

WATER RESOURCES — NATIVE PLANT SALVAGE

With some delays and a lot of re-imagining, program staff were able to honor their commitment to Thurston County residents who had registered for summer outdoor educational programming prior to the onset of Covid-19.



By creating strict safety guidelines for outdoor field courses as well as personalized laminated educational tools for each learner, over 50 County residents learned about a variety of South Sound and nearby ecosystems, including peat bogs, outer-coastal dunes and salt marshes, alpine meadows and forests, and lowland Puget forests. Multiple events were held throughout the summer months to allow participants to learn in very small groups, allowing for social distancing while still enjoying and appreciating the natural bounty of our region.

WSU MASTER GARDENER/MASTER RECYCLER COMPOSTER PROGRAM

Master Recycler Composter and WSU Master Gardener volunteers continue to monitor our Question/Answer clinic remotely. They are answering gardening, recycling, composting and waste reduction questions from Thurston County residents via email. Information about this free service can be found on our website; <https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/>

Volunteers that serve at the Dirt Works Demonstration Garden are wrapping up the harvest from the 25+ raised beds that were planted back in May. At the last work party, over 250lbs of food was harvested including over 44lbs of tomatoes. All food is donated to the Thurston County Food Bank. This dedicated group of volunteers working on the food bank garden is truly amazing!

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our annual plant sale and Bloomin' Bingo events were cancelled. The Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County members have been busy finding alternative ways to raise funds to help support our programs outreach and operation costs. MGFTC members hosted their first virtual fundraiser on September 10. "Gardening Trivia with Marianne Binetti" raised over \$2,000. A summary of the event will be available in the next edition of the MGFTC Roots-n-Shoots Newsletter. <https://www.mgftc.org/activities/mgftc-roots-n-shoots-newsletter/>



Thurston County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES — SEPTEMBER 2020

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

The WSU Extension agriculture program has been continuing to serve Thurston County farmers through the COVID-19 pandemic: in September, the SW WA Growers Cooperative (spearheaded by local farms, WSU Extension, Thurston EDC and the Northwest Ag Business Center) passed the \$100,000 mark in producer payments. This cooperative provides aggregation, storage, distribution, and market access services for farmers who have lost markets due to COVID-19. Sales to restaurants, farmers markets, and on-farm customers have all declined due to COVID-19. The growers cooperative operates the SW Washington Food Hub, which is currently selling 100 Food Security Boxes to dislocated workers over a 10-week period August-November.



SNAP-ED

With September being a great harvest month, SNAP-Ed has been busy with the Farmer's Market food rescue program. Every Tuesday after the Chehalis Farmer's Market is over, we pick up the left over produce from a few of the farmers and transport it to the Salvation Army's food bank. The Salvation Army has been very appreciative of our efforts and their patrons are loving the fresh local donations. Each week the farmers have new and exciting produce to donate. Right now there is an abundance of summer squash, kale and peppers. The program has been busy all Summer and donated over 1000lbs so far.

4-H PROGRAM

October 1 marks the start of the new 4-H year! Thurston County 4-H Clubs are gearing up to begin project learning and celebrating National 4-H Week (October 4-10, 2020). We highlight Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) with 4-H STEM month. 4-H youth are invited to participate in fun and engaging STEM activities all month long, including the 2020 4-H Science Challenge, Mars Base Camp. Through the Mars Base Camp science kit, youth will learn about Mars and explore what it takes to send a mission to the red planet.



During these challenging times, 4-H youth who raise and care for animals have continued to work towards their project goals. Even though instruction is being conducted virtually, our local youth are still able to demonstrate their skill and knowledge through online contests. Thurston County was well represented during the virtual Washington 4-H Horse Contest with local teams placing 3rd in Senior Horse Bowl, 1st Place and Champion in Senior Horse Judging, and 1st Place and Champion in Senior Hippology. 4-H horse members also earned first place in the Individual and Team Public Speaking Contests. 4-H rabbit project members competed in the Washington State Rabbit Breeders Association (WSRBA) youth educational contests and earned several top placings. Local 4-H member, Joanne K., will represent Washington State in the national intermediate rabbit judging contest being conducted virtually later this month. Way to go Thurston County 4-H'ers!