Recently I met with a representative from a local corporate giving program. Our discussion ranged from challenges in getting healthier food into schools, to the city’s new Food Action Plan, to Seattle Tilth’s activities and our efforts to develop earned income streams. “That’s a smart strategy,” she remarked. “You will have more options when this wave of interest in funding food-related programs wanes.” Her comment resonated with me. Ever since I stepped into my role at Seattle Tilth, I’ve frequently wondered -- and worried -- about this same thing.

Back in the late 1970s, there was a surge of interest in going “back to the land.” My sister and her husband enthusiastically embraced the concept. Seeking a way of life that was simpler and respected the environment, where they could produce some of their own food, they found affordable land and set out to raise their family on 80 acres in rural Indiana. Around the same time my sister was establishing her farm, Seattle Tilth was being founded by a group of like-minded people.
Welcome Just Garden Project

Stephanie Seliga, Manager of Just Garden Project

After two years as a project being fiscally sponsored by Seattle Tilth, the Just Garden Project (JGP) has become an official program of Seattle Tilth. The JGP embodies Seattle Tilth’s vision of a future where all people have access to fresh nutritious food, and the resources needed to sustain and protect our health and our environment. The JGP builds subsidized food gardens for low-income families in their homes, educates gardeners, celebrates our community and engages youth in our work.

The Just Garden Project’s gardening and health programs are based on the premise that we can heal our communities and ourselves by supporting individuals to take control of their food and health. With the garden as our vehicle, our outcomes show that JGP gardeners are beginning to achieve this in their first year of gardening.

Since 2010, the Just Garden Project has built over 70 gardens throughout King County. In 2013, we are narrowing our focus on two neighborhoods. Join us for garden builds on March 23rd in the High Point Neighborhood of West Seattle and May 18th in Redmond! For more information on the Just Garden Project, visit Justgarden.org or e-mail food@justgarden.org.
Seattle Tilth Roots

Jen Crouch, Development Director

In 1974, Kentucky farmer and visionary Wendell Berry spoke about the state of American agriculture to a captivated audience at a Spokane symposium. He challenged attendees to change our relationship with the land and the food it produces and “bring together individuals and organizations concerned with creating a better kind of agriculture.”

Fired-up symposium attendees met later that year at Pragtree Farm in Arlington, WA, a hub of alternative agriculture, and Seattle Tilth founders such as Mark Musick and Elaine Stannard emerged as new leaders. The group adopted the name “Tilth,” organized the Northwest Conference on Alternative Agriculture, which drew more than 800 participants, and began organizing and writing newsletters and publications.

They had a willing and eager regional audience: Steve Solomon was starting Territorial Seed Company in Oregon and the Seattle P-Patch network was just getting started. Within three years, the Tilth Association was formally incorporated and local Tilth chapters formed in California, Oregon, Idaho and Washington – including Seattle Tilth at the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford. Though Seattle Tilth is sometimes referred to as “Tilth,” we are actually one of nine Washington Tilth organizations!

Like most great things, Seattle Tilth came into being through serendipity and hard work. In 1976 Mark Musick spotted a “for sale” sign on the Good Shepherd Center. The site was zoned for development as a shopping center. Seattle Tilth founders and community members saw promise in the beautiful building and orchard. Together they saved the property, which was purchased with city funds.

Within two years, Carl Woestwin, a longtime Seattle Tilth staff member, migrated from Pragtree Farm to be the Good Shepherd Center groundkeeper. With other founders and community enthusiasts, he helped create a plan to develop the site. Volunteers used pickaxes to demolish an old basketball court and swimming pool to make way for our first community learning garden and children’s garden. Seattle Tilth began teaching classes and published “The Future Is Abundant,” a sourcebook for sustainable agriculture in the Pacific Northwest (see pages 1-2).

Even after the parent Tilth organization disbanded in the early 80’s, Seattle Tilth and our sister organizations remained leaders in the local organic and farming movement. Because of those visionary founders, many thousands of people have connected to their food, planet and community. Together we’re still striving for a “better kind of agriculture”!

