

Scoop to Dirt

Yakima County Master Gardener News September 2025



CALLING ALL MASTER GARDENERS!!

TOMATO FEST 2025

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 at 12:00 pm
IN THE RED BARN



Bring a potluck dish based on your favorite tomato recipe.

Besides eating a fabulous lunch, we'll be taste-testing tomatoes. These are the categories: ***Ugliest Tomato, Most Beautiful Tomato, Sweetest Tomato, Best Tasting Tomato, and Best Cherry Tomato.*** ENTRIES IN ALL THESE CATEGORIES HAVE BEEN DECLINING IN RECENT YEARS! Come on! You're a Master Gardener, for crying out loud! We need more entries to make it fun. If you're growing tomatoes this year, please bring something in for judging.

If you bring a tomato for judging, your name will be entered in a raffle to win a valuable prize yet to be revealed! Who knows? Could be a new car, a Hawaii vacation, a new pair of gardening gloves, or a bottle of ketchup...You don't want to be left out.

Please bring your entries by 11:45 so we can log them in and get them displayed.

Foundation will provide everything else we need. The new class of 2026 Yakima Master Gardener trainees will be invited. Here's your chance to welcome them with open arms.

Please join us. Call ***Carol Barany*** if you have any questions at 509-901-9018.

Vegetable Garden Tour

Tuesday September 9th

New this year! Join the group in touring member vegetable gardens:

- ***Sarah Judd*** (Selah)
- ***Phyllis Pugnetti*** (East Valley)
- ***Kelly Klingman*** (West Valley)
- ***John Barany*** (Barge-Chestnut Neighborhood)

Meet to carpool at 9 am. Location TBD.

Save The Date!!

Saturday, October 25th
9am-4pm
MG Fall Symposium at PNWU

Reminder!

Foundation/Program Meetings

Wednesday, September 17th
@10:30 at the Red Barn

Although we are often thanked for our work in the clinic and the help we give clients, we don't often get such a response as we did from this recent client.

A gentleman came in recently with samples of his sweet gum tree. It was not looking very happy with leaves that had turned a purplish-reddish color. Clinic lead **Kim Foster** did some research through the WSU resources and found a related article. Her response to the client:

"Hi (Client),

The only article I can find is the science-based article we were looking at together at the office, which states, "Leaf reddening: Sweet gum trees can also exhibit leaf reddening as a response to water stress or transpiration-cooling failure.

This can be triggered by:

Water Stress

Periods of drought can cause the tree to prioritize survival by shedding some leaves.



Transpiration-Cooling Failure

If a tree can't effectively cool itself through transpiration (water evaporation from leaves), the leaves can turn red."

As discussed, moving the tree to a space with less hours of direct sunlight and mulching around the tree (at least 4 inches deep and two feet out from the trunk) are good first steps. Link to resource:

www.sciencedirect.com

Hope this helps.



Client Response: I really appreciate you looking into this. My mom and I found an area that should be perfect for the Sweet Gum with less direct sunlight! We're going to pick up some mulch tomorrow and I'll follow the directions you gave me for applying it. If we have any gardening related issues in the future that we can't solve, I'll be sure to reach out. Thanks again!

And, a follow-up email: Thank you again for helping me with the Sweet Gum. It's doing much better now that it's in a more shaded area. Most of the purplish, reddish color is gone already and it's only been a few days. I've attached a few pictures of the leaves now.



Have you seen the newly remodeled Answer Clinic?

Stop by the Extension Office and check it out!

Matching furniture, new chairs, updated logging system, and a cleaned-out refrigerator. Any one of our team members will be happy to give you a tour.

In the Greenhouse

Veggie Team Wants Your Help

Next year's plant sale may seem like the distant future, but it isn't. The veggie team is already thinking about which varieties of plants to offer at next year's sale.

The team's goal is to offer vegetable varieties that are not widely available at the local nurseries and, more importantly, to offer varieties that Master Gardeners enjoy and grow successfully. Our customers rely on our expertise and expect all the varieties we sell to come with our recommendation.

