Controlling insects and pests is not only important, but it’s also a great way for you and your family to get outside and enjoy nature. Chickens will eat dandelions and clover but, if given half a chance, they will also uproot and devour the lettuce and other plants in your veggie patch creating a veritable moonscape. Unfortunately, I’ve never seen them eat morning glory or horsetail.

Chickens are great decomposers, gobbling up leftover rice, pasta and over-ripe produce giving us plenty of manure to enrich garden soil. Raising exotic or rare breeds can also give us a good feeling in our hearts as we help keep obscure breeds from becoming extinct.

Choosing the Right Chickens for Your Backyard

Falaah Jones, Garden Educator

Lately, with all the talk about urban farming, getting back to basics and eating local, you might be thinking about getting chickens yourself. Raising a small flock of city chickens is a lot of fun, but there are a few things to consider before bringing home some random, albeit adorable, baby chicks from one of our local feed stores. If schlepping to the feed store lacks appeal, it is even easier to place an order for a boxful of domestic fowl from a mail order hatchery.

First, slow down. Pick the breed that is right for you. Most hens that are bred for backyard confinement are dual-purpose birds, suitable for meat as well as eggs. Some lay eggs with blue and green colored shells; some have crested tops or patterned or frizzled feathers. Cool! Some are really good foragers providing great natural pest control as they seek out and eat insects and worms in your garden beds. Chickens will eat dandelions and clover but, if given half a chance, they will also uproot and devour the lettuce and other plants in your veggie patch creating a veritable moonscape. Unfortunately, I’ve never seen them eat morning glory or horsetail.

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The thing that sways my chicken choice is basic personality. Many books describe chickens by size of bird, number of eggs per...
Remembering Neal Thayer

Karen Luetjen and Neal Thayer receive the governor’s award on behalf of Seattle Tilth.

Last fall we learned the sad news that Neal Thayer had died of melanoma at the age of 55. Neal joined the Seattle Tilth board in 2004 after being recruited by former board president Amy Stephenson. Neal “stood out” from other Tilth types. He had a military rank and always wore a tie. At a wine and cheese mixer for new and previous board members, we had an ice breaker activity where each individual wrote something about himself on a slip of paper. We were supposed to pull out a note that said, “Collects sarongs.” It took a good long time before the group realized that Neal was practically giggling. No one had picked him for that clue.

That was just the first of many surprises that Neal had in store for us.

Seattle Tilth benefited from his organizational development background. Neal played an important leadership role as President at a time of exciting transition.

Neal worked in partnership with board members on planning, including hosting two retreats at his house. He made us pots of coffee that would strip paint, had a big vat of black bean soup going on the stove and his favorite fruit scented markers ready for the flip chart. It was indeed a fruitful setting for advancing the organization. All of us were deeply grateful for his facilitation of those meetings, as well as his ability to line up outside facilitators for two board-staff retreats that advanced strategic planning.

I will always think of Neal, head tilted to the side, asking “What would success look like?” He truly helped us to envision success and move toward it.

This Year’s Fab Five
Continued from page 1

interplant multicolored Swiss chard, lacinato kale, gourmet salad mix or leeks into your existing landscape

Preserve well

Extend your harvest and eat from your garden all year by growing things that preserve or keep well. Fruit can be canned or frozen without special equipment. Hearty greens such as kale, Swiss chard and collards are easy to blanch and freeze. Leeks and onions can be cleaned, chopped and frozen without a dip in boiling water. Cucumbers, beans and other vegetables are easily pickled for a delicious treat from your pantry.

Climbing or compact varieties

Get the most out of your small space by growing plants that climb are well suited to:

Get Your Wristbands for Smooth Shopping!

Our staggered entry system guarantees a pleasant shopping experience and abundant plant selection. Enjoy educational displays, books, and food until your time comes to enter the sale.

