



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- From the President
- From the Program Coordinator
- Plant Detectives Pop Quiz
- From the Education Garden
- Master Gardeners Around Island County
- Meet Our Newest Master Gardeners
- The Intern Experience
- Upcoming Events

MASTER GARDENER *Gazette*

As Master Gardeners, we have been busy volunteering for so many different activities. From the Whidbey Gardening Workshop to the Plant Sales to Earth Day, we have done a lot! There are many projects and classes where we can gain and share knowledge. We have so many plant clinics all over Island County. The Advanced Education Conference, the Education Series, and our member meeting CE talks will surely give us more ideas for our gardens as well as knowledge to share with others. Remember to share with the public about the new Green School and the Master Gardener Program!

A variety of Master Gardener projects need your help. Join your fellow volunteers at the Education Garden at Greenbank Farm, the Coupeville Community Garden, plant clinics on Whidbey and Camano, school and food gardens, the Extension Office, or the Whidbey Island Fair. This issue of the *Gazette* is filled with ideas and opportunities for Master Gardeners. And if you want to hone your diagnosing skills, check out the Plant Detectives quiz!



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
newsletter@icmgf.org



Kudos and thanks to the volunteers at the Whidbey and Camano Plant Sales for the successful events!



From the President

My dearest fellow ICMGs, it is time to take a deep bow and then give yourself a big pat on the back. Our two fundraisers are complete, and the results were outstanding in so many ways. You all deserve a standing ovation.



The Whidbey Gardening Workshop and our Plant Sale require extensive planning and weeks of hard work. Neither event would be possible without the talented team of Master Gardener volunteers that make them happen. We are so lucky to have a group willing to share their diverse experience and knowledge.

What makes our events even more successful, however, is the way our volunteers come together as a team, chip in where needed, and mentor others so they can learn new skills. Teamwork is really the cornerstone of our success and the secret sauce of Island County MGs.

To continue to host successful fundraisers, we need these strong teams in place months before each event. Your special talents are needed! Please be sure to check with the 2026 WGW and Plant Sale chairs, Barb Faville and Raissa DeArmond, to see how you can help. Both chairs will be stepping down after next year and would be happy to mentor replacements during their final year or help you get involved with other tasks for the events.

I thoroughly enjoy volunteering at WGW and the Plant Sale and have chaired or co-chaired both. Working alongside my fellow MGs, I have learned so much about their interests, passions and unique knowledge. Their work for our community is truly a labor of love. What I hope is that all of you can follow what you are interested in and passionate about in your volunteer work.

To help fulfill this goal, the Board is planning to survey the membership in the fall to get feedback on satisfaction with our volunteer opportunities and overall program and to determine if members feel a strategic planning session and goal setting would be beneficial to the program. Please plan to complete this survey. We want to hear from everyone!

Cathy Lofton-Day, ICMGF President

And The Winner Is...

The Whidbey Gardening Workshop was awarded **First Place** in the **2025 David Gibby International Master Gardener Search for Excellence Awards!**

This award recognizes the outstanding work by a group of Master Gardeners in one of six categories. The Workshop was selected as the First Place Winner in the Community Service category.

Given by the Extension Master Gardener program, the award is named in honor of Dr. David Gibby, the founder of the Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program. Dr. Gibby launched the program in 1973 while working as a horticulture agent with Washington State University Extension.

Congratulations to all who have made the Whidbey Gardening Workshop a shining example of the work that Master Gardeners do across the county to help educate gardeners and conserve and protect our natural resources. Kudos to Cathy Lofton-Day for suggesting that we apply for the award and to the team who worked on the application!

All winning projects will be showcased at the [International Master Gardener Conference](#) held online in late August and hosted by the Texas Master Gardener Program.

From the Program Coordinator

The Washington State Master Gardener Program has begun an exciting new initiative to better understand and help showcase the **positive change** we make in our communities. As Master Gardeners, we know the value of our work – whether it's teaching sustainable gardening practices, sharing the importance of protecting pollinators, or helping neighbors grow their own produce. Now, we're taking the next step and documenting that value in a meaningful and measurable way.



This statewide evaluation effort is centered on three key areas of change:

1. **Change in Knowledge** – What did participants learn?
2. **Change in Behavior** – What did they do differently as a result?
3. **Change in Condition** – What improved in their lives or communities?