Build healthy soil. Grow food organically. Safeguard natural resources. Live sustainably. These mandates have animated Seattle Tilth for the last thirty-five years.

While our community has helped guide and sustain this organization through the years, it hasn’t always been easy. More often than not, funding has been scarce. Members, donors, volunteers and program participants have made it possible for us to carry on. And now, somewhat surprisingly, we are experiencing not just a wave of interest in the food system, but a tsunami.

It is exhilarating to think that in 2013, our 35th anniversary, so many more of us have embraced those values articulated decades ago. But we must not be complacent and assume that this interest is here to stay.

Thirty-five years ago there was no guarantee that my sister and her husband, both teachers with no farming experience, would be able to succeed. They have! And there was no guarantee that Seattle Tilth would be still be here – and growing! I find this success to be both a cause for celebration and a great source of inspiration to seize the moment and think strategically about our next thirty-five years. I’d love to hear from you. Send me your memories about Seattle Tilth’s past thirty-five years, and your hopes and dreams for our next thirty-five at andreadwyer@seattletilth.org.
February is fickle. It can be short-sleeves weather or wind-whipping cold. Don’t be fooled by the few relatively warm days and start sowing edibles outside. Do take heart — spring will arrive. And what could be a more hopeful act than starting seeds?

Under a protective cloche outdoors you can start arugula, cilantro, lettuce, mustard and spinach. Indoors, sow cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower along with celery, leek, lettuce, onion, parsley and even rhubarb. Indeed! How do I know? In consulted the “Maritime Northwest Garden Guide,” my definitive planting calendar ever since I planted my first seed.

“I don’t know about you, but when the weather gets cold again in March, I lose my sense of gardening humor. The guide tells us that if we didn’t get a chance to start our babies in February, pretty much the same list applies in March. Phew! Make sure to give your indoor fledglings some good air circulation. You might have to provide bottom heat and full spectrum lights to grow sturdy starts, but a warm, sunny, southern window is usually sufficient."

– Excerpted from the “Maritime Northwest Garden Guide.”
Get A Smart Start for Your Spring Garden

Chris Iberle, Events and Volunteer Manager

Seattle Tilth’s March Edible Plant Sale is back for its fourth year. Great varieties for planting in cool spring weather abound at the sale, so don’t miss out on March 16, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. We’re in a new central location this year, conveniently located between I-5 and State Route 99, three miles south of downtown at Pacific Market Center in Georgetown, 6100 4th Ave. S. The sale will be full of information to help you pick the right plants for your garden, but shop smart with the following tips in mind and coupon in hand.

Love to grow onions to keep for storage? Don’t wait to get them in May! It’s crucial to plant the long day varieties in early spring to allow the greens to fully develop. The biggest bulbs come when the tops are lush and robust, so they will need to get started early. All the onions at the sale can be harvested as scallions -- just pull the long day varieties before they mature. A good trick is to plant them two inches apart and thin out every other plant for a green onion harvest throughout the season.

Add edible perennial plants to your garden to invest in a good eating future. Spring is a great time to get them into the ground. Imagine adding some zing to your sandwiches with your own horseradish sauce, or stirring up a vitamin-packed soup with some fresh sorrel leaves. Look for a good assortment of herbs, strawberry plants, rhubarb, sunchokes, asparagus and the long-lived artichoke as well.

Have early garden success with “succession” planting. By planting cold tolerant crops in March, you can have a great spring garden and enjoy a lovely salad months before summer arrives. Cold tolerant plants like lettuce, spinach and mustards make a lovely early spring salad, and you’ll be harvesting when most gardeners are just getting started in May.

Select cold tolerant plants from the Brassica family like broccoli, cabbage, kale, collards and cauliflower. These plants produce sugars as an anti-freeze, making them sweetest in the spring during cool weather. Brassica crops planted in March will be sweeter than those planted in May, when things start to warm up, so your raw kale salad will be the talk of the block in April.

We’ll all survive the wet, cold winter and spring gardening is a fun way to celebrate. You deserve to get a jump on your backyard bounty with local, organic, sustainable veggie starts from our March Edible Plant Sale. We’ll also have garden supplies like cloche kits, seeds, worms, compost, potting soil, as well bare root trees and shrubs and free garden talks. See you there!

