



1

Notices

Master Gardener Foundation of King County presentations are based on Washington State University home gardening publications and other science and research-based materials.

To enliven the discussion, speakers may share their own experiences, including successes and failures.



2

Welcome and Icebreaker Question

- Welcome -- we are glad you are here!
- All photos by Elise Evans unless otherwise noted

A bit about You:

- Have you heard of or visited Beacon Food Forest?
- What inspired you to join this webinar?



www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods | 206.684.0464

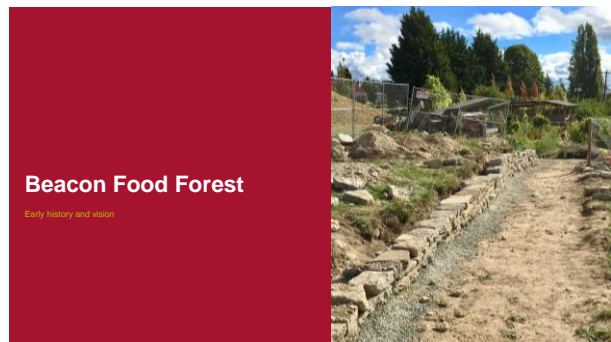
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Tonight's Agenda

- Brief history of Beacon Food Forest (BFF)
- Current organization of BFF
- Permaculture: plant guilds
- Plant highlights, including culturally relevant plants for neighbors
- The importance of community in gardening (Community Care)



4



5

**Beacon Food Forest:
Seattle's Communal, Edible Landscape**

- In 2009, four friends looked at a bare sunny hillside in North Beacon Hill & dreamed of a source of delicious, organic, free food.
- Fifteen years later, the Beacon Food Forest (BFF) has grown into a 4-acre community oasis!
- Diverse in many ways



6

Beacon Food Forest Vision

- A world where all communities participate in creating local food ecosystems.



Photo by Nat Lee



Photo by Julie Hsack



7

Beacon Food Forest Mission

The BFF mission is framed around the permaculture ethics of "care for the earth, care for the people, fair share for all."



8

First Work Party – September 2012



9

Overview of BFF Site

Beacon Food Forest (BFF)
 Seattle, WA, USA
 First work party on site: 2012

4+ acres
 public permaculture orchard
 Future 7 acres total

Public land from City of Seattle:

- Seattle Public Utilities land
- BFF site is administered by Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
- Site is powered by volunteers
- Food Forest Collective is the 501c3 nonprofit name



10

BFF Organization



- Committees:**
- Site Development
 - Community Development
 - Education
 - Plants & Pruning
 - BIPOC Garden
 - Pollinators
 - Compost
 - Food Forest Collective Board

- Activities include:**
- Water system installation
 - Retaining wall construction
 - Sheet mulching
 - Vegetable gardening
 - Pruning and weeding
 - Bee keeping
 - Compost making
 - Social media & web design
 - Photography & video
 - Translations
 - Event management
 - Community Outreach
 - Hosting classes
 - Curriculum development
 - Leading tours & work parties



Located at:
 Jefferson Park
 15th Ave S & S Dakota St
 Seattle, WA 98108

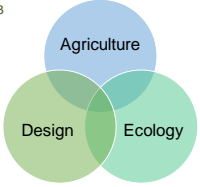
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12

What is Permaculture?

- Design system pioneered by Bill Mollison (AUS), 1973
- Follow the patterns of nature to fulfill human needs
- Based on indigenous land management practices that have existed and thrived for millennia
- Permaculture Design Certificate (PDC)
 - Internationally recognized certification program



13

Permaculture Principles

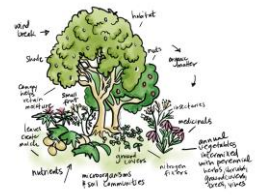


14

What Does Permaculture Look Like?

Permaculture Guild – a community of plants that help each other

Systems thinking!



15

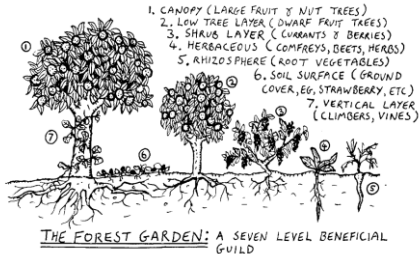
Forest Ecosystems

- In a food forest, each fruit or nut tree is at the center of a plant guild.
- A guild is a beneficial grouping of plants that support one another in all their functions.



