Avoid Transplant Shock, Harden-Off Your Plant

Carey Thornton, Adult Education Coordinator

Whether you’ve grown your seedlings indoors or purchased your transplants from a nursery or our plant sale, harden them off before planting outdoors – it could be the key to your success!

Hardening-off is a process of slowly adjusting your plants to outdoor temperatures, wind, rain and sunshine. At this time of year, many of the plants we are digging into our gardens are coming from inside nurseries, cozy greenhouses or our own sunny windowsills. If you brought them directly outside and planted them straight into the ground, they would have a rude awakening once the bright sun, harsh wind, cold rain and chilly nights got a hold of them. This is often the cause of “transplant shock.”

Hardening-off is a pretty easy process. Give them 3-14 days transitioning to their final homes outside. For cool-season crops like broccoli and cabbage that don’t mind too much cold, just a few days may be needed for this process. With heat-loving crops like tomatoes and peppers, more time (up to two weeks!) may be necessary.

Because the quality of light from a supplemental florescent bulb is very different from full sunshine, for the first few days you’ll want to pick a partly shaded site that is protected from a lot of wind. Bring your babies in at night during most of the hardening-off process. Each day, allow your transplants to be exposed to more and more sun, eventually leaving
Fixing the Food System

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

“What I found over four years of research and reporting, was a conscious effort — taking place in labs and marketing meetings and grocery-store aisles — to get people hooked on foods that are convenient and inexpensive.”

Note that nutritional value is not part of this equation. If you haven’t read the recent New York Times article “The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food,” you might want to do so. It will have you reading aloud to whomever is nearby. Perhaps even shaking your head in dismay and muttering a bit under your breath. What we have allowed to happen to our food system is appalling.

But it’s not too late. Seattle Tilth is also making a conscious effort — in our gardens and farms, in school cafeterias, and in community kitchens — to get people hooked on food that is convenient, affordable and highly nutritious.

Healthy soil, clean and abundant water, vigorous plant and seed stock, beneficial insects and wildlife are all necessary to produce nutritious food. Seattle Tilth teaches people how to grow food while taking care of the environment. For some people that makes all the difference. But what about those without a garden? How do we help them eat well every day?

Helping people understand that our food system is broken is a good starting point. Then we make sure that nutritious, locally grown fruits and vegetables are available and affordable and that everyone knows how to plan and cook a tasty meal quickly. As consumers, educators, parents and community members, we can all determine what kind of food system we want, then learn, grow and eat accordingly.

As consumers, educators, parents and community members, we can all determine what kind of food system we want, then learn, grow and eat accordingly.

AVOID TRANSPLANT SHOCK, HARDEN-OFF YOUR PLANTS

Continued from page 1

them out in the full sun at their ultimate destination. As you near the end of your hardening-off process, it is time to leave them out all night. Finally you can dig your little guys in.

Use season extension tools to make this job easier. A clear plastic covered hoop house or cloche serve as a great transitional space for your transplants. Even a structure covered with floating row cover (spun poly-cloth you can purchase under the brand Remay or Harvest Guard) can serve as the extra protection your plants need to become well-adjusted.

How do you know if plants starts need to be hardened-off? If you are purchasing from a garden center and you are choosing plants from the outside racks, they are probably already conditioned for outside. If you are choosing them from an indoor or sheltered area, they need to be hardened-off.

The summer veggies you buy at Seattle Tilth’s May Edible Plant Sale have gone through a few days of hardening off, but still need a little protection before planting them into the garden. Since nighttime temperatures often don’t get warm enough for heat-lovers like tomatoes, eggplants and peppers until late May, use those extra few weeks to give your starts a good transition by hardening them off.
New Cohort Grows CSA and Egg Share
Matthew McDermott, Seattle Tilth Farm Works Program Manager

Farm on! Seattle Tilth Farm Works’ organic farmer education program began on February 9. The new cohort consists of 12 participants that come from far and near – Kenya, Somalia, Canada and Western Washington.

They bring a variety of farm experiences to Seattle Tilth Farm Works (STFW) and great enthusiasm to pursue their small-farm aspirations. Frances and Elizabeth, a Kenyan couple, expressed their excitement, “We want to get back to our agricultural roots and the opportunity with Seattle Tilth is helping us move in that direction.”

Training classes are held twice a week for 16 weeks. During this time, participants learn about organic farm practices, crop and business planning, and marketing outlets. Recently, the group has been sowing seeds in the greenhouse and masterminding their crop and harvest plans.

In addition to the new cohort, we’re delighted that six farmers from the previous cohort are returning for a second year of farming with STFW. Some of these farmers will be expanding their plot size and diversifying crops and marketing outlets. A couple of the returning participants have a strong interest in animal husbandry and STFW staff is working with them to implement a rotational pasture system.

