



master gardener connection

A JOINT MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM WSU EXTENSION KING COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS AND THE MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF KING COUNTY

May 2026

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It's Plant Sale Season!

Visit the events below to stock up while supporting the WSU Extension King County Master Gardener Program & the Master Gardener Foundation of King County.



**Bellevue Demonstration
Garden Spring Plant Sale**



**Tilth Alliance Spring
Plant Sale**

Celebrate the arrival of spring at the Bellevue Demonstration Garden Annual Spring Plant Sale! You can discover the perfect plant for your garden or a thoughtful gift. This year's sale will take place on **Saturday, May 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at 15500 SE 16th St in Bellevue.

[Learn More](#)

Don't miss the WSU Extension King County Master Gardener booth at the Tilth Alliance Plant Sale, where every plant is grown and sourced by Extension Master Gardeners! The sale will take place **May 9 and 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** at Meridian Playground, located at 4920 Meridian Ave N.

[Learn More](#)

GiveBIG on May 5 to Support Master Gardeners!

By Joan Baldwin, Extension Master Gardener and Foundation Board President

The Master Gardener Foundation of King County raises funds to support the WSU Extension King County Master Gardener Program. Those funds help the Program share research-based horticultural education, training, and resources with the community through our 700+ volunteers.



You can support this work by donating to the Foundation during the GiveBIG event, going on now! Our goal for GiveBIG 2026 fundraising is \$20,000. Our Board of Directors has established a matching fund for the first \$5000 of donations received during GiveBIG in 2026, so you can double your impact.

[Donate Now!](#)

[Read More](#)

A Fresh Look for Extension Master Gardener Clinics Across King County

By Extension Master Gardener Wesa Anderson

If you visit a WSU Extension King County Master Gardener clinic this season, you may notice something new: a refreshed, more cohesive look designed to better serve our community.



Across King County, Extension Master Gardener volunteers are introducing updated clinic infrastructure, including new signage, table runners, and canopy setups. While the look may be new, the goal remains the same: providing trusted, research-based gardening advice in welcoming, accessible spaces.

[Learn More About the Refresh](#)



Free Heavy Metal Soil Testing Events

King Conservation District is hosting SoilSHOP events in the coming weeks focused on lead and arsenic testing in areas most affected by the historic **Tacoma Smelter**

Plume. To find out if you live in an area affected by the plume, search for your address on **Dirt Alert**.

To test your soil for lead and arsenic contaminants, bring a cup of your soil to a SoilSHOP event this summer! King Conservation District will give you immediate results of lead and arsenic levels and provide expert advice on how to manage contaminated soil.

Save the date for these upcoming events:

- Federal Way SoilSHOP @ **Federal Way Farmer's Market**
Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- **Des Moines SoilSHOP** @ Midway Covenant Community Church
Saturday, June 20 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Vashon SoilSHOP @ **Vashon Strawberry Festival**
Saturday, July 18 from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sunday, July 19 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Learn **how to take a sample of your soil** and **precautions you can take** to stay safe in the garden.



BELLEVUE
BOTANICAL
GARDEN
SOCIETY

Bellevue Botanical Garden Society Joint Events are Back!

By Extension Master Gardener
Gary Scheider

We're excited to share that again in 2026, the WSU Extension King County Master Gardener Program will present several classes in collaboration with the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society.

These timely and science-based presentations will provide excellent information for the home gardener. They will also be eligible for continuing education credit for Extension Master Gardeners.

[Learn More About the Events](#)

Quick Links

[Become a Master Gardener](#)

[Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State](#)

[GivePulse Login Page](#)

Upcoming Events

[PNW Garden Savvy](#)

[Growing Groceries](#)

[Education Events for Home Gardeners](#)

**Support the Master
Gardener Foundation of
King County**

[Donate Now](#)



Q&A: Get to Know your WSU King County Extension Master Gardeners

By Extension Master Gardener Emeritus Nancy Gardner

In this issue of the WSU Extension King County Master Gardener Q&A, we catch up with Michele Ohge, one of our newest interns. At age 69, Michele is proud to finally be part of the Extension Master Gardener program. She says she has wanted to be an Extension Master Gardener for about 25 years and finally had “all my plants in a row” to be able to take the course.

[Read More About Michele](#)

Introducing Vermicomposting to the Elementary Classroom: Dirty, Interesting, Icky, and Fun!

On a rainy Kenmore Friday in March, WSU Extension King County Master Gardeners Betsy Kurcinka, Judy Ralston, and Sharon O’Grady visited “Teacher Deb” Fullerton’s fifth grade classroom at Moorlands Elementary in the Northshore School District. The mission? To set up a functioning worm bin that the students will maintain.



