Wanna grow tomatoes? While we all dream of yummy home grown tomatoes, local gardeners are often challenged by our cool spring temperatures. The secret ingredients are heat and healthy soil. Here are some tried and true techniques to create your own tropical tomato paradise.

**Before you Plant**

Start early. Extend the growing season by starting tomatoes indoors in February, or buy young plants in May that have been bred to do well in cooler temperatures.

Pick a sunny spot. Select a location that gets eight hours of sun exposure — even better if it has radiant heat from sunshine reflecting off of a wall. Tomatoes love heat!

Heat the soil. This step can be as simple as placing dark tarps or plastic over your vegetable garden. Raised beds will further increase soil heat.

Heat the air. Warm air is critical so keep the heat close. If you just have a few plants, you can fill wine bottles with water to create a wall around each plant. You can also buy commercial “Wall O’ Water.” Or think larger—from simple cloches using PE pipe to a wood framed “house” covered in 4-6 mil plastic sheeting. Voila -- instant greenhouse! Water-filled gallon jugs placed inside will increase heat gains.

**Ready, Set, Plant**

Now you’re ready to start working the soil. Remove the tarp and work in composted steer manure, compost and any remaining cover crops. Think, “Feed the soil, not the plant.”

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**Grow Great Tomatoes in Seattle**

**Tips from an Avid Grower**

Kirsten DeLara, Master Composter/Soil Builder

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**A Community Farm in Rainier Beach**

Katie Pencke, SE Seattle Program Manager

Imagine a community farm in the heart of Rainier Beach, known as one of the nation’s most diverse zip codes. Think of the possibilities: a community farm with classrooms and a big kitchen, a place to gather friends and neighbors, a friendly learning environment to grow and share food, a vibrant, active, engaged community place for diverse cultural groups or a hub for urban agriculture and local food. This summer and fall a community design process begins and Rainier Valley community members are invited to envision the possibilities of an urban farm at the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands.

Seattle Tilth, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and the Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands are teaming up with the Berger Partnership and the Rainier Beach community to create a vision and for the site located at 5513 S. Cloverdale St. This community design and capital improvement process will transform the site into a model for community-based urban agriculture and environmental education in Seattle and the nation.

Each member of the design team brings something special to the table: **Seattle Tilth** has extensive experience managing productive public landscapes and facilitating civic engagement around food and environmental justice issues.
Welcome to the Seattle Tilth Board

Jennifer Crouch, Development Director

Seattle Tilth proudly welcomes five new board members who joined the Seattle Tilth Board of Directors in February at the Annual Members Meeting.

David Traylor is a landscape architect, Master Gardener and artist who enjoys tai chi and long distance running. David has served on four other nonprofit boards and is passionate about how Seattle Tilth connects people and nature through gardening.

Beth Nackowski began volunteering with Seattle Tilth in 1999 and spends her spare time biking, hiking, going to the opera, gardening and weeding. Beth brings years of experience in board service, an MBA, and expertise in finance, technology and customer service.

Russ Goedde recently retired from King County service and now teaches Seattle University Master of Public Administration students. In his spare time, he tends to his grandchildren, garden, chickens and bees and is the proud steward of a Washington Certified Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary.

Elizabeth Crouse is an avid gardener, traveler and passionate supporter of good, local eating. She brings valuable expertise in tax law to the Seattle Tilth Board. Elizabeth is delighted to join an organization that is dedicated to food systems and looks forward to fantastic experiences with Seattle Tilth members.

Tom Neir is an entrepreneur with an MBA from the University of Virginia. After a successful career in Hong Kong, Tom and his family returned to the Pacific Northwest, where he dedicates himself to the community, grows his garden and dreams of owning an organic farm.

Stop by the office or come to an event to meet our new friends!
Living Cities

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

Where do you go to find nature? The woods? The mountains? Your local park? How about your backyard or front porch? For too long, nature has been something “out there,” something that we have to go in search of. The reality is that nature is all around us. Cities occupy space in nature and the majority of us occupy space in cities.

In 1800, only three percent of the world’s population lived in urban areas, and many people saw nature as something to be tamed. Since then, people have moved steadily into cities, and by 2050 it is projected that seventy percent of people will live in urban areas, where it’s easy to forget our connection to – and dependence on – nature.

