Scoop o' Dirt
Yakima County Master Gardener News
October 2026

'WE GREW LUNCH'

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7
NOON IN THE RED BARN



Gardeners know that preparing and eating our own homegrown food is pure happiness. Sharing a meal is a timeless, yet becoming increasingly rare, means to human connection. A farm-to-table meal is the perfect way to share our bounty and 'do life' with friends. We especially extend a warm invitation to our newest Yakima County Master Gardeners.

Please join us for this annual celebration of our garden harvests. THIS IS NOT A POT LUCK EVENT!!!! All the food is being prepared by the We Grew Lunch committee. A very special menu has been planned. Just bring your appetites, and we'll send you home with happy grins on your faces. Spread the word!

Central Washington State Fair
Master Gardener Booth

September 25 thru October 4

We need two volunteers for each shift (2 shifts per day.)

Volunteers receive one ticket to the fair for the day they volunteer. One parking pass is given for each shift, so car-pooling is recommended.

Sign up here: yakimamg.ivolunteer.com/fair_001

FIVE SEASONS
The Gardens of Piet Oudolf



Friday, October 9, 2026
Two Showings



Join us for this remarkable showing
Two viewings to choose from. Register Now!

Showing 1: 1:30 to 3:00 pm
Showing 2: 6:00 to 7:30 pm

Yakima County Extension Office
Large Training Room

Bring a Friend! You must register for one of the showings. **No Walk-ins.**

go to iVolunteer to register

Click here to Register

Master Gardeners at the Fair



Our speakers in the Ag Building on both Saturdays: ***Melody*** *(Cover Crops),* ***Darrell*** *(Knots),* ***Carol*** *(Dahlias),* ***Debra*** *(Pollinators)*



Friday at the MG booth: ***Angela*** *and* ***Patty D.***



Manning the MG Booth: ***Angela*** *and* ***Debbie***



Sharing their Monday at the MG booth: ***Sue S****. and* ***Barb S.***

Intern Focus

More interns have completed the 40 required hours, in addition to the GreenSchool and in-person labs, to become a certified Master Gardener. ***Elizabeth Chicken, Laura Lai, Barbara Glover, Chris Osburn, Gary Cooper, Susan Martin, and Jayme Hardyman*** all reached the goal in September. Kudos to them! And a job well done. That makes 13!! A few more are close. Honors will come at our Awards Luncheon in February.

Interns, we can't track your progress unless your impacts are entered in GivePulse. Time to work in the Gardens is winding down and we need to know if you have put in the time. In a month, it will be too late to work in the gardens, as well as the Answer Clinic and Youth table at the farmer's market.

Master Gardener Winners at the Fair

Several Master Gardeners had entries at the Central Washington State Fair and were awarded ribbons!





Above and Right: ***Angela Galbreath*** entered roses and a palm. Looks like the palm was a big winner!

Intern ***Chris Osburn*** entered garlic, peppers, and butternut squash.

Kelly K. entered a pepper and a couple varieties of tomatoes.









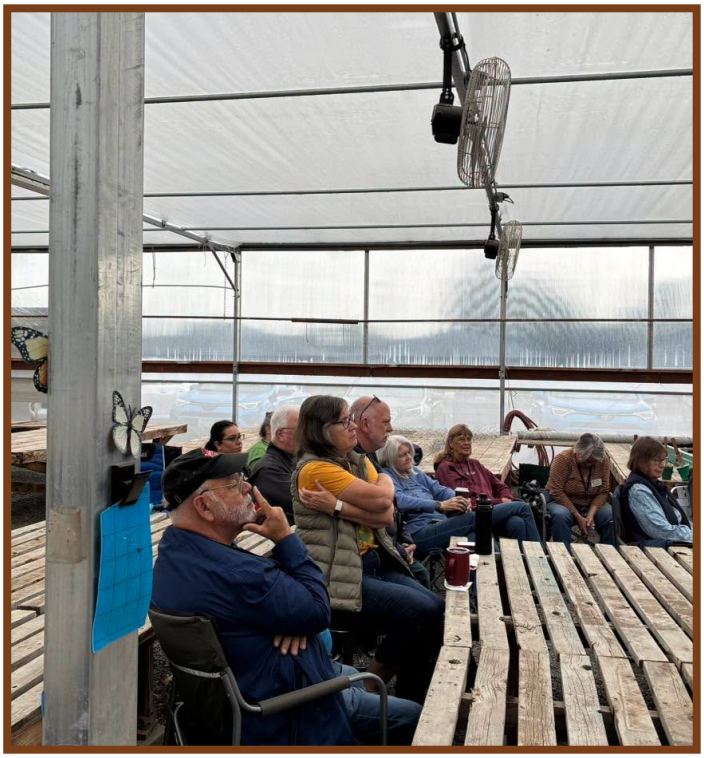




Classes in the Garden

Don Flyckt taught a class in which he focused on a few of the important bees that are great pollinators in our area. The rainy morning may have kept a few guests away, but those that braved the weather were treated to a class inside the greenhouse. Don, as well as class attendees, were patient with the youngsters who were engaged and inquisitive.