Here's an example: imagine you're giving a presentation on growing tomatoes. A participant learns a new technique for pruning (change in knowledge). They go home and start using that technique in their garden (change in behavior). By the end of the season, they have such a bountiful harvest that they're sharing tomatoes with neighbors and donating extras to the local food bank (change in condition). That's the kind of story we want to tell – with data to back it up.

When we can show how our work leads to real, positive change, we can:

- **Demonstrate our value** to community members, funders, and decision-makers.
- **Secure funding and support** for future projects.
- **Empower volunteers** with the tools to advocate for the program.
- **Strengthen our impact** by identifying what works and where we can grow.

A good example of how this information is being used can be found in the recent statewide [Master Gardener Impact Report](#). Beyond reports, the data is a tool for every Master Gardener to use when speaking to the public, giving presentations, or engaging with local leaders. It helps us move from anecdotal evidence to compelling, data-driven narratives.

A few counties have already begun collecting this information, and the first test of the evaluation process

was focused on one of our core program priorities, Local Food. Participants at educational events were surveyed before and after gardening presentations to assess changes in their knowledge. Contact information was collected voluntarily. Over time, additional surveys will be sent to assess behavior and condition changes. These responses will help us understand how we can continue to improve our outreach.

As a WSU Extension Master Gardener, your role in this process is vital, and I am here to help you! First, please look at the [Program Priorities](#) section of the Master Gardener Volunteer Resources website. In addition to PowerPoint templates – and even prepared presentations in some cases – each of the nine priorities includes survey questions that you can use to refine your presentations to gather the information we want to measure. There are also QR codes to insert at the end of your presentation that will direct participants to the surveys. Then, contact me to discuss your presentation and I will help with additional questions or needs.

Thank you for your help with this initiative. Together, we can build a powerful picture of how the Master Gardener Program is making a difference in Island County.

Loren Imes, Program Coordinator

Learning Opportunities

If you are interested in local history, native plants, or creating a garden that weathers change in our climate, be sure to put the last two Foundation member meetings of this year on your calendar.

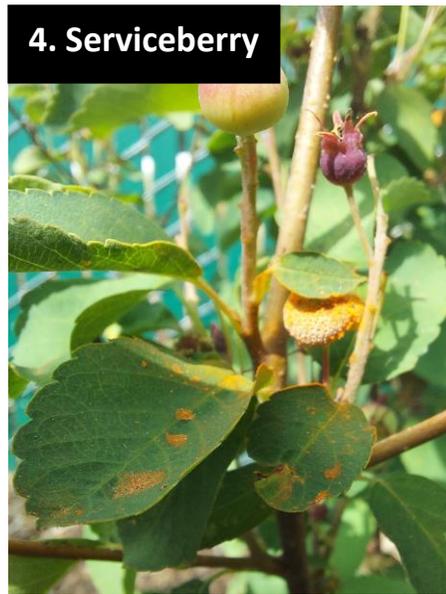
The Significance of Camas, September 25. Learn about the history, cultivation and significance of the Camas plant to the Coast Salish people. Sam Qol7ánten Barr of Coast Salish Youth Coalition is our speaker.

Principles of Permaculture, October 30. Eric and Britt Conn of Full Cycle Farm will share their insights on creating a resilient ecosystem that conserves resources and fosters biodiversity.

Both presentations count for Continuing Education credits. We hope to see you at the Granary Building at Pacific Rim or on Zoom.

Plant Detectives Pop Quiz!

Can you identify these common summer plant problems? See how many you can identify and then check your work in the Pop Quiz Answers box on page 8.



From the Education Garden

Revitalization is the current theme in the Education Garden at Greenbank Farm, with numerous projects done or nearing completion.

Gary Ketcheson transformed a rotting tree trunk into a haven for wildlife. The dying curly willow tree was cut to a 12-foot stump in 2015 to provide habitat for cavity nesters and woodpeckers. As the root system decayed, the tree became unstable and a hazard to garden visitors.

This spring, the trunk was keeled over on its side rather than being disposed of, to start its third life of providing organic matter and nutrients to the soil. Cardboard was put below a layer of wood chip mulch to deter weed germination. Shrubs were added in key spots and honeysuckle will grow over the trunk. Look in your own yards – maybe you too have a place for this attractive landscape feature.



The Little Library is now ready for the exchange of gardening books. Many thanks to Anita Merrill for the idea, design, construction, and installation of this great new feature. Please stop by and leave a book or take one home.