Clearly, this concentration of people creates challenges for us in how we understand, use and care for the natural world. At the most basic level, many of the resources we consume come from nature, and we expect nature to absorb the waste we produce.

Increased urbanization also means that opportunities to learn about the cycles of nature occur on a smaller, more intimate scale. Therefore, urban forests, community orchards and parking strip gardens provide a vital function helping people develop an appreciation for and a connection to our natural world.

Our new venture at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands (described on p. 1 and below) is an extraordinary opportunity for us to create a natural laboratory in the city, where people can explore and learn about how our everyday actions can keep our relationship with nature in balance. Once completed, this urban farm will illustrate how the issues of health, food security, and social justice are directly connected to urban environmental stewardship. What’s more, it will provide community members with access to fresh healthy food in a way that’s both fun and educational. We hope you come visit soon!

Plant Sales Succeed

The May Edible Plant Sale was a big success thanks to the support of 5,000 shoppers, over 300 volunteers, several vendors, community organizations and sponsoring businesses. Special thanks to major sponsors Greenwood Hardware, Swanson’s Nursery and Big Dipper Wax Works.

Meredith was one of many wonderful volunteers who worked hard through rain, mud and sunshine. Thank you volunteers! Photo by Tanya Dumas.

GROW GREAT TOMATOES IN SEATTLE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Next, apply mulch or a soil cover to eliminate weeds, keep the soil warm, and reduce water loss from evaporation. A commercial option is “Planters Paper.” It is water-permeable, discourages slugs and disintegrates over the season. Make slits in the cover to plant through. Add a natural calcium source to reduce chances of blossom-end rot. This disease shows up as a black circle spreading from the bottom of a tomato and often occurs when water fluctuations inhibit the plant’s ability to absorb calcium from the soil. Watering more regularly and adding additional calcium should help turn things around.

Grow

Invite the bees. Attract a variety of pollinating bees by opening cloches or other structures on warm days and placing flowering pots, such as lavender and marigold, just inside. Or try your skills at hand pollination by brushing each flower lightly with an inexpensive electric toothbrush with frayed bristles. This mimics the pollinating vibration (sonication) of bumble bees. Remove covers completely when nights are warm.

Keep the water off. To minimize risk of late blight (Phytophthora infestans) and Verticillium wilt, select disease resistant plants and use soaker hoses to keep water from splashing soil onto leaves. Reapply your cover before late summer rains. Finally, keep the garden tidy—remove any infected leaves or plants as soon as possible.

Harvest!

Sit back and savor the abundance of delicious tomatoes from your own natural garden. The results are priceless and all your neighbors will be jealous!

For a list of my favorite tomato varieties, as well as tips on greenhouse structures, soil amending, and fall tasks, see the full article on Seattle Tilth’s website in the May section of our Garden Almanac. seattletilth.org/learn/resources-1/almanac/may/grow-hot-tomatoes-in-seattle.
A Peek at Seattle’s Urban Farms

Jen Crouch, Development Director

When Melissa Clauson runs out of eggs, she doesn’t drive down to the grocery store. She steps out her backdoor and collects 8-12 eggs each day from her thirteen chickens.

“We started seven years ago by taking Chickens 101 at Seattle Tilth and it just kept going!” The family drinks milk from their two dairy goats, with babies on the way this spring, and plans to harvest honey from three hives this year. But Melissa’s bucolic spot, 3 Bees City Farm, isn’t in rural Washington, it’s in the 1200 sq ft side lot of her north Seattle home.

At City Art Farm in Columbia City, Joan Engelmeyer uses her urban farm to teach art to children. Students make prints with giant rhubarb leaves. They use bamboo from Joan’s yard to create pens to draw and eggshells from her chickens for mosaics. Joan is particularly excited to show off her goats’ angora and the students’ new garden bed which features plants for dying wool. “We’re also going to make mason bee houses from bamboo this year. I love teaching the kids that they don’t have to go to the store – and if they get their supplies outside, they know where it comes from.”

These farms are two of forty stops on Seattle Tilth’s annual Chicken Coop and Urban Farm Tour. To get a peephole into the world of backyard fowl, goats, honeybees and vegetable gardening, grab tickets for July 14 and check out what urban farming is all about.

Ten years ago, Seattleites wondered about those eccentric folks who kept a small flock of chickens. Today, urban farming is a full-fledged movement, and livestock classes are among the most popular courses offered at Seattle Tilth. Those seeking ideas -- or just wanting to see what’s possible -- will delight in farm structures made from recycled materials, raccoon-proof coops, greenroofs, vertical growing, creative hives and even an adobe chicken coop.

