



WSU EXTENSION
Thurston County

The Extension Connection

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE. CHANGING LIVES.

January 2024

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

4th Quarter 2023



Schilter's Family Farm contacted the WSU Master Gardeners about partnering for their upcoming Fall Festival in October. The corn maze for the festival was cut in the shape of the 50th Anniversary WSU Master Gardener Logo.

inside this issue...

**WSU WATER RESOURCES/
NATIVE PLANT SALVAGE
PROGRAM** page 1

**SNAP-Ed
PROGRAM** page 2

**AGRICULTURE
PROGRAM** page 3

**WSU MASTER GARDENER
& MASTER RECYCLER
COMPOSTER
PROGRAM** page 4

**4-H YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM** page 5

*What's
COMING UP IN
EXTENSION?*

Native Plant Salvage Events February-March

To learn more please visit:
www.nativeplantsalvage.org/events/

2024 Composting Workshops

Workshops are free and open to the public. No advance registration is required for in-person workshops.

To learn more please visit:
<https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/gardening/composting/>

Southwest Washington Grazing School - April 18-21

To learn more and register please visit:
<https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/event/sw-wa-grazing-school-2/>

CAHNRS FOR



DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION

Thurston County WSU Extension builds the capacity of individuals, organizations, businesses and communities, empowering them to find solutions for local issues and to improve their quality of life. Extension collaborates with communities to create a culture of life-long learning and is recognized for its accessible, learner-centered, relevant, high-quality, unbiased educational programs.

Connect with us:



3054 Carpenter Road SE
Olympia, Washington 98503
Main Line: (360) 867-2189



WSU Native Plant Salvage program volunteers Daniel Klosowski (kneeling) and Patty May (center, back) join WSU's Erica Guttman (center) and project partners Katie Nelson from Pierce CD (left) and Jae Townsend from Thurston CD (right) in laying out plants in advance of the hands-on hedgerows training. (Photo: Alison Nichols, Pierce CD)

WSU WATER RESOURCES & NATIVE PLANT SALVAGE PROGRAM

Erica Guttman

As part of its new initiatives to promote the power of hedgerows, WSU Water Resources and its non-profit arm, Native Plant Salvage Foundation, partnered with Pierce and Thurston Conservation Districts, Xerces Society, and Helsing Junction Farms for a successful two-part webinar and field-based workshop that culminated in establishing a new agricultural hedgerow in Rochester. These events were the first in a series of trainings to be offered through fall 2024.

A November 1st webinar covered:

- The multiple agricultural, water-resources, habitat, and climate-change resiliency benefits of hedgerows;
- An overview of the steps to designing, planning and implementation of a successful hedgerow project;
- An overview/introduction to the Hedgerows for Rural and Working Lands Toolkit for future use by participants; and
- Plant-spacing principles and examples.

Then, on a stormy Saturday, November 4th, almost 40 learners and volunteers gathered at Helsing Junction Farms in Rochester for hands-on learning while installing a 500-foot long by 15-foot wide hedgerow composed of 932 trees and shrubs and 1,185 native grasses and perennials.

Participants got hands-on practice learning how to follow a planting plan, understanding the dense spacing of hedgerow designs, and learning how to plant cost-saving plant stock such as livestakes and bare-root plants. Learners also learned about the 32 species of native and water-wise trees, shrubs, and native herbaceous perennials featured in the planting design.

As an additional learning opportunity, a Xerces Society expert in pollinators and other beneficial insects presented information about the role of hedgerows specifically in supporting healthier crops and sustaining critical insect species in our region.

The events and the hedgerow plants were jointly funded by grants from Thurston County Community Planning, Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, and the Washington Conservation Commission.

If you missed the events and want to know more, you can access the WSU [Hedgerows Toolkit here](#), and check out the webinar and a video featuring the Helsing farmers, [here](#). Or, sign up to be notified of upcoming trainings, including the next hands-on planting on March 16th, [here](#).