Judy Nylander and Lisa Phillips are completing a major revitalization and expansion of the rhododendron area. They extended the rock wall to add more space, removed old shrubs, cut back and opened up overgrown rhododendrons, and installed soaker hoses. They acquired four new rhododendrons from Bill Stipe's collection. These improvements help us demonstrate variety in rhododendrons for the home gardeners, with different leaf textures, colors, and bloom time.



We owe a great debt of thanks to Larry Douglas, Brant Baxter, and Paul Marshall for the donation of their time and energy in installing a new roof on the cottage, its attached alcove, and the storage shed. The Foundation approved the funds for the roofing supplies, but these spouses of MGs did the hard work. Our gratitude is abundant!

We invite you all to visit or to volunteer during these lovely summer months. In addition to our regular Wednesday work parties, we are also in the garden on 1st and 3rd Saturdays through September – all from 9 am to noon. And don't forget to follow what's happening in the Ed Garden via our [Facebook page](#).

Ready, Set, Register for the Advanced Education Conference

The statewide Advanced Education Conference will be held September 26-27, with a focus on Cultivating Resilience. Topics include using trees to mitigate climate change, attracting pollinators, composting, fire-wise landscaping, vegetable gardening, and much more.

Larry Weaner will deliver the keynote, speaking on Living in the Liberated Landscape. He is nationally recognized for his expertise in horticulture, landscape design, and ecological restoration.

The conference sessions are virtual, but a new feature this year adds an in-person experience. In-person events are called Shared Learning Experiences (SLE) and will be held on Friday, September 26 in select counties. Snohomish County will host the closest SLE to Island County. That event will be held at [Willis Tucker Park](#) in Snohomish, with a potluck lunch planned.

You can [register online](#) until September 25. The cost for virtual and SLE sessions is \$109 for Master Gardeners and \$119 for the public until July 15. Starting July 16, the cost for Master Gardeners is \$129 and \$139 for the public. Sessions will be recorded and available to participants until February 28, 2026.

Master Gardeners Around Island County

This column is 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 please contact Carol Ann Leonessa with your news from around Island County.

Celebrating Earth Day. Volunteers participated in three local Earth Day events, each emphasizing the spirit of environmental care and community service. At Camp Casey, Anita Merrill, Jamie Halterman, Kathy King, and Susan Hamilton delighted young visitors by handing out nearly 100 Western Red Cedar saplings, inspiring the next generation of tree stewards.

At the Coupeville Community Garden, Jim Peskuric, Carolyn Lancet, and Line Goulet rolled up their sleeves to plant vegetables and tidy up the garden beds for the growing season. And at Olympic View Elementary, Paul McKenna helped Tricia Heimer and other community members install new garden beds, compost bins, and an irrigation system, laying the groundwork for children to learn sustainable gardening practices. It was a fun day of working together to celebrate environmental stewardship and community engagement.



Spring Social. Many thanks and kudos to our host, Melissa Evans, who once again opened her home to a swarm of cheerful Master Gardeners. As always, many tasty dishes were enjoyed, and much fun was had during the day. A highlight was Julie Lary receiving a Star Award for her vision, development, and continued management of the wonderful Facebook page for the Island County Master Gardener Education Garden.



Plant Sale. The weather did not deter the public from checking out and purchasing plants at both the Camano and Whidbey Plant Sales. This year we made a deal with the Conservation District to enlarge our selection of native plants substantially. Geraniums grown in the Education Garden greenhouse once again featured

heavily and their blooms added a beautiful festive air to the space, as did the garden art. Plants left over from the Whidbey sale were carted to the Camano sale. Overall, we sold 1,943 items for a total of \$9,926 and an average purchase of \$29. Thank you to all who donated such a great variety of plants including veggies, fruit trees, shrubs, and, of course, flowering plants.



Thank you to Raissa DeArmond, Judy Nylander, and Lori Fekkes for coordinating the events. And thank you to all the volunteers who

showed up, organized and made the sale a fabulous success!

Partnering with PRI. We had an impressive assortment of native trees and shrubs at the Plant Sale this year, and Jim Peskuric got creative in handling the leftover inventory. Jim set up a partnership with the Pacific Rim Institute (PRI), where they agreed to sell the plants on consignment, with an appropriate split of profit between PRI and the Foundation. Thanks to Jim for setting up this relationship.



Master Gardener Education Series. On a sunny Father's Day at the Education Garden at Greenbank Farm, WSU Extension Plant Diagnostician Jenny Glass shared her expertise on diagnosing plant problems with Master Gardeners and the public. Her talk emphasized practical approaches to problem solving, such as careful observation, understanding plant needs, choosing the right plant for the right place, recognizing common issues, and encouraging tolerance.



