



Thurston County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES — JULY 2020

WSU MASTER GARDENER/MASTER RECYCLER COMPOSTER PROGRAM

Master Recycler Composter (MRC) volunteers have been monitoring our Question/Answer clinic remotely. They are answering a variety of questions related to recycling, composting and waste reduction via email. Volunteers continue to meet via Zoom every other week and share continuing education opportunities. Next week MRC's will begin working on the back log of compost work needed at the demonstration gardens. We are also working on how to offer online classes via Zoom on recycling, composting and waste reduction for the fall.

The Master Gardener demonstration garden committee volunteers have been working in small groups at our demonstration gardens. No more than 10 volunteers per shift, following all COVID-19 safety precautions. Closed Loop Park and Olympia Farmers Market Gardens are working on a backlog of weeding and solving irrigation

problems. Dirt Works Garden volunteers have been harvesting the 25+ raised beds that were planted back in May. All food is donated to the Thurston County Food Bank. Over the last few weeks they have been averaging about 100lbs of produce per harvest day. As we enter the harvest month of August, we anticipate these totals to grow. This dedicated group of volunteers working on the food bank garden is truly amazing!



WATER RESOURCES — NATIVE PLANT SALVAGE

With support from the County stormwater program, WSU water resources staff are digging into the scientific evidence that supports the benefits of planting narrow buffers, also known as "hedgerows," to protect local waterways. Hedgerows enable landowners to enrich fish and wildlife habitat along their local streams, while still maintaining most of their acreage for crops or livestock. We are also interviewing farmers about the additional benefits they enjoy with hedgerows, such as extended pollinator seasons that benefit their crops, exclusions for cattle in their streams, privacy, and wind protection. This fall, staff will present the results of the research and interviews in a series of fact sheets and webinars, so farmers and other landowners can learn about how to make hedgerows work for them.

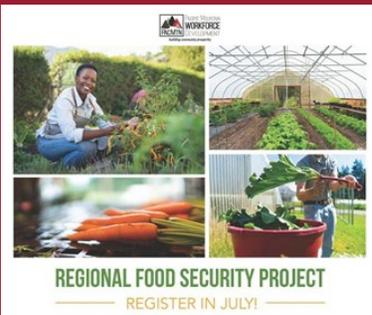


AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

In July the SW Washington Growers Cooperative (formed over the past winter) sent its first shipment of malting barley by rail to Great Western Malting in Vancouver, WA. In total nearly 400 tons of malting barley produced on 120 acres were loaded onto 4 railcars over a week's time. The Northwest Agriculture Business Center provided project management, and funding or other project support was provided by Valley Ag, The Lewis County Farm Bureau, Country Financial, Northwest Farm Credit Services, George Brown, The Farm Store, The Office of the Chehalis Basin, The Lewis Conservation District, The Port of Chehalis, WSU Thurston County Extension, and Great Western Malting. WSU Extension supported the cooperative with barley sampling, a malting barley production guide (with OSU), and farmer survey work used to secure \$800,000 in funding to extend a rail spur and construct a pad gravel pad for truck-rail grain transfer. The truck-rail transload facility will be capable of shipping grain out from multiple counties in the region, as well as for farmers to bring in grain, such as Organic Valley dairies, at a decreased cost due to rail transit.

SNAP-ED

Partnering with PacMtn Workforce Development, SNAP-Ed is developing and producing a 10-part cooking video series, to coincide with the Regional Food Security Project that is providing produce boxes for dislocated workers. The video series will focus on making the most of the produce folks receive in their weekly boxes, teaching ways to prepare healthy meals and snacks, and ways to preserve what cannot be used right away. We will be working with a diverse group of local chefs to teach participants simple, delicious ways to prepare the seasonal produce.



4-H PROGRAM

Despite the cancellation of the 2020 Thurston County Fair, several 4-H projects are offering on-line contests to the youth so they may showcase what they have learned in their project areas this year. The Dog Project is currently holding a virtual showcase where members complete a weekly Instagram challenge for six weeks. Some of the challenges include completing a heeling pattern, a photo contest, and a drawing contest. Other animal projects are offering judging and knowledge bowl contests, as well as other "just for fun" contests.