When you think of the Food and Farm Bill, do you think of complicated subsidies and large farm productions? If so, you’re partially right. The bill gives direction to America’s food and farm policies but it also governs a broad range of programs that include conservation, forestry and food assistance -- almost 80% of funding.

Congress enacted the first Farm Bill in the 1930s to regulate food production. During World War I, the U.S. government encouraged American farmers to increase food production in order to help feed a war-torn Europe. However, as Europe became less dependent on food aid, this increase eventually led to a national surplus and falling prices for basic crops. In an effort to bring up prices, Congress passed legislation that paid farmers not to grow crops. This principle has remained in place for the last 80 years, with Congress revising this legislation every five or so years. Each rendition is coined as the new “Farm Bill” and has come to mean commodity subsidies, emergency food assistance and (often underfunded) titles supporting local food, farms and sustainability.

So, why care about the Farm Bill? The bill’s “titles” or funded programs, define the way we grow and eat our food. Crop subsidies for commodity crops mostly go to large firms producing wheat, soy, corn, cotton, and rice, and the result is low-priced processed foods. Curiously, fruits and vegetables are so undersupported in the bill’s titles that they are referred to as “specialty crops.” The vast majority of the bill addresses food assistance benefits and crop subsidies, creating a stalemate between anti-hunger advocates and agribusiness. This conflict prevents controversial change to either pot of funding.

**Youth Farm Program Grows**

*Robert Servine,*
*Seattle Youth Garden Works Farm Manager*

This year has been a year of big exciting changes for Seattle Youth Garden Works (SYGW). SYGW is all about growth; growing food, helping the youth grow into the people they are meant to be and growing opportunities.

**Growing food.** We doubled the size of our farm from less than ¼ acre last year to ½ acre this year. With our larger farm, we’re growing more produce, bringing more food to market and we’re hiring more youth. Our farm stand at the University Farmers Market is overflowing with great produce, making it a much more competitive farm stand and attracting many new customers.

**Helping youth grow.** The biggest and most exciting change we’ve made is the creation of a year-round program. In the past, we hired a new crew every season, ranging from 8-12 weeks. In July, 19 youth began the first year-round program and this change has transformed the crew. They have already formed closer relationships than any crew in the past. Instead of being sad when the summer session ended, the crew continued into the fall season as a team, building upon our summer experience.

**Growing opportunities.** SYGW is a life and job skills training program, and we are building more enriching opportunities for young people. This year we added a leadership track to the program. Three of the most committed crew members from
Farmer Profiles: Ali and Seth

Micah Anderson, Education Manager, Seattle Tilth Farm Works

The fields at Seattle Tilth Farm Works (STFW) are lush with a hearty crop of produce and new farmers. Two of the newest farmers are Ali Issa and Seth Christian. Both share a green thumb, a sense of stewardship, a strong work ethic and are recent graduates of spring training in Seattle Tilth Farm Works farm incubator program. These farmers pour their heart and soul into their farms and it shows in the beautiful fresh healthy food that they’ve grown and now sell at a variety of local markets in the Seattle area.

Ali Issa’s fields are vivacious. They burst with color and variety. Pink radishes shelter under green kale. Yellow squash spills into rows between ruby red beets. Purple carrots, golden lettuce, and rainbow chard. Sometimes it is hard to believe this is Ali’s first year farming in the Pacific Northwest.

Ali was raised on his family’s farm in Somalia where he learned to grow maize, sesame, tomatoes, greens and many other crops. Now he combines his farming background with the training and support provided by Seattle Tilth to manage his own fields, and also mentor other farmers. Whether lending a hand in his neighbor’s field, or engaging a farmer’s market customer, Ali is spreading roots.

Seth Christian has long dreamed of owning and operating a farm. He recently acquired an old farmstead in Chelan, WA, not far from the town where he was raised. During this first year of farming, he had a baby, held down a part-time job, and (I’m not sure how) he also managed to cultivate several specialized varieties of peas, cucumbers, and collard greens at the Seattle Tilth farm -- all with grace and good humor.