In this effort, STFW has begun to model a pasture laying-hen operation. Starting from their first days, STFW staff has nurtured the 70 little puffs of down into their now adolescent pullet stage. The warm spring days have them anxious to get on green pastures. These hens will start producing eggs in mid-June when we plan to offer an “egg share.”

The egg share will be part of a larger effort to begin selling community supported agriculture (CSA) shares. The 2013 plan is to sell 40 CSA shares which will each provide a weekly box of vegetables from June through October. The CSA model is a new concept for many participants, but as Samuel explains, the model has been well received. “It requires a lot of planning, but I like the idea of knowing who we will be selling our produce to before the season begins.”

Our new egg share and CSA will be a great opportunity for the community to support aspiring farmers, and to enjoy fresh produce and tasty local eggs. Sign up on our website!

Elizabeth Ndishi and Tabitha Maina planted spring crops during the first weeks of Seattle Tilth Farm Works’ spring training.

Give Big On May 15th

Make a donation to support Seattle Tilth on May 15th and your donation will be matched by The Seattle Foundation during their annual Give Big day of philanthropy. Last year, donors gave more than $7 million to support community non-profits!

It’s easy. On Wednesday, May 15th, visit the Seattle Foundation website. Search for Seattle Tilth, and make your donation. We will receive your gift, plus matching funds. Your gift is a powerful way to connect, support and transform our local, sustainable food system.
Seattle Celebrates 25 Years of Curbside Recycling

Clarissa Allen, Resource Conservation Program Coordinator

Twenty-five years ago, the City of Seattle expanded the radical project of a local activist, Armen Stepanian, and instituted a city-wide curbside recycling program. Since January of 1975, Stepanian had been running a grassroots curbside recycling effort in Fremont, personally picking up newspapers, bottles and cans from the homes of community members. This was the same era when Seattle Tilth’s founders were organizing.

The work wasn’t easy, and neither was building support for the cause. Stepanian was dubbed “Mayor of Fremont” as he and his increasing number of supporters persisted, knowing their efforts were integral to building a sustainable future. Even when his home-grown recycling company was losing money, Stepanian continued his quest to reduce waste and encourage the re-use of consumer goods.

The influence of Fremont’s recycling efforts spread. In 1988, the City of Seattle took action, becoming one of the first in the nation to institute a city-wide curbside recycling program. Fast forward 25 years and Seattle residents are recycling more than ever – our residential recycling rate was over 60% in 2011!

What many Seattle residents don’t realize is that even as we celebrate our recycling successes, we are still sending approximately 60 rail cars full of waste EACH DAY to the 700-acre, Columbia Ridge landfill in Oregon. As the population of the Puget Sound region continues to grow, so will that train – unless we take action. Thirty-eight years ago, one man took action and the impact grew far beyond Fremont, sparking a city-wide commitment to waste reduction and a more sustainable future.

Interested in becoming a recycling champion? Seattle Tilth offers several volunteer training programs where you can increase your knowledge and start making a difference in your household and community!

- Seattle residents -- Participate in our Master Composter/Soil Builder program where volunteers receive in-depth compost education, and then share their knowledge and experience with the wider community.
- East King County residents -- Our Master Recycler Composter East program trains volunteers about recycling, backyard composting, organic gardening concepts, resource conservation and education outreach in the community.
- King County residents outside of Seattle -- New this year, Seattle Tilth is partnering with King County to support the “Master Composter Recycler program” campaign. Participate in an intensive training about curbside recycling and teach others in the community. More information can be found at http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/garbage-recycling/recycle-more.asp.

Volunteers Help Put Seattle on the Map

Did you know Seattle ranks third in the country for percentage of residents that volunteer in their communities? It’s true! Thirty-three percent of you gave 112 million volunteer hours last year to support all kinds of great organizations including Seattle Tilth. Nice work!

This year, help us number one in the country by volunteering at Seattle Tilth!

There are lots of ways to get involved:
- Children’s garden volunteer naturalist
- Veggie crew
- Garden steward
- Event volunteers: May Edible Plant Sale (May 4 & 5), Chicken Coop & Urban Farm Tour (July 13), or Harvest Fair (Sept. 7)
- Farm volunteers: at Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands, Seattle Tilth Farm Works and Seattle Youth Garden Works
- To get started as a volunteer or intern fill out a registration form and learn more at seattletilth.org/get-involved.
385 Reasons to Come to Our May Edible Plant Sale

Chris Iberle, Events and Volunteer Manager

Urban and suburban farmers of all kinds will be gathering again at Meridian Park in Wallingford for our May Edible Plant Sale. Featuring over 385 varieties of local, organic and sustainable vegetable and herb plant starts, the sale is the best place to get everything you need for a fantastic garden.