Jenny reminded us that not all damage is harmful, and that many so-called pests play vital roles in the ecosystem, leaving

us inspired to enjoy our gardens more and worry less.

...continued on next page

Master Gardener Presentations. Five Island County Master Gardeners gave engaging and informative presentations to the community this spring. On Camano Island, Cathy Lofton-Day led “Get Growing: Gardening on a Shoestring,” a practical session focused on budget-friendly gardening techniques and advice for cultivating a successful garden.



At the Sno-Isle public library in Coupeville, Anza Muenchow gave her popular talk on growing vegetables, offering valuable tips for both new and experienced gardeners. Also at the Coupeville library, Lisa Phillips had the audience abuzz with her presentation on honeybees and pollinators, highlighting their essential role in healthy ecosystems.

Two Master Gardener interns, Janet Wick and Jean Yoho, gave a well-received presentation on the Master Gardener program to members of the Mabana Flames Auxiliary, which supports Camano Fire and Rescue. Janet and Jean shared their experiences going through training, as well as how their new knowledge is being used to help others.

Coupeville Community Garden. Master Gardener volunteers are managing six plots at the Coupeville Community Garden to grow vegetables for the Coupeville Food Bank. Recently Jim Peskuric sent out a call for more Master Gardeners because the gardens are coming alive and needing water. The team is now up to five team members, and they have added Tuesdays to their work week. Thanks to intern Jamie Halterman for joining the team at the gardens!



If you are interested, come to the gardens on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10 am until 12 noon – whether to help or just visit for a short time. On the day

this picture was taken, the team discovered a nearby stand of Canada Thistles big enough to fill a 20-gallon container. The shock of the sheer size of the stand and the determination to attack it is evident in the picture!

Climate Change on Camano. Warren Weissman gave a presentation in June to Camano Master Gardeners titled “The Resilient Yard.” The talk highlighted practical steps gardeners can take to create more climate-resilient and environmentally mindful yards.

His presentation is one of the five ready-made presentations developed by the statewide Master Gardener Climate Action Team to inspire sustainable gardening practices and support thriving landscapes in a changing climate. These and more resources are available to Master Gardener Volunteers in the [Resources for Master Gardeners](#) section of the WSU Extension Master Gardener website.



Registration for Washington Green School is now open in Island County. Classes begin in October and continue for 15 weeks. *Choose from two options:*

The **Washington Gardener** track is a fully online, self-paced course, for individuals seeking to deepen their gardening skills and knowledge. Participants earn a Washington Gardener Certificate on completion with no volunteer requirements. The cost is \$550.

The **WSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer** track includes online classes and in-person labs, leading to WSU Extension Master Gardener certification upon fulfilling the course and volunteer requirements. The cost is \$275.

greenschool.extension.wsu.edu

Meet Our Newest Master Gardeners

Amanda Krass, Camano

Class of 2025

I grew up in Pennsylvania gardening with my mom. Later, while going to nursing school and then traveling, I lost gardening for quite some time. After my husband completed graduate school, we moved to Washington, and I had the opportunity to stay at home with my kids. During this time gardening became my retreat. I dove deep into propagating houseplants and growing perennials by seed through winter sowing. I kept finding something else in the world of gardening to learn about and realized that gardening is a deep well of education that I love.



When I saw the postings for the Master Gardener program on Camano, I wanted to participate and learn more about gardening in Washington. I am especially interested in vegetable gardening, which I have struggled with since moving here, as well as learning more about natives, invasives, and fruit trees.

I am so thankful that I stumbled across the postings for the Master Gardener class and became a part of this group. I value this group with its array of volunteers and all the knowledge and determination we have collectively. I have already gained so much more than I sought, and I look forward to continuing to learn from each and every one of you.

Jean Yoho, Camano

Class of 2025

I come from a long line of gardeners. My grandparents grew cotton in Oklahoma, and my parents grew tree fruit, berries, and vegetables. At my first home, I grew grass. At my second home, I put in vegetable and rose gardens.



My third home had seven gardens: a formal and fragrant white flowering front garden surrounded by a Leyland cypress hedge, a perennial garden, a dry creek bed, an herb garden, a walking labyrinth, and sedum and vegetable gardens. That property was featured in the Seattle Times Pacific Magazine.