March Edible Plant Sale
Saturday, March 16
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Early Bird Plant Sale
Friday, March 15
6-7:30 p.m.
Tickets $25 on our website.

Pacific Market Center
6100 4th Ave. S.
New convenient location south of downtown! Volunteers welcome.
seattletilth.org/events

It's probably illegal to make soups, stews and casseroles without plenty of onions.
– Maggie Waldron
What’s Your Microclimate?

Lisa Taylor, Children’s Education Program Manager

Get a jump on the growing season by identifying the different microclimates in your yard and garden. Sun exposure, soil type, storm water runoff and wind patterns influence how fast or slow areas warm up in the spring. Identifying your microclimates is an important part of learning about the ecology of your yard and a key to successful city farming. Seattle Tilth’s “Your Farm in the City” tells you how:

“A microclimate is a small area that experiences its own weather conditions. Around your property there are tiny climates that are each affected by sun and wind exposure, soil type, houses, fences, and other landscape features. Soil types influence how quickly a garden bed will warm up. Sandy soil warms up more quickly than heavy, silty soil, which also takes longer to dry out. Likewise, raised beds will warm up more quickly than beds that are sunken. It may take you a few seasons to fully understand and identify your unique microclimates.

To pinpoint different microclimates, walk around your yard on a nice evening wearing short sleeves and use your skin to feel differences in heat and cold. Stand still and notice the wind and where the yard is warmer. Use visual clues to find tropical or chilly areas. Look for frost pockets—areas where frost or dew lingers longest, or other areas that seem to heat up more quickly.

Observing where early weeds first appear can help you identify the locations that warm up more quickly; these may be ideal places to plant early spring crops.”

– Excerpt from “Your Farm in the City” by Lisa Taylor and the gardeners of Seattle Tilth.

Identifying a warm spot in February or March gives early spring veggies a growing advantage. Cooler microclimates are good sites to continue succession planting of cool season crops like spinach, lettuce or cilantro, which run to seed quickly in warm weather. Finding the “hot spots” lets you know where heat-loving plants such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplant will thrive.

Garden to Table: Get Carb Smart

Leika Suzumura, Program Manager of Community Kitchens Northwest

Whether your feeling inspired by the Paleo craze or you are diabetic, there is good reason to be conscious of the quantity and source of your carbohydrates. To clarify first, carbohydrates are not the enemy. In fact, all carbs break down to glucose, the simple sugar that feeds our brain and gives us the building blocks for energy production. So why all the fuss? For diabetics, there is a delicate balance to keep blood sugars in a healthy range, requiring careful counting of carbohydrates and combining foods with fat and protein. For those looking to lose weight, dramatically lowering your carb intake will give quick results. An important issue to consider is if you can keep this diet for the long-term, because when you add carbs back, weight gain is sure to follow. My rule of thumb is to eat a variety of foods, in moderation, and enjoy what you eat! Try out this incredible recipe of mashed cauliflower that is deceivingly delicious and seasonal and low in carbs.

**Mashed Cauliflower**

**Ingredients**

- 1 Head of cauliflower
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tablespoon butter
- Chopped chives (optional)

**Instructions**

Rinse cauliflower. Trim florets from the base of the cauliflower.

Place cauliflower florets into the steamer basket inside a pot filled with about 1 inch of water, cover with lid and place on high heat. Steam cauliflower until fork-tender, about 10-15 minutes.

Place steamed cauliflower into a food processor or high speed blender. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add a tablespoon of butter. Puree until smooth and serve. Top with chopped chives.
Q. I just got my first garden and am anxious to get started. What tools do you recommend?

A. A good tool not only makes gardening easier, it may also prevent injury. Quality tools are expensive, but will last much longer if they are taken care of. Cheap metal may bend the first time you use it, so look for tools with steel blades. Many tools are now made with ergonomic handles to reduce injury to the wrist. Bright orange handles are much easier to find in a mulch pile than brown ones.