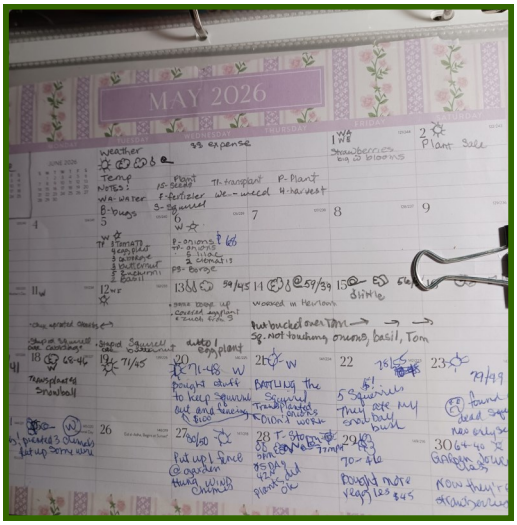
Newsletter submissions are due on the 25th of each month. Please send to Julie via text at (530)209-4329 or by email: jbhunziker@gmail.com. Please include your name so that credit can be given to the source.

Starting a Garden Journal

by ***Connie Mey***

On Saturday, May 30, I had the opportunity to attend a Teachable Moments class at Ahtanum Park Garden, presented by MG ***Diana Pieti***. Her topic was "The Joy of Garden Journaling." I have attended many of these classes, but my thoughts as I traveled to this class were "sure, I've tried that before and fallen flat." Truthfully, I was going just because being there added another hour to my intern volunteer time. But I was in for a shock. You see, Diana admitted that she had started the journaling process several times and failed, too. Imagine, a successful MG like Diana failing at something, just like me! With that short statement, she had me hooked. Diana showed the group her previous attempts…a strong start followed by blank pages.

I thought it must not be all that bad to have a great idea that goes nowhere. I went home with a resolve to try the journaling trip again. I dug up my previous attempts, pages full of…nothing! Not many words, no pictures, or even ideas of what I wanted to accomplish. There has to be a way of journaling that keeps me interested and writing. So, I used Pinterest, getting ideas of what others do and the materials they used.



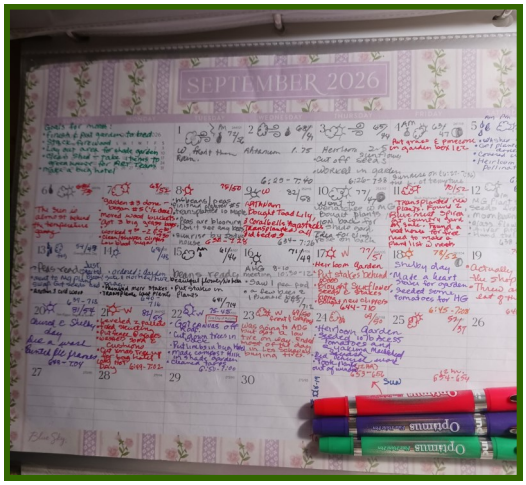
May Calendar

I settled on a flowery snap notebook (from the thrift store – I didn't want to invest too much in case this one flopped too!) with a very cheap monthly calendar which had a square for each day of the month. I wrote with a pencil in case it still didn't work and I could still use the calendar for something else. I was full of confidence and faith, ha! And off I went, beginning with an entry of attending Diana's class. Because the squares on the calendar were so small, I ended up just bulleting my activities.

But a strange thing began to happen. As the squares began to fill up, I developed a form of 'garden shorthand' to fit all I did each day. And I discovered I did a lot. I used a picture system to record the weather each day, a little sun, a cloud, a rain drop, etc. I wrote the temperature high and low. Eventually I even tracked the moon phases and the sunrise and sunset times. At the beginning of each month, I took a picture of my garden and flower beds. (Really, these are still on my phone, but I have plans to get them printed and pasted to the correct month.) When I came across ideas or information that pertained to my garden, I saved it to my phone (maybe I should sit down soon and get all of this printed out). And best of all, I found that I love journaling, Four full months with no blanks. And now I journal using a thin-line gel pen. No turning back. Oh, the places Master Gardeners will take you!