Each year the veggie team adjusts the plant list to include new varieties and delete varieties that did not sell. Now is the perfect time of the year to do this task, while we are dealing with the successes and failures of this year's garden.

The veggie team is asking for your input. Are there changes we should consider to our plant list? Is there a favorite variety that we do not offer, and should? Is there a variety that you could recommend to other Master Gardeners? Do we offer a variety that does not perform well in your garden? Is there a variety that you would like to add to the list to try?

Help us to provide a variety of plants that are truly a reflection of the veggies Master Gardeners grow in their gardens. Provide suggestions to: ***Don Flyckt, Beatrice Reiss or Kelly Klingman.***

Introducing the Washington Cherry Tomato

by Don Flyckt



If you have never grown the Washington Cherry tomato, it should be high on your list of tomatoes to consider for next year's garden. An early-fruiting tomato that thrives in containers or garden beds. The plants do not need pruning and may be grown without support.

The fruit are ready to harvest about 60 days after transplanting, approximately a week later than the Early Girl tomatoes. It is open pollinated and ripens within a concentrated time period (determinate type).

The plants have a high yield of deep-red, meaty fruit. The thick wall of the fruit provides them with a good shelf life both on and off the vine.

The fruits are a unique size about 1 ounce. Slightly larger than a typical cherry tomato and smaller than a salad tomato. Making them the perfect size for salads, snacks and vegetable platters.

Picnic in the Park 2025

Master Gardeners and their guests enjoyed a long table of delectable food at the annual picnic. Master Gardeners are such good cooks! Eric Prather, Larry's son, shared the bounty of their Selah farm with eager Master Gardeners. (Photos by Mary Kearney)



GivePulse Tip of the Month

Impact Summaries

We are approaching the time of year for reapplication to the program. Your GivePulse team receives many requests from individuals requesting their status. Do they have enough CE? Ten hours are needed. Where do they stand with volunteer hours? Just 25 hours are needed. **Please refer to these simple steps for finding your hours** (only verified hours will appear in your transcript):

- 1) Click on **Activity** in the top right of your screen.
- 2) Select **Impacts**.
- 3) On the right side of your screen, click the **Impact Summary** button.
- 4) Select **Filter by Date**.
- 5) Either enter the start date manually (01/01/2025) or click on the calendar and toggle back to January, selecting January 1. Do the same with the end date, choosing today's date.
- 6) Click on **Download**. A summary page will pop up.
- 7) The first page will give you all the information you need.

It has been strongly suggested that when logging in, DO NOT use the "Log In" route going through the pull-down menu in the upper right corner. Rather, click on the blue "[Log In](#)" button at the bottom of the page. It has been found that people accidentally click on "Sign In" and find directions to claim their account. Subsequently, they get locked out of their account.

Reflection of the month: *"What an exciting time of growth potential, hope and joy of the new participants and friends for Yakima MGs!"* listed under Program Support/Supportive Teams and Meetings.

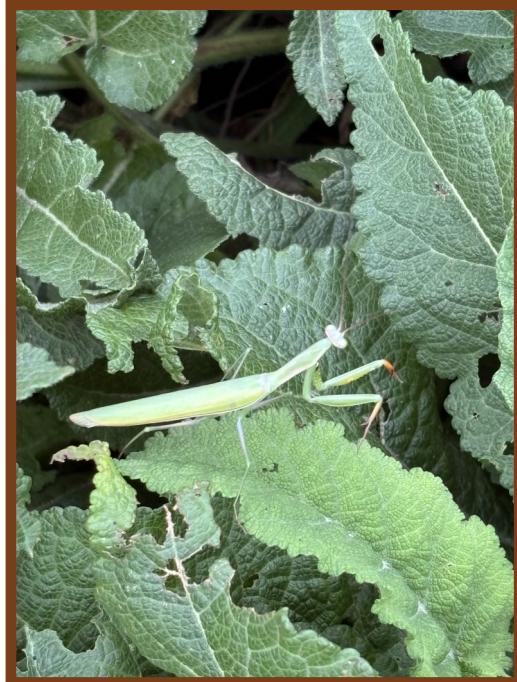
Also: *"This will be fun, 30+ interns!"* listed under Program Support/Supportive Teams and Meetings.