Grow in a container. Climbers growing up poles, or a simple, sturdy trellis, use very little space at soil level. Peas, pole beans, tromboccino squash, cucumbers and winter squash will produce abundantly in a small amount of soil. Compact varieties are well suited for those city farmers who don’t have land but want to grow food in containers. Look for bush varieties or determinate tomatoes.
Food Security for All People
Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

Recent protests and political movements around the country and the world have kept me glued to the news channel. Massive grassroots groups are organizing themselves in order to change broken political systems, empower their communities, and demand their rights to lead healthy, prosperous lives. This is an inspiring moment in history.

Seattle Tilth also started as a grassroots movement. Over the years, our members and supporters helped us grow into a strong and effective organization, respected throughout the region for our efforts to build a healthier, more sustainable community. Being a member of Seattle Tilth means much more than just getting a discount on classes. As a member, you are a central part of the movement working to ensure that we all have access to fresh, nutritious, organically grown food and are able to live in a healthy environment free from contaminants.

Today, we are continuing the work begun so many years ago by a small group of committed individuals. Seattle Tilth’s board of directors recently formed an advocacy committee to identify key strategies and issues where we can champion causes that will advance our work to ensure food security for all.

Can You Feel Your Food System?
Stephanie Seliga, Just Garden Project (Fiscally sponsored by Seattle Tilth)

We are what we eat! In Seattle and King County, this saying is a beacon of hope, inspiration, and a rallying cry for those desiring sustainability, balance, health, community and self sufficiency.

In 2010, Seattle’s Year of Urban Agriculture inspired us to build, create, and celebrate our local food system. Sponsored by Seattle Tilth, Spring into Bed was one of the amazing community projects born out of the excitement and energy around local food and farming.

Choosing the Right Chickens for Your Backyard
Continued from page 1

Spring into Bed is growing into a year round project and a county-wide event in 2011. Sponsored by Seattle Tilth, the Just Garden Project as it is now called, continues to affect the food system in positive ways. Our goal is to build over 30 free and subsidized gardens for low income families across King County. These gardens provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables for people who need them the most.

Feel your food system! Join over 500 volunteers in community gardens, farms and backyard gardens on May 14, as we build 30 new gardens. Work parties start at 10 a.m. culminating with a celebration from 3-6 p.m. -with food, music and a great feeling of community. When we have a hand in it, our food tastes so much better and our communities are healthier – indeed, we are what we eat. Visit springintobed.org to pledge your support, map your garden or sign up to volunteer.

For more information, e-mail food@justgarden.org, or call (206) 633-0451, ext. 611.

Where to buy:
Check your local stores for breeds and availability:
- Bothell Feed Center
- Grange Country Store Co-op
- Hayes Feed Store
- Monroe Farm and Feed Corp
- Portage Bay Grange
- Seattle Farm Co-op

Mail order hatcheries:
- mcmurrayhatchery.com
- mypetchicken.com
- dunlaphatchery.net
- shankshatchery.com

Docile Breeds for Backyards:
- Black Australorp
- Buff Orpington
- Barred Plymouth Rock
- Jersey Giant
- Silver or Gold-laced Wyndotte
- Silkie
Parents, send your kids to garden camp this summer! Toddlers to teens help tend the garden, explore garden ecology and harvest delicious fresh food. Where else can kids learn to use tools, build compost piles and investigate the creatures that help the garden grow? Other favorite camp activities include cooking, art, music and running through the sprinklers.

Choose between two special garden locations – the Children’s Garden behind the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford and the Rainier Beach Learning Garden. The Rainier Beach garden is a wonderful place to learn and explore, with beautiful raised beds from salvaged lumber, an herb garden, rain garden and native plant swale. The garden in Wallingford has been enchanting kids for decades, offering the famous bean tepee, bug tunnel, and several active worm bins.

**Garden Toddlers**

The youngest members of the tribe explore alongside their parents or caregivers. Explore family gardening with your child! Learn what plants kids will adore and how you can work together to grow your own garden. These classes introduce children and parents to insects, flowers and the food world. Each session includes gardening, an art project, stories, our famous sun tea and yummy snacks.