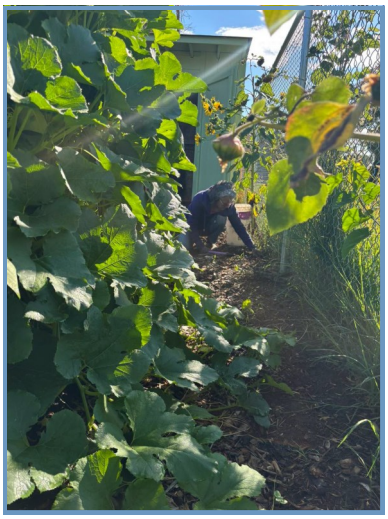
I do have some things I will change next calendar year. First, I will get a larger calendar – at least one with larger squares and darker print. Second, hopefully I will print those pictures, articles and ideas a little faster. But the one thing I hope not to change is giving up. It's kind of exciting to look back at what the garden was doing in May compared to September. And I never realized just how fast the daylight disappears in the fall.

My advice...try it, you'll like it. And attend those Teachable Moment classes on Saturday mornings in the summer. You may have an AHA moment, too. Thank you, Diana.



September Calendar

Interns at Work



Catherine Patnode



Gary Cooper



Chris Osburn



Jayme Hardyman



Don Mayo (L) & Mikki Boughton
(with Patty F)



Ashley Haney



Christina Nyirati & Barbara Glover



Andrea Jimenez



PJ McGrath



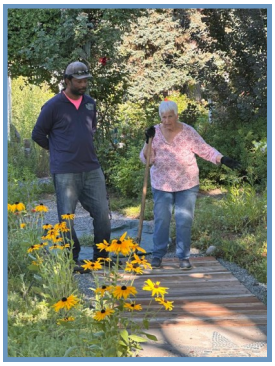
Connie Mey & Semone Dittentholer



Mikki Boughton



Laura Lai



Rod Greggs *(with Diana)*



Susan Martin



Elizabeth Chicken



Connie Mey

Garden Tour: Derby Canyon Natives



On September 10th, many of us traveled to Derby Canyon Natives along with Master Gardeners from Kittitas County. We were given an exclusive guided tour of the nursery nestled between a fruit orchard that was started in 2003. We learned about using long slender containers to accommodate the taproots of native plants, observed one of their original employees setting up an assortment of pots, saw their immense recycling and storage of various nursery pots in apple bins, dozens of wheel barrows, saw the loading dock where special blends of soil is mixed on site, saw how they staged plants on the sloping terraces based on watering needs, viewed a few of their green houses and admired the dedication shown to using native plants. The nursery has a skeleton crew of 5 full time employees and 4 part time employees hired in the spring that grow more than 150,000 plants each year that are sold commercially, to the general public, and to many soil conservation districts. At the end of our excursion, we were allowed to purchase native plants not found in any big box store or local nursery. And, boy did we purchase plants! Our small group purchased several hundred dollars worth of plants. We proved we never can have enough plants and are planning on a shopping trip next spring.













Clockwise from top center: Bree talks to the group of Master Gardeners about the work that goes on at the nursery; Master Gardeners give rapt attention as they learn about the Derby Canyon operation; a worker fills trays with the cylindrical starter pots; MGs proved to be avid plant shoppers and enjoyed the input of fellow gardeners; numerous cylindrical pots ready to be sorted and filled; ***Debbie, Gilbert,*** *and* ***Barb*** *listen intently to our hostess. (Photos by* ***Jenny Mansfield****)*

Garden Tour: Wenatchee Community Demonstration Garden

*By **Jenny Mansfield***

We next went to the Wenatchee Community Demonstration Garden located near the WSU Wenatchee Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center. This garden began in 2010, is easily navigable for wheelchairs for easy access, the signage at entrance is very welcoming and plants, shrubs and trees are labeled throughout. A very large pergola had been constructed years ago to accommodate space to bring out tables and chairs for educational classes and we had the pleasure of having our lunch there while the Program Coordinator gave a presentation to us. Paths wander throughout the dahlia area where netting was being used to support stems, through the rose garden, vegetable garden, pollinator/cutting garden, sensory garden for children with an amazing caterpillar bench made out of an old tree, and an evergreen garden. We viewed a compost section that demonstrated many different ways of composting and even a hardscape area demonstrating varying materials used for mulch and surface areas in the garden. We viewed many different types of raised beds: concrete blocks, metal troughs, and wood that were all planted to demonstrate different ways to garden based on personal preferences and availability of materials to fit your budget. Some of the wood raised beds had benches on top of the side boards to enable a garden- er to sit while weeding, watering or harvesting. Every tree, shrub, plant, groundcover was labeled for identification as pointed out by our tour guide, Chelan-Douglas County Foundation President. She indicated they have approximately 120 Master Gardener volunteers and a yearly budget very similar to Yakima County. She mentioned different teams maintain areas of the garden and whenever a tree or shrub is removed, they gather input from the volunteers for approval or consideration. A lot of thought and planning went into this garden and it showed in every corner. This was such an educational and enjoyable event and we had perfect weather. (Photos by ***Jenny Mansfield***)







