Many community members are coming together to restore the wetlands at Rainier Beach Urban Farm, including interns Sammy Black (left) and Chauncey Foster.

Merging into a Statewide Tilth Organization
Seattle Tilth Joins Forces with Tilth Producers

Liza Burke, Communications Director

It’s official — we’re merging! Seattle Tilth is joining forces with Tilth Producers of Washington. Both boards of directors have voted “yay” and the decision will be effective January 1.

As a new merged organization, our impact will be greater. By coming together, we have a better chance of realizing our shared goals in creating a sustainable and equitable food system.

Key benefits of merging include:
- Larger, more visible and influential organization
- Increased capacity to advocate for and create systems change
- Enhanced ability to raise funds
- Tilth Producers will gain the benefits of joining a larger organization with strong infrastructure
- Seattle Tilth will gain a statewide network

Executive Director Andrea Dwyer explains, “The conventional food system is a vast and complex force that is invested in the status quo. As smaller organizations, we have less of a chance of making a difference. By working together, we can share resources and our voice will be amplified.”

Restoring the Wetlands

Chris Hoffer, Environmental Programs Manager

First-time visitors to Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands often ask why there is so much land set aside for the wetlands. Couldn’t we use that land to produce even more food for the community?

Here at Seattle Tilth, we believe that a healthy environment is the foundation for growing healthy food. The reason we protect and restore wetlands is simple: they protect and restore us. When it rains, for example, healthy wetlands help filter polluted runoff that could otherwise carry harmful chemicals and bacteria into local waterways and groundwater.

In addition to providing cleaner groundwater for the food we grow and eat, wetlands also support the trees that give us clean air and provide habitat for wildlife. Wetland restoration also creates an opportunity for communities to tackle environmental issues, like pollution and climate change, which may otherwise seem daunting. Restoration gives everyone the chance to create a healthier environment and food system, one work party at a time.

So what does restoration look like at Rainier Beach Urban Farm? In the fall and winter, we’re planting native wetland trees and shrubs, with a goal this year of getting 1,500 new plants into the ground. We also sheet mulch the surrounding soil to suppress weeds and protect soils during winter rains and summer droughts. We shift focus in the spring and summer, relying on hundreds of volunteers to ensure these new plants are not overtaken by invasive weeds.

Plants in the wetlands and farm areas at Rainier Beach Urban Farm compete
Where Does the Food System Live?

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

In 2009 I came to Seattle Tilth with a clear mandate: break through the status quo. Opportunities were passing us by; needs in the community were going unmet that we had the potential to fill. In response, we adopted programs and started new ones that fit like puzzle pieces into what is now a stronger, bolder organization. When we stepped back from the puzzle, what did we see?

The answer is five words: earth – farm – garden – market – kitchen. These are the places where our work is done and where our programs live. It’s what we mean when we say, “our local food system.”

Earth programs build healthy soil and keep our water and air clean – the essential foundation for growing food sustainably and organically.

Farm programs train and support farmers with limited resources, and provide job training and employment for youth and elders.

Garden programs teach people of all ages to grow food sustainably in small spaces and urban settings, raising awareness, education and empowerment, in addition to supplementing food to households.

Market programs deliver healthy food from gardens and farms to the community and increase access for people with limited resources.

Kitchen programs empower people with the skills they need to eat well every day.

These areas represent the cyclical and interconnected nature of our food system. All areas are equally important to creating a future where everyone has access to fresh, nutritious food, and the resources to sustain and protect our health and environment.

But what really links them together is you. As we enter a new era for the Tilth movement (see page 1), I invite you to join us by making a financial contribution to support this work at this exciting and critical moment. No one person thing will fix the enormous problems within our food system, but by coming together across the food system, we’ll create a real and lasting change.

RESTORING THE WETLANDS  Continued from page 1

heavily with invasive species like field bindweed. Intensive weeding, pulling and grubbing of invasive plants is necessary until the new plants can hold their own.

No matter the time of year, work parties are fun, family-friendly events. We work with youth, elders, corporate groups, veterans and people of all abilities and backgrounds. Some of our favorites work parties are when community members choose to celebrate important life events -- from birthdays to bachelorette parties -- by volunteering with us. And restoration doesn’t end at the farm. Everyday actions support healthy environments, too. We can all fix leaking cars and wash them at commercial car washes, pick up after pets, practice natural yard care, build healthy soil with compost and mulch, and replace lawn and hardscapes with trees and vegetation.