**School’s Out**

Kids 5-10 years old will have fun while engaging their minds in the amazingly diverse world of plants and animals. Kids learn practical skills doing garden activities outdoors and also get healthy exercise. Your kids might take a new interest in eating vegetables!

**Growing Up in the Garden**

Youth ages 10-14 have the opportunity to mentor younger campers while exploring garden ecology. Junior Counselors assist with practical gardening skills and also get healthy exercise. Your kids will want to grow and eat more vegetables and fruit!

Kids love to dig in the dirt, fly like a winged creature and sing songs about bugs. Garden camp brings out the magic of summer vacation. Sign up now!

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**Good Shepherd Center**

4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Seattle

- Parent/toddler: ages 1-2 with adult
- Preschool: ages 3-5 with adult
- Week-long day camps: ages 5-10
- Jr. Counselor program: ages 10-14

**Rainier Beach Learning Garden**

4800 S. Henderson, Seattle

- Parent/toddler: ages 1-2 with adult
- Preschool: ages 3-5 with adult
- Mini day camps: ages 5-10

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**We are Family**

Enjoy free family celebrations in the garden! Find out what Seattle Tilth’s children’s garden programs are all about. See seattletilth.org for other locations and dates.

**Earth Day Celebration**

Friday, April 1; 5:30 - 7 p.m.
Rainier Beach Learning Garden

**Earth Egg Day**

Saturday, April 23; 10 a.m.-noon
Good Shepherd Center
Growing Potatoes

Falaah Jones, Garden Educator

In the fall, we see purple, red, and yellow potatoes in the grocery store. Some potatoes are nobby, some are fingerlings, yet all are delicious. It is very easy to grow potatoes, and April to June is the time to get them in the ground.

Potatoes grow along the stems of the potato plant. That is why it is best to start potatoes in a trench, gradually adding soil or organic matter (e.g. straw, compost) to form a mound. Or plant them in containers such as a potato box, burlap bag, garbage can, even a heavy duty plastic bag or a cardboard box.

Add six inches of amended soil to the bottom of the trench or container. Place seed potatoes a few inches apart on the soil. If you use a portion of a potato, make sure the piece has several eyes and that

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A Volunteer with Many Hats

Liza Burke, Community Relations Manager

An exceptional Seattle Tilth member and volunteer for twenty-three years, Bill Thorness has contributed his skills and leadership in countless ways. Until recently, Bill has served as our publications editor, investing his invaluable professional expertise. He has stepped down from that role and we look forward to seeing what’s next. We’ll take this opportunity to highlight some of his work and find out more about this special volunteer.

How did you get involved with Seattle Tilth?

I first volunteered with Seattle Tilth in 1987, helping organize the Harvest Fair in its second year. I soon also started writing for the newsletter. Throughout much of the 1990s I helped with the Harvest Fair and the Edible Plant Sale. I also did a lot of public relations and publicity for Seattle Tilth, helping to expand the "Maritime Northwest Garden Guide" into its current size and format.

I raised money for events and set up a corporate sponsorship program. I chaired an organic wine tasting and was in the original group that got Seattle Tilth’s second learning garden at Bradner Gardens Park off the ground. It was inspirational to think of Seattle Tilth having another demonstration and learning garden in another part of the city. In the late 1990s I served on the board, becoming the president at the time when we were hiring our first executive director. I took the Master Composter/Soil Builder training (in 2003) and did a lot of volunteering with that program for a couple of years.

What motivates you about Seattle Tilth’s mission?

My life is much richer because I am a gardener, and I think I make better decisions for myself and my environment by being more connected to the Earth. My gardening education and evolution has been greatly enhanced by Seattle Tilth, just as the organization has helped thousands of others. There are still plenty of people who can use gardening education to help them live better, so I think Tilth’s mission is still very valid.

