Conserve Water by Going Grey

Chris Hoffer, Environmental Programs Manager

In the garden, many of us familiar with dry, Pacific Northwest summers are already savvy about water conservation. We choose drought-tolerant plants, water deeply but infrequently, amend our soils with compost and use mulch. If we have lawns, we let them turn to gold during the summer, and consider cisterns to harvest rainwater for later use.

But in the home, the average American family of four uses 400 gallons of water daily, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, including over 100 gallons of fresh water just to flush the toilet!

Fortunately, there is no need to install costly or complicated plumbing systems to take advantage of the gently used water from sinks, showers and washing machines, called greywater. Go beyond taking shorter showers, and try one of these simple strategies to conserve water:

The old bucket in the shower. Using a bucket in the shower to catch water is one of the simplest ways to capture greywater. You can use the bucket's contents to water plants, or even to flush the toilet.

Everything but the kitchen sink. If a bucket in the shower is too much trouble, try keeping a water pitcher under the kitchen sink to fill with cooking water, and use it to water houseplants. Or, use a dishpan after dinner to save your soapy water for watering bushes.

Clean your clothes, water your plants. The water we use to wash our clothes can easily be repurposed for watering plants. So-called “laundry to landscape” systems don’t require a plumber to install, since it’s...
Global Interest in Local Food Systems

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

We have had some interesting requests come to Seattle Tilth over the last few weeks. The first was an official delegation from the Wanju County Government who wanted to improve and develop their own local food system by learning about the “advanced experiences” of other cities around the world.

The second inquiry came from Korean Broadcasting System, which is similar to PBS. They are producing a documentary about how urban farming can transform cities, and want to feature Seattle Tilth.

A third inquiry came from Growing Memphis, a group that is trying to merge several different organizations into one entity that can offer a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to building a better local food system.

I started writing this with the intention of soliciting your financial support, citing our growing reputation and numerous examples of the need to sustain what we have started. How could you resist such an appeal? However, during our visit with the Wanju County delegation, I had an exchange that has stayed with me and reminded me that support comes in many guises.

We were visiting our new food hub warehouse, and while there, one of the delegates told me that they once had a CSA of 3,000 members, but it had dwindled over time to 500 subscribers. He was interested in understanding why people chose our CSA when there were so many others available. I explained that our CSA exists to serve the needs of farmers, and that we are intentional about sharing our farmers’ stories. I also explained that we had a long history in the community, and that over the years, thousands of people have been involved in our organization – as members, class participants, donors, volunteers and friends. “Ah,” he said, “you share each other’s values.”

So yes, your financial support is important. Feel free to donate online or send us a check. We couldn’t do what we do without your contributions. But more than that, stay true to the values we all hold so dear. Together, we can change the world.

SEATTLE YOUTH GARDEN WORKS GROWS YOUNG FARMERS AND LEADERS

capability and capacity in the program. By then I had found a voice of my own that was becoming more familiar and I saw potential in myself as a leader.

In 2014, I was again promoted to a new role as a program assistant. It was my responsibility to do things like offer support to the crew leads, purchase items for our cooking program, keep our inventory stocked, provide weekly feedback for the youth participants, manage the harvest and run our farmers market stand. My responsibilities changed constantly but I was always open to completing them. Being a program assistant was a tall order that I welcomed with open arms because I was learning to be comfortable being a leader.

That was a huge accomplishment for me, especially because I did not see myself as an outspoken person or a leader. I am now the operations specialist at Seattle Youth Garden Works and whether I’m juggling all the different tasks on the farm or working at the office, I proudly wear that title!”

Building upon the positive outcomes of so many young people in the program like Suez, we’re currently in the process of documenting practices and preparing to replicate Seattle Youth Garden Works at a new farm site. Guess who is doing that work? Suez is, of course! With her solid understanding of the program practices, as well as her strengths as a leader and a farmer, Suez is helping support the next generation of young farmers to become invested community members, leaders and professionals.

Seattle Tilth empowers young people from diverse backgrounds, ages 16-25, to work together to grow food to sell at local farmers markets, developing leadership and employment skills as well as personal connections to the food system. The program is called Seattle Youth Garden Works and you can find out more at seattletilth.org.
recalled that “the president of Somalia—who demanded fresh fruit and vegetables from farming areas like ours—ate and enjoyed the produce we grew.”

Since moving to Washington, Mato and Abukar sincerely appreciate the opportunity to continue to use their farming skills and distribute the delicious produce that they grow. Abukar said that farming with Seattle Tilth Farm Works is the only thing that reminds him of being back home. Mato agreed saying, “Farming keeps us strong and youthful. It lets us provide good food for our family and give back to the community.”

