

THE REAL DIRT

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MASTER GARDENER
FOUNDATION OF LEWIS COUNTY



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Fall Fruit Tree & Shrub Sale

Fall is a fantastic season to add trees and shrubs to your landscape. Join us for our Fall Fruit Tree and Shrub Sale, October 18th from 9am-3pm at the Borst Garden Greenhouse, where you can browse a curated selection of fruit trees, fruiting shrubs, and ornamentals chosen for their beauty and resilience in Pacific Northwest gardens. Our offerings are tailored to thrive in local conditions. We'll also have a selection of hand-made goods crafted by Master Gardeners as well as Potpourri sourced from our demo gardens.

Experienced Master Gardeners will be on hand to:

- Share expert planting and care tips
- Help you select the right plants for your space and goals
- Answer questions about soil, placement, and long-term maintenance

Find more details on our [website](#).

PLANTING IN FALL

What to plant in Zone 8B

CAT VARNER

October is a pivotal month for Zone 8b gardeners. With mild autumns and relatively short winters, this is the time to establish cool-season vegetables and spring-blooming bulbs before frost settles in.



Vegetables

Focus on hardy, fast-growing crops that thrive in cooler soil. Leafy greens—**spinach**, **kale**, **arugula**, and **Swiss chard**—establish quickly and can be harvested repeatedly. Lettuce varieties such as **romaine** and **butterhead** germinate well in October's temperatures. Root crops like **radishes**, **turnips**, **carrots**, and **beets** can be sown now for winter harvests. **Broccoli**, **cabbage**, and **cauliflower** transplants also perform well when planted this month, maturing through late fall and early winter. **Garlic** is a must: plant individual cloves now for summer harvest.

Flower Bulbs

October is prime time for planting spring-flowering bulbs. **Daffodils**, **tulips**, **hyacinths**, and **crocuses** need the winter chill to bloom vigorously. Plant bulbs two to three times as deep as their height, in well-drained soil, with pointed ends facing up.



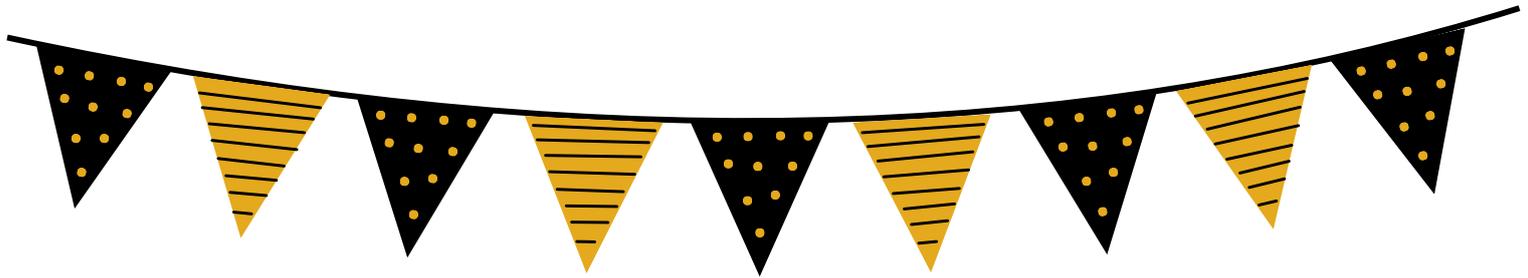
Efficiency Tips

Prepare beds before planting. Remove summer crops, amend with compost, and loosen soil for strong root growth. Mulch bulbs and seedlings to regulate soil temperature and reduce weeds. Water consistently, but avoid over-saturation as fall rains increase. By planting strategically this October, we can set ourselves up for steady winter harvests and a vibrant spring display. A little effort now ensures both edible and ornamental rewards in the seasons ahead!

RECENT GRAD PROFILE

Updates from the Recently Certified

LEAH HUGHES



We're proud to celebrate **Susan Lykken**, who recently completed the Master Gardener training program and earned her official certification. Susan joined the program last year with a curiosity about planting in our unique Washington climate.

Congratulations again, Susan! We're grateful for your time and insight in this month's interview and excited to see where your Master Gardener journey leads next.



Why did you decide to pursue becoming a master gardener?

I always had a love of gardening. My mother was a big-time gardener. Her garden was even featured in a local magazine. I'm recently retired and the fit was perfect to partner love of gardening with time spent with my husband also doing the program.

