

Weeder's Digest

Whatcom County Master Gardeners
December 2013



From the Coordinator's Desk...

The quiet of winter in the wilderness is calling me. I told my family that I want to go snow camping this year up at Mt. Baker. My kids - Sahale (14) thinks we are crazy, and Zach (9) is psyched to get out in the winter wilderness. It's a chance to take a break from the buzz of the holidays. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday and take time to soak up the fresh winter air. Before I dig myself a snow cave, there are many great things to report to you.

2014 BASIC TRAINING

The new MG training starts February 6th. I have received 25 applications and am very excited to see our program grow. The diversity of new Master Gardener volunteers is important as WSU Extension strives to keep all of our programs relevant in our community. Our goal is to serve as many areas of Whatcom County as possible.

SCHOOL GARDEN EDUCATORS

With the help of my supervisor, Chris Benedict, I have received a small grant that will allow me to train Master Gardener volunteers to be school garden educators. This is a great opportunity for us to work with school-aged kids and share what we do so well, teach gardening skills, healthy eating, and stewardship practices. *Read more about this program on page 4 of this newsletter.*

2014 MENTORING PROGRAM

As the annual Master Gardener training will begin in February, we are recruiting mentor/buddies to be matched with new trainees. If you are interested, please see the informational letter and questionnaire attached to this newsletter. Jerry Fenwick and his team have done a great job creating a plan for our second year of mentor program buddies! If you would like to apply to become a mentor, contact Jerry at jafenwick93@me.com.

DATES and DEADLINES:

- Mandatory Mentor Orientation meeting, to be held in January, 2014. *Details to follow.*
- Meet and Greet Intern/Mentor potluck, February 6, 2014

HOVANDER WORKSHOP SERIES

The spring education workshop series at Hovander will start in March, 2014. Luanne Williams has done a fantastic job for the past 3 years and has passed the torch to John Dewing, 2dewings@comcast.net. John is looking for a planning committee to assist in selecting topics, format, etc. The series will be a "six pack" of 1-hour classes from March - July. If you have ideas and would like to support this educational effort, please contact John Dewing. He will have a mid-January planning meeting.

CLINIC WRAP UP MEETING

There will be a clinic wrap-up meeting on December 9, 9:30 am—11:00 am. This is a time to reflect and make improvements to our diagnostic clinic. Among items to discuss are new software and a clinic manager.

Beth Chisholm, MG Coordinator



Whatcom County Master Gardeners Program



1000 N. Forest Street
Suite 201
Bellingham, WA 98225-5594
360-676-6736

<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/mastergardener/>

MISSION: The WSU Extension Master Gardeners Program trains volunteers to be effective community educators in gardening and environmental stewardship.

WSU WHATCOM COUNTY EXTENSION STAFF:

Drew Betz: County Director
Chris Benedict: Agriculture Educator
Colleen Burrows: Agriculture Special Projects Coordinator
Beth Chisholm: Master Gardeners & Community First Gardens Project
Cheryl Kahle-Lallas: Office Manager

Whatcom County Master Gardener Foundation

ROLE: The Master Gardener Foundation of Whatcom County supports the MG program with fundraising and provides information about home horticulture to the public through a demonstration garden, lectures and home gardening advice.

MG FOUNDATION BOARD:

Past President: Sandy Keathley
President: Linda Battle
1st Vice President: Kathleen Bander
2nd Vice President: Louise Granger
Secretary: Shelley Fishwild
Treasurer: Frank Hubka
Members at Large: Lorrie Yoos and David Hardman
Representative to State Foundation: Linda Bergquist

The **WEEDER'S DIGEST** is the monthly newsletter of the Whatcom County Master Gardeners Program. Guest articles are encouraged. Please submit to Jo Fleming (jof@uw.edu). Articles are most appreciated if they contain 600 or fewer words and are accompanied by a photo. Editors reserve the right to edit for content and formatting.

COOPERATING AGENCIES: Washington State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension Office.

All the Latest MG & Foundation News!