How popular are city chickens right now? The USDA says that between 1997 and 2007, the number of egg producers with fewer than 50 birds jumped 60%. Commercial hatcheries have seen a boom in business thanks to backyard chicken raisers, according to the Capital Press.

One of the most exciting stops on the tour will be “Raise the Roost,” a new chicken coop design competition at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands. Architects for Humanity and Architects Without Borders are teaming up with Seattle Tilth to host the competition. Over 25 coops by professional architects and amateur enthusiasts will be on display - stop by as part of the tour and vote for the People’s Choice award, or come by at 4 p.m. after the tour for judging and a party!

Tickets are available online or at select retailers. For more information visit seattletilth.org.

A COMMUNITY FARM IN RAINIER BEACH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands are committed organizers and activists deeply connected to the Rainier Beach community.

Seattle Parks and Recreation demonstrates its commitment to urban agriculture and ecological restoration through the work of the Parks Urban Food Systems committee and the Green Seattle Partnership.

The Berger Partnership offers an extensive portfolio of planned and built parks, urban farms and wetland projects that serve the community, are loved by users and supported by the agencies that run and manage them.

With input from the community, the finished design will be one that weaves environmental and ecological functions into the daily site experience. This is a time to imagine and plan a place that creates community, stimulates economic development in the Rainier Beach neighborhood and will continue to evolve over time.

Seattle Tilth operates over twenty programs. A fully developed site at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands could be a home base for Seattle Tilth education programs that meets the unique needs and interests of Southeast Seattle residents while creating a lively, inspiring community farm. The design process will be a time to engage community members, neighbors and aspiring farmers, develop new ideas and illustrate the opportunities inherent in this unique site. Imagine the possibilities!
Permanent Culture- Beyond Sustainable

Carey Thornton, Garden Educator

Nature is abundant. Nature is resourceful. Nature is resilient. These are all qualities that we seek in our lives, our homes, and our gardens. So how do we get there? One place to look is permaculture.

Permaculture. The name is a contraction of the words “permanent culture.” It’s a design philosophy that seeks to mimic and incorporate natural systems into human made environments. Bill Mollison, one of the originators of permaculture, describes it as “a philosophy of working with, rather than against, nature; of protracted and thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless labor; and of looking at plants and animals in all their functions, rather than treating any area as a single-product system.”

Permacultural principles, such as encouraging diversity, catching and storing energy, and using relative location to take advantage of the connections between elements, apply to any designed system. In his book “Gaia’s Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture,” Toby Hemenway says “Permaculture has been used to design buildings, wastewater systems, villages, and even less tangible things such as school curricula, businesses, community groups, and decision-making processes.”

Nature integrates rather than segregates. Her ecosystems are made of whole communities of plants and animals. Nature is efficient -- we see her recycle all waste. Nature is resilient, using multiple elements to support every function.

Permaculture goes beyond the goal of “sustainability” to that of “abundance.” It is about changing our culture from one of consumption to one of production. The focus is to reverse our current model of degeneration to one of regeneration.

If you are interested in learning more about permaculture, consider taking a class at Seattle Tilth. We will be offering our fourth Permaculture Design Certification course taught by Toby Hemenway this winter. Unlike most design courses that occur as two-week intensives, this course will take place one weekend a month from October 2012 through March 2013, offering flexibility for people with busy schedules.

Already turned on to the benefits of permaculture and want to spread the word? Maybe you’d like to learn how teach others what you have discovered. Seattle Tilth is offering a Permaculture Teacher Training Course in September. This exciting week-long intensive course will be offered at the Seattle Tilth Farm Works farm in Auburn, WA. Rarely offered in the US, this course will be residential and include farm fresh meals.

Up, Up and Away

Falaah Jones, Educator

If your vines are trailing, invading or creating a mess in your garden, don’t despair, send them skyward!

Pea tendrils reach for teepees or wire fences, beans bend lovingly around poles, and even tomatoes cooperate when they are wound up strings or secured to sturdy trellises. Sending plants skyward will keep fruits off the ground (and out of slug territory), improve air circulation and allow plants to dry out after watering or a heavy rainfall.