If you’d like to get involved in restoration at Rainier Beach Urban Farm, a pollinator project at Seattle Tilth Farm Works in Auburn or forest restoration at McAuliffe Park in Kirkland, contact Chris Hoffer at chrishoffer@seattletilth.org or (206) 633-0451 ext. 108. We rely on volunteers like you to build healthy ecosystems for a healthy food system!
Meet Super Volunteer Ashley Braun

Carey Thornton, Adult Education Program

Since 2009, Ashley Braun has volunteered at the March and May Edible Plant Sales, at the Good Shepherd Center community learning garden, in the children’s garden and in classes. Below she discusses why she volunteers and what being a Seattle Tilth member really means to her.

What prompted you to become involved with Seattle Tilth?
One of my earliest and most memorable experiences was a free container gardening class in downtown Seattle in 2008. That first class truly inspired and empowered me to be a gardener. At the time I was relatively new to gardening and the Pacific Northwest, and it showed. I bought a small rosemary shrub and planted it in a container I bought for cheap at Goodwill. But because it was late fall at that point, I brought the plant inside for the winter which promptly killed it. I realized how little I knew and turned more and more to Seattle Tilth, which has continued to feed my voracious appetite for information and inspiration in organic gardening. Today, I’m still container gardening -- in dozens and dozens of planters outside my apartment.

Why is volunteering important to you?
Seattle Tilth’s approach to environmental sustainability mirrors my own values. Volunteering with the adult garden education program has allowed me to grow in knowledge about the environment while fulfilling this desire to support those values in my community. Plus, volunteering with Seattle Tilth is so fun!

Is there something you’ve learned from joining Seattle Tilth that you’d like to share?
Even with an environmental science degree, I’m not sure I realized the centrality of soil for healthy gardens and healthy food. But since volunteering with Seattle Tilth, I have learned not only what soil is, but how to be building, amending, nurturing and protecting the soil and its web of life that make growing edible plants possible.

What have you enjoyed most about being a Seattle Tilth member?
The continuous, joyful learning at quarterly member events -- and the delicious food that results!

MERGING INTO A STATEWIDE TILTH ORGANIZATION  Continued from page 1

The decision to merge was the result of 18 months of active discussion and negotiation between the two boards. There were no lasting concerns and everyone recognized the shared values and common goals between the two organizations and supports the merger enthusiastically.

Seattle Tilth’s Board President, Liza Turley, explains her vision for the future. “I hope to see healthy local food become accessible to all communities and organic agriculture in Washington thrive.”

Now the hard work begins. Integrating two organizations with such deep histories and traditions is a big task. As you might know, the two groups originate from the same roots back in the early 70’s, but they have evolved in different ways.

Becky Warner, the president of the Tilth Producer’s board, explains, “Our two organizations have always worked in similar areas but from somewhat different ends of the food system. Over time, the areas of focus were starting to overlap. Bringing together all our work under one new organization offers a full food system-wide perspective and increased capacity to make a meaningful difference for farmers, eaters and the food system.”

Our goal is to unite forces in a way that retains the best of both cultures. We’ll spend time thinking about who we are and how we identify ourselves, what we want to call our new organization and how to integrate plans and systems.

Both organizations are responsive to community needs and will be asking for input. We don’t have preconceived notions about what people want, nor do we think we have all the answers. The process will be gradual and incremental. Programs in both organizations will continue as usual while we learn more about how our combination can lead us to a stronger future.

We will update our stakeholders and community members along the way. Visit our blog for more information.

We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas. Email Executive Director Andrea Dwyer at andreadwyer@seattletilth.org or call (206) 633-0451 ext. 104. Don’t be shy! We’re excited for people to share our enthusiasm for the future as we become a united organization.
Bring the Garden Inside
Experience a Mobile Classroom

Alexandria Vickery, Children’s Garden Coordinator

Imagine a freezing, blustery, rain-soaked winter day. You and your students are sitting inside your classroom, away from the weather. You gather together in a circle on the carpet, while a Seattle Tilth children’s garden educator prepares a lesson and takes a seat among you.