Why be timely in entering your impacts? In case of injury claim, L&I needs a record of our activity/work. Also, when applying for grants, our hours matter.

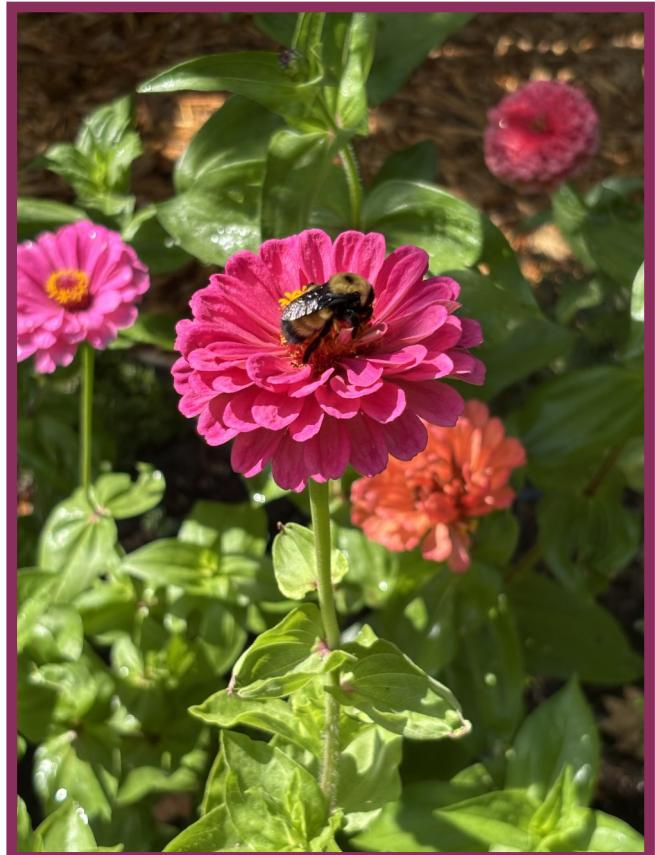
by Julie Hunziker



In The Gardens



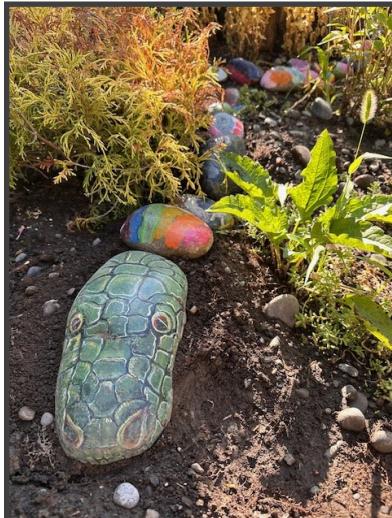
Left: The majestic Norway Spruce in the Ahtanum Demonstration Garden. Right: A Johnny Mantis descendent found at the West Valley Food Garden. Yes, it's actually a Praying Mantis.



One can never take enough photos of bumblebees on the zinnias in the Ahtanum Demonstration Garden, says photographer Kelli Barton.

Youth Team

Slither, the Snake, is finally installed at the Ahtanum Demonstration Garden! The head was masterfully created by our super talented *Debbie Sundlee*! The kids painted rocks at the Demonstration Garden Anniversary party and the farmers market. (Photos by *Kelly Klingman*)



The magnificent snake head designed and painted by *Debbie*. Knowing it would be a prime target for theft, it is securely lodged in the ground in concrete.



Master Gardeners at Home



Phyllis shares that everything for the pickles looks so pretty even before the pickles were made!



