



WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



## MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

2024

### BY THE NUMBERS

- **61 active volunteers** gave 5700 hours of service to Jefferson County.
- **450+ Horticulture questions** answered at our “Ask a Master Gardener” clinic and online form.
- **265+** Seed Library members.
- **60 presentations, workshop and activities** delivered by Master Gardeners to community members.
- **17 new volunteers took Master Gardener Training;** volunteers commit 80 hours towards programming in Jefferson County.
- **330 residents** reached at pesticide reduction presentations hosted by Master Gardeners throughout Jefferson county.

### ISSUE

the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program provides research-based horticulture education on a wide range of topics to residents of Jefferson County through trained volunteers. For example, clean water is vital to our health, communities and economy. We need clean water upstream to have healthy communities downstream. About 117 million Americans--one in three people--get drinking water from streams that were vulnerable to pollution before the [Clean Water Rule](#)). How we care for plants and manage soil in our home garden/landscape can have an impact water quality. Excess pesticides and fertilizers can run off or percolate through soil, ultimately ending up in surface and ground water. Compacted soil reduces water-holding capacity, allowing it to run-off. Organic matter left on or incorporated into the soil can help absorb and hold water. Loose soil can be blown or carried off and can flow into streams, rivers and lakes.

### RESPONSE

Volunteers staffed outreach booths highlighting garden techniques to reduce run-off; maintained municipal rain gardens; taught composting and best soil practices at local garden clubs; staffed “Ask a Master Gardener” clinics in Port Townsend, Port Hadlock and Quilcene, and answered questions from the community through our online portal. At “Ask a Master Gardener” clinics, volunteers provide counseling on horticultural questions from the public. They offer solutions/advice by implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles and best practices which prioritize non-chemical solutions. This empowers individuals to make informed decisions that minimize pesticide usage when effectively managing pests. By reducing reliance on harmful chemicals, Master Gardener not only promote healthier gardens and landscapes but protect local watersheds, ecosystems, wildlife, and pollinators.



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## PARTNERS

Food Bank Growers Association  
 Chimacum & Port Townsend  
 School Districts  
 City of Port Townsend Habitat  
 for Humanity Port Townsend  
 Library Jefferson County Library  
 Khul Kah Han Native Plant  
 Garden Jefferson County  
 Noxious Weed Control Board  
 Port Townsend Leader

## QUOTES

“I had an excellent experience. Great instruction, all my questions answered and lots of guided hands on experience.”

“I feel more confident about pruning than I ever had from reading a book or watching a video.” ~ 2024 Workshop attendee

## PROGRAMS

Growing Groceries classes and workshops  
 Seed Library  
 Community Seed Project  
 Speaker’s Bureau  
 “Garden Note” monthly article  
 Sims Way Demonstration Garden  
 “Ask a Master Gardener” Clinics  
 Master Gardener Training  
 Rain Garden Mentors  
 Garden –Know-How

## IMPACTS

Master Gardener programs play a vital role in promoting sustainable gardening techniques that reduce pesticide runoff and improve stormwater management.

**Rain Gardens:** Rain gardens are effective stormwater management tools that capture and filter runoff from impervious surfaces, such as rooftops and driveways. WSU research shows these gardens can reduce pollutants like pesticides, fertilizers, and heavy metals in stormwater. By incorporating a mix of sand, compost, and native plants, rain gardens slow water flow, enhance soil absorption, and significantly decrease pollutant loads before the water enters local streams and aquifers.

**Composting and Soil Health:** Composting improves soil structure and fertility, reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Healthier soils lead to resilient plants, which are less reliant on chemical inputs. WSU's "Natural Yard Care" initiatives encourage composting as part of integrated pest management (IPM), promoting practices that minimize chemical use while protecting stormwater quality

**Community Adoption and Impacts:** Master Gardener programs amplify these benefits by educating gardeners and homeowners about sustainable practices. Surveys indicate that participants adopt environmentally conscious methods, significantly reducing pesticide use and runoff. For instance, in Kitsap County, 91% of Master Gardener trainees implemented new practices that improved stormwater quality.

These methods, when integrated into community practices through Master Gardener education, provide scalable solutions to pollution and support cleaner waterways, healthier soils, and reduced environmental toxicity.

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