For most of our gardens, plants such as squash and cucumbers can take up way too much real estate if allowed to tumble and frolic through your garden beds. They’ll have more space going vertical. Give them support on fences, hoops, A-frame trellises or strong lattice structures. Slight ledges on your trellises can hold larger fruits, such as pumpkin or winter squash.

Pick veggie varieties that want to climb, avoiding descriptions such as bush, compact, determinant or patio. Visit one of our community learning gardens to see fences full of fledging tomatoes ready for lift off. Feel inspired? Take a Seattle Tilth class like “Go Vertical” at the Good Shepherd Center or Bradner Gardens Park in Seattle or at the Pickering Barn in Issaquah -- and learn how to tame your trailing bunch.

These beans are climbing a sturdy bamboo teepee trellis in our Children’s Garden in Wallingford.
Four Western Red Cedars—along with Oregon Grape and bluebells—grow along a southern fence in part of my yard. They cast long shadows and so the ground to the north of them is given over to ferns and shade-tolerant plants, moss and fungi, which, along with slugs and salal, seem to constitute the native ground-cover in these parts.

But the cedars are spreading out and there’s less and less usable space in that section of the yard. This has led me to propose cutting them down and planting something more suitable to a suburban lot, such as fruit trees. If I did that, I’d be inclined to plant a bit of a lawn in the recovered shadow space. This news came as a shock to my wife because it has not been many years since we got rid of the lawn. I now find I’d like a patch of turf to lie down upon when the mood strikes me. Yes, I understand I’m going to have to mow it, too.

My neighbor Andre has a lawn. For the past several summers he regularly brought me his grass clippings. In return I delivered to him the occasional batch of garden produce, mostly collard greens. He appreciated the fresh vegetables and I appreciated the highly nitrogenous green stuff for my compost bin. I took pleasure in this arrangement. It was a small bit of neighborly networking that makes me feel grounded in my place. Sometimes Andre put his bins just inside my front gate for me to find. When I had emptied them I left them in his driveway. I managed to feel a bit conspiratorial about this, which I enjoyed. Even though Andre and I didn’t see each other during these transactions, they continued and confirmed our arrangement.

Last weekend I took Andre a small bale of kale. He thanked me and then gave me the news that he has bought himself a mulching mower, and there will be no more grass clippings. We pondered this news together for a second or two before I said, “But I’ll still share my vegetables with you.”

It seems like a small matter, but I’ve grown to believe that our quality of life depends very much on our mundane daily connections, interactions and relationships. Andre will still get his greens, and even if I leave them secretly on his doorstep, he’ll know where they came from.

Ian Taylor welcomes comments and feedback at crookedcucumber@earthlink.net.

Garden to Table

Pesto at it’s Besto!

Leika Suzumura, Program Manager of Community Kitchens NW

With summer setting in, the delicate aroma of basil begins to scent our kitchens and treat us to the delicate and satisfying flavor of pesto. Whether it’s on pizza, pasta, or a simple dip for your favorite cracker, pesto is a highlight of these warm summer days. And what’s even more exciting is that you are not limited to using basil and pine nuts.

Herbs like cilantro, parsley and arugula offer us endless combinations to make the most fantastic and pleasing pestos around.

Here is a template recipe for pesto that can be swapped out with any herb of choice, nut or seed you favor, and the option to make it with or without dairy. This allows for creativity and flavor exploration that will keep you craving the taste of summer!

**Ingredients**

- ¼ cup toasted nuts or seeds – pine nuts, pumpkin seeds, almonds, walnuts or sunflower seeds
- 2 cups herb of choice, basil, cilantro, parsley, arugula, spinach, mint
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese (optional)

**Directions**

Place nuts or seeds in a blender or food processor and blend until chopped fine, almost like a coarse flour. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. Serve immediately or store in refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Tips and Tricks

- Combining different nuts/seeds will give various textures, flavor and nutrient profiles to your pesto.
- Strong herbs like cilantro, arugula, or mint are best used in combination.
- Did you know that pumpkin seeds are packed full of Zinc? It’s a powerful nutrient to support your immune system and increase prostate health in men.
- For longer storage for that great harvest, you can freeze in individual containers or ice cube tray and pull as needed.
Q. I am concerned about what will happen to my vegetable garden when I leave town for two weeks this summer. Do you have any suggestions?

A. The two most important things to think about when leaving your vegetable garden in the middle of summer are water and harvesting.