It was a busy hour, and the students were very attentive, interested, and actively learning about worms and vermicomposting.

[Read More About the Vermicomposting Class](#)

New Garden Companions for 2026

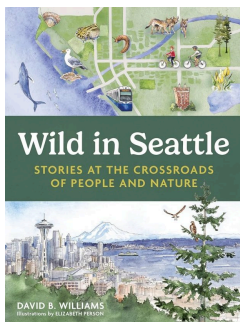
By Extension Master Gardener Bruce Bennett

Spring is here! As a home gardener, one of the satisfying rituals of spring is finding new garden treasures; those plants that are making their debut in the retail marketplaces.



My candidates for your horticultural consideration include grasses, perennials, shrubs, and trees (sorry folks, I have no interest in annuals). While I do dislike writing a column which is more list than anything else, this is my very subjective list of 2026 new plant winners and runners-up.

[Check Out Bruce's Plant Recommendations](#)



Elisabeth C. Miller Library Selection: Wild in Seattle

Wild in Seattle is a collection of the Street Smart Naturalist newsletters Williams writes weekly, each two or three pages long.

Its three sections – “Geology,” “Fauna,” and “Flora and Habitat” – lay out various discoveries Williams has made patrolling the city on foot. He emphasizes that one need not be a professional scientist to enjoy these encounters.

[Read the Book Review](#)

Helpful Links

Browse our gardening tip sheets.

[Garden Tip Sheets](#)

Some tip sheets are available in six languages.

[Translated Tip Sheets](#)

Find our clinic and garden locations

[Program Map](#)

Gardening Education

Classes presented by Extension Master Gardeners and partners of the Master Gardener Foundation of King County

Find more gardening classes!

Visit our [Education](#) page to find more horticulture and home gardening classes available to the public from our Growing Groceries and PNW Garden Savvy series.

Need Master Gardener CE?

Extension Master Gardeners can visit our [Volunteer Portal](#) page for a full list of approved content eligible for credit toward annual continuing education requirements.

PNW Garden Savvy: The Beauty of Weeds

Presented by Mark Turner, garden author and photographer

May 2 at 9:30 a.m. | Virtual

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Growing Groceries: A Gardener's Guide to Integrated Pest Management

Presented by EMG Adam Romero

May 6 at 7 p.m. | Virtual

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Gardening with Fewer Chemicals

Presented by EMG Adam Romero

May 7 at 7 p.m. | Virtual

[Learn more and register here.](#)

PNW Garden Savvy: Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Garden

Presented by EMG Molly van der Burch

May 16 at 9:30 a.m. | Virtual

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Protecting Our Pollinators

Presented by EMG Susan Melgaard

May 16 at 1 p.m. | In Person

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Drip Irrigation for the Home Gardener

Presented by Chris Offer, Tilth Alliance

May 16 at 1 p.m. | In Person

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Propagation Tips (Free!)

Presented by EMG Emeritus Fred Wemer

May 20 at 12:30 - 2 p.m. | In Person at Soos Creek Botanical Garden

Basics of Successful Vegetable Growing (Free!)

Presented by EMG Jim Olson

May 23 at 10 a.m. | In Person

[Learn more and register here.](#)

South Sound: Little Marsh Native Plant Walk

Presented by Lizzy Matteri, Washington Native Plant Society

May 28 at 6 p.m. | In Person

[Learn more and register here.](#)

PNW Garden Savvy: Soil Fertility and Fertilizers for King County

Presented by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Professor Emeritus Gary Hergert

May 30 at 9:30 a.m. | Virtual

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Garden Tool Sharpening (Free!)

Presented by Master Consulting Rosarian John Harmeling

May 30 at 10 a.m. | In Person

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Contributing to Master Gardener Connection

Do you have content you'd like to submit for this newsletter? For more information about the process, or to submit items for consideration, contact Master Gardener Connection Editor Kayah Swanson at kayah.swanson@mgfkc.org.

The deadline to submit is the 15th of each month.

Was this newsletter forwarded to you?
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Land Use Acknowledgement for the King County Master Gardener Program

We acknowledge that we are gathered on the sacred lands occupied by the Coast Salish Peoples since time immemorial. We give thanks to the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, and Tulalip Tribes for sharing their ancestral lands and watersheds with us, and we embrace our responsibility to steward them for future generations. As WSU volunteers, we also recognize that the Morrill Act of 1862 established land-grant institutions by providing each state with “public” and federal lands, which are traced back to the dispossession of Indigenous lands.



Master Gardener Connection is a joint publication from the Master Gardener Foundation of King County, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and the WSU Extension King County Master Gardener Program to provide research-based education about horticulture and home gardening to the residents of King County. WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office.

Follow us on social media!



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