Gardening for Climate Change

Laura Matter, Garden Hotline Coordinator

The past two summers' high temperatures broke records. Tomatoes loved it. Before that, the warmest summer on record was in 1967. So far, June and have July hit record highs. Our familiar Northwest summers are changing.

What's wrong with early tomatoes? Nothing! But our warming summers indicate more changes to come.

Climatologists' research indicates an upward trend in global temperatures caused by carbon dioxide emissions. These gasses accumulate in the atmosphere and warm the planet, leading to deforestation and loss of reflective glaciers -- warming the planet further. This heat may benefit the Northwest gardener for a few decades, increasing plant diversity and offering a longer growing season. But the benefit might be mitigated by challenges such as the increase in pests that accompany warmer and longer seasons. Severe weather like hail, wind storms and wildfires will increasingly take their toll. The Northwest will see increasing humidity while summers may get drier. Rain events will be heavier, especially during the winter.

Sounds dire, right? The good news is we can utilize our gardens to mitigate problems, even in a small way. As we make changes, we can encourage others to do the same, magnifying the effect on our environment at large. Following are techniques you can try.

Experiment with new plants. Our climate zone changed in the 2012 USDA Plant Hardiness map, netting a 5 degree F warmer zone. Look to the Southern Oregon, California and Mediterranean plant palette for ideas. Many of these plants are more drought tolerant in dry summers.

Hello Food and Farm Hub

Chris Iberle, Food Hub Manager

What is cool as a walk-in cooler, attracts local farmers, delivers CSA boxes, makes juice and sells chicken feed? A new Food and Farm Hub in Rainier Beach, that's what!

Seattle Tilth Produce has been looking for space to pack our 300 CSA shares and 150 Good Food Bags, increase our cold storage and receive deliveries from local farmers. We've found our new home!

Seattle's Southeast Effective Development (SEED) signed a master lease on the 5000 square foot building. They welcomed Seattle Tilth Produce along with Juicebox, Seattle Farm Co-op and City Fruit, establishing one of the first multi-use food spaces of its kind in Seattle. What a great team! And we still have some space available for additional partners. Who's interested? Email chrisiberle@seattletilth.org.

Our team spent long hours building a big walk-in cooler and now we can receive fresh, organic produce and food from local farmers and then distribute it to the community. Buyers include weekly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members, subsidized Good Food Bag members and local restaurants. When construction begins at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, a farm stand will open at the Food and Farm Hub as well!

Many small-scale farmers struggle to find adequate space for cold and dry storage, packing and aggregation. Since Seattle Tilth Produce is sourcing food from many local farmers, we needed a larger space. A majority of the food comes from Seattle Tilth Farm Works in Auburn and Seattle Youth Garden Works in Rainier Beach and the University District.
Construction Begins this Fall
Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands Gets a Facelift

Andrea Dwyer, Executive Director

After six long years of combined effort, we are on the verge of moving from vision to reality at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands. Thanks to the help and assistance of many key partners, we hope to begin construction sometime this fall, completing the project in time to take advantage of the 2016 growing season.

The farm, which began as a vision of the late Harry Hoffman, was quickly embraced by the community. Several especially enthusiastic community members organized themselves into the Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, and began the arduous process of converting a vision into something real and valuable. They continue their efforts today, serving as a critical link to the community.

As those entrusted with the day-to-day operation of the farm, we at Seattle Tilth are committed to ensuring that the farm adds maximum value to the community. Besides growing and sharing food in the neighborhood, we hope the farm will contribute social, economic and ecological benefits that reach far beyond the fields.

During construction, we will, by necessity, scale back on programming at the farm. School tours, youth employment and elder farming will all be constrained by the presence of heavy equipment and chain link fences.

Wetlands restoration will continue, solidifying the gains that have been made over the past six years. Volunteer work parties will be an important component of this ongoing work (you can sign up online!).

This new gate is being installed on the southeast side of Rainier Beach Urban Farm, connecting the farm to Beer Sheva Park. It was created by Jean Whitesavage and Nick Lyle.

Participants in our East African elder farming program learn about sorting garbage, recycling and yard waste at the farm — in three languages!
Faith in the Garden

Marlena Nip, Food and Faith Coordinator, Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest

As you walk through the streets of Seattle, take notice of the changing landscapes at neighborhood churches, mosques and synagogues. Houses of worship throughout King County are teaming up with Seattle Tilth’s new program, the Food and Faith Initiative, to strengthen our local food system by growing fresh produce for those who are food insecure.

Our Food and Faith Initiative provides support for faith-based organizations who would like to grow food. This support can take many forms. A house of worship can apply for new garden beds, attend gatherings and educational workshops, and connect with other faith groups who grow food in an ecumenical setting.