MG Foundation President's Message

December brings with it the hard frost that puts the rest of my gardens to bed for the winter. It also brings the celebrations and hope of Christmas or Hanukkah or Kwanza and/or the Winter Solstice. We share this season with family and friends and with gifts, food and get-togethers. We give more of ourselves in this season.



And so I ask all the wonderful Master Gardener Volunteers to consider doing a bit more for the Foundation and the Program this coming year. If you haven't stepped up, yet, it's the perfect time. We need someone to help Andrea and Jerry Fenwick with hospitality. We are still looking for someone to fill Susan Palmer's shoes as clinic manager and we need a training assistant while Alicia Lanz continues to mend. The slate of officers for the board was incomplete. Thankfully, Louise Granger offered to fill the 2nd Vice President's position, until someone else steps forward.

Your talent, expertise and time are the greatest gifts to give. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions. A year may seem like a huge commitment, but time flies. Please consider making a gift of your time. Joy and peace to you and yours.

Linda Battle, MGF President 2014

MG Foundation General Meeting

Wreath Workshop



December 12, 2013
6:30 pm - social time
7:00 pm - general meeting
7:30 pm - Wreaths!

The December 12, 2013 MGF General Meeting will be Wreath Making for the Holidays with Linda DeBoer as coach. The Extension Meeting Room will turn into a workshop with some help from the elves. It is suggested that each person bring hammer, pruner (labeled), gloves and an assortment of greens like holly, conifer, and boxwood to share. Look through your garden for interesting dried seed pods, cones, leaves, etc. Prong-type circular forms will be available for \$1.50 or you can bring your own. We will have a few selections of ribbon. Our social time starts at 6:30 pm, followed by the general meeting at 7:00 pm, followed by the wreath workshop. Get a head start on holiday decorating and feeling jolly! Ho, ho, ho!

The meeting is free and open to the public. Bring a friend, goodies to share, and lots of holiday materials to create a beautiful wreath. Whatcom Co. Extension Office - 1000 North Forest St. Please use the side entrance on Laurel Street.



Plant ID Study Group

Our Plant ID Study Group will **not** meet in December. No need to make things more busy than they already are! In place of this, come to the December 12th **Wreath Workshop**, at our December MGF General Meeting. Go out and forage some evergreens, berries, seed pods, vine prunings, etc. and make a personal creation in which you can name every ingredient!

See the above for more information or contact Karen Gilliam (jkgilliam@gmail.com) or Louise Granger (rutroad@gmail.com). We are seeking ideas for new native plants walks for mid 2014.

MG CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2013

December 5, Thursday	MG Foundation Board Meeting	WSU Whatcom County Extension Office, 10:00am-12:00pm
December 9, Monday	Clinic Wrap-Up Meeting	WSU Whatcom County Extension Office, 9:30am. Come to this meeting to help make improvements in the clinic and discuss such topics as new software, clinic manager position, responsibilities, Google sign-up calendar, trainee mentors, etc.
December 12, Thursday	MG Foundation General Meeting	The Master Gardener Foundation December meeting will be held on Thursday, December 12, at the WSU Extension Office, 1000 North Forest Street. Social hour is at 6:30pm, short meeting at 7:00pm, with the wreath workshop at 7:30pm. <i>(See page 3 of this newsletter for more information.)</i>
December 12, Thursday	Plant ID Study Group	The Plant ID Study Group will participate in the Wreath Workshop on December 12. <i>(See page 3 of this newsletter for more information.)</i>

WHATCOM EDIBLE EDUCATION

WSU Whatcom County Extension (WSUE) has received a small grant to work more closely with school age children. For starters we will work specifically with 3rd and 4th grades providing gardening and food education. We call it WSU Edible Education--building awareness of where food comes from, how it is grown, nutrition education and social traditions around food preparation and consumption.

To teach our children we need your help. We will offer free training for certified Master Gardeners to become school garden specialists in Bellingham and Mount Baker School Districts. Teach short fun lessons and support students and teachers. Schools served may or may not have a school garden.