Are you reaping tomatoes? Phyllis found these beauties in her garden recently. The dark burgundy tomato weighed in at 12 ounces, both red tomatoes are one pound, and the gold tomato is a 2 pound monster!

Master Gardener Mission Statement:

"Engaging university-trained volunteers to empower and sustain communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education."

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension Office.

Botany Plants Lately?

REPORT JAPANESE BEETLE



AGR.WA.GOV/BEETLES

Be on the Look Out!

Have you seen this pest? Thousands of Japanese beetles have been found in Yakima, Benton, and Franklin counties. If you spot this pest, take a photo and report it at agr.wa.gov/beetles.

See it? Report it! Japanese beetles are destructive, invasive pests that attack over 300 types of plants.

Snap a photo and report at agr.wa.gov/beetles.

Floribunda: Tomato Harvest *by Carol Barany*

With all the blazing hot weather we've had, I came home from a few days at the beach expecting a garden full of ripe tomatoes. I was greeted by just the opposite. Ripening seems to be going slowly, almost like what happens in the cool temperatures of late September and October. After doing some investigating, it turns out that the optimum temperature range for ripening mature green tomatoes is 70-75 degrees F. The further temperatures stray from that range, the slower the ripening process will be. And when temperatures exceed 85-90 degrees F, ripening really slows or even stops. At high temperatures, lycopene and carotene, the pigments that give tomatoes their red and orange color, cannot be produced.

I also learned that while Yakima sunshine may be a boon for growing tomatoes, it's not necessary for ripening them, once they're mature. Increased ethylene synthesis is responsible for many of the processes that control ripening. That's why super market tomatoes can be picked green and stored in the absence of ethylene until just before marketing.

I'm not saying we have no tomatoes. I pulled my first-of-the-season tray of beauties from the oven this week, roasted in fragrant garlic and olive oil. I stumbled on this preservation technique several seasons ago. After trying it just once, I gave up canning tomatoes forever. I can't explain why these tomatoes are so good. I just thank whatever mysterious alchemy is at work here, transforming even ho-hum tomatoes into an intensely sweet succulence luscious enough to scoop right off the tray and eat with a spoon.

Start with the ripest tomatoes. They ripen from bottom to top, but some heirlooms can ripen unevenly. You can pick them even if their shoulders are still a little green. Just set them on the counter for a few days to complete ripening. Never store tomatoes in the refrigerator. Not only does flavor suffer, but ripening enzymes are destroyed by cold temperatures in the refrigerator, just as they are in the garden.

I use 12" x 18" rimmed baking sheets, but any size pan will work. Chunk washed tomatoes into rough, 2" pieces. You can leave cherry tomatoes whole. There's no need to peel. Something happens to the skins during roasting. They become meltingly soft and almost disappear.

Arrange the tomatoes in a single layer of pieces packed closely together, and top with a chunked sweet onion or two, and 6 (more or less) peeled garlic cloves. Season with salt and pepper. Add several liberal glugs of olive

oil, enough to lavishly coat all the veggies, and toss with a spatula.

Roast in a 400 degree oven for about 40 minutes (cooking time will vary depending on the size of the pan and the juiciness of the tomatoes), stirring occasionally. They're done when most of the juices have cooked down into thick, olive-oily syrup. The tomatoes and onions should be caramelized and getting a bit of char around the edges. Cool.



Freeze the roasted tomatoes as they are, or pulsed in the food processor into a chunky puree. Either way, this concoction makes a perfect pizza or pasta sauce. It's a versatile base for a host of hearty winter soups, including lentil or white bean. Slather it on toasted baguettes and savor the flavor of summer in the depths of winter. The possibilities are endless. And since you've already done all the cooking before this sauce goes in the freezer, this is 'fast' food at its finest.

If you don't have enough tomatoes to roast by the tray yet, you can make salsa. I've been making it for weeks now, adjusting the recipe to accommodate whatever else I happen to be harvesting.

