Did you know that you can tell what season it is just by testing the concentration of spices in the Puget Sound? The holiday season is marked by measurable increases in cinnamon, cloves and ginger, while summer sees the amount of vanilla spike. Research like the “Spices in the Sound” report by scientists at the University of Washington serves to remind us that we are all connected to the Puget Sound, in more ways than we might imagine.

In our minds’ eye, the Puget Sound is vibrant and beautiful, blue and full of salmon, crabs and orca. Each year, its beauty and abundance power a $9.5 billion dollar tourist industry and $147 million dollars of business in commercial and recreational fisheries. But while the Sound gives us our wonderful quality of life, what we are giving back to it is more akin to a bellyache. About 10,000 streams and rivers drain into Puget Sound, each collecting pollution as the rain that washes over the land makes it’s way to the Sound.

You could use a cliché to describe the pollution plaguing Puget Sound today: death by a thousand (or four million) cuts. Four million people live within the land that drains down to Puget Sound, and our individual actions, however small they may be when considered singly, all add up.

With the rapid urbanization of Puget Sound’s watershed, spongy forests that once slowed and filtered the rain have been replaced by hard surfaces, like lawns, driveways, roofs, and...
Planning Ahead for Seattle Tilth’s Future

Jen Crouch, Development Director

For more than 20 years, Linda Versage and Walter Brodie have been volunteering in Seattle Tilth gardens, events and on our board of directors. Recently, they decided to make a planned gift to Seattle Tilth. Touched by their support, we asked Linda and Walter what motivated them to include Seattle Tilth in their wills—and what keeps them involved.

Why Seattle Tilth?

Linda says, “Seattle Tilth seems to do it right. I feel like it’s high quality, strong educational programming.” Both are excited about new programs that engage a wide and diverse community. Walter says “I’m always thrilled on a personal standpoint to be part of a community working towards something bigger than myself.”

About making Seattle Tilth a beneficiary of their wills...

Linda shares that, “I felt like Seattle Tilth had a good track record and I had faith it would continue on into the future. And gardening and farming is our passion. We met because of Seattle Tilth!” Walter reminisces, “Tilth has had a big impact on my life and I have really favorable experiences in my heart from Seattle Tilth...It’s just been a big, big part of my life.” Linda agrees, “It’s had a big impact on my personal life as well. Many of our friends that we will carry with us through the rest of our lives came through Tilth.”

Suggestions for others who are considering making a planned gift...

Linda advises, “I think one thing is that you don’t have to have a lot of resources to give some of it away...I think you want to narrow it down to the few organizations that you think will be around—you want to choose an organization that has strong roots in the community.” And Walter chimers in, “I would say, give yourself permission to give to whomever you want...and follow your heart.”

We are honored by Linda and Walter’s support! To include Seattle Tilth in your planned giving, call Development Director, Jen Crouch at (206) 633-0451 ext. 114.
Renewed Mission for the New Year

Andrea Dwyer, Executive Director

Mission statements are important. If done well, they communicate as concisely as possible why and for whom an organization exists. As part of our recent strategic planning process, we concluded that our existing mission statement was correct as far as it went, but was a bit too wordy and did not fully convey some key concepts that are central to our vision of Seattle Tilth’s reason for being. Our new statement contains nine fewer words than our old statement, yet is a more accurate reflection of why we exist:

Seattle Tilth inspires and educates people to safeguard our resources while building an equitable and sustainable food system.

In a previous newsletter, I posed the question of whether we should focus our work on the environment or on agriculture. I received several thoughtful responses, which I shared with our strategic planning committee. We valued this feedback from our constituents, and after much discussion decided that we couldn’t separate the two. That continued commitment is reflected in this new mission statement. The major change we made was to call out equity as an explicit aspect of our mission, underscoring our belief that all people should have both a thriving environment and access to healthy food.

This new and improved statement of our purpose will help us usher in 2013, the year we’ll be celebrating Seattle Tilth’s 35th anniversary. I’d love to hear what you think of our new mission statement, and whether or not you think it clearly articulates the purpose of Seattle Tilth. Please drop me a line at andreadwyer@seattletilth.org.