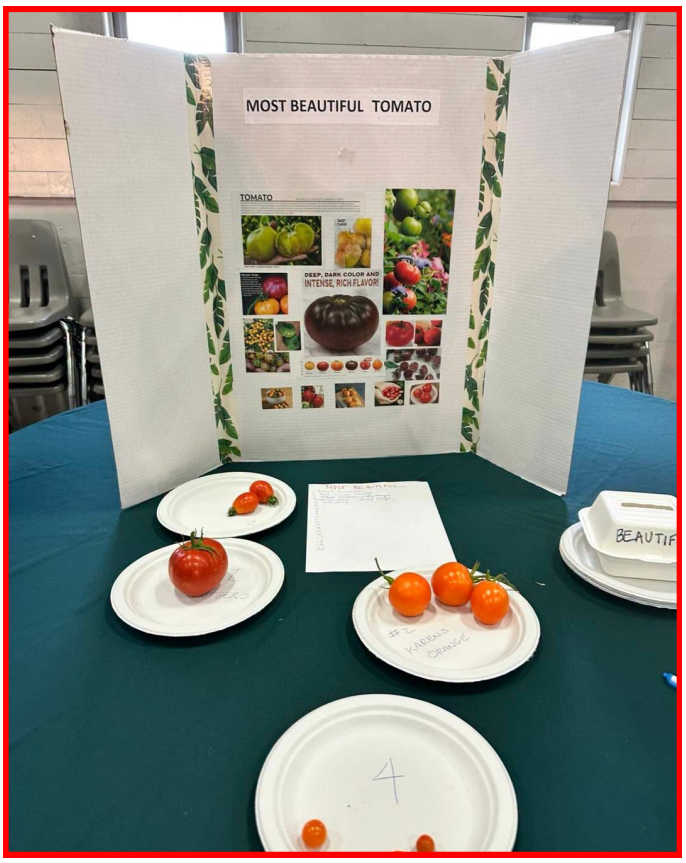




TomatoFest 2026: It's a Wrap!



Plenty of tomato-based food at the potluck lunch!



Entries for the Most Beautiful tomato.



Entries for the Ugliest Tomato



Great fellowship while sharing a yummy meal and puzzling over tomato trivia.

Around Our Gardens

Heirloom Garden

(Photos by ***Kelly K.***)



*Interns **Sandy R** and **Pam D** have fun working together.*



Tomatoes! Ready to harvest and dry the seeds for the seed library.



***Sarah J.** walks through the garden studying the status of the produce.*



*Intern **Mikki** tackles the ever present weeds.*



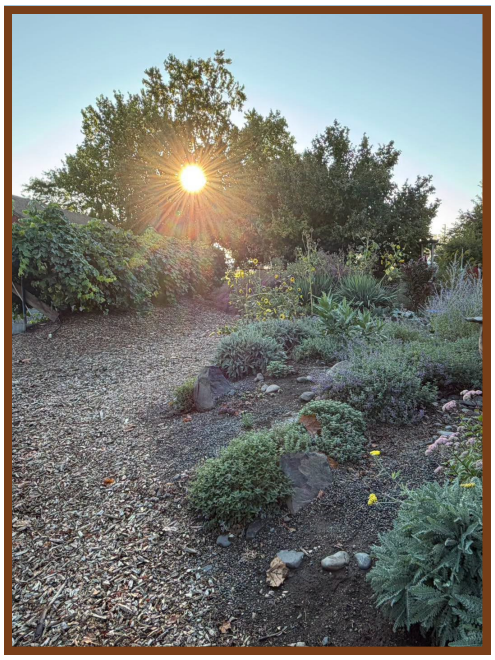
***Sally** is in her happy place working in the Heirloom Garden.*



***Jan Miller** and intern **Teri Z.** share a laugh as they harvest and sort tomatoes.*

The <u>September Answer Clinic</u> Meeting will be Thursday October 22nd @ 1:30 at the Extension Office

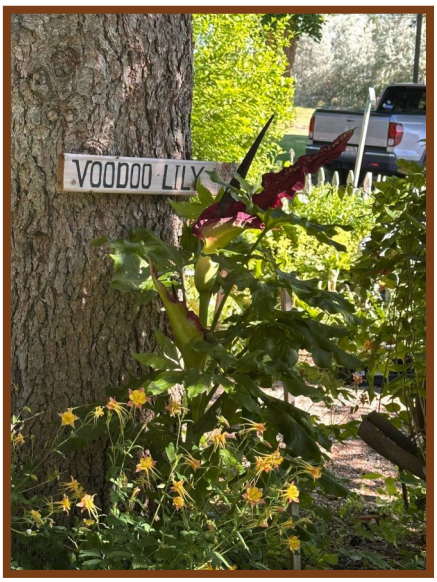
Ahtanum Park



Good Morning, Garden!!