16

Forest Ecosystems



17

Plant Guilds at BFF

- Learning as we go
- We adapt with the space
- To benefit other plants, people, animals
- Here we see: thimbleberry, heart nut, calendula human paths



18

Plant Guild Example

- Plum trees
- Full sun
- Created shade
- Understory includes: Himalayan honeysuckle, herbs, greens, borage



19

Plant Guild Example

- Heart nut tree as center of Nut Guild
- Has become the tallest tree in the food forest
- Full sun originally
- Created shade
- Created habitat for creatures
- Understory (not all pictured) includes: rhubarb, lupine, herbs, Jerusalem sage, honey berry



20

Big Tree Guild

- Planted April 2021 (as seen here)
- Hazelnut and walnut
- These trees will:
 - Grow to fill the space
 - Enjoy the sun
 - Act as a windbreak
 - Provide nutrient rich harvest



21

Apple Guild

- A couple volunteers primarily lead the stewardship of this space
- Netting apple trees
- Learning from experience
- For example:
Removing invasive weeds



22

Plants of a PNW Food Forest



23

Permaculture at the Community Food Forest



- Butternut
- Hazelnut
- Almond
- Pine nut
- Apple
- Pear
- Quince
- Medlar
- Plum
- Peach
- Cornelian cherry
- Fig
- Kivi
- Grapes
- Mulberry
- Blackberry
- Raspberry
- Blueberry
- Honeyberry
- Elderberry
- Strawberry
- Goji
- Currant
- Aronia
- Artichoke
- Sunchoke
- Asparagus
- Hops
- Rose
- Annual vegetables...



24

Aronia Berry - (*Aronia melanocarpa*)

- Birds love them too!
- High in antioxidants
- Nutrient dense, high in fiber
- Mouth-drying effect... great for juice & jelly!



25

Apache Thornless Blackberry - (*Rubus apache*)

- They are thriving at BFF!
- Can grow up and over a trellis
- No thorns – large sweet berries!
- Grows 4 to 10 feet tall
- Likes full sun; well-drained soil



26

Borage – (*Borago officinalis*)

- Blue flowers are edible & taste lightly of cucumber
- Flowers stay open for months
- Self pollinates – and attracts pollinators
- good companion plant for tomatoes, squash, strawberries



27

Burdock – (genus *Arctium*)

- A biennial plant
- The burrs inspired hook & loop fasteners (Velcro)
- Burdock root is commonly eaten in east Asian cuisine
- Used in Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Harvest in fall of the first year or early spring of second year
- Companion plants should have shallow roots



Photo by Gila Parsons

28

Cardoon – (*Cynara cardunculu*)

- We eat the tender core of the stalks
- A perennial vegetable
- Harvest in winter or spring
- Self pollinating
- Common in Mediterranean



29

Cleavers

Plant Profile
 Cleavers/ Sticky-weed/ Goose grass, *Galium aparine*

- Cleaver is a fun plant to find in the garden for its sticky nature.
- All parts of cleaver are edible. You can eat it raw, in soups, salads, tea and can even use it to make pesto! Traditionally taken as a spring tonic to cleanse toxins from the body after winter.
- The sticky seeds can be dried and roasted to make a natural coffee.
- The roots can be used to make a very strong red dye! What a gift!

Learn more about cleavers

12 min, 50 sec YouTube video

Share your cleaver creations with the community on Slack or IG!

blog post

All plant profiles in this presentation are by Jamie McNeil, core volunteer at BFF

30

Crandall Black Currant –
(Ribes odoratum)

- Bushes can grow 4-5' tall
- Plant smells of clove
- Sweetest black currant
- High in potassium and antioxidants, anti-inflammatory
- Sawfly larvae is a pest



31

Elderberry – (*Sambucus spp.*)

- White spring flowers (edible!)
- Berries in late summer
- Berries toxic raw; must be cooked
- High in vitamin C, fiber, antioxidants
- Grows 10-20' tall



32

Fig – (*Ficus carica*)

- From Moraceae family – related to mulberry
- Fruit is ripe late season, sweet
- Fruit that does not ripen can be used – such as pickling
- Leaves used in cooking



Photo by Gao D. Parsons

33

Goumi Berry –
(Elaeagnus multiflora)

- Edible, tart, red berries in summer
- Originally from East Asia, now grown worldwide
- Drought tolerant
- Fixes nitrogen