In tow, she has a gigantic green leaf, a mysterious box with the word “Arthropods” in gold glitter letters, a ukulele and a half dozen piles of rich, dark soil. Over the course of the next hour, your classroom erupts with captivating songs, stories, larger-than-life many-legged creature puppets, soil “magic” tricks, recycling machines and, yes, real live worms.

While your garden beds may be saying goodnight for the winter, Seattle Tilth’s children’s education program is awake and alive with garden magic. The mobile classroom program runs throughout the season, bringing the garden inside with interactive, hands-on, inquiry-based lessons. Mobile classrooms reach students from grades ranging from preschool to 6th grade, from 24 to 30 students.

We currently have four offerings that fulfill science requirements and inspire wonder in the natural world. Focus on the underground with Soil in a Box, which delves into the fascinating question, “What is soil?” We explore the creatures and components that contribute to a complex underground ecosystem, and those that don’t. Use It or Lose It makes waste reduction and recycling captivating and cool. This lesson provides practical applications for classroom and household resource conservation. Use It or Lose It is a follow-up to Soil in a Box.

Energize your students and investigate insects and invertebrates indoors. Mighty Arthropods explores the crawling critters that call the garden home. We learn about the characteristics of arthropods and insects, then discover how spiders, pill bugs, centipedes, ladybugs and aphids live and grow. Worms on Wheels focuses on the role of red wiggler worms in food waste composting. Using a hands-on lesson with real creatures, we explore soil composition, worm anatomy and the host of organisms that turn banana peels into rich, living soil.

Schedule a mobile classroom for your students this winter! Visit seattletilth.org.

A Glamorous, Generous Gala

You bid, you dined, you gave! It was quite the evening of fun at the annual Gala Auction on September 26, our signature fundraiser of the year. Hangar 30 was all abustle with the wine grab, silent auction, chocolate roulette, dessert dash, and riveting live auction. One of the hot ticket items for the night was a tour of the Seahawks practice facility with Michael Bennett, defensive back for our home team and new Seattle Tilth supporter. In total, we raised over $160,000 to support Seattle Tilth’s impactful programs.

Thank you to our amazing sponsors: PCC Natural Markets, Whole Foods, Homestreat Bank, Big Dipper Wax Works, Essential Baking Company, Herban Feast Seattle Children’s, Elliott Bay Brewing and Skip Rock Distillery.

Thank you sponsors!
Grow More, Plan Now

Maren Neldam, Children’s Education Program Manager

The sun is traveling its winter arc low in the southern sky, and we are urged indoors to connect with the restful rhythm of the season. The garden has been stripped of the summer bounty, revealing spaces which invite us to imagine. While the garden is in sleep mode, we can slow down and prepare. Relish the opportunity to sit with a notebook, look at seed catalogues and dream. Here are some tips:

Garden Map
Make a map of your garden -- a simple birds-eye map will do. Note permanent features, perennial plants and annual vegetable gardening. Look for places to plant more intensively. Drawing the garden to scale can help visualize plant spacing. See illustration below.

Garden Journal
A garden journal is an invaluable planning tool. Record planting dates, successful varieties and failures for each season so you can learn from the past.

Crop Rotation
Keep a crop rotation log. Effective crop rotation will build soil and prevent disease. Make a page or chart for each garden bed and record the date and crop grown.

What to Grow
There are many great seed companies in our region offering unique and heirloom varieties rarely seen in stores. Sign up for seed catalogues to explore crops you like as well as some new varieties to experiment with. Organize those into cool and warm season crops. Sign up for some garden planning classes, listed on page 7.

Timing is key
Check out our Maritime Northwest Garden Guide to solve the puzzle of what to grow when (and all of these ideas). The earliest plants can be sown or transplanted outside as early as March. Others must wait until warmer weather in May or June. Save space for both. With some planning, you can plant quick-growing salad greens in early spring, harvest them in May and make space for heat loving tomatoes, while intercropping fall crops in August.

Building a Cold Frame

Sue Hartman, Educator

Are you looking for a project to combat the winter blues? Build a cold frame and jump start your garden!