We Need You!

Without volunteers, Seattle Tilth doesn’t happen. Consider participating in urban agriculture and education by:

• Maintaining a learning garden
• Assisting with one of our classes for adults or kids
• Mentoring youth to learn food production and job skills
• Getting students outside to explore food growing in their school’s backyard
• Labeling storm drains to educate communities on where their wastewater goes
• Helping at our Edible Plant Sale

Take action! There are many ways to support our work. Check seattletilth.org to see current volunteer opportunities, fill out an application, and attend an orientation.
You've caved in to your inner city farmer and cooped up eight chicks in your yard. You're delighted – but increasingly overwhelmed – by their prolific egg production. To the rescue are my best culinary friends: Mark Bittman's "How to Cook Everything Vegetarian", "Simply in Season" by Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert, and Barbara Kingsolver's "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle". Among these deliciously practical pages are recipes greedy for fresh eggs: bread puddings, egg salads, vegetable bakes, crepes, custards, quiches, and cakes. Pair them with the fruits and vegetables of the season.

A certain egg-centric holiday may tempt you to hard boil your backyard bounty, but eggs should be at least two weeks old for easiest peeling. To determine how old eggs are, immerse them in cool water. The freshest eggs sink, resting horizontally, while the larger ends of one-to-two week old eggs tilt upward. If they float, they’re too old; toss 'em!

For a quick, simple, but endlessly flexible dish to dispatch your fresh egg glut, whip up this veggie frittata to celebrate the flavors of spring.

**Asparagus Leek Frittata**

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 8 fresh eggs, washed
- salt and pepper to taste
- ½ cup milk
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped
- 1 cup roasted or steamed asparagus, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- ½ cup leeks, chopped and cooked
- ¾ cup fresh feta cheese

Heat olive oil in large, oven-proof skillet on low. Beat eggs with milk, salt, pepper, and oregano. Pour into hot skillet and stir in asparagus and leeks. Sprinkle in feta. Preheat oven to "broil." Allow mixture to cook undisturbed on low until eggs are barely set, 5 to 10 minutes. Transfer to oven and broil 3-5 minutes, or until lightly golden on top. Serve warm or at room temperature with salad and bread.

Ashley Braun is a freelance environmental writer. Find more of her writing at ashleybraun.com.
Hot Questions
Sue Hartman, Garden Educator

Q: **What does it mean to “harden-off” transplants?**

A: When plants are started indoors, they need to be toughened or hardened-off before being put outside so that they will survive temperature fluctuations, strong sun and wind. A week before taking them outside, reduce water but don’t let them wilt. Forego fertilizer until after transplanting. On a mild day, put the seedlings in a sheltered place for only 2-3 hours. Do not immediately expose them to full sun. Over a period of 7-10 days, gradually increase exposure to sunlight and cold a few hours each day. Check them daily for moisture. If the temperature drops below 40 degrees F, protect seedlings with floating row cover, empty cardboard box or bring them inside. Keep the plants sheltered from wind gusts to prevent damage to fragile stems and leaves.

Q: **When can I plant my heat-loving vegetables outside?**

A: Warm season crops love the heat and thrive in temperatures of 60 degrees F or higher. Heat-lovers such as beans, corn, basil, eggplant, peppers, squash, tomatillos and tomatoes will languish or die if the weather is too cold. Wait to put these vegetables out in the garden until nighttime temperatures are reliably above 50 degrees F. A little early protection will yield a bigger harvest later!