Recently, Westside Unitarian Universalist Congregation (WUU) connected with Food and Faith Initiative to expand their mission to feed the hungry in West Seattle. The congregation’s Social Justice Council, organized by church member Regina Brennan, had already been gardening and donating food, but wanted to expand their garden to increase yields. She teamed up with Rose Sheppard and Pastor Peg Morgan from WUU applied for and received two raised garden beds from Seattle Tilth. Brennan explained, “We want our church garden to increase awareness in our community of the importance of growing food locally.”

News of the garden project cultivated a surge of enthusiasm from church members. On May 16, many members worked together to build the new raised beds. The new WUU garden has bolstered the church’s social justice mission and engagement of members. The fresh produce will go to the West Seattle Food Bank and also to members of the WUU congregation.

“We want our church garden to increase awareness in our community of the importance of growing food locally.”

- Regina Brennan, WUU

Inspired by the momentum of the expanded garden, WUU graciously donated half of their monthly tithe to support other faith groups who wish to grow food for others. Along with WUU, eleven garden beds have been built at faith groups this year! If you know of a faith group interested in learning more, contact Derek Farmer at foodandfaith@seattletilth.org.

Hello Food and Farm Hub Continued from page 1

Once the produce arrives, orders are packed and shipped out. Every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday you might see Seattle Tilth Produce’s biodiesel van pulling away from the dock packed full with locally grown, organic produce.

Seattle Tilth Produce shares the “clean room” and cold storage with Juicebox. They began in 2012 at the farmers market and specialize in cold-pressed organic juice and vegetable-focused cuisine. They began bottling their juices at the Food and Farm Hub in June, and their tasty juice is available at their Juice Bar and Café on Capitol Hill and online. Some extra kale or cucumbers from our farmers may find its way into Juicebox as well.

After a two year search, Seattle Farm Co-op is excited to share space with like-minded organizations. They moved into the dry storage side of the warehouse and opened their doors in May. They offer gardeners, urban farmers and co-op members access to animal feed, tools, supplies and workshops. Their hours are posted at seattlefarmcoop.com, supporting food producers in Southeast Seattle and beyond.

A match made in urban farm heaven! Be on the lookout for an invitation to our grand opening party in late summer.
Let’s Get Jammin’

Emily Gordon, Volunteer and Development Coordinator

Harvest season is here! Now is the perfect time to fill your mason jars with delicious jams and spreads to enjoy all year.

Canning at home is easy and fun and there are many resources to help you get started. The National Center for Home Food Preservation (nchfp.uga.edu) provides helpful information on safe canning techniques and easy recipes. Food safety is a serious concern; improperly canned foods can lead to botulism and other harmful bacterial growth. Always follow directions carefully and use a tested recipe. Or take a class from Seattle Tilth on canning, pickling or fermenting in August and September!

Fruit products can be preserved with a boiling water canner. You can make your own water canner using a large pot, a tightly-fitted lid, and a wire rack to keep the jars from resting at the bottom of the pot (to prevent cracking).

Right now you can make delicious jams with blueberries, peaches, plums and many other tasty fruits from your local farmer’s market. Apples are just coming into season -- it’s a great time to preserve applesauce for winter baking. One of my favorite canning recipes to make this time of year is a spicy jalapeno pepper jelly, a brightly-colored sweet, sour and spicy condiment. This is my go-to potluck item to serve with cream cheese and crackers.

HOT IDEAS: GARDENING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Continued from page 1

Start your veggie garden early. This summer many Northwest gardeners set their summer crops out earlier. As a result we have seen vine ripened tomatoes in June. Experiment with melons, okra, edamame, longer season tomatoes and sweet potatoes.

Grow organically. Reduce your fuel miles by growing food at home. Keep soil mulched, plant cover crops, grow a winter garden, compost and use organic fertilizers. Water plants deeply to encourage deep rooting, which helps minimize carbon loss from soil.

Plant more trees. Trees store carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. One tree can remove one ton of CO2 in its lifetime! The Arbor Day Foundation found that one tree’s shade has the same effect as ten air conditioners operating 20 hours a day. Trees also block winter winds, reducing the need for heat. Trees reduce the heat island effect caused by concrete city landscapes.

Mulch and compost. Organic matter in the soil stores carbon by sequestering it from the atmosphere. Mulch also covers bare ground which emits CO2 as materials biodegrade and prevents water loss, crucial during hot summers. Composting at home reduces your carbon footprint by eliminating the fossil fuels needed to move materials from your home to the compost facility.

Life Below the Soil

Veralea Swayne, Garden Educator

Did you know there is a grand balancing act going on below your garden soil? Many living soil organisms are eating, excreting, dying and decomposing each day. They are interdependent and creating dynamic activity that is known as the soil food web.

Some of these organisms you can see, like earthworms and millipedes; others are microscopic, such as bacteria, fungi and protozoa. What do they each contribute to the show?

