a short business meeting, the group was challenged by a Plant ID game—identifying the native plants in Cathy's new and very well-planned garden. Carol Anne Ebert and Judy Coddington were winners, but everyone learned a lot about native plants.



Idonna Pieper-Nelson has led tours on the Camano Center's Garden Trail. Several members attended, impressed at Idonna's plant knowledge, along with her talent in her art and in leading the tours.

Thank You and Farewell

The following Master Gardeners are leaving Island County and will be sorely missed:

Barbara Schmitt has moved to Yakima to be closer to family and plans to volunteer with Yakima County Master Gardeners. Barb trained in 2018 and has been very involved in marketing for the Whidbey Gardening Workshop and the Pie Shoppe Garden at our Education Garden, and part of the team that organized to research and install the Education Garden greenhouse.

Annette Yell has moved to Des Moines, Washington. Annette was in the class of 2016 and helped coordinate many social activities for the Foundation for many years, including the Hospitality Room for the Whidbey Gardening Workshop. She also helped with maintaining the Education Garden.

Re McClung has retired as a Master Gardener Volunteer to devote herself full-time to the long-term success of Meerkerk Gardens. Re was the treasurer for the Master Gardener Foundation for many years and trained several classes of Master Gardeners when there was no money available for a WSU coordinator.

Re was also very involved with the administration and growth of the Whidbey Gardening Workshop. We will miss Re's dedication and support to the Master Gardener program but look forward to our continued connection with her through Meerkerk Gardens.

From the Education Garden

Have you ever wandered through or volunteered in the Cottage Garden and later wondered what a cottage garden actually is? Donna and Steve Stansberry have the answer for you. They established the Cottage Garden in 2005, as one of the first garden areas in the Education Garden at Greenbank Farm.

Donna is the lead for that garden, always with Steve's help and the help of all the Master Gardener volunteers who have been part of this garden over the years.

A cottage garden reflects the early 1900's era, showcasing the types of plants that grew then. The ambience is a combination of casual, whimsical, and useful. A distinguishing feature is that fruits, vegetables, and perennials are grown together.

The goal is to display plants from that era, based on reference books from the time period but modified by the characteristics of the space. For example, browsing deer, westerly winds, and changing climate have all impacted the evolution of the Cottage Garden.

The original garden was at the Davis Farm, north of the barns at Greenbank, but it was limited in size. The Port of Coupeville suggested moving south of the pond to the current location. The Cottage Garden area was originally all flat land, so the first steps were to create hills, planting areas, walkways, and water access.

The cottage itself was just a run-down shed, but once the Master Gardeners applied their design and building skills, it became an attractive focal point. The cottage was named in gratitude for all of Donna and Steve's work and contributions.



Steve and Donna Stansberry in front of the cottage

One of the features that visitors enjoy is the espalier apple tree. It was designed to create the effect of a room, while producing delicious fruit. A child-resistant waterfall is also popular. And there is much to enjoy and learn from the great variety of perennials, grasses, shrubs, and trees throughout the Cottage Garden.

How can you get involved in the Cottage Garden? You might think that pulling weeds is all there is to do. We beg to differ — on two counts. First, weeding is learning! As you weed, you learn about the weeds themselves and the surrounding plants. You learn plant identification, growth patterns, placement, pruning, environmental effects, and overall plant needs.

Second, and even more important, is that new perspectives are not only welcome but essential to ongoing development and evolution of the garden. As Donna said, "we get bored with our own ideas sometimes." Bring yours, please!

Come and share in the camaraderie among volunteers in all the garden areas, which is what keeps us coming back.

Come during regular Wednesday work parties from 9 am to noon, or during 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 9 am to noon. Saturday work parties continue until September, while Wednesday work parties are year-round.



Camaraderie is much appreciated in gardening

Master Gardener Training

Training for new Master Gardeners will start on September 16 and continue for fifteen weeks through January 27, 2024.

Tell your friends and other interested people to contact Loren or visit the [WSU Extension website](#) for details and an application.

From the President

Happy summer solstice! These long days are something that I look forward to every year (as do my fruit trees). It's hard to believe that it is already July. Our workshop and plant sales are behind us, and the next few months can be devoted to family, vacations and sharing our valuable gardening knowledge with others. There are many opportunities to connect with the public in the coming months, such as plant clinics in Langley, Coupeville, Oak Harbor and on Camano Island.



We are partnering with the Island County Noxious Weed Board and Sound Water Stewards to educate the public on noxious and invasive weeds. The workshops for eradicating Canada/Bull Thistle are still to come. We have secured a spot at the Island County Fair and Greenbank Farm is planning a harvest festival in early September. Whidbey Island Conservation District has again asked us to join them on Orca Recovery Day in October so I am hopeful that many of you will join me in teaching sustainable gardening practices to the public. More details to come about all these exciting events.

In Foundation news, the 50th Anniversary Regional Celebration in Mount Vernon is almost here. Many thanks to Carole Matthews for working with the Skagit County Master Gardeners to organize the event. A big thanks also goes to Dave Thomas, who will be speaking about his forty years as a Master Gardener. If you have not done so already, get your tickets to the upcoming Advanced Education Conference in Tacoma.