A cold frame extends the growing season by creating a protected, warmer environment during the cold months. Hardy crops like salad greens, spinach, Swiss chard and arugula can be planted inside the cold frame. You can also “harden off” transplants, to help warm season plants like tomatoes transition from the greenhouse to cooler outdoor temperatures.

A cold frame is a bottomless box with a transparent lid to capture the most radiant heat from the sun. It can be as simple as digging a hole in the ground or arranging hay bales in a square and setting a window frame on top. Place it adjacent to a house or shed for extra protection.

Recycle a broken window, old door or a wooden pallet for the frame. The lid can be plastic or glass and must let light through. Consider using a material that won’t break to avoid a broken window if a stray baseball drops by! Attach the lid to the frame with hinges or secure it so it won’t blow off in a wind storm.

Position the cold frame facing south with the lid at an angle to capture the low winter sun. On a sunny day the temperatures inside can get hot, so vent or prop open the lid in the morning and close it at night. Check it frequently to see if the soil is drying out too much since rain can’t get through.

Check the internet for ideas for all kinds of building materials: kiddie pools, concrete blocks and old desk drawers. If the bottom is solid, cut it out if you want to plant directly into the soil. Use a rot resistant wood like cedar if you want it to last longer. Get creative -- you may be able to celebrate Valentine’s Day with a freshly harvested salad!
Gardening Bartender:  
The Cinnamon Persimmon Old Fashioned

Colin Groark, Environmental Programs Director

We’ve been watching the mighty persimmon tree outside the Good Shepherd Center with eagerness and anxiety. Eager to rip into the Asian fruit’s thick, pulpy flesh; anxious that the squirrels and bugs might beat us to it.

Deriving from the Greek word “diospyros” meaning “divine fruit” or “wheat of Zeus,” persimmon trees are native to Japan, China, Burma and northern India. The tree’s fruit falls into two major categories: astringent and non-astringent, the former being more plum-shaped and harder to stomach until fully ripe. Non-astringent persimmons – most commonly, the Fuyu – have more of a squat shape and can be enjoyed earlier, when still quite firm. Astringent or not, anyone patient enough to wait for a persimmon to fully ripen can attest to the origin of the fruit’s name.

Persimmons have a truly unique taste and texture and they’re perfectly palatable as a stand-alone snack. But this time of year, why not muddle some “wheat of Zeus” into one of the season’s most staid cocktails: the old fashioned. That’s right, pairing well with cinnamon and an essence of citrus, a Fuyu creates a cinnamon persimmon old fashioned that might just be the creative kick your winter needs.

Garden to Table:
Stock It Up for Winter

Leika Suzumura, Community Kitchens NW Program Manager

There is more than comfort that comes with a bowl of chicken soup; it’s a steaming brew of nourishment that our bodies instinctively crave. You can easily put together a wonderful stock with leftover bones from whole turkey, chicken or beef, along with vegetable scraps like onion and celery ends, parsley stems, and carrot and potato peels. The vegetable and herb scraps add a rich flavor while also enhancing the cooking pot with nutrients. Due to its acidic nature, vinegar will draw calcium and gelatin from the bones when added to your broth, benefitting our own bones, skin and hair. Your winter soup will be bubbling with vitality that can keep you healthy through a season riddled with contagious colds.

Bone Broth
Ingredients
- 3-4 pounds chicken and/or turkey bones*
- Your choice of veggies or veggie scraps
  (onions, carrots, garlic, celery, etc.)
- Choice of fresh or dried herbs (parsley, rosemary, thyme, bay, etc.)
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- Water

Directions
- Roughly chop onions, carrots and other vegetables; place in crockpot. Avoid brassicas (which add bitterness) and beets (turns stock red).
- Crush garlic by pressing the flat blade of a knife down on the clove with the palm of your hand. Cloves can be used whole with skin.
- Stalks of vegetables, onion skins and other unused veggie bits can be added to stock.
- Place all veggie bits in crockpot. Add fresh herbs whole.
- Add bones, cartilage and meaty pieces to the crockpot. Fill with filtered water and apple cider vinegar. Set on high for one hour, then reduce to low for 24 hours.
- Filter the broth through a sieve. Cool and remove solid layer of fat on top.
- Add salt and seasonings to taste.
- Broth can be refrigerated for up to a week or frozen for later use.