Get your favorites along with some new varieties, like Chadwick’s Cherry and Carmello Tomatoes, Golden Glory Squashes, and Erdine Purple Striped Eggplants. Seattle Tilth educators and volunteer plant sellers can help you find the right varieties, and each plant has signs with descriptions and icons to help you select good varieties for your garden.

• Leave the selection up to us by buying a Garden to Go online and then stop by for a quick pick-up in the lower field.
• Volunteer! Hundreds of volunteers are needed to help before and during the sale, and you get into the Early Bird Sale for free.
• Saturday afternoon and Sunday mid-day tend to have no lines and we’ll still have plenty of plants -- Saturday at 9 a.m. until noon can be very crowded. Pick-up a wristband on Saturday and Sunday morning for a guaranteed entry time.
• Get a ticket to the Early Bird Sale on Friday May 3, 5:30-7 p.m. for $25, and have first pick of the plants, while raising extra funds for Seattle Tilth.
• Don’t miss the vendors with supplies, hot food and educational talks in the lower field.

• Carpool, take the bus (#16, #44), or ride your bike and trailer. Bring wagons, carts, carrying devices, and friends as extra hands…but please leave your dogs at home.
• Renew your Seattle Tilth membership at the sale, or become a member for the first time, and get a free plant.
• Proceeds from the sale support Seattle Tilth’s organic farm and garden education programs – thanks so much for your support!

Carefree Gardening

Lisa Taylor, Children’s Program Manager

You want a bountiful vegetable garden, but you dread the “yard work.” The solution? Go organic! Using organic techniques saves time, money and helps the environment. A diverse, thriving edible garden doesn’t have problems with pests and diseases, there are fewer weeds (or they are easy to pull) and saves you money because healthy soil conserves water.

Disease and Pests?

No problem. By using good organic gardening practices, your plants will be stronger and able to withstand most pests and diseases. Smart gardening practices include building healthy soil, putting the right plant in the right place, working with nature, encouraging biodiversity and using water wisely. Other practices for a problem-free garden are proper pruning and training to improve air circulation and good sanitation (removing and disposing of diseased plant material).

Get to Know Bugs

Put the spray can away and get out the field guide. A big part of a healthy carefree garden is learning how to appreciate all the creatures that live there. Most of the bugs you see are beneficial or are food for beneficial creatures. Get to know about the habits and habitats of garden critters and learn how to help them so they can help you.

Weeds be Gone!

Using organic techniques can save time spent weeding – so you can spend more time eating all the food you are growing. Spacing plants so that less bare soil is exposed to the sun will keep weed seeds from sprouting. Spreading out a layer of mulch is an effective way to suppress weeds while enriching the soil. Another benefit of mulch is that any weeds that do poke through are easy to pull.

Feel Good about Doing Good for the Planet

A healthy, pesticide-free edible garden is good for everyone. Healthy soil helps absorb and clean storm water. Including a wide variety of plants will invite wildlife into your garden. Composting recycles organic waste into a nutrient rich soil amendment that plants need to grow.

Want to Get Started?

Here’s what to do: take a class at Seattle Tilth! We offer a variety of classes to get you on the path toward having your own healthy, pesticide-free edible garden. Get the most from your efforts this season. Learn the time-tested techniques for growing an abundant, productive urban landscape. Experience hands-on how to use these techniques for a successful and bountiful garden.
Growing Food Justice

Katie Pencke, Southeast Seattle Program Manager

Few things are as inherently social as food. The social bonds created when working side-by-side with folks growing, sharing, cooking and eating food are the foundation of a just and equitable community.

Seattle Tilth’s programs are built on this foundation of social food justice. We strive to make fresh healthy food accessible to all of the communities we work with.

Garden to Table: Dazzle Your Greens

Leika Suzumura, Program Manager of Community Kitchens Northwest

The earth is starting to reawaken with the changing rhythm of the season. She’s sprouting tender greens, reaching for the sky like a tired child waking from slumber. Greens nourish our bodies in many ways. They are packed full with vitamins and minerals, reflecting the healthy nutrients of the soil. They can also be bitter, a distinct flavor that activates our liver and stimulates the digestive enzymes needed to get the most power from our food. Our liver is a detoxifying organ, naturally bringing the spring season of fresh greens to initiate a “spring clean” in our body.

To accompany these tender leaves, try creating various dressings that will flavor them in endless combinations. Explore the tang of lemon or lime juice, balsamic or sherry vinegar, combine with a matching oil. Experiment with the spectrum of flavors and create a personalized pantry of choices. Start with this template, then modify to create your own twist on this classic dressing!

Basic Vinaigrette Dressing

Ingredients
- 1 cup olive oil
- ½ -¾ cups vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons honey (optional)
- 2-3 teaspoons your choice of herbs (thyme, parsley, oregano, rosemary….)