What was your favorite class topic in the program and why?

Flowers have always been my passion. My raised beds are the best ever this year.

Did you learn anything that surprised you?

The lessons I learned that stuck with me have to do with flowers. I learned the benefits of good air circulation and mulching.

What advice do you have for future trainees?

Master Gardner people rock.

THYME TO DISCOVER HEIRLOOMS

Devil's Club (*Oplopanax horridus*)

JEANNETTE LAWSON

This sprawling deciduous shrub with thick, spiny, crooked stems, and very large leaves grows in moist woods and riparian areas from Alaska to Oregon.



This plant can grow between 3' to 10' tall. Elongated racemes or panicles produce shiny, inedible, flattened, bright red berries on showy clusters. This plant is related to ginseng. It can be used as an effective buffer to wetland habitats and has a cluster-forming habit. The berries are eaten by bears but will cause illness to humans if not used correctly.

Many Pacific Northwest tribes including the Cowlitz, have made a tonic of bark and stems to treat rheumatism, arthritis, and influenza, used as a diuretic, tonic, eyewash for cataracts, and as a laxative.

In some Coastal First Nations this plant was considered scared and used for spiritual ceremony. It was believed to ward off evil spirits and bring good charms if hung over a doorway. It was also used for ceremonial paint by

mixing charcoal from burnt stalks and mixing it with grease, then applied to the skin. Shamans, warriors and hunters used this plant for good luck and strength.

Other uses for Devils Club included mashing the berries and applying it to the hair to combat lice and dandruff. The hard stalks could be carved into fishing lures. Pulverized stems were dried and pounded into a powder to be used as a deodorant. Charcoal from burnt plants could be used as a powder for tattooing.

Today, this plant is being examined for certain chemicals it contains that show promise in preventing certain cancer cells from growing. It may also hold properties that fight bacteria, fungi and viruses.



NOTE: Master Gardeners do not recommend consuming any part of wild plants that have not been accurately identified as being safe for human consumption. Some plants may be toxic or deadly to humans.

THROUGH A GARDEN GATE

Elisabeth C. Miller Memorial Lecture

EL EVERETT BECHTOLD

This year marked the 30th anniversary of the Elisabeth C. Miller Memorial Lecture and the first “in person” lecture since the covid pandemic – exciting times! It was held in the Meany Hall for Performing Arts at the University of Washington and featured none other than Fergus Garrett of Great Dixter fame.



If this name only vaguely rings a bell, then possibly Christopher Lloyd: gardener and author of note rings louder. Under Christo, for nearly his whole life, and now Fergus, Great Dixter became a magnificent garden that continues to be known for its innovative designs, succession planting (a team of 4 propagation gardeners produce approx. 80,000 plants a year for the garden), and, most importantly, bold colour schemes.

Two of the many garden rooms of the Dixter garden with the 15th century house (restored by Christo’s father) as a backdrop.

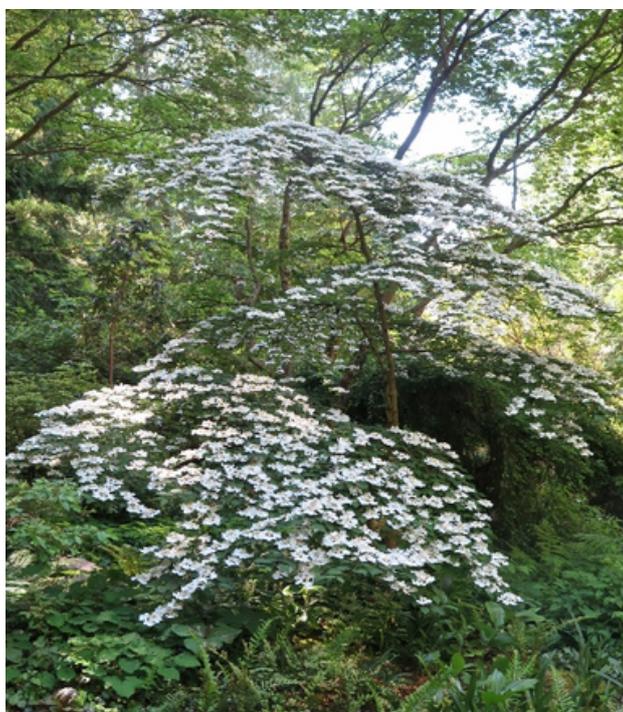


In the summer of 2022 my mother and I visited the Miller garden in North Seattle and although I had some idea of its relevance in the horticultural world of the PNW little did I realize (bar having to apply for tickets for a June 2022 visit in September of 2021) just how important it and its founder were to horticulture in our part of the world.