The extra income helps, too, allowing Mato and Abukar to purchase clothes and school supplies for children and grandchildren, to fix broken-down cars, and to travel to visit friends and relatives in places like New York and Kenya.

Both men have been farming with Seattle Tilth Farm Works in Auburn since it broke ground in early 2011. They enjoy farming in a diverse community and have begun taking on leadership roles, mentoring new farmers and assisting more experienced farmers.

They share a friendly farmer rivalry: both compete to raise and sell the most produce each year. Mato concedes the 2015 summer season to Abukar, but promises that next season “Insha’Allah,” it will be his time to shine.

“Morning! Ahh, Good Morning!” exclaims Abukar with a broad smile and deep laugh. Abukar is the first to arrive on this particular harvest day, and he makes long, confident strides towards the fields to begin his diligent work. Mato appears not long after, strutting down the path with a wheelbarrow. “Squash. Farm. Cooler,” he informs me, dropping the wheelbarrow for a moment to articulate more completely with his hands before resuming his trek.

Mato and Abukar farm proudly. They work hard and excel at their craft. Farming is an integral part of their identity, their shared history and friendship. They grew up farming in Jilibi, Somalia, where they cultivated bananas, mangoes, corn, beans and tomatoes. Their fresh produce was in high demand in the capital, Mogadishu, and other big cities. Mato and Abukar show off their impressive farm plots at our Seattle Tilth Farm Works farm in Auburn.

CONSERVE WATER BY GOING GREY Continued from page 1

Greywater can be used for edible plants, like berry bushes and fruit trees, but it’s best to avoid those where the part we eat is in direct contact with the water source, like root vegetables. And in general, shade and acid loving plants (like ferns) should not be watered with greywater.

For more information on how to start your own greywater project, be sure to check the Washington State Department of Health website and consult with your local public health agency.
Family Fun with Worm Bins

Justin Maltry, MC/ISB Program Coordinator

When planning a fun family activity, it’s understandable if “worm bin” doesn’t pop into your head immediately. Even so, a worm bin has many charms. These little wigglers help to turn food waste into a nutritious amendment for garden soil or P-Patch plot. An entertaining project for adults and kids, this “ecosystem-in-a-box” makes a great teaching tool and conversation piece.

To the many Seattle residents who live in apartments or condominiums without yards, it can be challenging to find an effective, low-maintenance way to compost. Food digesters require yard space, and sending food scraps to the city composting facility could instead be used for your own compost.

Worm bins are a great solution to this dilemma. A small plastic worm bin can be kept under the kitchen sink, on the porch or in the garage.

Starting one is simple, you don’t need a large wooden bin to be successful. Instead, you can build one out of two nested plastic totes with holes drilled for aeration and drainage. We call this type the “off the shelf” bin because of its simplicity. See the worm bin plan on our website (go to the orange “Learn” link and then Educational Resources).

Once you’ve built your bin, your only job is to keep the worms happy. Though squishy and seemingly fragile, worms can put up with a lot. They survive fairly cold weather, eat a variety of foods and can live up to 10 years! Though reasonably tough, they still need care. They require food but not too much, bedding that is moist but not too wet and temperatures that aren’t extreme. If cared for correctly, it’s similar to owning an aquarium: it is always entertaining to peer into, has lots of interesting creatures and requires occasional maintenance.

For more details or for help getting started, contact the Garden Hotline at help@gardenhotline.com or (206) 633-0224 or take our Composting 101 class – go to seattletilth.org.

Meet Our New Staff

Growing organically is something we teach, as well as something we have been doing as an organization. We’re happy to introduce the new team members who have joined us since March.

Lauren Foster, Executive Coordinator
Colin Groark, Environmental Programs Director
Rebecca Holbert, Children’s Education Program Coordinator
Kevin McAleese, Communications Coordinator
Melissa McGinn, Garden Hotline Educator
Maureen McGregor, Administrative Coordinator
Lia Spaniolo, Seattle Tilth Farm Works Coordinator
Carey Thornton, Garden Educator

The weather is finally cooling down after our 90 degree F summer. It’s time to get started on some fall projects!

Plant garlic.
October and November are the perfect time to plant garlic. Plant individual garlic cloves 4-6 inches apart a couple inches deep into the soil. Mulch with straw or burlap to keep the soil cozy through winter.

Put your garden to bed.
When summer veggies have stopped producing, cover empty garden beds with organic mulch like fall leaves, straw, cardboard or burlap. This will protect the soil from winter rains and will slowly break down to feed the soil food web.

Make compost.
Start a big pile of compost with collected garden waste, fall leaves, chicken or rabbit poop, coffee grounds, shredded cardboard, newspaper and other scavenged biomass.