Then I moved to Camano, done with gardening. My current home of two acres is mostly native plants with a small lawn, stock tanks with vegetables, blue and purple perennial flowers, and many pieces of my art.

The November bomb cyclone damaged the property, and I am using the knowledge that I gained in the Master Gardener program to make a more water-conservation, plant appropriate, pollinator friendly garden. I am hoping to share creative and research-based information with my community.

Plant Detectives Pop Quiz Answers

Click on the links to learn more about each common problem.

1. [Blossom-end rot](#) is from a calcium deficiency due to inconsistent watering.
2. [Root Weevils](#) chew characteristic notching along leaf margins.
3. [Birch leafminers](#) leave winding trails inside leaves.
4. [Serviceberry rust](#) causes orange spots on leaves and fruit.
5. [Drought](#) in conifers leads to needle browning and tip dieback.
6. [Verticillium wilt](#) causes sudden wilting and branch dieback.

The Intern Experience

by Suzanne Kieffer, Class of 2025

Editor's Note: The Intern Experience is a regular feature where we ask interns for their perspective on training and interning. We hope you enjoy the variety of impressions you get from our newest colleagues.

I completed course work at Edmonds College for the Landscape Horticulture program in August 2024. I pondered what I might do next with my newly acquired learning.



Happily, I spotted the sign on Camano Island promoting the Master Gardener program and seeking applicants for Fall enrollment. The fact that the training was on Camano was an even bigger inducement to apply.

After enrolling, I discovered how comprehensive the WSU program was, covering more topics than I had studied previously. Additionally, the material was structured to provide facts on the various topics without being overwhelming. Also, having the chance to review material that I had been taught at Edmonds helped to reinforce it. I now know botanical names for all those pesky weeds that lurk in my garden - a better choice than what I have been heard to call them.

I particularly enjoyed all the speakers who presented on the topics we were studying. The class on how to build a worm bin and the course on bees and their care were great! The field trips were thoroughly enjoyable, and the demonstration gardens are amazing!

Volunteering at the Whidbey Gardening Workshop gave me a chance to meet many of the other Master Gardeners and learn from them, as well. However, I will say that when we were tasked with planting seeds for the plant sale, I was completely out of my element and my results proved it!

And so, "learning by doing" is my constant mantra on this new journey.

Summer Volunteer Opportunities

There are many ways for you to participate in our community outreach activities. Here are a few needs for the summer months:

Whidbey Island Fair

July 20 to 28

Stanwood Camano Fair

August 1 to 3

Plant Clinics

Ongoing

Snap-Ed School Gardens in Oak Harbor

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, 9 to 11 am

Coupeville Community Garden

Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10 am to 12 pm

The Lord's Garden

Wednesdays, 5 to 6:30 pm

Education Garden at Greenbank Farm

Wednesdays year-round, plus 1st & 3rd Saturdays through September, 9 am to 12 pm

Need other ideas? You can write articles, give presentations, and help with training.

See the [full list and contact information here](#). Or contact Loren if you need help.

Upcoming Events

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

- July 20** MG Education Series at Greenbank Farm
- July 24-27** MG booth at Whidbey Island Fair
- July 27** Summer Picnic
- August 1-3** MG booth at Stanwood-Camano Community Fair
- August 17** MG Education Series at Greenbank Farm
- September 18** ICMGF Board meeting
- September 21** MG Education Series at Greenbank Farm
- September 25** ICMGF Membership meeting & CE*
- Sept 26-27** [Advanced Education Conference](#), virtual, with option for in-person Shared Learning Experience

LOOKING FARTHER AHEAD

- October 30** Annual ICMGF Board meeting
Annual ICMGF Membership meeting, elections & CE*
- December 7** Holiday Party

*At PRI and on Zoom



Great friendship,
great food,
and a great day
at the Spring Social!



ICMGF OFFICERS

President – Cathy Lofton-Day
Vice President – Jenni Wilson
Secretary – Kim Baxter
Treasurer – Paul Rowe

AREA REPS

South – Christine Dimm
Central – Deb Mitchell
North – Lisa Phillips
Camano – Rosemary Easley

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 the [Resources](#) page or point your smartphone camera at the QR code. If you need the password, contact Loren.



The [ICMGF Member Portal](#) on the Foundation website includes

- member picture book
- minutes of Foundation meetings
- minutes of Ed Garden Committee
- Foundation bylaws & agreements
- selected CE videos

Need the password? Contact Sue Gibson.

[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 newsletter@icmgf.org.