Most of the year thirsty plants are not something we need to worry about here in the Pacific Northwest. Come mid-summer, however, we do need to consider how we are going to keep our plants watered. Those leafy greens we carefully planted and have been tending all spring are susceptible to drying out if we hit a hot spell. One way to ensure your plants get the water they need even when you are not home is to install a drip irrigation system in your beds. Drip systems that run through an automatic timer can be attached to the faucet on your house with the addition of a backflow preventer.

Set the timer to water as needed and you can rest assured that your plants are getting hydrated even when you are out of town.

Another option is to do a top dressing of compost, soak the garden well and top that compost with straw or leaves right before you leave. This should hold it if we have our usual summer weather, though things might be a touch dry when you return. This new cover of mulch will also keep the weeds at bay.

Be sure not to start any new seeds or put new transplants out within at least three weeks of leaving town. Time your plantings for when you will be home to tend the young seedlings.

Don’t plant things that will need their major harvest during the time you are gone. There is no fun in tending plants that you don’t also get the benefit of harvesting! Harvest what you can in a timely way to be able to eat them before you leave, or share them with friends, neighbors or the food bank.

To ease your mind about both watering and harvesting, a garden sitter can be a good option. Friends, neighbors and professional gardeners are often happy to tend your garden for you in exchange for garden goods or cash. Call the Garden Hotline for recommendations for gardeners and food banks that accept fresh food donations. Learn more about when to plant seeds in Seattle Tilth classes and our “Maritime Northwest Garden Guide.”
Maximize Summer Fun
Take a Class!

Two or three prices are listed for each class; the second price is discounted for Seattle Tilth members and the third is a special price for a second member of your 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. 101.

Class venues:
BGP: Bradner Gardens Park, 1733 Bradner Place S, Seattle
GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Seattle
PBI: Pickering Barn in Issaquah, 1730 10th Ave. N.W., Issaquah

City Chickens: The Integrated Flock,
$36/$25/$54
Saturday, Jun. 2; 2-4 p.m., TBA

Go Vertical, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Jun. 2; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Thursday, Jun. 21; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Jun. 9; 1-3 p.m., PBI

Organic Gardening 101, $36/$25/$54
Wednesday, Jun. 6; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Thursday, Jul. 19; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Seattle Tilth Master Food Preserver Certification Course, $350
Saturdays, Jun. 9-Jul. 7; 9 a.m.-4 p.m., GSC

Garden to Table: All About Peas,
$45/$35/$68
Wednesday, Jun. 13; 6-8:30 p.m., GSC

Propagation: Make More Plants,
$45/$35/$68
Saturday, Jun. 16; 10 a.m.-1 p.m., GSC

City Chickens 101, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Jun. 23; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Jul. 28; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC

Make Herbal Salves,
$36/$25/$54
Wednesday, Jul. 11; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Start Your Fall or Winter Garden,
$36/$25/$54
Thursday, Jul. 12; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Jul. 28; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP

Basic Canning 101, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Jul. 21; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Harvest Wild Sea Vegetables, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Jul. 21; noon-2 p.m., TBA

Pickles and Fermentation, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Jul. 21; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Garden to Table: Garlic and Onions,
$45/$35/$68
Wednesday, Jul. 25; 6-8:30 p.m., GSC

Wildlife Gardens, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Jul. 28; 1-3 p.m., PBI

Beekeeping 301: Winterize Your Hive,
$36/$25/$54
Saturday, Jul. 28; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Plant Now for Winter
Visualize Cabbage

Julie Kintzi, Garden Educator
Gardeners learn to be in the “now” while simultaneously planning ahead for the next season or two. Ideas to consider:

June
• Start Brussels sprouts, broccoli, heading cabbage, cauliflower and beets.

July
• Start root crops, Swiss chard, broccoli, onions, spinach, collards and cabbage.
• Plant in the cool shaded spaces between lush tomatoes, beans and other summer veggies.
• Keep soil consistently moist for seeds and seedlings – not easy in summer!
• Add 1-2” of compost to enrich soil and to help hold moisture around plantings.

Upcoming Events
• Chicken Coop & Urban Farm Tour, July 14
• Harvest Fair, September 8
• Green Gala & Auction, October 20

Classes in Downtown Parks
Apartment dwellers, come take free classes! Learn how to grow food in containers and compost indoors. Visit seattletilth.org/learn.