



**Kitsap  
County**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



## KITSAP MASTER GARDENER 2015

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 252 certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardener volunteers
- 29 new Master Gardener volunteers trained
- 16,547 volunteer hours reported
- National volunteer hourly rate used to calculate \$455,704 labor savings for Kitsap County
- 6777 people received individualized help from MGs with 2250 specific questions answered.
- MG volunteer educators lead & coordinate 3 community gardens and 4 demonstration gardens
- 132 people take series of 5 Organic Vegetable Gardening classes taught by 5 MG volunteer educators
- 5649.75 pounds of produce donated to foodbanks
- 1306 Youth learned and implemented gardening practices
- 100 percent of the 32 Kitsap MGs employed in the landscape/nursery/small farms industry are applying skills they learned with MGs to their livelihoods
- 648 "Home Composting Made Easy", 500 "Natural Yard Care", and 160 "Kick the Weed & Feed Habit" booklets distributed to Kitsap Residents

## *Sustainable Gardening: Science-based techniques for productive gardens, clean water and healthy families*

### ISSUE

Puget Sound and Kitsap's rivers, lakes and aquifers provide water for agricultural, residential, and recreational use. Stormwater runoff is the leading cause of pollution in the Puget Sound region. Scientists have found 23 pesticides in Washington streams, many at levels that may damage salmon and other wildlife. Studies find increased health risk among families (especially pets and children) using lawn and garden pesticides, which are easy to track into the house, bringing toxins indoors. Sustainable gardening techniques such as composting, mulching to prevent erosion and reducing use of garden chemicals prevents polluted stormwater runoff. Protecting existing trees and adding more trees and native plants to our gardens has been proven to reduce stormwater runoff and provide myriad other environmental benefits.

### RESPONSE

The WSU Master Gardener Program began in the Seattle area in 1973, spreading from most counties in Washington to the entire United States and abroad. The Kitsap Master Gardener Program began in 1975 and celebrated 40 years in 2015. The Master Gardener name is well known and respected in our communities for friendly and unbiased advice on research-based gardening and conservation information. A survey of Pierce County Master Gardener clients showed that 42.9% of those visiting the Master Gardener Diagnostic clinics were referred by friends or family and 100% of the survey participants said they would recommend Master Gardeners to a friend. One person responded saying, "I like having someone to talk to that doesn't have a vested interest in selling me something" and another: "Every time I've called, they've been very truthful with me." This level of public trust allows Master Gardeners a unique and impactful role as community educators.



## QUOTES

### COMMENTS FROM NEW MASTER GARDENER TRAINEES:

*"The way I use pesticides will change because of today's information."*

*"Thank you most of all for educating and increasing our knowledge about sustainable, environment friendly gardening and giving us the ability to share so much within our community."*

*"The rain garden idea was really interesting and made absolute sense in regard to keeping our Puget Sound free of toxicity."*

*"It is very important to pay attention to what you do in your yard with pesticides, herbicides and insecticides."*

*"Continue the good work you've done with supporting healthy sustainable gardening practice/teachings because we can all learn more about how to do our part to promote healthy environments."*

*"I will be advocating rainwater capture and will implement the concepts on my property with mostly native plants."*

*"I am in the process of re-doing the landscape on my home and the information on water quality and conservation will be invaluable."*

## IMPACTS

37 citizens attended Kitsap Master Gardener Training, a 12 week program with online horticulture curriculum from WSU and 10 weeks of in class lectures on topics such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Gardening & Water Quality, and Plant Problem Diagnosis. Trainees are taught where to locate science-based resources with efficacious and safe pest control information to use at home and share with the public. 29 of those students went on to graduate as certified WSU Kitsap Master Gardeners. Certified Master Gardeners return to the trainings annually to earn required continuing education hours.

Post-certification evaluation indicated the vast majority of Master Gardener Trainees (91%, 21 of 23 respondents) began new environmentally conscious natural resource and environmental stewardship practices or increased these practices since becoming a Master Gardener. All (100%, 22 of 22) of the Master Gardener Trainees increased their knowledge through the MG program, particularly in understanding pest life cycles to optimize management methods. All (100%, 22 of 22) of the Master Gardener Trainees report that through the MG program they have learned techniques and concepts that have changed the way they live, garden, and/or think.

Kitsap Master Gardeners provided advice for homeowners at 279 regularly scheduled plant diagnostic clinics at 4 farmers market locations (Port Orchard, Bremerton, Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island, Kingston) and our business office in downtown Bremerton. "Home Composting Made Easy", "Natural Yard Care" and "Kick the Weed and Feed Habit" booklets are popular publications Master Gardeners reference and distribute to the public. 9 special clinic days were held at festivals, as well as 2 locations during the 5 days of the Kitsap County Fair. A total of 6777 people received individualized help from MG volunteers and 2250 specific garden related questions were answered for citizens.

All the demonstration and community gardens MGs plan, manage and lovingly tend are maintained with organic methods to protect our water resources. Sustainable methods are on display at these gardens for citizens to adopt at home. 178 individuals in total attended classes on the safe and proper use of pesticides from WSU and Master Gardeners. Kitsap Master Gardeners succeeded in coordinating 98 workshops, demonstrations and field days that focused on stewardship of natural resources and environmental protection.