Residents of Hanyuan, a small town in the Sichuan Province of China, ignored warning signs in the 1980’s when their local pollinators began disappearing after farmers started using insecticide. Now hundreds of locals flood the orchards each spring to do over months what a colony of bees did in a matter of days. They don bamboo shoots with chicken feathers fastened to the end to hand-pollinate their world-famous pear orchards, one flower at a time.

Like the pear trees of Hanyuan, 75% of earth’s plant species require the help of pollinators to reproduce including apples, alfalfa, blueberries, melons, plums, squash and 150 other crops grown in the United States. One of the most versatile pollinators for commercial crops is the European Honey Bee. Unlike most pollinators, who are best suited to pollinate the local plants they evolved alongside, honeybees are generalists who are attracted by nearly all nectars and pollens. Currently, 1/3 of all food produced in the U.S. is pollinated by commercial honeybees.

Since 2006, honeybee colonies around the world have faced Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), the sudden, inexplicable disappearance of worker bees. Honeybee keepers in 35 states report losses, some as high as 80%. For the first time in history, honeybees are borrowed from Australia to pollinate American fields, most significantly in the almond groves of California.

One cause of honeybees’ disappearance has been traced to a type of insecticide, neonicotinoids, which hit the scene in the early 1980’s. Neonicotinoids were developed because they show lower toxicity in mammals than other insecticides. For our six-legged friends, however, a microscopic dose can cause memory loss and confusion, making it difficult for worker bees to find their way back to the hive and leading to eventual death by starvation. The neonicotinoid imidacloprid is currently the most widely used insecticide in the world.
Welcome to the Family

Jennifer Crouch, Development Director

We’re thrilled to welcome these new staff members to Seattle Tilth! Here is a bit of information so you can get to know them, including the most important question of all: what’s your favorite summer veggie?

Hong Chhuor spent the spring interning with us, and is now Seattle Tilth’s first communications coordinator. When not connecting with our readers through social media, taking photos or singing, Hong is hard at work in his Capitol Hill P-Patch. Favorite veggie? Zucchini.

Becca Fong has been at Seattle Tilth since February and is the director of all our farms and food programs – a big job! She loves working with people who are passionate about improving the food system. On days off, catch her soaking up the summer sun in West Seattle. Veggie? Green beans from the vine.

Mike Gervais is Seattle Tilth’s children’s garden program coordinator. When he’s not teaching kids about worms and compost, he might be playing the guitar on a raft, floating down a lazy river. Veggie of choice? Sugar snap peas.

Cara Ianni joined us in April as our adult education program manager. She’s having a great time watching class participants get the “ah-ha” moment. On a beautiful summer weekend, she forages for wild edibles. Veggie? Peas.

Kim Pitre is Seattle Tilth’s fearless office manager and she loves the variety of her days and the people she meets. Away from the office, you’ll find her reading a good book with an ice cold lemonade. Favorite veggie? Tomatoes.

Kristen Roewer joined us as the Seattle Youth Garden Works Program Coordinator in February. Kristen is inspired by the passion and perseverance of the youth in their program and loves growing food alongside them. Catch her on a sunny day riding her bike to a park with a blanket, book and ice coffee. She loves Green Zebra tomatoes and Genovese basil.
Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

Strategic planning. When you read those two words, did you react with a smile, a groan or indifference? Like it or hate it, strategic planning is an essential part of building a successful nonprofit. Over the past few months, we have been developing a plan that will guide Seattle Tilth's activities over the next five years.

During this process, board and staff have been wrestling with a fundamental issue: are we an organization primarily concerned with the health of the environment or creating a sustainable local food system? A five-year plan for an environmental organization would look different than a five-year plan for an organization dedicated solely to food security.

We're also asking ourselves about outcomes and metrics. What key indicators should we use to measure our successes during the next five years? How do we choose metrics that help us tell our story so our stakeholders understand what we're working towards, and whether or not we're making progress towards our goals? The metrics we use could be different depending on how we define ourselves as an organization.

Many of us believe strongly that we're both an environmental organization as well as an organization dedicated to building a better food system. This dual focus sometimes makes it challenging to choose between competing priorities. For instance, in order to ensure food security for people in our community, are we willing to establish a food distribution hub that will transport locally grown produce even if we know that use of fossil fuels contributes significantly to global climate change?

I'm interested in your thoughts. If you have an opinion on what type of organization we are, or should be, and what we should focus on over the next five years, email me at andreadwyer@seattletilth.org or call (206) 633-0451 ext. 104.