***Renee'** brings her daughter and grandkids regularly to the garden for a visit.*



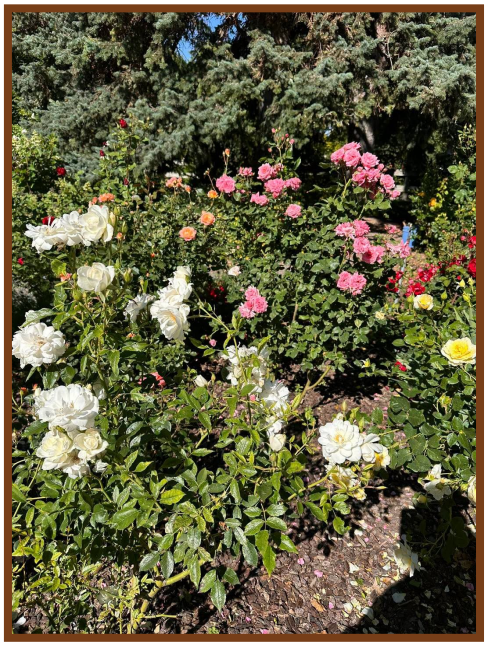
Voodoo Lily's annual bloom.



The freshly painted crayon fence in the Children's Garden is bright and cheery.



The ladder filled with bird houses welcomes winged visitors.



The roses are bountiful this time of year.



*Left: Workers bring a plethora of snacks which **Marj** organizes and complements with her specialty coffee drinks.*

*Right**: Diana** has her arms full as she works in the garden.*



Hide-and-Seek in the Garden



*There's **Karen T**, trying to duck the camera.*



***Shelly** pops up to say, "I'm here!"*



Amber found herself in a thorny situation and couldn't escape the camera.



*Fortunately, **Suzann**'s red apron makes her visible.*



***Mary** tries to get lost in the grapevines.*



***Annette** isn't usually hard to find with her bright smile.*

Program Meeting
Wednesday Oct 21st @ 11:00
at the Red Barn

West Valley Food Garden



Laura L, Kelli B, *and* ***Sandy*** *work along the row of peppers.*





Steve *and* ***Darrell*** *talk gardening.*



Vine-ripened tomatoes



Intern ***Cindy Fontaine*** *fills her colander with beans.*



Off to the food bank.



Jayme *harvests the beans growing overhead on the bean trellis.*

Kamiakin Garden



I went to the Kamiakin garden today where I was greeted by ***Gary Cooper*** and ***Rosebud Guthrie.*** Thirty-two 3x6 raised beds form the shape of an arrowhead. Ten of those are reserved for two programs and the remaining twenty-are given each year by sign-up on a first come first served basis. It was a lovely place to visit. Thank you Gary and Rosebud!

~ ***Melody Westmoreland***















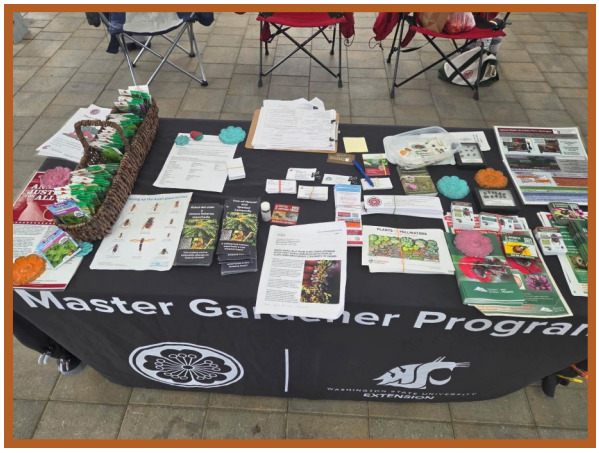




Farmer's Market



Patty F, Ken *and* ***Laura*** *on a recent Sunday at the Farmer's Market table.*



There's a plethora of information available for the public.



Ken and Gilbert welcome the public and their questions..



Ken *gives a pup a hand.*

Youth Outreach



At the September Farmer's Market MG Youth Table, veteran ***Patty Fendall*** and intern **Joe Briscoe** taught the kids the value of microgreens and helped them get some seeds started. The youth were so excited to take something home to put on their windowsill.



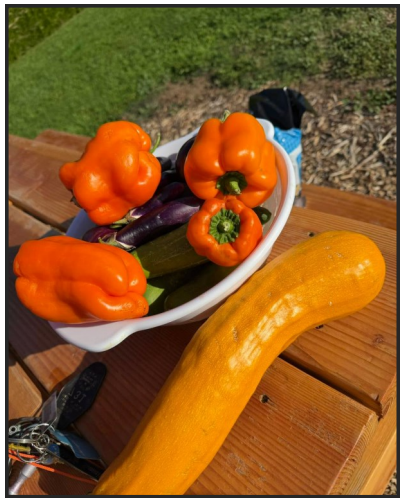
Plant-A-Row

Just some of the produce that has been brought to the gardens to be taken to a local food bank. Every little bit adds up.