The training will be in early Spring 2014. We envision Master Gardeners helping to teach a series of four classes to 3rd or 4th graders that may be offered in a classroom or outdoor setting. The training will likely take place in March or April 2014 and the lessons taught in May and June.

We need your feedback. If you are interested in this opportunity, please complete the survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9KNZJ3Y> to give us input so we can prepare volunteers for success in a school setting. Please respond by Friday, December 13, 2013.

Thank you!

Beth Chisholm

Master Gardeners & Community First Gardens

beth.chisholm@wsu.edu

Linda Versage

Edible Education Project Assistant

linda.versage@wsu.edu

WSU Whatcom County Extension

1000 N. Forest St. Ste 201, Bellingham, WA 98225

360-676-6736

www.whatcom.wsu.edu



Meet Your 2014 MG Foundation Board



Louise Granger

Shelley Fishwild

Linda Battle

Linda Bergquist

Past President: Sandy Keathley

President: Linda Battle

1st Vice President: Kathleen Bander

2nd Vice President: Louise Granger

Secretary: Shelley Fishwild

Treasurer: Frank Hubka

Members at Large: Lorrie Yoos and
David Hardman

Representative to State Foundation:
Linda Bergquist

Louise Granger (MG 2009), 2nd Vice President. A Washingtonian, I grew up on the rural edges of Redmond and Bellevue. Grandma (my early mentor) raised prize winning dahlias and had a WWII Victory Garden. Leaf and I moved to Whatcom County to escape urban sprawl. We have lived in Deming for 31 years on the lovely Middle Fork of the Nooksack River. Early years here left little time to pull weeds when our children went to school in Blaine, where Leaf was a school counselor, while I was an oncology nurse and then a hospice nurse at SJH. The light at the end of the tunnel switched on after retirement in 2008 when I took up the challenge of raising a victory garden of my own. Today I still lose the war with weeds! But every year I know and appreciate my garden and community more. We are closely involved in our library and I hope to find opportunities to bring more MG activities to our Foothills communities.

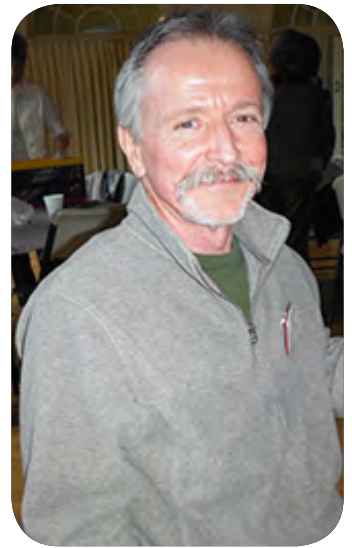
Linda Battle (MG 2012), President. I was born and raised on the Fort Peck Reservation on the windswept, northeast corner of Montana (zone 2). I grew up in my grandparent's garden and considered it Eden. I loved the hot summers, the cold winters and the open prairie. I attended college at the University of South Dakota (zone 4) and the University of Wyoming (zone 3) and have worked primarily with nonprofits as a therapist. My husband, Ron, and I moved to Bellingham 3 years ago so we could sail the San Juan's and live in the Pacific Northwest (zone 8). I am joyfully retired with a lovely daughter and a precious two year old grandson. I feel most fortunate to be in this community and to be part of the Master Gardeners program.

Shelley Fishwild (MG 2012), Secretary. I am a Master Gardener 2012 Graduate with a lifetime of gardening; first in Iowa on a farm, with a huge garden to feed all 7 of us kids, then in a small town with a vegetable garden to feed my own three daughters, as well as a perennial garden that fared well in the summer. After we (my husband Ken and I) moved to Washington in 1991, we built a house in Sudden Valley with it's huge deer problem! I have learned a great deal from all the Master Gardeners here, since my sister, Chris Hurst, has invited me along on many Master Gardener trips and classes. I love gardening here in all seasons and renovating the Roeder Home Garden with so many knowledgeable Master Gardeners. I like the Plant Study Group where we get to identify and learn the botanical and Latin names of plants. I look forward to working with the new MG Foundation Board as the Secretary.