Over her lifetime Mrs. Miller cultivated many treasures, several for the first time in America, and

THROUGH A GARDEN GATE

amassed a horticultural collection that rivaled many much larger botanical gardens. At her death the garden became a botanical garden and serves as a resource for the horticultural community. Not only is it a magnificent garden to visit but it is the home of many educational endeavors the foremost being “Great Plant Picks”.



Elisabeth Miller was dedicated to the education of gardeners and relished the opportunity to share her insights with others and to bring knowledgeable horticulturalists to the Pacific Northwest. As a lasting gift to the horticultural community the Miller foundations sponsor a free annual memorial lecture to remember her and her legacy.

Fergus’s talk was entitled “The Education of a gardener – Curiosity, Creativity and Inspiration of a Renowned Plantsman”. Fergus took us through his life and the people that influenced him: his grandmother and mother growing up in Turkey, Beth Chatto (of “right plant, right place” philosophy), a local farmer to Great Dixter who became obsessed with dahlias and, of course, Christopher Lloyd.



Fergus joined Christopher at Great Dixter in 1992 and has been a visionary in his own right with an effusive style of big, bold sweeps of exuberance and colour. His talk was uplifting – the joy, enthusiasm and wild energy of his gardening style along with his exacting attention to detail shone through. Although what happens at Great Dixter is on a scale very few gardens accomplish we can all garden with curiosity and creativity and revel in the richness of life.

RECIPE CORNER

What's Cooking in Cat's Kitchen

CAT VARNER

These are recipes for the snacks I brought to the September meeting, if you would like to try them out! The batch of hummus I brought had marinated peppers and some red pepper flakes added in.

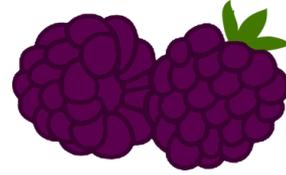
Cat's Best Hummus

15 oz. can or 1 ½ c. mushy chickpeas
½ c. tahini
¼ c. lemon juice
10 cloves roasted garlic (or 5 raw cloves)
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. cumin
1 Tbs. oil
½ c. ice water

1. Blend chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and cumin in a food processor for five minutes.
2. Stream in oil and ice water, blend at least five more minutes.
3. Drizzle with olive oil and cumin for serving.

Some additional flavorings to experiment adding:

- Roasted red peppers
- Sundried tomatoes
- Pickled or marinated peppers
- Sumac
- Za'atar



Blackberry Cardamom Muffins

400° for 20-25 min

2 c. flour
⅓ c. sugar
1 TBs. baking powder
½-1 tsp. cardamom
½ tsp. salt
1 c. milk
¼ c. melted butter (or coconut oil)
½ tsp. vanilla
1 egg
1 c. blackberries
½ c. chopped pecans

1. Preheat oven to 400°
2. Sift dry ingredients together. Mix blackberries and most of the chopped pecans into the dry ingredients to coat them.
3. Beat egg, milk, vanilla, and melted butter, being careful that butter is cooled enough to not scramble the egg.
4. Mix wet ingredients into dry, being careful to mix only until combined (around 25 strokes).
5. Spoon into muffin tin, sprinkle remaining chopped pecans on top, and bake at 400° for 20-25 minutes until a knife comes out clean.

2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

LEWIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

OCTOBER

Date & Time	Class	City	Location
Oct 4 10AM	 Growing and Planting Garlic	Centralia	Borst Demo Garden
October 11 11AM	Seed Saving	Salkum	Salkum Timberland Library
October 18 9AM	Fall Tree Sale	Centralia	Borst Greenhouse
October 18 10AM	Seed Saving	Centralia	Borst Demo Garden

Check out the [Lewis County Master Gardener website](#) for more information about our events!



Curious about what it takes to become a Master Gardener? Check out the new training program at <https://greenschool.extension.wsu.edu>



Check out our [Facebook Page](#) and [Facebook Group](#) for a closer look at what we're up to!