Yakima County MG Garden Locations

Ahtanum Park Garden:
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
Kamiakin Gardens:
1020 Fort Road, Toppenish

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:

Audrey Baker

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.

Floribunda: Don't Go Bare, Cover it Up!

(Or, why you need to consider a cover crop this year) by Melody Westmoreland

This is a story about cover crops, but first a little history lesson for those of you who are not old enough to remember it (which is most of us at this point). The Great Dust Bowl of the 1930's is one of the most important events in America's journey. Could it have been avoided if farmers at the time had only thought about cover crops? Because there were multiple contributing factors, it would have been unlikely. Think Manifest Destiny, drought, inexperienced farmers and falling wheat prices in Europe.

But perhaps it would not have been quite so devastating. Newly minted farmers dug up the grasslands of the prairies to plant more and more wheat fields. Mother Nature's cover crop – the grasses – were destroyed and fallow fields allowed the top soils to blow away, leaving destitution and dust in their wake. We'll never know….

A cover crop is just that, something grown to cover the soil during the period when you are not actively growing vegetables and herbs. It is temporary in nature and accomplishes multiple things: it keeps the soil from lying fallow and vulnerable, keeps the weeds from invading and taking over your garden, and adds nourishment back to depleted soil. A cover crop also attracts and feeds pollinators when not much else is available to them. A cover crop can be planted any time of year, but is often used in the cold weather. It can be used in both large and small areas, including containers and raised beds.

There are both warm and cold season cover crops. The warm season crops concentrate on weed suppression and pollinator support. The cold season crops work to rebuild the soil and fix nitrogen. You can cover all the bases by planting a variety of crops.

There are custom blends designed for different areas of the country so you can purchase just what you need. Fall planted cover crops germinate slowly and spend the winter months developing their root systems. When the weather begins to warm in the spring they emerge with a flush of top growth. After they flower, but before they seed, you will till the leaves, stems, roots, and flowers back into the ground to amend your soil. In 2-3 weeks, your bed is ready to plant again.

Some examples of warm season cover crops are buckwheat, sorghum-sudangrass, some of the millets and annual alfalfa. These plants do not tolerate cold weather but do well in the summer and fall seasons.

Cold season crops include cereal rye, winter wheat, winter triticale, oats, barley, and annual ryegrass.

Some great resources to help in your decision of what to plant are Washington State University Extension Fact Sheets FS117E and FS119E. If you want even more information, *Groundcover Revolution by Kathy Jentz provides detailed information on the pros and cons of specific groundcover crops.*

To be successful in your cover crop journey you must consider the following four questions. What is your goal with the cover crop? What are you planting after the cover crop? How are you going to terminate your cover crop? And, how are you going to establish the cover crop you choose?



Common goals might be to address soil compaction, depleted soils, bio-fumigation of the soil, and mulch covers. You would not want to plant a mulch crop if you are planning to direct seed afterwards – you would be feeding more birds than actually growing anything!

Gardeners need to prepare their soil for a cover crop. You cannot simply toss seeds into a weed bed and pray – your problems won't be solved.

Once a cover crop has been established, the most common methods of terminating the crop are smash and cover, crimping and cutting the top foliage to eliminate nutrients getting to the roots. Or, you can plant something that will not withstand the cold temperatures of winter and will die back naturally.

This is not an article to give you every detail of cover crops. It is an effort to get you thinking about them, and hopefully to encourage you to consider them and do the research to discover what is the best solution for your garden.

GivePulse Tip of the Month

*by Julie **Hunziker***

- As we enter the season of re-application, I receive numerous requests for members' status. Here's how to find your transcript:

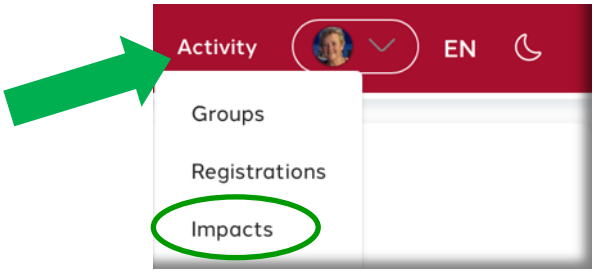
Obtain Transcript in GivePulse

Note: Refer to the **Quick Guide: Log Into GivePulse** for help logging in and **ALWAYS** log in from:

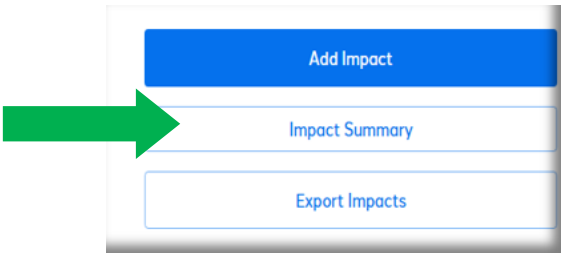
https://wsu.givepulse.com/group/453187-WSU-Yakima-County-Master-Gardeners

Important: Only **Verified** impact entries will appear in your transcript. Pending and Disputed entries will not be included.