Seth appreciates the supportive learning environment that Seattle Tilth has created. He sees STFW as a safe place to learn, grow, share and experiment. He expects to utilize his newly acquired farm knowledge and experience towards realizing his dream of operating a successful family farm.

STFW provides training, market assistance, farm land and infrastructure to aspiring farmers seeking to develop farm businesses in Western Washington. New applications are being accepted! Find out more: seattletilth.org/about/seattletilthfarmworks.
Eastsiders Begin New Compost Program

Graham Golbuff, Resource Conservation Program Manager

Picture this: you’re in your car, bags of garbage neatly tied up and crammed into the back. The sun is beating down through the glass where you, and twenty others, sit and wait, your car idling, the smell in your vehicle becoming riper by the minute.

Sound like fun? Didn’t think so. But for many Seattleites, similar experiences serve as surprising reminders of how much the waste stream can impact our daily lives if something gets out of sync, like last summer’s garbage strike.

Consider the processors side of the story. Local recyclers compost over 400,000 tons of organic material each year. If that material decomposed in a landfill instead of a compost pile it would produce the equivalent of annual CO2 emissions from 27,000 cars.

But compost facilities are reaching their limits. As local municipalities expand their organics recycling programs, and the population grows, these limits are being tested. Seattle Tilth and the City of Issaquah are stepping in to help compost facilities keep their loads manageable, and help keep you out of long lines at the transfer station.

Starting on October 17, we’re offering our first ever Master Recycler Composter (MRC) training and service program in Issaquah. Participants will learn to compost through hands-on practice and classroom lectures on the science behind the processes. They’ll also tour local recycling and composting facilities to see the issues first hand and learn how to conduct effective outreach to their communities.

Community outreach is the heart of the program. Consider that the average home compost bin, fully utilized, diverts between 400-600 lbs. of organic waste per year. That adds up to a big impact if adopted widely. With MRCs working throughout the eastside to convert neighbors into backyard composters, we hope to lighten the load at the landfill and also provide as many people as possible with skills to compost at home. Eastsiders, apply now!

Plant Garlic for Halloween

Some people think garlic wards off vampires, colds or evil. Embrace the season by planting garlic!

**PREP:** Garlic prefers rich, well-drained soil. Dig in compost before planting.

**PLANT:** Break apart the bulb and try to keep the skin of each clove intact. Plant cloves 2” deep, with the pointy end facing up, 6-8” apart.

**MULCH:** Add 4-6” of mulch to protect the garlic over the winter

**CARE:** In Spring, fertilize with a high nitrogen organic fertilizer, such as kelp meal. Keep well-watered until leaves start to yellow in June.

**HARVEST:** To encourage bulb growth, harvest and eat the flowering “scapes.” When more than half of the leaves turn yellow-brown in June/July, it’s harvest time!

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**Master Recycler Composter East**

**VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM FOR EASTSIDERS**

Wed. & Sat., Oct. 17-Nov. 10

Issaquah, WA | $20 deposit

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**YOUTH FARM PROGRAM GROWS**

Continued from page 1

last year, Autumn, Choega and Edixon, have returned to be team leaders. This gives them greater opportunities to develop leadership skills and better job preparedness. They lead work at the farm and train the new crew, bringing invaluable knowledge and skills from last year.

It has been a very exciting growing season for SYGW. Please come and visit us at the University Farmers Market on Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., and don’t miss the Green Gala and Auction to Support SYGW! See article on page 5.
Harvest Fair Shines

The community displayed its bountiful gifts and talents at a stunningly beautiful and festive Harvest Fair on Saturday, Sept. 8. Many thanks to over 100 amazing volunteers, nearly 100 participating farmers, organizations and businesses, and everyone who attended. And thank you to our fantastic sponsors:

Big Dipper Wax Works
Cascade Harvest Coalition
EnviroStars
Green Cleaning Seattle
Kippen House
Salish Sea Trading Cooperative
Swanson’s Nursery
Walt’s Organic Fertilizer
WeDesign

Thanks to Ballard Market, Equal Exchange, Essential Baking and New Roots Organics for feeding our volunteers and to Nonsequitur for supporting our music stage.