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Envision the Future

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

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Ethiopian Elders Grow Food and Community

Lindsay Jones, Seattle Tilth Intern

Every Friday, East African elders work alongside staff and interns at the farm, preparing, planting, and harvesting fresh, healthy produce, some of which they take home at the end of the day. I have spent several of the past Fridays talking with the elders during a tasty lunch that they prepared, learning about their experiences at farm. What they have shared with me has been inspiring, encouraging and delicious!

For the past several months, Seattle Tilth has been hosting the East African Senior Farming Project at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands as part of the Rainier Valley Eats (RaVE) campaign.

Through a group member who acted as an interpreter, they told me that although they were eating green vegetables before starting their work at the farm, they are now doing so more frequently. They are using fresh produce in their senior meal program at Yesler Community Center at least twice a week. One elder stated that if he returns home from the farm without freshly harvested produce, his family jokingly gives him a hard time and asks why he’s arriving empty-handed. Another elder laughingly said that her children are teasing her and say that she is getting younger because she is eating so well.

These conversations are filled with joy. As one elder explained, daily life in an unfamiliar culture can sometimes be isolating, but at the farm, “there is no depression.” All of the elders agreed that the program is about exercising, eating well and community. As one of the project’s East African leaders summed up, “This is about sharing our culture. It doesn’t matter if you are Ethiopian, African-American or Caucasian. We all eat.’ We hope that the work of RaVE helps to expand this sentiment throughout our community. We all eat, so let’s work together to make sure that we are all able to nourish both our bodies and our spirits.

Alem Alemayehu harvests collard greens at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands. Photo by Diana Vinh.
Ducks Offer Eggs and Charm

Cara Ianni, Education Program Manager

Who eats slugs and makes an excellent pet? Backyard ducks! People have kept ducks for centuries, raising these delightful and entertaining animals for eggs, meat or feathers. Ducks provide excellent pest control for your garden, eating a wide variety of insects and other invertebrates, and they tend to be less destructive than chickens. Their eggs have higher oil content than chicken eggs, making them great for baking. Well adapted to our wet weather, ducks are funny and charming companions. After they bond with you, don’t be surprised to find them waddling after you as you stroll around your backyard.

While backyard ducks may not be for everyone, this September’s “Raise City Ducks” class is perfect for anyone interested in learning more about what it takes to raise them. The class will cover basic physiology and behavior, housing, nutrition, city regulations, different breeds and egg laying -- no pond required! Register at seattletilth.org/learn/.
Seed Saving for the Savvy Gardener

Cara Ianni, Education Program Manager

Seeds are little miracles, each full of the potential for life. This fall, why not save seeds from your garden? Saving seeds preserves heirloom varieties, saves you money and expands your gardening expertise. Plus your seeds will be better adapted to the climate and pests!

Here are some tips to get you started:

• **Start easy.** Save seeds from annuals and biennials. Perennial plants are usually propagated by cuttings or division. Start with easy open-pollinated annuals that are not hybrids. Hybrid varieties produce seeds with a variety of traits that are often not similar to the parent plant.

• **Don’t cross.** With some crops, such as peppers, avoid cross-pollination by either planting just one variety or separating varieties by 500 (or more) feet.

• **Keep it cool.** After drying, store seed packets in a cool, dry place. Legumes should be stored in breathable bags, but place other crops in airtight containers.

Want to learn more? Check out our “Save Seeds” classes this September at seattletilth.org/learn. You’ll leave prepared to safely store your garden’s heritage to enjoy next year.

Stock Up and Celebrate!

Jen Crouch, Development Director

Don’t we all crave the long days of late summer sunshine, the bounty of sun loving crops, and the promise of warm comfort food for the fall? This harvest season, come celebrate your community, farmers and local food at Seattle Tilth’s 25th annual Harvest Fair. It’s on Saturday, September 8 at Meridian Park in Wallingford and is sure to be a festive fall highlight.

The first Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair took place in 1988, during Seattle Tilth’s 10th anniversary year, five years before the first neighborhood farmers market was founded in the University District. People were hungry for local, organic produce, and excited to have an opportunity to get to know their farmers. Over a dozen farmers attended, and 2,000 people came to support local agriculture and share in our region’s harvest. The event also connected producers with commercial buyers, bringing in restaurateurs, chefs, caterers, and other institutions to make sourcing connections for their businesses.

Since the fair’s inception, neighborhood farmers markets have grown to 41 locations in King County as of 2011. Seattle Tilth’s Harvest Fair has evolved over the years too, now welcoming more than 75 farmers, vendors and non-profits, and 3,000 visitors every year.