WSU's Erica Guttman (center) collaborates with project partners Katie Nelson of Pierce Conservation District (left) and Angie Camp of Helsing Junction Farms to arrange some of the 932 trees and shrubs used in the new hedgerow planted in November. (Photo: Alison Nichols, Pierce CD)





(Left) Burying pumpkins with first graders. (Center) Taste of Washington Apple Tasting with students. (Right) Kids eating (and loving) kale!!

SNAP-ED Amanda Leoni

We started out October with two exciting events at Garfield Elementary. We offered a Taste of Washington and harvested buckwheat from the school garden. Both events are school wide and very exciting! To celebrate A Taste of Washington, each classroom sampled 3 different kinds of unique apple varieties and then voted on their favorite. This year, the Cortland apple was the school favorite. With the leftover apples, we offered applesauce cooking demos with individual classrooms and in the school cafeteria before Thanksgiving break. During the buckwheat harvest, each student got to harvest, thresh, hull and grind the buckwheat into flour. We finished off the harvest by serving up buckwheat pancakes. We did this event in collaboration with the WSU Thurston County Agriculture team and Evergreen State College.

We spent a lot of time in the school garden planting over 700 native plants with students, harvesting pumpkins with the first graders, and hosting weekend work parties. The first graders got to hollow out their pumpkins and then fill them with trash from the lunchroom. A week later, we went back into the garden to bury the pumpkins. We will dig them up in the Spring to see what decomposed and what didn't.

In early December, we offered a MyPlate cooking demo for the third graders. We made healthy veggie filled wraps. We hope this inspired the students to make healthy snacks during break. Before Winter break, we gathered donations of fresh produce from local grocery stores and were able to send 25 family's home with bags of pantry staples. This is always important as many students rely on the school for two meals a day.

Throughout Fall we also tabled at two harvest festivals. One at the Olympia Farmers Market and the other at the Thurston Conservation Districts event. We offered cooking demos and educational materials at both. We also offered two cooking demos at the Salvation Army where we highlighted garbanzo beans. We made garbanzo bean stew and garbanzo bean fritters.



A student and his father at our November work party prepping a bed to plant garlic



SNAP-Ed Program Assistant, Melissa serving up buckwheat pancakes. Stephen in the station behind her teaching students about buckwheat.



Grazing Association members hear from Sarah Hamman with Ecostudies Institute, and Nora White from Thurston Conservation District, and the meeting was MC'd by Nicholas George with the US Fish and Wildlife Partners Program. WSU Extension and all partners facilitated a discussion about future structure of the Association.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Stephen Bramwell

WSU Extension agriculture educators Annie and Stephen teamed up with Amanada Musser in SNAP-Ed to offer buckwheat workshop with Garfield Elementary, reaching 8 classrooms and ~100 students teaching about gardening, cover crops, food preparation, and grain harvesting. The students loved sinking their hands into buckwheat, running the hand-powered mill, and eating buckwheat pancakes. Teachers were thrilled to engage their students with garden-based education, and students from last year still remembered their experience and helped out.

Sierra coordinated a Violet Prairie Demonstration Ranch workshop to scope out research, education, and management of the site to demonstrate habitat and grazing compatibility for the Habitat Conservation Plan. Sierra and Stephen helped run the SW Washington Grazing Association Annual meeting, with a blockbuster 45 ranchers. Steaks from Colvin Ranch were served, kids were in attendance, and livestock producers got much needed social time together to compare notes from the past year.

The SW Washington Food Hub also held its annual meeting, bringing out a robust showing at the Food Hub's new warehouse. The Hub launched two important programs that culminated Q4 of 2023, the Workplace Wellness Farmshare, and a Business Drop-site program where the hub delivers produce boxes to about 15 businesses regionally. These are critical revenue anchors for the cooperative, and Thurston County as a drop site plays an important role helping this group of farmers reach new markets in our community. The Hub plans to expand both drop site programs in 2024, and hopes for continued support from local municipalities that they deliver to.