WHY CARE ABOUT THE FARM BILL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Forty percent of the nation’s land is under the jurisdiction of the Farm Bill, giving agriculture a big responsibility for environmental stewardship. Though much smaller pieces of the pie, the bill also funds and governs issues like renewable energy investments, forestry programs, farm-to-school lunch programs, support for organic farming, community food security, farmer’s markets and support for beginning or underserved farmers. Seattle Tilth has been fortunate in benefitting from both the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program for Seattle Tilth Farm Works and Community Food Project grants for Rainier Valley Eats. No doubt, we think this funding is valuable.

The 2012 Farm Bill is being debated at a time when each dollar spent by the federal government is under close scrutiny. The Senate and House Agriculture Committee each have proposed versions of the bill. Republicans and Democrats are waging a political battle especially over the funding needed for food assistance programs and subsidy distribution. With so many titles for a wide array of programs, reconciling the House and Senate bills for a final version is always contentious.

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The urban livestock were a big hit like usual at the Harvest Fair in September.
Bid High for Seattle Youth Garden Works!

Jen Crouch, Development Director

There’s only one place in town where you can get a CSA grown just for you by Seattle Youth Garden Works youth, a wheelbarrow full of beer, private tours, local getaways and wine tastings – among more than 200 other unique auction items. It’s the 10th annual Green Gala & Auction to support Seattle Youth Garden Works!

This auction is a popular and festive event that brings in almost a third of SYGW’s operating budget. Guests return annually to celebrate this program and support the youth who are working hard to develop employment skills and improve their lives. Though the event is festive, the youth are at the heart of it all. Last year, moving speeches by the youth earned a heartfelt standing ovation and appreciation from the audience. Learn more about the program on page 5.

Join us at 5 p.m. on October 20th at the Swedish Cultural Center, with beautiful views of Lake Union and outstanding catering provided by Herban Feast (new this year!), with fresh ingredients from Seattle Tilth farms. Get ready for FUN! Enjoy a wine grab – you might go home with a $10 bottle of wine, or score one that’s $80. During the dessert dash, your table will jockey for position for the best dessert in the house.

This year, we’re also proud to introduce the Springboard Fund, a scholarship to benefit SYGW lead mentors who graduate and want to continue their education. All gifts to the Springboard Fund at the Green Gala & Auction will be matched by generous, longtime donors to SYGW.

Check out auction items and buy tickets http://is.gd/sygwtix – we’re adding new items daily. Love Seattle Tilth and want to share our work with your friends? Buy a table of 10 and invite your pals to celebrate with you!

If you’d like to donate an item to the auction, please contact jencrouch@seattletilth.org. To volunteer for this event, contact chrisiberle@seattletilth.org. Thanks to major sponsor Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union, an ongoing and generous supporter of Seattle Tilth. We look forward to seeing you there!

Grow Good Soil

Lisa Taylor, Children’s Garden Program Manager

If you want a great garden, you need great soil. Think about growing soil, not just plants.

**Build your soil.** No matter what kind of soil you have, the solution is simple. To make it better for plants, add organic matter or compost. Feed the billions of tiny beneficial organisms by recycling organic waste back into the garden as mulch. Use cover crops to protect soil from compaction and erosion during our rainy winters. Then chop them into spring soil to add organic matter.

**Pile it high!** Let time and nature do the work. Gather leaves, pile them on a tarp and use a pitchfork and garden hose to get them wet. Think *giant Caesar salad*. Pile moisten leaves on your garden beds and anchor them with burlap sacks or floating row cover.