The 2012 Harvest Fair features friendly goats and chickens and a honeybee demonstration hive. Visitors can press their own cider, swap seeds, learn more about urban farming and local food, design beautiful herb crowns to wear, make crafts in the Children’s Garden and dance to the music of wonderful local artists.

Dozens of vendors and local organic farmers will be selling their produce – it’s a great opportunity to stock up for canning, or buy extra to donate to a local food bank. Not to be missed are the two urban farm raffles for a beekeeping starter package from Big Dipper Wax Works and a beautiful chicken coop from Kippen House!
The Sophisticated Peasant

Evil Herbivores

The garden pests that threaten the success of city gardeners are mostly invertebrates, which is to say small and manageable. I’m spending the summer in a rural environment where the main threat comes in the form of deer, which wander through yard and garden browsing on both ornamental plants and vegetables with relish. They enjoy a varied diet.

Now you might think that cabbage-and-azalea fed deer would make fine venison, but no one in this locale seems to be hunting the deer. In fact some people welcome them, and the most welcoming residents actually feed them.

For those of us interested in growing plants for our own enjoyment and consumption, free-ranging deer present a bit of a problem. I should explain that “a bit” in this context is not the binary digit of computing technology but the English “bit” with which I grew up. It’s an acronym for British Imperial Tossup and is part of the Weights and Measures system over there, which includes rods, perches, gills and firkins. This bit is unique in that it is indeterminate, like some of our tomato types. It means whatever the situation requires it to mean. A typical usage would be the comment, “A bit wet today, innit?” offered when the skies have been pouring torrential rain since before dawn.

So, anyway, deer browse and that is a bit of a problem. I’ve seen heroic fences raised in the defense of produce against deer and I believe they mostly work, but they are necessarily high, expensive to build, and, to my mind, unattractive. There are also chemical products that can be sprayed to discourage deer, but who wants to do that?

I’d like to know if a dog would be an effective deterrent. My own dog is definitely interested in pursuing the deer here, and they are clearly alarmed by her. If she wasn’t leashed I believe she’d have tapped deeply into her canine unconscious and hunted them down, although I doubt she could actually catch one by herself. To do that she’d need the support of a pack and hers consists of me and my wife and we’re simply not up to it.

So I’m thankful to be gardening in the benign suburban biome of Shoreline, where the coyotes in the ravines eat only possums and squirrels, plus the occasional cat. A gardener can get along with a carnivore, no problem.

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

Roasted Red Pepper Pasta Salad

Leika Suzumura, Program Manager of Community Kitchens NW

The fiery flavor of the roasted peppers is what makes this salad so distinct. You can roast and can peppers to make them last throughout the year and savor the flavor of fire during the long Seattle winter months.

**Ingredients**
- 3 cups dry pasta spirals
- 2 cups green peas, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup fresh basil, chopped
- 2 cups spinach/other leafy green, chopped
- 2 red bell peppers, roasted and sliced
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ cup vinaigrette dressing

**Instructions**
Preheat oven to 450°F. Cut peppers in half from stem down. Remove seeds and place peppers on an oiled sheet pan cut side down. Place pan in oven and roast for 10-15 minutes. When skin is blistering and blackened, remove from oven and cover with a towel to “sweat” the peppers and make peeling the skin easier. Remove the thin layer of skin and slice.

Fill water in a pot and bring to a boil. Place pasta in boiling water and cook for 8-10 minutes until cooked. Strain and set aside.

Combine ingredients for dressing (below) in a small bowl. In a large mixing bowl, combine noodles with dressing and veggies until evenly mixed.

**Basic Vinaigrette Dressing**
- 1 cup olive oil
- ½ cup vinegar (your choice)
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons honey (optional)
- 2-3 teaspoons fresh herbs (thyme, parsley, oregano, rosemary etc.)

Mix ingredients in a bowl and combine with a whisk. Dress salads before serving and save the rest in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.
**Hot Questions From the Garden Hotline**

**Attract Good Bugs**

Laura Matter, Garden Hotline Coordinator

**Q. I seem to be having trouble with aphids in my vegetable garden and don’t want to use poisonous sprays. What do you recommend?**

**A.** It is a good choice to “think beyond the bottle” and avoid using sprays to manage insects in your garden. Even certified organic products are soap or oil based and can kill off the beneficial insects you need to combat those aphids. Because aphids are soft bodied insects they can be wiped off or sprayed off with a jet of water. Also check your plants for water or light needs -- they will be more prone to infestation when stressed. But best of all, prevent future damage by creating habitat in your garden that will attract beneficial insects to your site to do the work for you.