Arthropods, like pill bugs, shred organic matter near the top of the soil. Fungi can extend its hyphae many feet through the soil to bring water and nutrients back to plant roots. Bacteria convert organic matter into nutrients that plants can absorb through their roots. Bacteria exude a slime that holds the soil in aggregates, but it also keeps them from getting washed away as the rain percolates through the soil. Smart, aren’t they?

The plants growing in the soil actually ask for what they need from the soil food web, attracting the bacteria and fungi to their roots with carbohydrates leftover from photosynthesis. Curious about the other critters in the soil? Check out the Soil Food Web: Field Study class on October 10.
Yield: 5 (8 oz.) half-pints

**Ingredients:**
- 12 oz. red peppers (use a mix of sweet and hot peppers for a spicy and sweet jelly)
- 2 cups cider vinegar, divided
- 6 cups unrefined sugar
- 2 3-oz. packages liquid pectin

**Directions:**
- **PURÉE** peppers in food processor or blender with 1 cup cider vinegar until smooth. Do not strain purée.
- **COMBINE** purée with remaining 1 cup cider vinegar and sugar. Bring to a boil over high heat. Boil 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
- **ADD** liquid pectin, squeezing entire pouch contents. Continue to boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.
- **LADLE** jelly into hot jars leaving ¼ inch head space. Wipe rim. Center lid on jar. Apply band until fit is fingertip tight.

Recipe adapted from Ball: freshpreserving.com/recipes/jalapeno-jelly-recipe

It’s been a hot, dry summer and we’re fortunate to be able to enjoy a season of harvesting so many beautiful crops. What could be a better reason to celebrate! Enjoy the festivities at Harvest Fair on Saturday, September 12, this year co-produced with our sister organization Tilth Producers.

Shop at the abundant organic farmers market – Seattle’s original neighborhood farmer’s market -- showcasing local farm goodness at the height of the season. Browse favorite sustainable vendors offering gardening books and tools, canned goods, organic clothing and lunchtime flavors. Don’t miss our brand new beer garden!

Find your inner flower child at the herb crown station, make a new friend at our urban livestock area with live goats, chickens and bees, and learn something new in the demonstration tent. Bring the kiddos to our children’s garden for fun craft activities involving plants. The music gazebo will bring down the house, along with a mid-day parade featuring a funky brass band.

Bring the whole family for this all-day event and soak up the joy, music and festivities! We look forward to seeing you at the Harvest Fair. Share your pics on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

**During Harvest Fair 2014, Seattle Youth Garden Works program assistants show off produce that they grew.**

**Talk of the Town:**

**Harvest Fair**

*Amanda Boyle, Development and Events Officer*

**Seattle Tilth’s Harvest Fair**

**Saturday, September 12**

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Meridian Park

4649 Sunnyside Ave N

#harvestfair
Garden to Table

Garden Fresh Pico de Gallo

Bethany Fong, Senior Congregate Meal Site Dietitian

Simple. Fresh. Goes with (just about) everything. We’re talking about pico de gallo or salsa fresca. This fresh sauce is a perfect way to enjoy the bounty of your garden. It’s simple to make, easily transformed, bold in flavor and the perfect addition to any outdoor BBQ or picnic.

A basic pico de gallo calls for fresh tomatoes, onion, garlic, cilantro, lime juice and salt. Once you have the basics down, the options are endless. Using tomatoes of all shapes, sizes and color will subtly change the favor and greatly change the color palate of your pico de gallo. Adding corn, bell peppers, avocado, jicama, beans, mango, pineapple, cactus or tomatillo will turn a run-of-the-mill pico de gallo into a signature creation with an entirely different spin.

For those that enjoy playing with fire, consider grilling your veggies for a smoky and charred pico de gallo. And if you enjoy fire on your tongue, a finely minced chili pepper will do the trick. The key to getting the perfect amount of spice is finding a chili with the right combination of flavor and heat. Not all chilis are created equal. For instance, a Thai bird chili is about 45 times hotter than a jalapeño, while Anaheim chilies are half as hot as jalapeños. Habaneros are 70 times hotter than a jalapeño, and any dish with chiles is made spicier by keeping the seeds and white ribs.

When you are ready to serve, chips and pico de gallo are a classic combination. Pico de gallo is also a wonderful condiment for grilled fish, chicken and pork, fresh greens from the garden, grilled quesadillas and fried eggs at breakfast.

Heirloom Tomato Pico De Gallo

Ingredients
2 cups heirloom tomatoes (any kind), diced
½ cup red onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup cilantro, finely chopped
2 tbsp. fresh lime juice (about 1-2 limes)
Salt to taste

Optional
½-1 jalapeno or Thai bird chili, seeded and minced (adjust the amount depending on how hot you want it)

Directions
Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Cover and let sit in the refrigerator for at least half an hour to allow flavors to combine.