Garfield Elementary School students work with the WSU and The Evergreen State College team (including Evergreen farm students) on milling buckwheat. Kids in the background help flip buckwheat pancakes. Big thanks to Amanda Musser with SNAP-Ed, and all the eight Garfield Elementary teachers who brought about 100 students through the activity!



Kids at the SW WA Grazing Association annual meeting found the chair carts in the dancehall and had a rodeo.



WSU Master Gardeners celebrating at the 50th anniversary picnic .

WSU MASTER GARDENER & MASTER RECYCLER COMPOSTER PROGRAMS

Cori Carlton & Jenni Post

2023 was an exciting year as the WSU Master Gardener program turned 50 years old. The Master Gardener program started in King & Pierce counties 50 years ago and has since spread internationally. We had extra special events celebrating this exciting milestone. One of the highlights included Schilter's Family Farm.

The owners of Schilter's Family Farm contacted us about partnering for their upcoming Fall Festival in October. The corn maze for the festival was cut in the shape of the 50th Anniversary WSU Master Gardener Logo. A team of volunteers met to plan the educational content for the trail signs. They also chose themes for their container gardens that were in the maze. Corn maze participants voted on their favorite container garden based on three different criteria. The festival opened on Sept. 30 and ran through Oct. 30. Over 50,000 people attended the festival and 30,000 participated in the corn maze. A memorable event to celebrate the WSU Master Gardener Program 50th anniversary.

Our events schedule for 2024 is coming. Events will be added throughout the year so check our website for further details.

<https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/gardening/community-events-and-outreach/>

The Master Recycler Composter program has set 2024 dates for their monthly composting workshops. Visit our website for more details.

<https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/gardening/composting/>

Gardening, Composting, Recycling Question/Answer Clinic –

Do you have a gardening, composting, or recycling question? Our WSU Master Gardener and Master Recycler Composter volunteers can help. Please email your question to: master@co.thurston.wa.us

At Schilter's Family Farm Fall Festival visitors who participated in the corn maze voted on their favorite container garden display. Here are the three winners:

People's Choice - 1st Place



Most Fall Themed - 2nd Place



Most Unique - 3rd Place





4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Emily Killeen

Thurston County 4-H Presentation Team Wins in Kentucky!

Camille T. and Charlotte P., members of the Thurston County Blazing Saddles 4-H Club, qualified to represent Washington State at the Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup competition in Louisville, Kentucky in November. Charlotte writes “We competed in the national equine team presentation portion and won first place with our presentation on The Mental Health Benefits of Equine Activities. This was the first time that a team from Washington has won, so everyone was very excited. We spent countless hours in the months leading up to the competition practicing, preparing, and refining our presentation, so it was very exciting to see our hard work pay off. We also had an amazing time after the competition traveling around Kentucky with Washington's representatives in the other phases of the competition and touring all sorts of equine facilities.” At this year’s Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup, 215 youth from 23 states completed. In addition to earning top honors, the girls also received a \$500 scholarship and a trophy.

New Thurston County 4-H Youth in Agriculture Workshop Series

The Thurston County 4-H program began a workshop series in October that focuses on raising animals and growing food for home use. The Youth in Agriculture workshop series is an example of community partners working together to provide positive youth development opportunities to the next generation of youth farmers, crafters, and gardeners! Workshop presenters throughout the series will include WSU Extension staff, local farmers, farm/garden related organizations, 4-H Volunteers, 4-H and FFA teen leaders. The series highlights topics such as poultry, rabbits, gardening, and preserving the harvest. 4-H members, FFA members, and general public school-age youth are invited to attend with their adult mentors. To learn about upcoming workshops please e-mail tc4h@co.thurston.wa.us.



Camille and Charlotte, Thurston County 4-H national-level winning equine presentation team.



Camille and Charlotte stand outside the stall of famous racehorse American Pharoah, a Thoroughbred racehorse who won the American Triple Crown and the Breeders' Cup Classic.