In contrast, the three acres of open wetlands are filled with rampantly growing, water-wasting, invasive plants, mainly reed canary grass, bindweed and quack grass. Because these weeds suck away the wetland’s water, its function is highly degraded. Replacing the water wasters with slower growing, water efficient natives will not only improve wildlife habitat, but also improve the wetland’s function by increasing the amount of available water.

This year we used sheet mulching to kill off the invasive plants in a 7,000 square foot area. We will maintain that mulch for two or more years until the underlying root systems have been killed. Then we can begin planting native plants. This is a long-term project!

Next year we will expand the mulched area and re-mulch any areas that show signs of deterioration. Of course, invasives have a way of re-invading, so the entire wetland will continually require weed patrols.

In our first year and a half, Seattle Tilth’s restoration efforts have been supported by hundreds of volunteers, the Green Seattle Partnership and the science department at the Rainier Beach High School. You, too, can learn more about the wetlands! Come to a weekly volunteer work and invest in your urban ecosystem.

Get Involved!
RAINIER BEACH URBAN FARM AND WETLANDS VOLUNTEER WORK PARTIES
5513 S. Cloverdale St.
Every Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Joining Forces with Growing Power

Katie Pencke, SE Seattle Program Manager
Robert Servine, Seattle Youth Garden Works Program Manager
Leika Suzumura, Community Kitchens Northwest Program Manager

Seattle Tilth was invited to give a presentation at the Growing Power’s National Urban Agriculture and Small Farm conference this year in Milwaukee, WI. Growing Power is a social enterprise which has been making waves since they first moved onto their original three-acre farm in 1993.

The conference was well attended with over 1,000 people representing organizations from all over the country and offered 125 workshops. Our presentation involved three staff sharing information about the work of Seattle Tilth. We were thrilled to share our experiences with such an inspiring network of peers.

Robert Servine, the Seattle Youth Garden Works (SYGW) program manager visited two Growing Power sites. The first was the Jackson Farm, which is a 35-acre farm 40 minutes outside of Milwaukee. Growing Power leases the land from Sysco, which processes the produce and distributes it to the local school system, an interesting model. Robert also toured the Growing Power headquarters, which he described as “possibly the most intensively managed urban growing space I have ever seen.” Robert said, “I was amazed how much food is produced in this small space and I am inspired to bring some of these techniques back to SYGW.”

Leika Suzumura, Community Kitchens Northwest (CKNW) program manager, participated in workshops focused on empowering youth in the food movement. Leika gained insight on how to structure programs to help youth develop leadership skills. Especially impressive were paid internship opportunities that positioned youth as community educators who were responsible for teaching others about broader issues in our food system as well as nutrition and food preparation. Leika plans to incorporate these ideas into the CKNW after-school program.

Katie Pencke, Seattle Tilth’s program manager for our southeast Seattle initiatives, attended workshops on aquaponics, and learned about Growing Power’s partnership with the fisheries program at a local university. She also attended a workshop on race and social justice which helped her see the many ways that Seattle Tilth can help create equity in our environment and within our food system and is even more motivated to develop collaborations across cultures.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THE PUGET SOUND BLUES

Continued from page 1

roads, which make it difficult for the rainwater to soak in. The rain washes over the land and through the soil to the closest stream or urban drain. By the time it reaches Puget Sound, it’s full of pollution. On top of our urban surfaces are chemicals that dissolve into the water as the rain washes over them. Overall, approximately 75% of all pollution in Puget Sound comes not from large industrial polluters, but from stormwater runoff that starts right in our own neighborhoods.

Want to make a difference? There are many everyday actions you can do to protect and restore Puget Sound.
• Eliminate the use of harsh chemicals in your yard, such as pesticides and chemical (non-organic) fertilizers
• Build healthy, absorbent soils in your yard through organic gardening, composting and rain gardens.
• Use a commercial car wash rather than washing your car at your home where the soap, oil and chemicals go down the drain and enter our waterways.
• Use less toxic cleaning products in your home.
• Scoop pet waste, bag it and put it in the trash.