Linda Bergquist (MG 2001), Representative to the State MG Foundation. As a native Californian my gardening interest began by helping my Grandmother in her garden. I graduated from Cal Poly in Pomona and worked for IBM as a system engineer. My husband worked for IBM too and our family moved to different states about every 6 years. This included 3 years in France. We sailed in the San Juan Islands and loved the Pacific Northwest. When my husband retired in 2000, we built a house in Blaine to be near a golf course and a big city. I took the Master Gardener class in 2001 while the house was being built. My children and grandchildren are in South Carolina and Australia. Being the Whatcom Representative to the State MG Foundation means I travel all over the State meeting with MGs from each county.

2014 MG Foundation Board, (continued)

Frank Hubka (MG 2013), Treasurer. I've lived in Bellingham since 1972. I am a mostly retired, self-employed technical illustrator. My primary interest as a gardener is native plants. I know nothing of treasuring, but I am your treasurer this year. I'm married for 37 years to Susie, have two daughters, both married and living in the Portland area, and four grandchildren. Don't ask me about them or I'll bore you to tears.



Frank Hubka

Sandy Kethley (MG 1996), Past-President. Born and raised in Alaska, my first gardening included wild flowers because they took care of themselves. I went to WSU (with my horse) where I swore I'd never leave the mountains, trees and ocean again. Moved to Bellingham in '76 where I got my MBA and became a Master Gardener in '96. I worked for Whatcom County for ten years and for WWU for almost thirteen years - ten of those as accountant for the College of Education. In 2004, Ben and I started K & K Industries which we sold in 2012. We are spending our retirement now with a llama, alpacas, horse and chickens. And I finally have time to play in my greenhouse!



Sandy Keathley

Dave Hardman (MG 2012), Member at Large. Dave and his wife Paula live in Lynden. Dave practiced Large Animal Veterinary Medicine in Lynden from 1972 until his retirement in October 2011. Graduating from WSU in 1969, Dave is a Cougar at heart. He completed the Master Garden curriculum with the class of 2012. Primary gardening interests are vegetable gardening and diagnostics. Main volunteer activity has been with the Hovander Demonstration Garden.



David Hardman

Kathleen Bander (MG 2012), 1st Vice President. Kathleen had the good fortune to live in many places in the world, as her father was a professor who loved to travel. Her careers have been varied, most concentrated in public relations, politics, and teaching. Her love of gardening began when she was asked to help her father write a book on *Color in Your Garden* during his stint working for *Sunset Magazine*. She and her husband Bill lived in Seattle for 20 years, but moved first to Camano Island to build a house, and then onto Bellingham to build yet another one. Currently she raises much of the food she and her husband eat, and sells/gives away the remainder. As Bill likes to remind her, "You've got 1800 square feet of food garden. Do you really need more?" She thinks that's a silly question to ask a gardener!