Plant trees and shrubs.
Fall is a good time to get perennial food crops like fruit trees and berry shrubs into the ground. If planted now, they can take advantage of the rainy season to get established. It’s also a great time to plant natives to the Pacific Northwest.

Ferment veggies.
Spend some time in the kitchen making sauerkraut or pickles. Now that the weather is cooling down, temperatures are ideal for fermenting vegetables. Yum.

Fall is Tea Time!
Chris Cain, Program Specialist, AmeriCorps VISTA, Seattle Youth Garden Works

Fall makes itself known in October, when plants are slowly hibernating and we begin to put our garden to bed; summer is clearly over. However, some of the herbs that you have been growing all summer long may have a secret benefit this time of year: you can make teas from your herbs, perfect for those cold and rainy days in Seattle.

There are plenty of herb plants you can harvest through fall for tea-making purposes. A healthy plant will consistently grow new leaves if picked. Fresh (wet) leaves can be bruised to readily release medicinal properties and aromatic oils—a good practice for a clumsy harvester. Alternatively, tie up a bundle of 5-10 inch stems and hang upside down in a dry environment, preferably indoors. Once leaves become crisp and brittle, place them in a paper bag (not plastic, they need air circulation) and label it with the date. Be sure to experiment with recipes and mixtures, and develop your own signature blend. Here are some examples of common herbs which make brilliant teas:

- **Lavender**: This great insectary plant grows in plenty under direct sun and well-drained soil. The dried leaves make great additions to Earl Grey and chamomile teas.
- **Fennel**: This herb is not just for excellent salads and salmon grilling. Fennel seeds have been used for centuries in tea for stomach trouble.
- **Rose Hips**: Rose hips make for a tart and citrus-tasting tea with high levels of vitamin C that may be used to support healthy joints. Slice the hips in half before steeping. Rugosa roses produce the largest hips. Fun fact: During WWII the British government created rose hip syrup to provide its army with Vitamin C when fruits were scarce.
- **Birch**: While not an herb, this is available around Seattle and makes a refreshing tea, often used in treating inflammations of the urinary tract and general detoxing. Make the tea from the leaves and twigs.

This, of course, is just the beginning. Continue to explore and experiment with lemon balm, mints, chamomile and many others that you can find in your neighborhood or garden patch.

Special shoutout to Seattle Youth Garden Works for their festive attire and spirit. Photo by Chelsie Johnson.

Thank You, Harvest Fairies
This year we partnered with sister organization Tilth Producers to co-produce Harvest Fair, strengthening connections between people who grow food and people who eat it. Big thanks to everyone who attended, our outstanding volunteers, farmers, vendors, musicians and presenters who made it great. Special thanks to our key sponsors PCC Natural Markets, RainWise, Cedar Grove Composting, Chinook Book, Sustainable Agriculture Education, Farmigo and media sponsor KUOW.
Apples for Children’s Education

Getting Down to “Core” Values

Amanda Boyle, Development and Events Officer

What do you get when you combine apples and philanthropy? The Bagged Apple Program, that’s what! Thanks to a prized partnership with PCC Natural Markets and Organically Grown Company, the phrase “an apple a day” has been making a huge difference for Seattle Tilth since 2014.

Starting in mid-October through early summer, be on the lookout for specially marked bags of Fuji apples at all PCC locations. From these apple purchases, 100% of the proceeds go to children’s garden programs in South Seattle at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands and at other Seattle Tilth children’s garden education sites.

Program grants will be awarded annually — and the more apples Washington eats, the more grant money will be available.

This year PCC raised over $46,000 to support hands-on science based learning for children ages 2-15. These children’s education programs allow kids to explore the world of insects, soil and plants while learning to tend a garden and grow food that they can eat directly from the garden.

Interested in taking your school group to one of our farms or gardens? We will be offering educational tours September-November and mobile classrooms at schools. See more about children’s education programs through the fall and winter months at seattletilth.org/learn.

Garden to Table

An Apple A Day

Leika Suzumura, Community Kitchens NW Program Manager

It may be worth changing the old saying to “an apple a day, when grown the organic way.” According to test results provided by the Environmental Working Group, apples test with the highest pesticide residues since 2011. The good news is that apples grow well in our Northwest climate, and with resources like the Garden Hotline and City Fruit’s urban orchard stewards, growing your own apples is easier than ever. The recipe below is great as an appetizer or breakfast. If you don’t feel like working with puff pastry or you don’t eat wheat, enjoy just the filling as a side dish.