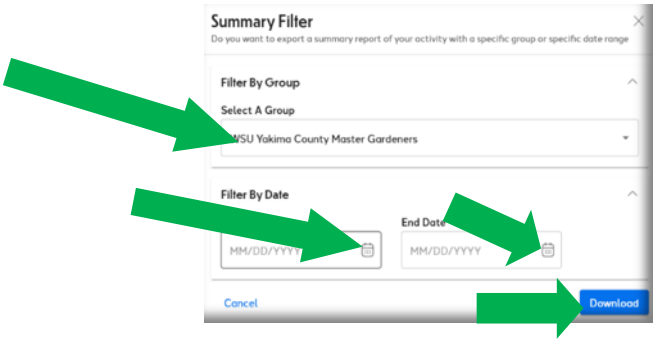
1. Go to your Impacts Dashboard by clicking **Activity** at the top right of your screen and selecting **Impacts** from the dropdown menu.



2. On the right-hand side of your Impacts dashboard, click the **Impact Summary** button.



3. In the Summary Filter pop-up:
   a. Click **Filter by Group** and select the **WSU Yakima County Master Gardeners** group
   b. Click **Filter by Date** and use the **calendar icons** to select the Start Date and End Date for the time period you're requesting.
   c. Click the **blue Download** button to download your requested transcript



Your downloaded transcript will reflect the total **Verified** hours in each Impact Category for the time period selected.

Reflections of the month: *"I learned about scale from the other MG's while working in the garden today"* entered under Demonstration Gardens/Work at Heirloom

"*oh I loved this morning.....the kids!!! so enthused. We created a list of things in the garden for them to find and check off. Sue and I led 4 groups of kids and their parents thru the garden*" entered under Youth Out-reach/One-Day Event

Focus on Continuing Education

Our Own Demonstration Garden Classes

Date	Topic	Presenter	Location
Oct 3rd	Fall Tool Maintenance	MG Rick Russell	Heirloom Garden

Looking for Continuing Education?

Local Resources:

* **Arboretum Classes**
* Upcoming **Demonstration Garden classes**: October 3rd (both at the Heirloom Garden)
* **Staying Mission Driven**: Wednesday, Sept. 9th @ 9 am— News and updates about Master Gardener program from state program coordinator, Jennifer Marquis, and other WSU Extension faculty and staff. Register for Zoom meeting through GivePulse. Or watch recordings of past sessions on YouTube.
* **Evergreen Thumb Podcast** (WSU Master Gardeners)
  Recent episodes: Cover Crops (August 18th)
  Research-based Gardening Advice: What Does it Mean? (July 28th)
  The Hidden World of Insect Collections and Native Bees (May 12th)
  From Tubers to Blooms: A Practical Guide to Growing Dahlias (May 26th)
* **WSU Extension Master Gardeners Virtual AEC** (look for the next session coming fall 2027)
* **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.
* **From Roots to Results: Exploring the Cooperative Extensions Role and Impact.** Click here
* **WSU Program Priority Videos and Literature,** "Discover What You Can Do about (Program Priority)": Click here.

MG Program Priorities

Local Food
Pollinators
Wildfire Preparedness
Water Conservation
Clean Water
Climate Change
Nearby Nature
Plant Biodiversity
Soil Health