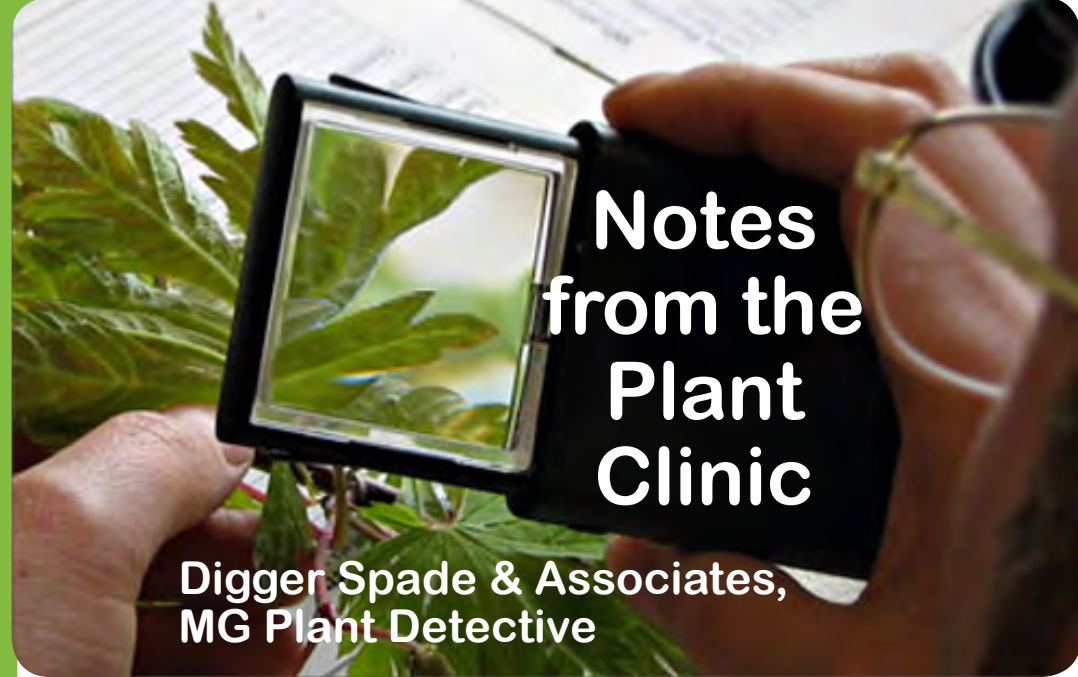


Kathleen Bander

Lorrie Yoos (MG 2011), Member at Large. Lorrie moved to Bellingham 3 years ago, after retiring from the University of Rochester. She is enjoying being close to family (especially 3 active grandchildren) and all of the outdoor activities that Bellingham offers. Lorrie was in the 2011 Master Gardener class, and enjoys working at Hovander in the herb and children's gardens.



Lorrie Yoos



Notes from the Plant Clinic

Digger Spade & Associates,
MG Plant Detective

Maybe no need for action. There is no magic bullet for wireworms. Though there are 18 pesticides labeled in Washington for homeowner use against wireworms, none is approved for use with potatoes. There are nematode predators available that may help, although results have been highly variable.

The client asks. "Then what can be done?" The problem might be mitigated by repeated cultivation. The larvae like cooler soils, so cultivating a couple of times in fall and spring when the soil at the surface is cooler, is best. Planting non-root crops for

The Case of the Pitted Potatoes

The client brought in a few potatoes. His concern was that they had many quite small spots on the surface and when he peeled them the damage went into varying depths and in some cases ruined the tuber. And when some of the potatoes were cut through they had cavities in the middle which had a pinkish surface. His concerns:



1) what was causing this damage and,

2) were the potatoes OK to eat?

A few questions:

- Has he seen these problems before?
"This is the first year I've grown potatoes."
- What kind of soil were they grown in?
"Recently converted a piece of his lawn; soil is well drained."
- What is the extent of the damage?
"Not very many tubers are affected."

That explains the spots that led to deep penetration of the tuber. This kind of damage is common on potatoes and some other root vegetables. The cause – *wireworms* - hard-bodied yellowish worms, 3/4 to 1 inch long, the larvae of click-beetles. They are usually abundant in lawns where they feed on grass roots and, since they live in the soil for 2-6 years, they could be in his new garden patch more-or-less permanently. So what to do?

a year or two should also help. Their roots may be attacked but they can give a decent crop. In the spring before planting root crops, he can put some potato pieces in the ground about 6 inches deep and after a week or two dig them to see if they have significant wireworm damage.



"What about the other spots, the ones that are quite shallow?" These can be peeled off leaving a perfectly useful spud. They may be due to root knot nematodes or to lenticels (a kind of breathing pore on the tuber) that have been infected by soft rot bacteria. Harvesting after the vines have been dead for a week or two to let the skin mature helps. If the potatoes are washed after harvest, make sure they are thoroughly dry before storing them. And store them in a dark cool place to keep them from turning green which results in solanine production, it's bitter and toxic. These small blemishes are fairly common on commercial potatoes.