The basic recipe is to throw about 3 cups of ripe tomatoes in the food processor, along with a Walla Walla sweet onion, one bunch of fresh cilantro, and the juice of a lime. There's one ingredient that's non-negotiable. Add a 7.75 ounce can of "El Pato" brand hot tomato sauce. Look for it in a bright yellow can with a duck on the label in the Mexican food aisle at most grocery stores. Pulse the ingredients to your preferred degree of chunkiness. Add salt and pepper to taste, and maybe a splash of balsamic vinegar. Lately, I've been adding fresh corn cut from the cob, peaches, or nectarines.

It's so simple, and once you taste it, you'll be making this salsa all summer long.

Master Gardener Venue Work Seasons												
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Enrichment Classes at Arboretum	Orange	Orange										
Greenschool	Brown	Brown								Brown	Brown	Brown
Classes in the Gardens					Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue				
Answer/Plant Clinic	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red		Red	Red
Demonstration Gardens			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
Demonstration Garden (Ahtanum)			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
Heirloom Kamiakin			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
WVFG			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
Greenhouse		Green	Green	Green						Green	Green	Green
Annuals	Green	Green	Green	Green						Green	Green	Green
Arts	Green				Green	Green	Green	Green				
Hanging Baskets												
Herbs												
Perennials												
Vegetables												

Program Priority Focus: Water Conservation

The Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program promotes water-wise gardening and landscaping practices to conserve water. The program drives lasting environmental stewardship by equipping communities with science-based water conservation practices that safeguard public health, protect ecosystems, and ensure the sustainability of local water resources. Through education, outreach, and hands-on demonstrations, volunteers provide individuals with the knowledge and tools to reduce pollution, improve water quality, and strengthen resilience against environmental challenges. Their efforts seek to lower municipal costs, enhance local water systems, and foster a culture of sustainability, ensuring that clean, accessible water remains available for future generations. Briefly through:

- * Drought Tolerant Landscaping
- * Drip Irrigation
- * Irrigation Timing
- * Watering
- * Understanding Plant's Water Needs

Materials Needed

Dear Pressed Flower Enthusiasts,

We Master Gardeners who enjoy pressed flower art are low in material. Projects in the fall and winter include greeting cards for our sunshine committee and then to community outreach classes and demonstrations. Please take some time each week as you garden to collect and press material to include flowers, herbs, leaves, stems, etc. There are many techniques to press. However, simply sandwich material on paper towel and place a heavy book on top. Let dry for 2 weeks. Store in a dry place. It's that easy.

We can advise, help collect, and/or store your stuff. Just reach out.

~Mary Kearney and Diana Pieti



Guiding Principles

Act Respectfully
Lead Supportively
Adaptability
Work Together
Always Learning
Emphasize Quality
Communicate Effectively
Be Honest
Take Responsibility

WE WANT YOU—

To think about becoming a member of the Writer's Guild by contributing an article for submission to the Yakima Herald Republic. You do not have to be a professional writer; you just need to be willing to tell a story and put it down in writing. Well, it does have to have something to do with gardening here in Central Washington, but other than that it is your story to tell.

Some possible topics to write about are: what's happening in your garden right now; how did you design the layout of your garden; what are your favorite plants to grow; who got you into gardening in the first place; what challenges have you faced in the garden; what has been your most successful garden adventure; what is the best thing about gardening for you; and the list goes on and on. You are only limited by your imagination!

Each article needs to be about 700-750 words long and if you have a photo to go along with the article even better. If you are worried about things like punctuation and grammar, we can help you with that. If you think your writing is not polished enough, we can help with that too. You just need to be willing to try – and think about this, you will enjoy a bit of local fame when you see your name in print!

Please contact **Carol Barany** or **Melody Westmoreland** and we will help you get started; we would love to add you to our team.

Happy Birthday!!