*Chicken and turkey necks, feet, beaks, and other cartilage offer the healing benefits of gelatin. Meaty pieces can be added for additional flavor.

Useful tip: Keep a freezer bag in your freezer and add vegetable discards whenever cooking to create a useful batch of ingredients for making soup stock.

*To make cinnamon syrup: bring 1 cup of water to a boil, reduce to a simmer and stir in 1 cup of sugar until dissolved. Add 4 halved cinnamon sticks and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Recipe by Jess Bitting, Food Hub Coordinator
Q. Last winter some of my Swiss chard and shrubs froze. What can I do to protect them?

A. Newcomers to the Pacific Northwest often marvel at our mild winters. Temperatures rarely drop below 40˚ F and a light dusting of snow quickly turns to rain. However, sudden plummeting temperatures can kill off normally hardy crops or damage tender shrubs. If it has been unusually dry and you hear that a cold snap is coming, water your plants well beforehand. Wet soil holds heat better than dry soil. Mulch with 2-3 inches of fallen leaves, straw, pine needles or wood chips if you haven’t already done so. Do not pile wood chips up against the trunk of woody shrubs or trees. Check any containers for moisture and snuggle them up together. Wind can dry out plants. Move containers to a sheltered location if possible.

Covering up plants with some type of fabric can also provide enough protection to get through a freeze. Drape floating row cover, burlap or a sheet loosely over plants and weigh them down with rocks or by attaching to a frame. “Frost blankets” are heavier weight fabrics that provide better protection against lower temperatures, but also let in less light. If the plant is small, cover it with an overturned bucket or container. You can also cover them up with leaves or straw. As soon as the temperature warms, remove anything that blocks light and air and remove any slugs that might be hiding.

Q. I love to cook with fresh herbs year round. Can I grow herbs indoors over the winter?

A. Many herbs in the Northwest are perennials, like rosemary, lavender, thyme and sage, which all grow best outdoors. For indoor growing, focus on the annual or tender herbs that take a nose dive when frost hits to supplement your winter herb harvest. Try basil, chives, cilantro, dill or parsley on your window sill. Most herbs need at least 6 hours of sunlight so you will need a very sunny window or grow lights.

Take note that aphids and spider mites seem to appear out of nowhere on indoor herbs, so check them regularly. Use a good potting soil and let the plants dry out a little in between watering. Herbs are not heavy feeders but may benefit from added nutrition over the winter to keep them actively growing. Use an organic liquid fertilizer. They also need to be harvested. Trim or pinch them to help promote growth and enjoy the trimmings for dinner that night!
Live Green, Give Green

Share your love of the earth and Seattle Tilth by giving our green gifts to friends and family!

Books

*Maritime Northwest Garden Guide* ($18.50)
We have completely remodeled and updated our beloved classic month-by-month garden manual. It’s a perfect gift for beginners and experienced Northwest gardeners alike.

*Your Farm in the City* ($20.75)
Our 330-page guide to raising your own food and urban livestock is a fun read and a must-have for the urban farmer in your life.

*Worms Eat My Garbage* ($17)
Author Mary Appelhof illustrates how to use red worms to recycle food waste into nutrient-rich fertilizer for your garden.

In Honor or Memory
Make a contribution to Seattle Tilth in honor or memory of your favorite gardener!

Membership 2 for 1

Sign-up for or renew your Seattle Tilth membership and give a favorite gardener the gift of membership for free! Throughout the year, you’ll both receive discounts on classes, invitations to special members-only events and our print newsletter. Sign-up at seattletilth.org or send the enclosed envelope and be sure to (include your friend’s name and contact information).

More Goodies

*Tees and Tea Towels*
Pick up one of our 100% organic cotton t-shirts or tea towels with botanical artwork and show off your good taste!

*Cloche Kits* ($50)
Protect plants from the cold with a “mini-greenhouse” kit.

*Gift Certificates*
Purchase a gift certificate for $35, $50, $100 or more. Redeem them for memberships, cloche kits, books, classes or plants at our Edible Plant Sales.

Find these green goods at our office, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Suite 100, or at seattletilth.org.

make 2016 BIG & BOLD—support Seattle Tilth!
Please donate online or use the enclosed envelope.