What about the hollow heart? That's what it's called. It is a disorder not a disease, probably due to irregular growth rates for the tubers caused by rapid changes in moisture or some other environmental factor. His well-drained soil will make keeping a fairly steady level of moisture difficult during our summer droughts (good idea no matter the crop). The spuds that have this disorder and are otherwise relatively undamaged are OK to eat. **Enjoy.**

Seasonal Greens and Christmas Trees

by Kathleen Bander, MG 2012

'Tis the season! It's hard to know when it actually begins, given the marketing push that starts before Halloween, but I think now that December has arrived, we can confirm the holidays are just around the corner.

Many gardeners want to gussy up their houses and yards with natural materials. They look outside for inspiration, and find an amazing assortment of cuttings that would work wonderfully.

Of course the traditional holiday greenery is evergreen boughs, festooning the fireplace mantel, or shaped into swags or wreaths. For many of us, collecting the boughs is as easy as stepping into our gardens.

But for those who don't have that kind of access, there are other ways. You can buy them from nurseries. You can ask neighbors and friends if they wouldn't mind if you pruned their evergreens. Or you could go to a city park where wind and pruning often result in piles of boughs you can help yourself to.

Fresh greens, of course, don't stay fresh, and begin to look like the beginning of a compost pile as they desiccate and lose all color in the heat of our homes. There's a good fix for that, however. On a swag, for example, wrap the end of every stem with a small amount of paper towel that has been thoroughly moistened. Then wrap the paper towel with green florist's tape. That will give your greens many more days of freshness.

For those of you who want to reach beyond the traditional, I would suggest spray cans of gold, silver, red, etc. and some materials from your garden. I've found that anything in the

onion family that's gone to seed, producing lovely pom-poms, is a great source. But even old branches and twigs take on a magical look when first sprayed a color, and then sprayed with glitter.

This year I have a couple of gargantuan zucchini that I plan to spray paint. I've never seen anything like it, and I'll bet it'll be a good conversation starter. I might even affix some ornaments to it. I can see two of them, flanking the front door!

Dedicated gardeners often want to get live Christmas trees. The potted evergreen trees used as Christmas trees all do best in cool environments. They will not tolerate sustained artificial heat. At night you can turn the heat down. And try to keep the tree lights off as much as possible, as they produce a good deal of heat.

You should not expect your live tree to stay indoors for more than a week, at most. Make sure it's well-watered. Try to keep your house as cool as you can stand it, keeping the tree away from heat vents and fireplaces.

If at some point, you notice any yellowing of the tree's needles, take pity on the tree and move it outside. One rather elegant solution to the challenge of a live Christmas tree inside is to have it on a covered porch, where all the decorations and lights can be enjoyed through the windows and the tree can have the coolness it needs.

Whatever they are, once your decorations are in place, step back and admire. And have a Merry Season!

Gardening Gifts Galore!

by Kathleen Bander, MG 2012

With the gift-giving season almost upon us (how did that happen?) I have some great ideas for things any gardener might like. And I'm hoping my husband and son read this, as well!

Always heading my list are good gloves. A gardener simply can't have too many. Gloves come for many seasons and reasons. So be specific as you draw up your list.

Gardening tools. Again, can you have too many? Don't leave it to chance. Do an inventory of your tools and see what's missing or about to give up the ghost.

During those long winter months, holed up in front of the fire, nothing warms a gardener's heart better than a stack of gardening magazines. A couple of my favorites are, "Birds in Bloom" and "Fine Gardening." Along the same vein are all the gorgeous gardening books any gardener yearns for. Books by Sunset have lots of pictures, and recommend plants that will do well locally.

DVDs showing world gardens or special techniques (e.g., rose gardening, pruning, etc.) can be a great present for someone wanting to learn new tricks.