Want to do more? Sign up for one of Seattle Tilth’s volunteer stewardship programs! Our resource conservation programs, such as the Master Composter/Soil Builders, Master Recycler/Composter East and Water Smart, provide in-depth information on how to improve our soils and water, and how to teach others to do the same. Check our website in early 2013 for updated program information.
Avoid Winter Water Woes

Jenny Thacker, Director of Education Programs

As anyone who has lived in our region for a while knows, we have two distinct seasons, a long, wet season when we are “blessed” with more water than we know what to do with, and a short dry season when we spend an inordinate amount of time watering our beloved gardens.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every half inch of rain we get means enough water is coming off of your roof to fill your bathtub. Since we get about 38 inches of rain a year, that equals more than 75 bathtubs worth of water cascading off of your roof!

Harvest the Rain

If you would like to harvest some of that water wealth to use in our more thirsty months, you might consider installing a rain barrel, or several. You can link rain barrels together to increase your storage capacity. Or you could install a cistern.

Clean the Leaves

If leaves and debris fill your gutters, water will collect and overflow, instead of gushing into your rain barrels or drainage system. This could lead to water damage to your house or flooding streets. Runoff can collect pollution and contaminate our waterways. Keeping your gutters and storm drains clear is an easy way to prevent these headaches!

Auction Raises Big Funds for Seattle Youth Garden Works

The ‘Growing Roots’ Green Gala & Auction was a big success! Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of individuals and businesses, we raised $85,000 for Seattle Youth Garden Works. Special thanks to our title sponsor, Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union.

Intern Caiti Fjelsted shows off "Your Farm in the City" at our Harvest Fair last September.

Choega Thundrup from Seattle Youth Garden Works was the winner of this year’s Springboard Fund Scholarship.
The Sophisticated Peasant

Harvests and Other Gifts

What did your garden give to you this year? Mine gave me flowers, fruits and vegetables, of course, and also seeds that I have saved so that I can grow more of the same next summer. My garden gave me some good exercise, too, lots of material for the compost heap, and close encounters of the bird kind, the insect kind, and the rodent kind.

What else? Well I have to say I always feel better after a work session in the garden. There’s something about working with your feet on the earth and your eyes on plants that serves as a healthy corrective to all the non-earthly stuff that fills our lives: office dramas, political campaigns, bad music, bad attitudes, bad news, bad smells and bad language - just to begin with. I could go on. But let’s say that working in a garden gives succor to those afflicted by the routine harassments of everyday life as we (who consider ourselves the very highest of the primates) have arranged it.

What else? I can say I gained the sense of accomplishment that comes from providing food for my table by my own sweat and skill. That’s a very good feeling and I venture to say it makes me a more humane person. Why so? Because it’s fulfilling, and a fulfilled person is more liable to behave graciously to his/her fellow primates.

I love to hear about all the urban farming ventures and schemes that are unfolding around Puget Sound (or in Detroit, or wherever) because every one of them means that more people are spending more time working on growing stuff and according to my theory they will all be fulfilled and they’ll all become even more humane than they were to begin with. Can’t have too much of that.

What else? The pagans among us might have something to say about a goddess and a horned god who can be made manifest in our garden: gardening as invocation. The aesthetes might speak of the transcendent beauty of lovingly-arranged plots of flowers and veggies. The grumpy old men might grunt that the home-grown tomato is the only vegetable that still tastes the way it’s supposed to taste. I believe that whatever your perspective, all gardening is rewarding.

Season’s greetings to you, and I hope your true love gives you a parsnip in a pear tree.

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

Editor’s note: An editing error was introduced into the last Sophisticated Peasant column. Julian of Norwich’s “Revelations of Divine Love” was published circa 1393, not copyrighted 1939. We regret the error.

Garden to Table: Winter Lasagna

Leika Suzumura, Program Manager of Community Kitchens NW

Just when you thought you couldn’t come up with another use for your potatoes and beets, here we come with a delicious twist on a classic. I was first introduced to this recipe at our after-school cooking club at Aki Kurose Middle School. I was a little doubtful when the lead said we’d be making lasagna with beets and potatoes, but I was so pleasantly surprised that I brag about this recipe now. The key is really getting those beets and potatoes shaved thin into slices that will act as the “noodle.” Using a mandoline slicer is best for this.