**Put greens to work.** It’s not too late to sow cover crops in empty garden beds. Hardy winter covers such as fava beans, wheat, oats, barley and crimson clover can be sown through October. Broadcast them evenly across the garden bed and chop them in with a steel rake. Cover beds with floating row cover until seeds have germinated to keep hungry birds and squirrels from harvesting your seeds. Water and weed as you would any seed bed.
The Sophisticated Peasant

Be Well

The folks researching the human genome keep coming up with remarkable findings. I am waiting for the day they announce the discovery of the gene which predisposes some people to think that drunken karaoke performances are a good idea.

My wife claims she lacks the gene required to keep track of what’s in the refrigerator. I am a little suspicious of the science here, but it’s true that I am regularly astounded by her ignorance of the ‘fridge inventory, while I keep track of it pretty closely. But that’s because I cook the meals: I need to know what’s in there. As a result I take the role of Fridge Monitor in our household, and remind my wife of those leftovers she promised she would eat for lunch back in July.

I also take care of the vegetable garden, while she takes care of the ornamentals. It’s probably a genetic thing. This growing season has been unusual for us because we spent pretty much all of June and July away from home. The ornamentals survived our absence very well, but you can imagine the chaos of the vegetable garden. Kale, Brussels Sprouts, lettuce, collards- and chard all grew to immense heights, blossomed and seeded, withered and died. I have more seed of those plants than I could possibly use. The weeds became rampant.

This is not all bad news. Since my return I noticed finches perched at chest height among the kale plants, eating the seeds, and the artichokes produced several magnificent purple blossoms – quite inedible, but lovely to see.

I’m slowly getting the garden back into order and may even be able to have some winter crops growing before it’s too late. Next season I expect a fierce battle with both weeds and volunteers from all those brassicas that scattered seed. But I’m ready for that. I’ve got plenty of compost; I’ll collect leaves in the fall and I’ll mulch heavily. To quote from Julian of Norwich (my personal patron saint) “All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.”

I admit that the work from which this quote is taken, the 13th Revelation of “Revelations of Divine Love,” copyright 1939,” deals with matters other that horticulture, but I see no reason why it shouldn’t apply equally to my garden in Shoreline. All shall be well.

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

Garden to Table: Preserve, Sustain and Nourish

Leika Suzumura, Program Manager of Community Kitchens NW

The art of food preservation is all the rage right now, but before refrigeration and the convenience of grocery stores, this art was an essential to every household. Preserving food is a great act of sustainability by giving longevity to the seasonal abundance that nature offers, and providing nourishment to our bodies throughout the year. Always use proper sanitation and food safety when preserving food. Before choosing which way to preserve your harvest, consider:

1. how you plan to use the food
2. what equipment you (or your friends!) have
3. how much time you have to spend

Canning is a great option for foods that will be cooked after opening, like tomato sauce, peach pie or roasted peppers. Plan a canning party with some friends and neighbors to spread the work and pool resources.

Dehydrating can be fussy. Use a good dehydrator to get consistent drying and good texture. Sun drying and dehydrating in the oven are other options but often require extra care to dry evenly. Great for fruit like apples and plums.

Fermenting gives a tasty zing to your foods, plus the bonus of healthful probiotics that flourish when foods are fermented. These “friendly bacteria” help our body’s digestive and immune systems.

Freezing may be the easiest option with the least equipment required. Blanch vegetables first in boiling or steaming water to stop the ripening process of the food. Freezing is a great nutritional option because abundant nutrients will be stored in the freezer. Check this resource for blanching times for vegetables: nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/blanching.html. Take a canning or fermenting class to gain experience and knowledge – visit our “Kitchen” classes at seattletilth.org/learn.
Q. I have a garden full of perennials that are getting quite large. Should I divide them and how?