Instructions
Mix all the ingredients in a bowl and combine with a whisk. Dress salads before serving and reserve the rest in an airtight container in the refrigerator for later use.

Oil suggestions:
- sesame oil
- hazelnut oil
- walnut oil
- peanut oil
- sunflower oil

Vinegar (sour/acid) suggestions:
- red wine
- white wine
- balsamic / white balsamic
- apple cider vinegar
- sherry vinegar
- rice vinegar
- lemon juice
- lime juice

Our work in the Rainier Beach neighborhood is an example of how food brings a community together from seed to stomach. Rainier Beach High School garden clubs have been working with Seattle Tilth to develop a school garden as a way to unify the student body. Students shared their thoughts on how the activities at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands (RBUFW) are addressing social justice.

For first year high school student Elizabeth Mehlhauff, “Social justice is non-discrimination. I’ve seen people here [at RBUFW] of all different ages.” Makayla Miles adds, “Working and gardening together helps people to be closer together and creates community. It even helps people who may be afraid to be outside.”

Other Seattle Tilth programs tackle food justice head-on. Seattle Youth Garden Works trains underserved youth in job skills through an urban farm-to-market enterprise. The Just Garden project builds gardens for low-income communities. Seattle Tilth Farm Works develops small farming businesses with people who need support. Through all of our programs, Seattle Tilth is working to create access to healthy food, new leadership, economic opportunity and social justice within our community.
Q. I planted a lettuce bed earlier this spring and still have lettuce seeds left over. Can I plant more seeds now?

A. Yes! **Succession sowing** is a fabulous tool for maximizing harvests from your vegetable garden since crops will mature at different times in the garden. It also avoids the dilemma of having your entire crop ready at the same time.

You can continue to sow lettuce throughout the summer. Be sure to plan ahead to have space in the garden to add crops as the season progresses. Succession growing works especially well for fast growing things like lettuce, mustard, arugula and cilantro and also for root crops like carrots, beets and turnips. These plants are tolerant of the changing seasons and you can also tailor the variety of seed you are sowing to plants that can stand the summer heat. For instance ‘Jericho’ lettuce is a type of romaine that is great for mid-summer growing.

Q. I am planning to use a cloche to get my tomatoes, basil and pepper plants out early in the season this year. When is it ok to remove the cloche for the summer?

A. Tomatoes, basil and peppers are heat-loving crops that can will benefit from leaving the cloche over them all summer long. You can exchange the plastic for floating row cover at the first of July. This will allow more air circulation while maximizing the growing environment by increasing heat. Floating row cover can raise the air temperature below it 2-8 degrees F, depending on the thickness of the cover. The cloche will also protect tomatoes from late blight disease by minimizing soil splashing when it rains, a mechanism for infection.

Mulch your plants to keep weeds down and minimize your maintenance under the cloche. It will also help you avoid blossom end rot, as the soil will be slower to dry out. Be sure to leave the cloche ends open to allow good circulation and access to pollinators. After all, no insects = no fruit!
Embrace Spring by Taking 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:
GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Seattle
BGP: Bradner Gardens Park, 1730 Bradner Place S., Seattle
PBI: Pickering Barn, 1730 10th Ave. N.W., Issaquah

Comprehensive Organic Gardening, $275/$235
Apr. 3-24; Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. & Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., BGP

Garden Educator Workshop: Designing and Sustaining Your School Garden, $35/$25
Saturday, Apr. 6; 9 a.m.-noon, GSC

Poultry Health Peeks: Tails to Beaks, $36/$25/$54
Wednesday, Apr. 17; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Saturday, Apr. 20; noon-2 p.m., GSC

Urban Weeds and Wild Foods – Part 2: Preparing for Your Table, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Apr. 20; 3-5 p.m. GSC

Mushrooms: Cultivate Edible Fungi, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Apr. 13; 2-4 p.m., GSC

City Chickens 101, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Apr. 13; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC

Family Fun in the Chicken Run, $40/$30
Saturday, Apr. 27; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Organic Gardening 101, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Apr. 27; 1-5 p.m., GSC

Secrets of Companion Planting, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, May 11; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP

Go Vertical, $36/$25/$54
Saturday May 25; 1-3 p.m., PBI

Spring Into Bed!
Saturday, May 18
Help build garden beds for low-income families.
Volunteer: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Celebrate: 2-4 p.m.
In Redmond
justgarden.org

May Edible Plant Sale
May 4 & 5
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
4649 Sunnyside Ave. N.

Early Bird Sale
Friday, May 3
6-7:30 p.m.
$25 on Brown Paper Tickets

May Edible Plant Sale
May 4 & 5, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Meridian Park, GSC

Grow Heat Lovers, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, May 11; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Wednesday, May 22; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Secrets of Companion Planting,
$36/$25/$54
Saturday, May 11; 2-4 p.m., GSC