Savory Kale Apple Pockets

Instruction
- Preheat oven to 425°F.
- Place a sauté pan on medium heat and add oil, garlic and onions. Sauté until onions are translucent.
- Add apples and continue stirring until they are softened, about 3 minutes. Add kale and water to mixture and let it steam until kale becomes wilted but not over cooked, another 2-3 minutes.
- Take pan off the heat, stir in goat cheese, juice of ½ lemon, salt and pepper. Taste and add more seasoning as needed.
- Flatten out puff pastry sheets, cut into 6 squares, about 4”x4” each.
- Break egg into bowl and whisk with a fork.
- Place 3 tablespoons filling into the center of the square and brush edge of square with egg.
- Fold the square in half to form a triangle. Seal the edges by using the tip of a fork to press and form small crimps. Use a knife to cut 2-3 small slits into the top for steam to vent. Brush egg over the top.
- Place in oven for 15 minutes, until golden brown. Remove and enjoy.

Ingredients
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ onion, sliced
- 1 apple, cut into ½ " long matchsticks
- 1 bunch kale, cut into small strips
- 2 tablespoons water
- 4 oz. goat cheese feta
- ½ lemon
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 sheets puff pastry
- 1 egg
Q. I love my veggie garden but need plants that I don’t have to water so much. Can you help?

A. After this whopper of a hot summer, breaking a variety of records, we should be thinking about including as many drought tolerant plants as possible in our gardens. Think first about plants that come from dry and hot climates like thyme, rosemary, lavender and oregano. These plants are woody and shrub-like, and range in size from 3 inches to 6 feet tall (so plan accordingly)!

Add herbaceous perennial herbs like fennel or lovage, which are unique in flavor and die back over the winter, putting on the bulk of their growth in spring when we are flush with rain. Herbs are also fantastic in attracting beneficial insects to your garden. Try the tough-skinned thistle family members, artichoke and cardoon. The artichoke flower and cardoon stem are both edible. Also, save some space for fruiting plants like goji berry, persimmon, mulberry and fig. If you have space for a large tree, think about a bay laurel. Or, be a bold gardener and try Opuntia cactus, carissa shrubs or olive trees, great for our changing climate!

Q. What is the best way to make use of the ample stormwater that comes off of my roof in winter?

A. The abundant rain in the Northwest is a challenge and a blessing. We encourage the use of features that slow down, channel, purify and clean the water in your yard. Our area struggles with combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and overflowing storm drains, but each of us individually can make a difference.

A rain garden can be a beautiful feature for your house -- sunken gardens that receive water directed from your roof or other parts of your property to be slowed and filtered, much like a mini wetland. They are filled with compost-based soil and feature plants that tolerate wet winter and dry summer conditions, many of them Northwest natives. Cisterns can supply you with water to supplement watering other parts of your garden. They are large storage tanks (200-500 gallons), catching and holding more water than a rain barrel (60 gallons). Many people use the rain garden as an overflow for the cistern when it fills.

There are some cities in the area that are incentivizing the addition of these features in your garden, including Seattle, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park and other Puget Sound cities. Call us to learn more.
Dig into Fall by Taking a Class

Three prices are listed for each class: for the general public, for Seattle Tilth members and for two members of a household taking the class together. For example: $45 non-member/$35 member/$68 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. 128.

Class venues:
BGP: Bradner Gardens Park, 1730 Bradner Place S, Seattle
GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Seattle

Veggie Gardening

Put Your Garden to Bed, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, October 10; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC
Saturday, October 24; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP

Composting 101, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, October 10; 2-4 p.m., BGP
Sunday, November 7, 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Permaculture and Sustainable Landscapes

Urban Weeds and Wild Foods-Part 1: Identify and Harvest, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, October 17; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Urban Weeds and Wild Foods-Part 2: Preparing for Your Table, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, October 17; 2-4 p.m., GSC

The Soil Food Web: Field Study, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, October 10; 2-4 p.m., GSC

Kitchen Classes

Basic Canning 101, $45/$35/$68
Thursday, October 15; 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC

Intro to Fermentation, $45/$35/$68
Thursday, October 22; 6:30-8:30 p.m., BGP

Urban Weeds and Wild Foods-Part 2: Preparing for Your Table, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, October 17; 2-4 p.m., GSC

You’re invited to an:
Open House at McAuliffe Park in Kirkland!
We’re growing a community learning garden. Take a tour and discuss future plans.
Sat., Oct. 10; 2-4 p.m.
10824 NE 116th St, Kirkland

Parents & Teachers
Sign up for school garden and farm tours or invite us to your classroom!
seattletilth.org

Support local farmers…
Sign up for our Fall CSA!
Enjoy a box of locally grown fresh seasonal veggies at one of our many pick-up locations.
Four weeks in November.
Thanksgiving turkeys & pork shares also available.
seattletilth.org/csa