A. Yes! Dividing perennials controls size and also improves blooming. Extra plants can be given away or moved into new areas of your garden. Fall is a great time to divide perennials after blooms have faded.

For successful dividing and transplanting, the roots should be kept moist, so water them well. Next, work the ground gently around the outside edges of the plant with a garden fork or a shovel. Sever roots cleanly around the plant and then use a shovel to cut at an angle down and under the clump. Circle around the plant from various points until you can lever the plant out of the hole. Most perennial roots are 6-8 inches down.

The clump can be gently broken into 2-4 parts or divided with a shovel if needed. Each section should have roots attached. Plant or pot it up as soon as possible and water well.

Perennials that can be gently broken apart include Coral Bells (Heuchera), Bishop’s Hat (Epimedium) and Lamb’s Ears (Stachys byzantine). Perennials you can divide with a shovel include Black Eyed Susans (Rudbeckia), Catmint (Nepeta) and Daylilies (Hemerocallis).

Q. What do I need to know about planting trees?

A. Fall is a great time to plant trees! There are many good sales at local nurseries and planting in the fall is optimal for taking advantage of the rainy weather to get those tree roots growing.

Choose Wisely. Choose a spot with the recommended sun exposure for your tree (or vice versa). Plant where the soil drains well and where the branches can grow to their full potential. Avoid areas too close to a building foundation or over a septic tank and check for overhead wires to prevent future maintenance problems. Check Seattle City Light’s “The Right Tree Book” for ideas of trees to grow under power lines.

Plant Well. Dig a hole 2 times as wide as the root ball but only as deep as the existing pot, saving the soil. Remove the container, even burlap, and set the tree into place. Backfill the hole with the native soil mixed with a little compost and tamp it in with the end of your shovel or your hands. Be sure to not pile soil up against the trunk of the tree. Staking might be necessary if you have a windy exposure.

Water. Water thoroughly, even if it is raining.

Contact the Garden Hotline with your questions!
Fall Classes
Take a look at all the new opportunities!

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
SPU: Seattle Public University, 3307 3rd Avenue West Seattle

Organic Gardening
Put Your Garden to Bed, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Oct. 6; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Saturday, Oct. 20; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Composting 101: Feed Your Garden, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Nov. 3; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Saturday, Nov. 17; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Sustainable Landscapes
Prune Fruit Trees, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Oct. 6; 2-5 p.m., GSC

Organic Land Care Accreditation Training – NEW!, $550
Monday-Friday, Oct. 8-12; 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., GSC

Permaculture Design Certification Course, $900 (payment plans available)
One weekend a month, Oct. 13-Mar. 10; 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m., SPU

Harvest the Rain – from Landscapes to Cisterns, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Oct. 13; 2-4:30 p.m., GSC

Kitchen
Cheesemaking Workshop I: Soft-bodied Cheeses – NEW!, $55/$45/$100
Saturday, Oct. 13; 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., GSC

Cheesemaking Workshop 2: Mozzarella, Feta, Blue Cheese and More – NEW!, $55/$45/$100
Saturday, Oct. 13; 2:30-6 p.m., GSC

Urban Weeds & Wild Foods 1: Identify and Harvest – NEW!, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Oct. 20; noon-2 p.m., GSC

Urban Weeds & Wild Foods 2: Preparing for Your Table – NEW!, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Oct. 20; 3-5 p.m., GSC

Garden Educator Workshops
Intro to Organic Schoolyard Gardening, $60/$50
Saturday, Oct 20; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., GSC

The Garden Classroom, $60/$50
Saturday, Nov. 3; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., GSC

Schoolyards and Sustainability, $60/$50
Saturday, Dec. 1, 9 a.m.-noon, GSC

Urban Livestock
Start with Baby Chicks, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Oct. 6; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC

City Chickens 101, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Oct. 27; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC

Harvest Feast & Ceremony
with the Just Garden Project
Saturday, November 17
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Labateyah Youth Home