How about some certificates. No, not the kind you buy at a store, but the kind you make yourself. Like, for example, a certificate for spring visits to local display gardens, or to the Bouchard Gardens in British Columbia. Or for a preview of spring, a gift certificate promising a trip to Seattle in February for the Flower and Garden Show.



You can get creative with these home-crafted certificates. How about building raised beds, a compost system, a drip watering system, or an arbor? I don't think there's a gardener alive who wouldn't be delighted with an offer of this kind of project.

Now I recognize that not everyone has the knowledge or skill to build, install, etc. So how about thinking about another tack: "I pledge that I'll be the pile picker-upper, once a week for the year." Or, "I will be the garden servant, at your command and direction, on five occasions, 3 hours each, for a total of 15 hours." Of course, you can be as generous with your time as you wish.

These gifts are great if received from partners, but they're also good coming from children. Imagine how a mother will feel, getting a hand written gift certificate from one of her children, pledging to help in the garden.

So step off the impersonal gift merry-go-round, and give your gardener a present you know will delight. Be careful, however. We know from experience that the gardening bug is highly contagious!

November 25, 2013

2014 Mentor - Garden Buddy Program

You are invited to become part of the Master Gardener (MG) Mentor Program for the class of 2014. In its second year, WSU Extension wants to build a tradition of welcoming our interns to our MG community .

Developing a good relationship with your intern is the goal. As a mentor you will not need to be an expert on course material. What is needed is a personal connection and an understanding of the structure of the organization, the events, the gardens we work or sponsor, and most importantly that they are joining a caring, supportive community of fun, like-minded folks.

Diagnostic Clinic Support We will need help with training interns in the clinic. If you enjoy sharing your clinic experience with interns, we invite you to help out in that capacity only, or in addition to being a regular Mentor-Garden Buddy.

Master Gardener Mentor – Expectations

- Mentors will be considered more of a gardening "buddy" to the interns than an expert on subject matter. As such, developing a friendly relationship with the intern is very important as is introducing the intern to veteran Master Gardeners whenever possible.
- Mentor Buddies really need to attend the first day of class welcome potluck luncheon for the interns. This is when you will meet your intern. Date: Thursday, February 6th, at around noon, near the Extension office.
- Mentor Buddies should initiate contact with their intern at least once every two or three weeks by phone, email, or in person.
- Mentor Buddies are encouraged to garden with their intern at one of the ongoing MG projects (Hovander, Roeder Home, Community Gardens...etc.)
- The goals are to make your intern feel a part of the MG community, share personal gardening insights and experience, help the intern understand

1000 No. Forest, Suite 201, Bellingham WA 98225 * 360-676-6736

the scope and structure of the Master Gardener Program in Whatcom County, and answer and/or find answers to questions.

- If you are comfortable working in the Clinic you should meet your intern in the lab and show them the ins and outs.

Attached is pdf file of the WSU Mentor Job Description.

Please remember that this is an invitation to have fun!

Note: We are planning on having several mentors who feel comfortable in the Clinic at specific times to help interns in case you do not have much Clinic experience.

Please let us know if you would like to be a Clinic Mentor.

Sincerely,
Jerry Fenwick, MG 2013

Please send an email to JerryFenwick@me.com or call me at 360-325-2363 if you have questions or suggestions, and especially to sign up for this great opportunity. Thank you!!

1000 No. Forest, Suite 201, Bellingham WA 98225 * 360-676-6736

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of non-compliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

2014 Master Gardener Mentor Program Mentor Questionnaire

Purpose: matching mentors with interns

- 1) Name & Address

- 2) What year did you graduate from the MG program?

- 3) What master gardener efforts have you participated? Please list or describe.

- 4) What is your Master Gardener specialty?

- 5) Why are you interested in becoming a Mentor?

- 6) Outside of gardening, what are your interests/hobbies or skills and talents?
Eg. music, hiking, art, etc.

- 7) What is your preferred form of communication? (email, phone, text)

- 8) Any additional information?

1000 No. Forest, Suite 201, Bellingham WA 98225 * 360-6767-6736

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of non-compliance may be reported through your local Extension office.