**Tips for planting heat-lovers in May and June:**
- Protect transplants and seed beds with cold frames or cloches
- Surround tomatoes and peppers with a Wall O’ Water or make your own mini-greenhouse out of empty or water-filled bottles
- Plant in a raised bed, the soil will warm up faster
- Cover the soil with clear plastic prior to planting to raise the soil temperature enough to allow germination of bean and corn seeds
- Start cucumbers and squash indoors in biodegradable pots – create your own with newspaper
- Grow eggplants in dark colored containers in the sunniest spot you can find

Growing Potatoes
Continued from page 5

the cut sides have been exposed to the air for a few days in order to seal. Potatoes from the grocery store may have been dusted with fungicide, so it is best to plant seed potatoes from a local garden center. To prevent the proliferation of fungal disease, don’t use leftover potatoes that were overlooked in your garden last year.

After the potato plant has grown about six inches, cover the stem with soil until just a few leaves are above the soil line. Continue this throughout the summer as the plant grows. The plant will produce purple or white flowers and have fuzzy leaves. Plant early, mid-season and late varieties to extend your potato harvest.

Potatoes are in the Solanacea family so it is important to rotate your crop by family, i.e. do not grow potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant and peppers where you grew them last year. Rotating crops will significantly decrease the chance of blight — think Irish potato famine!

One last word of advice: Do not make potato salad using purple potatoes and hard-boiled eggs. Purple plus yellow makes green. Yuck!
Learn More  Grow more food, expand your skills and have fun by taking a class!

Two prices are listed for each class; the second price is discounted for Seattle Tilth members. Become a member through our website or use the form on page 11. Advanced registration and payment are required for classes. Class details and registration information are found on our website under the Learn tab. Questions? Call (206) 633-0451 ext. 101.

Classes are held at one of these venues:
BGP: Bradner Gardens Park, 1733 Bradner Place S, Seattle
GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Seattle
WC: White Center Cultural Community Center; 9421 18th Ave. SW., Room 12, Seattle
YCAC: Youngstown Cultural Arts Center; 4408 Delridge Way SW, Seattle

Build Unique Raised Beds, $45/$35
Saturday, April 2; 10 a.m.–1 p.m., GSC

Organic Gardening 101, $36/$25
Thursday, April 7; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Thursday, May 12; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Beekeeping 201: Start Your Hive, $36/$25
Saturday, April 9; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Get Your Garden Growing, $36/$25
Saturday, April 9; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC
Saturday, April 23; 10 a.m.-noon, WC

Drip Irrigation
Saturday, April 9; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC
Saturday, May 28; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Get Your Garden Growing, $36/$25
Wednesday, April 13; 6-8 p.m., BGP

Be Cistern Savvy! $36/$25
Thursday, April 14; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Mushrooms: Cultivate Your Own Edible Fungi, $36/$25
Saturday, April 16; 2-4 p.m., GSC
Saturday, May 21; 2-4 p.m., BGP

Master Food Preserver Certification Course
$350, Saturdays, April 16-May 21; 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m., GSC

City Chickens 201: The Integrated Flock, $36/$25
Saturday, April 23; 10 a.m.-noon, North Seattle
Sunday, May 22; 2-4 p.m., North Seattle

Pest Management (IPM) for Fruit Trees, $36/$25
Saturday, May 14; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Grow Heat Lovers, $36/$25
Saturday, May 14; 10 a.m.-noon, WC
Wednesday, May 25; 7-9 p.m., BPG

Cob Oven Building, $75/$65
Saturday, May 14; 9 a.m.-4 p.m., NW Seattle

Permaculture Design Certification Course, $900
One weekend a month, May-October; 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m., South Seattle Community College

City Chickens 101, $36/$25
Saturday, May 21; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC

Bike, Eat, Support Children’s Garden Education
Join us on June 28 for Spoke & Food. Bike to and from one of many Seattle area host restaurants and have 20% of your bill donated to children’s garden education at Seattle Tilth. Details at spokeandfood.com.

Garden Educator Workshops
Learn all about gardening with children from the experts!
Language Arts in the Garden, $36/$25
April 30; 9 a.m.–noon. (GSC)

Art and Music in the Garden, $36/$25
May 21; 1–4 p.m. (GSC)

Summer Intensive, $325/$275
July 18-22; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (GSC)