Beneficials either pollinate your plants or aid you in controlling the insects that eat your plants. These can include the familiar ladybeetle (ladybug to some), lacewing, parasitoid wasps, bumblebees, honeybees and even ground dwellers like black and soldier beetles. Soldier beetles do double duty eating aphids and pollinating flowers! To encourage their presence in your garden, use coarse mulches in your pathways and in between rows of lettuce to provide hiding space for beetles that will go after slugs. Scatter plantings of flowering plants throughout the garden. These will attract flying insects, including the parasitoid wasp, a fascinating and efficient aphid killer. Look for tan colored, hollowed out aphid bodies to detect their presence – visit our Facebook photo album “Summer 2012” to see examples.

Plants that are particularly helpful include those in the mint, aster and carrot families. The mint family includes many Mediterranean herbs like lavender, oregano and thyme and mint alone attracts ladybeetles in droves in early spring. The aster family includes all the daisy type flowers you can imagine, Echinacea, sunflower and yarrow. To bring in the parasitoid wasp, plant herbs like lovage, cilantro and parsley and let some of them go to bloom. Plant flowers near your tomatoes and squash to ensure bumblebee ‘buzz’ pollination. Creating a diverse habitat will attract the help you need to manage pests. Natural pest control can save time and money and provide a bounty of even more plants to enjoy.

Become a beneficial bug champion by taking our class, “Attract Beneficial Insects” offered only in August.

Find out more at seattletilth.org/learn.
Embrace Fall Bounty

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
VS: Victor Steinbrueck Park, 2000 Western Ave., Seattle

Organic Gardening

Attract Beneficial Insects, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Aug. 4; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Thursday, Aug. 16; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Prune Fruit Trees, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Aug. 4; 2-5 p.m., GSC

Organic Gardening 101, $36/$25/$54
Tuesday, Aug. 7; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Build Unique Raised Beds, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Aug. 11; 10 a.m.-1 p.m., GSC

Start Your Fall or Winter Garden, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Aug. 18; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Secrets of Companion Planting, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Aug. 18; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Edibles in your Landscape, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Aug. 25; 1-3 p.m., BGP

Save Seeds, $36/$25/$54
Thursday, Sep. 6; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Sep. 15; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP

Comprehensive Organic Gardening, $275/$235
Tuesdays & Saturdays, Sep. 11-Oct. 2; 7-9 p.m., GSC

Grow Perennial Edibles, $36/$25/$54
Wednesday, Sep. 12; 6-8 p.m., BGP

Urban Livestock

Family Fun in the Chicken Run, $40/$30 per family
Saturday, Aug. 4; 2-4 p.m., BGP

Beekeeping 301: Winterize Your Hive, $36/$25/$54
Thursday, Aug. 9; 6-8 p.m., GSC

City Chickens: The Integrated Flock, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Aug. 11; 2-4 p.m., TBA

City Chickens 101, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Aug. 25, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Sep. 22, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC

Raise City Goats, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Sep. 15; 2-4:30 p.m., GSC

Raise City Ducks, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Sep. 29; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Secrets of Companion Planting, $45/$35/$68
Thursday, Aug. 9; 6-8 p.m., GSC

City Chickens 101, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Aug. 25, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Sep. 22, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC

Pickles and Fermentation, $45/$35/$68
Thursday, Aug. 23; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Thursday, Sep. 20; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Kitchen

Chef in the Garden Class, FREE
Wednesday, Aug. 8; 6:30-8:30 p.m., PBI

Basic Canning 101, $45/$35/$68
Thursday, Aug. 16; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Thursday, Sep. 13; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Basic Canning 101, $45/$35/$68
Thursday, Aug. 16; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Thursday, Sep. 13; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Pickles and Fermentation, $45/$35/$68
Thursday, Aug. 23; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Thursday, Sep. 20; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Classes for Apartment Dwellers (in Downtown Parks)

Container Herb Gardening, FREE*
Wednesday, Aug. 8; 5:30-7 p.m., VS
Wednesday, Sep. 12; 5:30-7 p.m., VS

Fall and Winter Vegetables in Containers, FREE*
Wednesday, Aug. 15; 5:30-7 p.m., VS

Composting for Apartment Dwellers, FREE*
Wednesday, Aug. 22; 5:30-7 p.m., VS

Container Salad Gardening, FREE*
Wednesday, Sep. 5; 5:30-7 p.m., VS

*Free classes are sponsored by Seattle Parks and Recreation and Cedar Grove Compost. Pre-registration is required.