Meaningful Bids & Gala Thrills

The Gala Auction is weeks away and we can’t wait to show you all of the fun and exciting items we have in store. On Saturday, September 26, you will be a part of a one-of-a-kind experience, with local food from Herban Feast, riveting silent and live auctions, and a dessert dash at the unique Historic Hangar 30. Don’t forget to try our signature cocktail created by crafty Seattle Tilth board members.

What makes this event even more exciting is knowing where your dollars are going. As you probably know, Seattle Tilth is supported by people just like you. Our vision is broad: striving to create a more equitable food system. The food system is one that has to involve our community to succeed, and this event can help to raise over $150,000 for Seattle Tilth.

Funding for our Raise the Paddle portion of the gala auction will go to Seattle Youth Garden Works, empowering homeless and underprivileged youth to gain valuable job and interpersonal skills while working on a small urban farm.

This will be the most unique auction yet, with items and experiences that are perfect for Seattle Tilth supporters. Scope out the items, register and add friends to your table online. We hope you’ll join and support us at this fun event!
Hot Weather, Happy Plants

Katie Vincent, Garden Hotline Educator

Q. Wow, what a dry, hot summer! Other than cacti, which plants will do well in my yard with very little water?

A. We applaud you for thinking about your water usage during this seasonal water shortage! When choosing plants, repeat the mantra “right plant, right place.” Every plant has unique needs in order to thrive in the garden; do your plants (and yourself) a favor by finding a good match before you start planting.

If water is an issue, “drought-tolerant” plants are a good place to start, though they must occasionally be deeply watered for 2-3 years to be truly resilient. Pacific Northwest native plants are a great option, as they are often adapted to our wet winter/dry summer climate and persist through occasional drought. A few to try: kinnickinnick, Arbutus unedo, sword fern, yarrow, wild rose and Oregon grape. Great non-natives shrubs for sunny, south-facing areas include rockrose (Cistus), California lilac, Russian sage or Mediterranean herbs like rosemary, lavender and sage. At ground level, use ornamental grasses like blue fescue or fleshy sedums and sempervivums. If edibles are your preference, look to figs or persimmon trees. For the shadier part of your garden, look to hellebores, Epimedium or even wild ginger.

Q. What else can I do to save water and keep my plants happy?

A. No matter what you decide to plant in your landscape, certain strategies can help you keep your landscape as low-maintenance as possible. Start with the soil. Ensuring your soil has enough organic matter will help it hold onto water and nutrients, allowing for healthier roots and overall plant growth. Add 2-3” of compost to a new garden bed or lawn prior to planting and maintain it yearly with a fresh 1” deep layer. Mulching on top of the soil will also help reduce evaporation—even on hot days. A wide range of mulches are available. For ornamental and perennial edible plantings, our favorite mulch is 2-3” of arborist chips or other untreated wood chips. When it comes to annual edible crops, try 2” or so of non-sprayed straw, newspaper, leaves or uprooted herbaceous plants (i.e. cover crops). Mulch is best applied in spring and fall to help with weed control.

Membership, Donations & Books

O New member  O Renewing member  O New contact information

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MAIL TO: Seattle Tilth, 4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Suite 100, Seattle, WA 98103

□ MEMBERSHIP
O $35 Individual  O $20 Limited Income  O $60 Household $_________

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Learn, Grow, Take a Class!

Three prices are listed for each class: for the general public, for Seattle Tilth members and for two members of a household taking the class together. For example: $45 non-member/$35 member/$68 household. Become a member through our website or use the form on page 7. Advanced registration and payment are required for classes. Class details and registration information are found on our website under the “Learn” tab or by scanning the QR code. Questions? Call (206) 633-0451 ext. 128.

Class venues:
BGP: Bradner Gardens Park, 1730 Bradner Place S, Seattle
GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Seattle

Veggie Gardening
Start Your Fall and Winter Garden, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, August 8; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Comprehensive Organic Gardener, $275/235
Wednesday, September 16-October 7; 7-9 p.m., GSC

Urban Livestock
Beekeeping 301: Harvest Honey and Winterize Your Hive, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, August 15; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Backyard Beekeeping 101, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, September 19; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Raise City Goats, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, September 19; 10 a.m.-noon, Private residence in Madrona

All About Chickens, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, September 19; 2-5 p.m., GSC

Permaculture and Sustainable Landscapes
Grow Fruit in Small Spaces, $36/$25/$54
Thursday, August 27; 6-8 p.m., BGP

Kitchen Classes
Basic Canning 101, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, August 29; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Make Herbal Infusions, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, August 22; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Make Homemade Pickles, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, August 29; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Thursday, September 24; 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC

School Tours
Parents and teachers – September is a great time to book hands-on educational field trips to Seattle Tilth’s children’s gardens!

In North and South Seattle.