I recently asked a group of staff and volunteers at Seattle Tilth what are the top three tools they would recommend to a beginning gardener. It is clear that Seattle Tilth loves to dig! The digging fork or a Japanese digging knife, tied for top place, followed by shovels (round-pointed in particular) and hand pruners. One staff member prefers the Diggit hand tool to the hori hori. Another is a fan of the Nejiri Gama Japanese hand hoe. Other great suggestions included good gardening gloves, a copy of the “Maritime Northwest Garden Guide,” a friend to garden with and my personal favorite: basic soil knowledge.

Q. I have some new tools. What is the best way to care for them?

A. Great question! It’s important to take care of your tools. Here are some tips for tool care:

- Store your tools in a dry place and off the ground – not outside in the rain!
- Clean your tools before you put garden tools away. To use your tools rust free, keep a soft towel or rag to wipe them clean and dry after using them.
- Use a wire or hard bristle brush to clean off the caked-on dirt. A toothbrush can come handy for cleaning hard-to-reach spots.
- Wash heavily soiled tools with hot, soapy water. Soak them in a bucket of soapy water for an hour to loosen the dirt if necessary then dry with a towel.
- If you see some rust, remove it with steel wool or a stiff wire brush. Gently rub the rusted metal surface using a small circular motion, then rinse and dry. Steel wool can be rough on your hands, so wear a pair of gloves. Badly pitted steel surfaces may require more work. An electric drill with a wire brush attachment can work well for this purpose. Wear safety glasses to keep your eyes protected from flying rust particles or wire bristles.
- Don’t forget to clean the wooden handles. Wipe off the soil and wipe the wood with a cloth moistened with linseed oil.

Hot Questions from the Garden Hotline

Sue Hartman, Garden Hotline Educator

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- $35 Individual
- $20 Limited Income
- $60 Household

DONATE: Support Seattle Tilth

BOOKS

Order "The Maritime Northwest Garden Guide"
Month-by-month regional guide to year-round gardening.

Order "Your Farm in the City"
Our new 320 page guide to urban farming.

Mail to: Seattle Tilth, 4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Suite 100, Seattle, WA 98103

*Prices include tax and shipping. Total $
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 venues:
GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Seattle
BGP: Bradner Gardens Park, 1730 Bradner Place S., Seattle

Backyard Beekeeping 101, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 9; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC
Tuesday, Feb. 19; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 23; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Beekeeping 201: Starting Your Hive, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 16; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC
Tuesday, Feb. 26; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 30; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Prune Fruit Trees, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Feb. 16; noon-3 p.m., GSC

Smart Garden Planning, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 16; 2-4 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 2; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Wednesday, Mar. 20; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Start Your Garden Indoors, $36/$25/$54
Wednesday, Feb. 20; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 2; 2-4 p.m., GSC

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

Nuts, Berries and Other Perennial Edibles, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 23; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Organic Gardening 101, $45/$35/$68
TWO Wednesdays, Mar. 6 & 13; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Comprehensive Organic Gardening, $275/$235
Mar. 7-28; Thursdays, 7-9 p.m. & Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., GSC

Pollinate with Native Bees, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Mar. 9; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Raise City Rabbits, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Mar. 23; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Mushrooms: Cultivate Edible Fungi, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Mar. 23; 2-4 p.m., BGP

Raise City Ducks, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Mar. 30; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

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

Save the Date!

Seattle Tilth’s 2013 Events

• March Edible Plant Sale, March 16
• May Edible Plant Sale, May 4-5
• Chicken Coop & Urban Farm Tour, July 13
• Harvest Fair, Sept. 7
• Green Gala & Auction, Oct. 11

Wanna be a Master Composter?
Apply now! seattletilth.org/learn/mcsb

Kids Camps & Classes
Sign up now! seattletilth.org

FREE PLANT (up to $5 in value)

At Seattle Tilth’s March Edible Plant Sale
Saturday, March 16
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Early Bird Plant Sale
Friday, March 15, 6-7:30 p.m.
Tickets $25 on our website.

New location south of downtown:
Pacific Market Center
6100 4th Ave. S.

Valid only March 15 & 16, 2013.