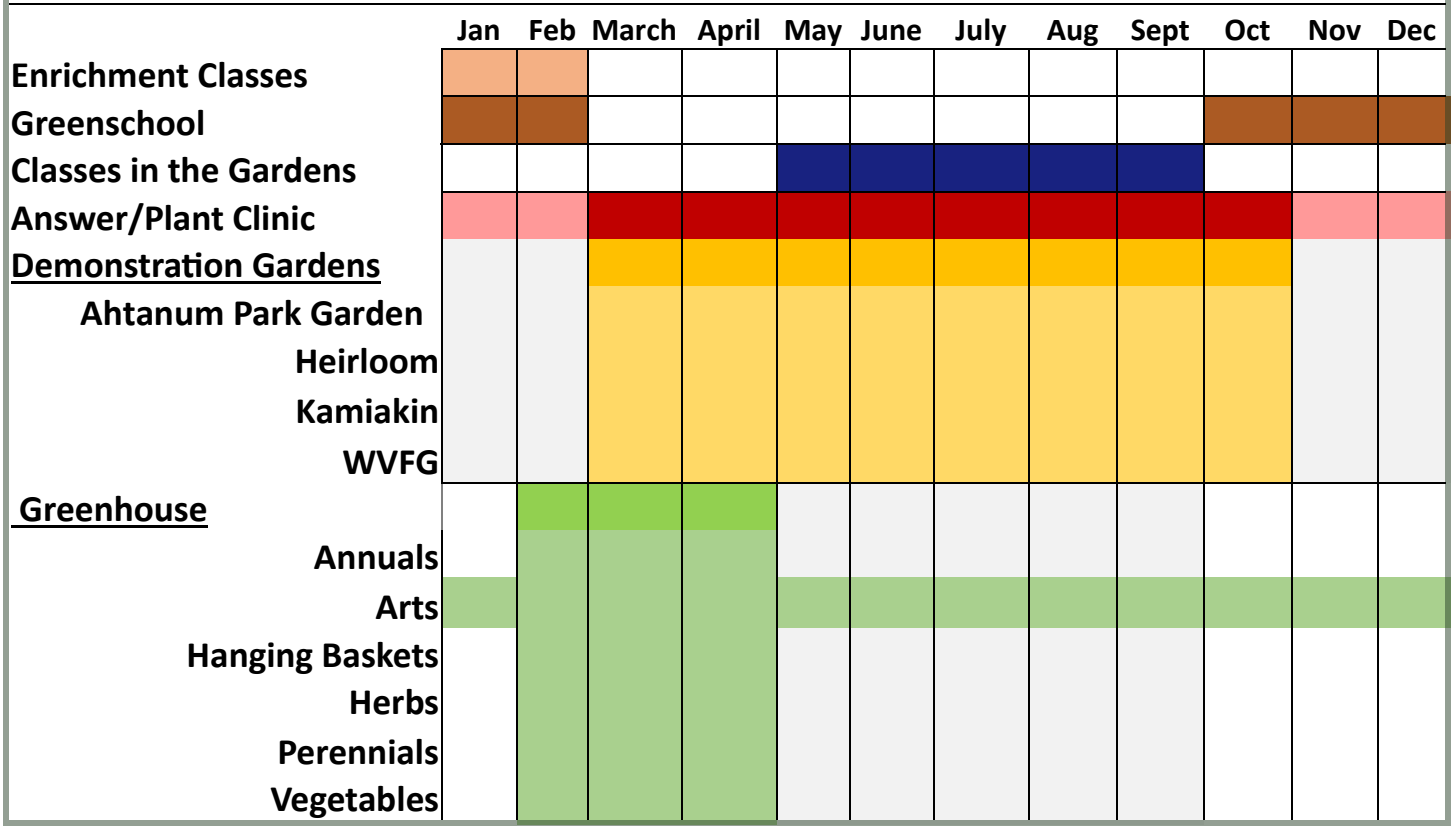
Guiding Principles

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

Yakima County MG Leaders

Answer/Plant Clinic: Andrea Altmayer/Kim Foster/Kathy Paulson
Greenhouse: Camille Smith/Kelli Barton
Annuals: Lorie Harrison/Camille Smith
Perennials: Carol Barany/Melody Westmoreland
Herbs: Diana Pieti/Diane Berthon
Hanging Baskets: Mary Hewitt/Shelly Oshie
Vegetables: Don Flyckt/Beatrice Reiss /Kelly Klingman
Art: Jenny Mansfield/Debbie Sundlee
Plant Sale: Laura Willet, Reggie Sanderson
Demonstration Gardens:
Ahtanum: Sue Schauer/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/Debra Kroon
Publications: Julie Hunziker/Debra Kroon/Rhonda Gardinier/Steve Kuhn/Barbara Schmitt
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/Barbara Schmitt
Mentor Team: Debra Kroon/Melody Westmoreland/Julie Hunziker

Master Gardener Venue Work Seasons





October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Heirloom Garden 8-10 WVFG 8-10 Central WA State Fair (MG Booth)	2 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	3 Garden Class: *Tool Maintenance* 10 am Heirloom
4 Farmer's Market 9-1 Yakima Herald Article	5 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	6	7 APG Garden 8-10 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4 We Grew Lunch! Noon @ Red Barn	8 Heirloom Garden 8-10 WVFG 8-10	9 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4 "Five Seasons" Video 1:30-3/6-7:30	10
11 Farmer's Market/ Youth Team 9-1 Yakima Herald Article	12 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	13	14 APG Garden 8-10 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	15 Heirloom Garden 8-10 WVFG 8-10	16 Answer Clinic 9-12/1-4	17
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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.

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