Potato and Greens Lasagna
- 5 potatoes, sliced thin lengthwise
- 2 medium beets, sliced thin
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 cup beet greens, chopped
- 2 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 can black olives
- 2 cans of tomato sauce
- 1 cup basil, chopped (or 1 tbs. dried)
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. sugar
- 3 tbs. fresh oregano chopped (or 2 tsp. dried)
- 8 oz. ricotta cheese
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 oz. parmesan cheese

Preparation
Preheat oven to 350° F.


In a pan, sauté onions, garlic and mushrooms with olive oil until soft; add tomato sauce, basil and beet greens. Add salt and sugar. Add olives to sauce.

Mix oregano with ricotta cheese; add pepper.

Remove potatoes and beets from water. Layer sliced potatoes and beets; top with a layer of ricotta cheese, then sauce, repeating twice or three times depending on what fits. Top with grated parmesan.

Bake for 45 min. Deelish!

Adapted from a recipe by Ande Flower.
Q. What can I do now to get ready for spring?

A. Outside the weather is frightful and therefore the perfect time to prepare for spring. If you haven’t already done so, start with bed cleanup. Remove dead materials and compost them if they are disease-free. Spread compost on your beds to insulate existing plants and to suppress weeds. The soil will be rich and ready for planting by spring as a result.

When it gets too cold out, wander back inside, make yourself a cup of tea and envision your dream garden. What do you want to plant next year? Branch out and plant something new and exciting. Get out your seed catalogs or browse selections online. Be sure to rotate crops to lessen disease and pest outbreaks. And ask yourself, “what did I want more and less of last year?” Write out a work schedule to prevent “weekend warrior” exhaustion. By the time spring rolls around, you will be able to focus on planting!

Q. How do I start my own seedlings and what do I need to get started?

A. Starting from seed can be very gratifying and you don’t need a greenhouse or elaborate materials. First, start with the seeds. Research each type of seed since some seedlings need several weeks before you have “finished” plants and you’ll want to plan accordingly. And they may have different heat and moisture requirements. It is important to use a sterilized seeding mix to prevent damping off, a disease that can wipe out new growth. A heated seed growing pad can help speed up germination and growth. If you offer good fluorescent lighting this is the only heat you will need. It is possible to use a sunny south or west facing window to grow your starts. A "mini greenhouse" (clear plastic lid and plastic flat tray) can help heat up the soil and keep the seeds moist. Give your plants room to grow. When the plants are big enough to be transplanted into bigger containers, you’ll need space for larger pots. Growing your own seedlings can result in more variety in your garden and the opportunity to give away extras to help spread the love of gardening.

Contact the Garden Hotline with your questions!
Winter Classes

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 venue:
GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Seattle

Urban Livestock

Beekeeping 101, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, January 12, 10 a.m.–noon, GSC
Saturday, January 26, 10 a.m.–noon, GSC

Start with Baby Chicks, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, January 5, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m., GSC

City Chickens 101, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, January 19 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m., GSC

Give Green this Season

Friends and family will love green gifts from Seattle Tilth!

TWO FOR ONE MEMBERSHIPS
We offer 2-for-1 memberships only one time a year. Get one for yourself - and give a second one to a friend! All year long, you’ll both receive discounts on classes, invitations to special members’ events and insider information in our newsletter. This offer is also good for a membership renewal. On sale through Dec. 31 at seattletilth.org.

SEATTLE TILTH BOOKS
“Your Farm in the City” ($20.75)
This manual is our 330 page guide to raising your own food and urban livestock.

“Maritime Northwest Garden Guide” ($16.50)
This comprehensive, calendar-based guide is a beloved classic for beginner and experienced Northwest gardeners.

GIFT CERTIFICATES
Purchase a gift certificate for $35, $50, $100 or more. Redeem them for memberships, cloche kits, books, classes or worms.

IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF A FRIEND
Make a contribution to Seattle Tilth in honor of your favorite gardener!

Find all this great Seattle Tilth stuff at seattletilth.org or stop by the Seattle Tilth office in Wallingford.