9/1 Reggie Sanderson
9/7 Laura Gaviglio
9/7 Rosebud Guthrie
9/10 Ken Tolonen
9/17 Joanne Davis
9/18 Angela Galbreath
9/27 Joan Sousley
9/30 Sue Karstetter



Plant a Row

Did you buy extra plants at our big sale? Are your vegetables taking off with the heat? Are you wondering what to do with all those peppers, squash, or zucchini? How many tomatoes do you really need? No need to fear being overtaken by your garden. **Sarah Judd** and **Kelly Klingman** are spearheading the Plant a Row project. If you have extra produce, donate to a local food bank. Use the form [here](#) to record your donations and then turn it in to **Patty** at the end of the season. Each 10 pounds of produce equates to 1 hour of time in GivePulse, with a maximum of 10 hours/year. A list of food banks can be found on our volunteer portal at <https://yakima.mastergardenerfoundation.org/volunteer-portal/>



Plant a Row For Our Greater Yakima Community

"Plant Your Garden, Grow Your Community."



Join WSU Yakima County Master Gardeners and **"Plant an extra row"** of produce to donate and feed Yakima County families.



scan code to go direct to our volunteer website.



WSU EXTENSION
Yakima County

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

Garden Classes

2025 Demonstration Garden Classes

Date	Topic	Presenter
Sept 13th	Winter Garden, Deciduous Forest, Tree & Shrub Data Project **A MG/Yakima Area Arboretum collaborative class, to be held at YAA	Karl Graf, YAA Board Member

2025 Heirloom Garden Classes

Date	Topic	Presenter
Sept 6th	Fall Tool Maintenance	MB Rick Russell

2025 WVFG Garden Classes

Date	Topic	Presenter
Sept 20th	Gardening to Help Native Bees	MG Don Flyckt

Looking for Continuing Education?

Local Resources:

- * **Arboretum Classes**
- * **YCMG Fall Symposium** (October 25th at PNWU)
- * **Master Gardener Demonstration Garden Classes** (Every Saturday in a different Garden)
- * **Master Gardener Yard Tours** (June) / Veggie Garden Tour (September 9th)
- * **Enrichment Classes** (January and February...they've passed, but look for them in 2026)
- * **In-person labs for trainees** (and veterans): Oct 1st & 29th, Nov 19th, Jan 29th, March 11th & 18th

Online Resources:

- * **Evergreen Thumb Podcast** (WSU Master Gardeners)
- * **WSU Extension Master Gardeners Virtual AEC** (Sept 26th-27th, recordings available online until 2/6/26) Register [here](#).
- * **Oregon State University** (Free webinars the 2nd Tuesday of each month at noon) Click [here](#).
- * **Oregon State University MG Short Course Series** (some free, most have a low cost). Click [here](#).
- * **Cowlitz County Master Gardeners Online classes** [here](#). Most Tuesdays at noon.
- * **From Roots to Results: Exploring the Cooperative Extensions Role and Impact.** Click [here](#)
- * San Juan County WSU MG Garden Workshop Series (\$35; online webinar Oct 14, 16, 18, & 23) Click [here](#) for information and registration

WSU Extension Master Gardener Advanced
Education Conference

Cultivating **RESILIENCE**

September 26-27, 2025

Registration opens June 1

Shared Learning Experience



You are Invited to our Regional AEC Shared Learning Experience!

WSU Yakima Extension Conference Room

Friday, September 26, 2025

9:00 am - 12:20 Annual Meeting,
State Awards & Keynote Speaker

12:20 Potluck*

1:00 Session 1

2:40 Session 2

You can stay for a portion or
all of the event

AEC Cost: \$109 June 1 - July 15

\$129 from July 16 - Sept. 25

There is **no additional cost for this
gathering**. Please check the **Yakima
Shared Learning Experience box**
when signing up for the AEC.