I want to thank Carol Anne Ebert for joining the ICMGF board to fill out the terms of State Representative and Camano Island Area Rep. She is a great addition and excellent example of a relatively recent MG stepping up to help in Foundation leadership. You too can join the board - watch for email from the Nominating Committee about the annual elections coming in October. Board service is a great way to supplement your volunteer hours in gardening and education activities while helping lead and shape our organization. I invite each of you to seriously consider how you might join in the shared responsibility, and some fun.

Thanks – *Jim Peskuric, ICMGF President*

From the Program Coordinator

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Master Gardener Program. Founded in 1973 by WSU Extension, it has spread nationally to become a trusted source of gardening information and brings communities together around a common interest. The Master Gardener Program is a great example of a Land Grant University program, with a mission to provide research-based knowledge that empowers individuals to improve their lives and strengthen their communities.



When King and Pierce County Extension agents saw the growing interest in urban horticulture 50 years ago, they trained community volunteers to help share gardening education based on the best science and research of that time. Today, there continues to be a need for general gardening knowledge, but also on how gardening can protect our natural resources. Extreme weather events and a changing climate challenge us to use new Extension research and tools to educate gardeners on using resilient gardening practices, creating habitat for wildlife and pollinators, increasing plant biodiversity, conserving natural resources to protect our marine environment, and using citizen science tools to contribute valuable data to help understand what is changing.

Whether you have just completed your internship or have been with the program for many years, Extension Master Gardeners make a difference in our community. Some of our Island County MGs have volunteered nearly as long as the program has been in existence, like Donna and Steve Stansberry, Richard Tamura, Dave Thomas, Anza Muenchow, and Judy Coddington, who trained as a Master Gardener in California in 1975! The next time you see them, tell them that you appreciate the work they have done.

So, let's celebrate the 50th Anniversary and thank you for your contribution to its success!

Happy gardening!
Loren Imes, Program Coordinator

Meet Our Newest Master Gardeners

Lori Fekkes, Camano

Class of 2022



I live on Camano Island with 2-½ acres. Many years ago, I told my husband I would like to take the Master Gardener course, and he said, "Go for it!" However, homeschooling five boys did not leave room for that. Now with an empty nest, the ad for taking the course on Zoom caught my attention.

After completing the online Horticultural class, I took the in-person Master Gardener training. Though I have gardened for years, this training greatly opened my eyes. My mother always had a beautiful garden, but I did not appreciate her work and garden until after she was gone. How I wish I had her here to answer my queries!

When I decided to pursue this program, I naively thought that Master Gardeners really do have all the answers to gardening issues. I now realize that learning and experimenting never, ever ends!

Susan Wilcox, Langley

Class of 2022



My interest in gardening began in my early twenties with a former neighbor. She introduced me to the Sunset Western Garden Book and later she and I toured the former Sunset Gardens in Menlo Park, California, which were designed by famed landscape architect, Thomas Church.

In 2016, I took the Master Gardener course in Sonoma County, California. In 2019 we moved to Whidbey Island to be near family and to return to our Pacific Northwest roots. Last year I decided to retake the Master Gardener course here rather than transfer because I wanted to better understand PNW gardening challenges and get a refresher on the MG course at the same time.

I am currently working with other MGs on refurbishing the planter in front of the WSU Extension office. I look forward to other volunteer opportunities.

Work Party Schedules

Summer is a great time to volunteer and visit with fellow MGs at one of the weekly work parties for gardens supported by Master Gardeners.

Contacts for questions are noted below for each site.

Coupeville Community Garden

Jim Peskuric, Holly Grason

- Saturdays from 10:00 am to noon

Crescent Harbor Elementary School Garden

Tricia Heimer

- Wednesdays from 2:00 to 5:00 pm

MG Education Garden at Greenbank Farm

Carolyn Mercer

- Wednesdays from 9:00 am to noon
- 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month, until September, from 9:00 am to noon

Lord's Garden

Dave Thomas

- Wednesdays 5:00 to 6:30 pm (work and potluck)

Olympic View Elementary School Garden

Tricia Heimer

- Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:00 am



Tricia Heimer and Gayle Taylor with an enthusiastic group of elementary school gardeners

Upcoming Events

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

- July 13** Regional Celebration of 50th Anniversary of Master Gardener Program, Mt. Vernon
- July 22** MG Education Series at Greenbank Farm
- July 27-30** MG booth at Whidbey Island Fair
- August 20** MG Education Series at Greenbank Farm
- August 26** Summer Picnic
- September 10** Greenbank Farm Harvest Faire
- September 14** ICMGF Board meeting
- September 16** Class of 2023 MG training begins
- September 17** MG Education Series at Greenbank Farm
- September 21** ICMGF member meeting
- September 27-30** Washington State MG Foundation Advanced Education Conference, Tacoma
<https://mglearns.mastergardenerfoundation.org>

LOOKING FARTHER AHEAD

- October 14** Orca Recovery Day
- October 26** ICMGF Annual Board meeting;
ICMGF member meeting & annual elections



Food, fun, and friendship
at the April social



ICMGF OFFICERS

President – Jim Peskuric
Vice President – Ilze Zigurs
Secretary – Kim Baxter
Treasurer – Paul Rowe

AREA REPS

South – Christine Dimm
Central – Holly Grason
North – Sally Howard
Camano – Carol Anne Ebert

State Foundation Rep –
Carol Anne Ebert

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 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