34

Grapes

- Can grow on a trellis, favors north-south rows
- At Beacon Food Forest, grapes grow on trellises with a goal of accessibility
- Well drained soil, 6 hours sun
- Monitor for pests
- Ripe late summer



35

Himalayan Honeysuckle –
(Leycestria Formosa)

- Also called chocolate berry
- Dangling clusters of soft, small, round, pink berries that turn dark purple when ripe
- Generally pest & disease free
- Adaptable & drought tolerant
- Delicious berries



36

Honey Berry – (*Lonicera caerulea*)

- First berry to ripen in spring!
- Smooth, blue berries are found under leaves
- A good understory bush, likes cooler temps
- Antioxidant, vitamin C, fiber



37

Jerusalem Sage – (*Phlomis fruticosa*)

- Hardy to grow in our zone in Seattle
- Can be subbed for culinary sage (though different genus)
- Pollinators love it!
- Originally from Mediterranean coast



38

Hardy Kiwi – (*Actinidia arguta*)

- Grows well on a trellis, fence, other structure
- Cold tolerant
- Takes about 3 years after planting to produce fruit
- Plant both male & female plants (need at least one male for every four female plants)
- Feed on nitrogen
- Propagation works well



39

Medlar – (*Mespilus germanica*)

- Native to Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Northern Iran – popular across Europe
- Tree can grow to 25' tall
- Harvest fruit in late November
- Edible when bletted – after the first frost
- Like apple butter?



40

Miner's Lettuce – (*Claytonia perfoliata*)

- A good ground cover in shade
- Self seeding
- One of the first greens of spring
- High in vitamin C, iron, vitamin A
- Whole plant is edible – best part is the top leaf, seen here



41

Mint Family

Plant Profile
Mint family, *Lamiaceae*

- The mint family has over 7,000 species! These are just a few you'll find at Beacon Food Forest.
- Characterized by square stems
- Excellent in teas with several traditional medicinal uses tracing back to Egyptian tombs in 1000 B.C.
- Some medicinal uses include sleep aid, gastrointestinal support, headaches and muscle pain

42

Mulberry – (Morus)

- Wind pollinated
- Sweet, edible fruit ripe in mid-summer
- Loves sun
- Sweet lavender mulberry pictured on left



43

Purple Dead Nettle

Plant Profile
Purple Dead Nettle, *Lamium Purpureum*

Completely edible and packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, purple dead nettle is a bountiful plant easily found around Seattle in the Spring. Great in tea, soups, salads, quiches, or blended into smoothies.

One of the first blooms of Spring, the flowers are an important food source for bees!

Learn more about purple dead nettle

9 min, 47 sec YouTube video

blog post about foraging

Share your purple dead nettle creations with the community on Stack or IG

44

Queen Anne's Lace

Plant Profile
Queen Anne's Lace/ Wild Carrot, *Daucus Carota*

Has poisonous look-alikes, so it's vitally important that you properly identify Queen Anne's lace if you're foraging for any part of the plant. Named for Queen Anne of England, legend has it that when pricked with a needle, a single drop of blood fell from her finger onto the lace, leaving the dark purple forest found in the flower's center. Edible when young. The young roots, leaves, and flower clusters are edible and can be used in salads, soups, stews, or even "French-fried". The roots, best to harvest in Spring, are similar to carrots and can be used in soups, stews, and tea during the plant's first year.

Learn more about Queen Anne's Lace

3 min, 59 sec YouTube video

blog post

Share your Queen Anne's Lace creations with the community on Stack or IG

45

Rosemary – (*Salvia Rosmarinus*)

- Pollinators love the purple flowers
- Available year round
- Good for teas, cooking



46

Native Guild Wetland

Native plant guild at BFF:
 The wetland and prairie at the southeast border of the food forest site have been restored and now grow native food plants such as wapato, camas and native berries, as well as grasses traditionally used for basket weaving.



47

Camas – (*Camassia quamash*)

- Important food source for PNW Native Americans
- Grow in prairies
- Take care not to confuse with toxic white-flowered meadow death-camas
- Perennial
- 3-5 years to flower



48

Camas

- Before harvest at BFF, we sprinkled a bit of sage as an offering in thanks
- We harvested in October 2024 – camas planted 8 years prior
- Must cook least 48 hours



49

Ozette Potato - (Solanum tuberosum)

- First variety of potato to arrive in PNW – 1790s
- Makah Tribe initially embraced it, then kept cultivation alive



50

Salal – (Gaultheria shallon)

- Common understory plant in the PNW
- Edible dark blue berries
Mid-late summer
(young leaves also edible)
- I recommend mixing with blackberries in a pie!
- Important food to Native Americans



51

Serviceberry –
(Amelanchier alnifolia)

- Important food to Native Americans
- Can grow to 12' tall
- White flowers in spring, edible berries in summer



52

Wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*)

- A traditional Native American food
- Aquatic
- Harvest in fall
- Tubers are 8" deep or so
- Can be used in cooking like potatoes



53

Wapato

- Muddy to harvest!
- After harvest & cleaning, we grated wapato and fried in patties



54

Seed Saving

- BFF involves community in seed saving
- Skill sharing
- A social activity
- Opportunities to see garden in all seasons
- And take seeds home



55



56

A Community Food Forest

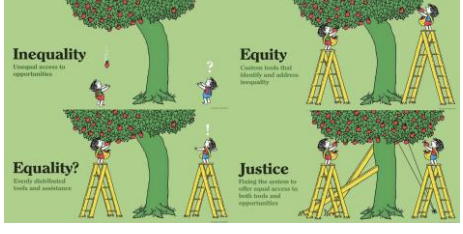


- Funded by grants and donations
- Run by volunteers, plus one-three staff members
- 100+ volunteers in one day! (pre-COVID, & again)



57

Social Permaculture



58

BIPOC Garden

- An affinity space, and also open to all
- Focus on culturally relevant foods
- Trees planted in November 2019
- Some of the space includes a focus on annual vegetables



59

Community



Site Development plant team at a morning meeting to plan where new plants will go



60

Community



61

Seven horizontal lines for writing.



62

Seven horizontal lines for writing.



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63

Seven horizontal lines for writing.



Thank You!

And now for some closing announcements before questions...

64

Resources

- Beacon Food Forest website: [Beacon Food Forest](#)
- BFF open harvest policy: [Harvest — Beacon Food Forest](#)
- P-Patch Program website: [P-Patch Gardening - Neighborhoods | seattle.gov](#)
- P-Patch Program video profile: <https://youtu.be/DuS4b-2zMb4?si=N9zVuF3MxgZyPSPF> (published September 2020)
- Get Involved at BFF: <https://www.beaconfoodforest.org/getinvolved>
- The Community Food Forest Handbook: [Handbook - Community Food Forests](#)
- Edible Forest Gardening: [About Forest Gardening | Mysite](#)

65



Upcoming Presentations



Growing Groceries
2025 Warm Season Series
Wednesdays 7:00pm-8:30pm



Date	Class
Wed, April 16	Growing the 'Other' Edible Nightshades: Peppers, Tomatillos, Eggplant
Wed, April 30	Roots and Rare Fruits
Wed, May 14	Grow Cukes, Squash and Melons- Big and Small
Wed, May 28th	The Nutritional Powerhouse: Corn and Beans (legumes)
Wed, June 11	Summer Starts for Fall and Early Spring Harvests
Wed, June 25	Caring for Community: Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens

PNW Garden Savvy
2025 Series 2
Saturdays 9:30am-10:30am



Date	Class
Sat, April 12	Gardening with Children
Sat, April 26	Plant It Where the Sun Don't Shine
Sat, May 3	Protecting Our Unsung Heroes, Our Pollinators
Sat, May 17	Understanding King County Soils for Better Gardening
Sat, May 31	Rain Gardens
Sat, June 7	Deer Resistant Gardening

More info: <https://kingcounty.mastergardenerfoundation.org/education>



66

 **Master Gardener Resources** 

Ask a Master Gardener

Visit: <https://extension.wsu.edu/king/ask-a-master-gardener>

Become a Master Gardener

For information on King County Master Gardener training (including signing up for the email notification list), visit: <https://extension.wsu.edu/king/gardening/become-a-master-gardener>

Applications for the 2026 class will open in September 2025

67

Thank you for the support!



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King County Master Gardener Program
<https://extension.wsu.edu/king/gardening>

- Demonstration Gardens
- Plant Clinics
- Education Outreach
- Science-based Publications



Master Gardener Foundation of King County
<http://www.mgffc.org>

- Fundraising for these programs

More information about growing groceries:
<https://kingcounty.mastergardenerfoundation.org/education/gg/>

68

Questions?



69