**For those traveling from Benton-Franklin or Asotin Counties
please bring easy items to share for the potluck.*

Yakima County MG Leaders

Answer/Plant Clinic: Andrea Altmayer/Kim Foster

Greenhouse: Camille Smith/Skip Brockman/Kelli Barton

Annuals: Lorie Harrison/Camille Smith/Deanna Husch

Perennials: Carol Barany/Melody Westmoreland

Herbs: Diana Pieti/Diane Berthon

Hanging Baskets: Mary Hewitt/Shellie Oshie/Cathy Penny

Vegetables: Don Flyckt/ Beatrice Reiss

Art: Jenny Mansfield/Mary Hewitt/Debbie Sundlee

Plant Sale: Laura Willet, Reggie Sanderson

Demonstration Gardens:

Ahtanum: Sue Schauer/Skip Brockman/Kelli Barton **Classes:** Annette Olson/Sue Schauer

Heirloom Garden: Sally Mayo/Reggie Sanderson/Sarah Judd

West Valley: Camille Smith/Kelli Barton/John Strong

Youth Program: Kelly Klingman/Jennifer Harris

Writer's Guild/Speaker's Bureau: Carol Barany/Melody Westmoreland/Claudia Steen

Publications: Julie Hunziker/Debra Kroon/Rhonda Gardinier/Steve Kuhn

Social Media: Kelly Klingman

Garden Tour: Jenny Mansfield/Lucy Stevens/ Barbara Schmitt

Facilities: Reggie Sanderson/Mary Kearney

Advisory Board: Debra Kroon/John Strong/Melody Westmoreland/Michelle Murphy

Mentor Team: Debra Kroon/Melody Westmoreland/Julie Hunziker

Yakima County Master Gardener Garden Locations

Demonstration Garden (Ahtanum):

1000 Ahtanum Road, Union Gap
(by Red Barn)

Heirloom Garden:

1522 South 18th Avenue, Yakima
(just south of the greenhouses)

West Valley Food Garden:

602 South 123rd Ave, Yakima

MG Program Priorities

Local Food

Pollinators

Wildfire Preparedness

Water Conservation

Clean Water

Climate Change

Nearby Nature

Plant Biodiversity

Soil Health

Foundation Board

President: Rick Russell

Vice President: Dick Larson

Treasurer: Gilbert Plascencia

Secretary: Carrie Chicken

Members at Large: Beatrice Reiss/Steve Kuhn

Past President: Dan Fortier

Program Coordinator: Patricia Ratzlaff

Newsletter submissions are due on the 25th of each month. Please send to Julie at jbhunziker@gmail.com. Texting photos (portrait format preferred) and brief descriptions are fine, as well: (530)209-4329. Please include your name so that credit can be given to the source.

September 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 <i>Labor Day</i>	2	3 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	4 WVFG 8-11	5	6 Garden Class Fall Tool Maintenance 10-11 Heirloom DG
7 Yakima Herald Article	8 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	9 Veggie Garden Tour 9 am	10 Answer Clinic Demo Garden Trainee Orientation Luncheon @Ext Office 12-2	11 WVFG 8-11 Heirloom Garden 8-11	12 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	13 Garden Class Arboretum Tree Data Project 10-11 @ Arboretum
14 Yakima Herald Article	15 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	16	17 Answer Clinic Demo Garden Foundation/ Program Mtg @ 10:30 Red Barn	18 WVFG 8-11 Heirloom Garden 8-11	19 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	20 Garden Class Gardening for Native Bees 10-11
21 Yakima Herald Article	22 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	23	24 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4 Demo Garden	25 WVFG 8-11 Heirloom Garden 8-11	26 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	27
Central WA State Fair			← Central WA State Fair			
Farmer's Market 9-1			TomatoFest @Red Barn 12-2			
Farmer's Market 9-1			Heirloom Garden 8-11			
YKM Herald Article	29 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	30	— 2025 MG AEC —			
Farmer's Market/ Youth Team 9-1						



Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact: WSU Extension/2403 South 18th Street/ Union Gap, WA 98903/509-574-1600.

For accommodation please call at least two weeks prior to the event. WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination.