Everyone knows that eating lots of fruits and vegetables is important for staying healthy. The best way to have fresh foods available is to grow them yourself! Power-packed with super nutrients, there are some foods that are especially good to eat and easy to grow. They are like superheroes in your garden (cue superhero theme music).

Similar to the comic book superheroes, the Fantastic Four, these garden superheroes have phytochemicals that punch through disease like The Thing and powerful Vitamin C that supports your immune system like the Invisible Woman’s force field. Essential proteins in some foods can reshape and rebuild your body like Mr. Fantastic, and antibacterial qualities in other foods can burn up germs like the Human Torch.

**Phytochemicals – The Thing:**
Eat more brightly colored fruits! The compounds that cause those colors - anthocyanins in blueberries and strawberries are powerful antioxidant phytochemicals that help fend off cancer and other diseases. Phytochemicals are compounds created by plants to fight off diseases and pests; studies prove that many phytochemicals also help people fight off diseases, too. Think of them as The Thing, brightly colored powerhouses punching through free-radicals to keep your cells from oxidizing. Other “fight-o” chemicals you may have heard of are...
Volunteers Grow Edible City

Chris Iberle, Events and Volunteer Manager

Spring will be here soon, which means our learning gardens are growing and volunteer or internship opportunities are sprouting at Seattle Tilth. There are adults and kids to teach, farms and gardens to prep for planting, food to harvest, storm drains to label and plant sales to organize. Get involved! Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills, support the Seattle Tilth community and have fun.

We depend on our amazing volunteers to inspire and educate people to grow their own food. Over 1,000 volunteers and interns keep Seattle Tilth growing. We hope you will join us this year!

Check out our current volunteer positions and fill-out an application at seattletilth.org/get-involved/volunteer. Attend an upcoming volunteer orientation, second Tuesday of the month at the Good Shepherd Center (GSC), fourth Tuesday of the month at the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands (RBUFW) and selected dates in Issaquah. Visit seattletilth.org/get-involved/volunteer for detailed volunteer opportunities.

Transitions

We said goodbye to some treasured and talented co-workers in 2011.

Laura Niemi was with Seattle Tilth for nine years and made quite an impact on the organization during her time. She began as a garden coordinator in 2002, taught classes, managed the Edible Plant Sale, became a program manager and most recently managed contracts and wrote grants. Last May, Laura moved to Portland to become the Community Gardens Programs Coordinator for the City of Portland.

Many of you know Amy Ockerlander as the teacher of many garden, water and food education classes. Her expertise and enthusiasm inspired many. Amy has moved on after five years as a garden educator to give full attention to her career as an artist.

The dynamic Jessica Heiman spent four years sharing the magic of the garden with kids. With a big smile and a little ukulele, Jessica invited all people, big and small, to dig in and get dirty. She moved to Hawaii with her husband where they are enjoying the beach, volunteering with school gardens and developing a small business.

Kate Cox was the first individual giving manager for Seattle Tilth, setting up important systems for fundraising. She is stepping back from years of an ambitious schedule to focus on her health.

Gratitude and best wishes go to all of these folks who dedicated themselves fully and made valuable contributions to Seattle Tilth!
A New Year of Growth and Evolution

Justine Dell’Arings, President of the Board of Directors & Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

The past three years have been an exciting time of growth and evolution for Seattle Tilth, and 2012 certainly promises to continue that trend. We have achieved the goals we established as part of our 2010-2011 strategic plan: effective programming with measurable outcomes, efficient staff and volunteer structure, new office space, diversified revenue streams, and a clarified advocacy role. Now we are embarking on a new strategic planning process, which will be finalized in the first quarter of 2012, to build on these successes.

Our board of directors is instrumental in developing the strategic plan, which sets the future direction for Seattle Tilth. Board members listen to our volunteers, our donors, and members to determine what community needs exist relative to our mission. They then work with staff to craft a plan that articulates our direction for the next three to five years.

As an important member of our community, there are several ways you can engage in this process and influence the future direction of Seattle Tilth. You are welcome to call or email any of our board members, board@seattletilth.org, or attend our annual meeting on February 15 to share your thoughts with members of the board. At the annual meeting, members also have the opportunity to vote on new candidates and officers, important positions in a nonprofit organization.

Our new strategic plan will define our direction for 2012-2015. In the short term, we will focus on strengthening our new programs, while ensuring continued quality in our existing programs. Our community learning gardens and our educational initiatives for adults, children, and families will continue to be the keystone of our programs. We’re looking forward to new cohorts for both Seattle Tilth Farm Works and Seattle Youth Garden Works, a community-based design/review process for the new Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, investments in the growth of our food hub, and an electronic version of “Your Farm in the City.” All in all, 2012 promises to be another fantastic year for Seattle Tilth!

Annual Meeting and Potluck

All Seattle Tilth members are invited!

Wednesday, Feb. 15, 6-8 p.m.

At Seattle Tilth’s Office

4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Ste. 100
Seattle WA 98103

Not a member yet? Sign-up on page 7 or on our website.

Low-tech Solution to Age-old Problem

Falaah Jones, Issaquah Program Coordinator

If you think you have it bad with slugs and other garden thugs, think again. If your garden were located on the city outskirts or along wildlife corridors, you might be facing deer and rabbit trouble. Sure, they are nice to look at, but they can be thugs in the garden! At Seattle Tilth’s community learning garden at the Pickering Barn in Issaquah, we have created an effective low-tech solution to thwart the deer while also keeping bunnies at bay.

Fencing panels made of chicken wire stapled onto wood frames are easily set up or removed, making harvesting and maintenance chores a breeze. Sorry -- you still have to weed! The panels are only 4’ x 4’, plenty low for deer jumping, but enclosing individual garden plots makes it impossible for deer to jump into the tiny spaces inside. They will munch on tomatoes or pole beans that reach the top of the fencing panels, so throw some bird netting or tulle net over the top.

While rabbits ignore tomato and squash plants (too prickly), they will sneak under the panels to feast on succulent broccoli and salads. Rocks placed around the fencing will keep out midnight raids. Use chicken wire to keep those cute baby bunnies from wiggling through larger gauge wire.

Come see for yourself! Stop by the Pickering Barn for a self-guided tour of the garden, or volunteer with us. You might even get a deer pic!
Composters of The Future

Graham Golbuff, Resource Conservation Program Manager

Pop quiz: Are Seattle Public Schools (SPS) required to compost lunchroom food waste? Since residences are required to separate food waste from garbage in Seattle and some neighboring cities, you might think that’d be true for school lunchrooms, too. Nope. Even so, schools do recognize a great opportunity to educate and instill values of sustainability in their students through composting. Seattle Tilth is now helping more teachers and staff than ever incorporate compost-based programming into lessons and lunchroom operations.

Since 2005, a whopping 70% of SPS’ 86 facilities have implemented voluntary lunchroom composting programs. In fall 2010, SPS’ Resource Conservation Department was awarded a grant by Seattle Public Utilities to help an additional 12 institutions begin composting by the end of 2012. Funding helps with the purchase of compost bins, compostable bags, and signage, as well as compost pickup fees and educational services.

Seattle Tilth is partnering with Seattle Public Schools to provide compost education through our Master Composter/Soil Builder (MCSB) program. MCSB staff and volunteers stage interactive school-wide assemblies and make individual classroom visits to teach kids to compost and conserve natural resources. MCSB volunteers also serve as waste-station monitors during “launch weeks” to help the new young composters develop good habits. These kids are becoming leaders in the compost savvy future!

The work of educating new composters is never done. There are still 5 more schools to go in the current grant cycle and 14 more after that to get to 100% participation. If you’d like to help with school composting efforts and learn plenty about composting yourself, consider participating in the 2012 Master Composter/Soil Builder program.

SUPERHEROES IN YOUR GARDEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

chlorophyll in leafy greens and carotenoids that make carrots orange.

Vitamin C – Invisible Woman:

Some of the most nutritious leafy greens are also the most easy to grow. Miner’s lettuce, Claytonia perfoliata, is high in Vitamin C and, like arugula and garden cresses is a great self-sowing plant. Gold Rush miners gathered it from the wild and ate it to prevent scurvy, giving it the name Miner’s lettuce. Like the Invisible Woman, Vitamin C can be hidden in places you’d least expect. The greens from violas and violets are said to have three times the Vitamin C of oranges – Euell Gibbons referred to them as “nature’s vitamin pill.”

Proteins – Mr. Fantastic:

Proteins are considered the building blocks of our bodies. Like Mr. Fantastic, who can twist and move his body into a million shapes, the amino acids that form proteins break apart and reassemble themselves to build our blood, muscles, hair and organs. Sources of protein can be tough to find in the garden, but peas and beans are well-known garden friends. Garden peas can be planted early in the year and sown in succession to ensure a continual harvest throughout the season.

Antibacterial qualities – Human Torch:

Culinary herbs like sage, oregano, rosemary and thyme get their strong flavors from volatile oils on their leaves. These strong oils are used to protect the plant against foraging insects and fungal diseases. The antibacterial qualities of these oils have historically been used to guard against pathogens. Like the Human Torch, these herbs will set ablaze any illness causing germs. Thyme and sage extracts are used as active ingredients in natural cleaning products while lavender and rosemary are used in healing formulas. Plus, they are perennial plants so you can plant them once and have a medicine cabinet in your garden for years to come.

OCCUPY YOUR LAWN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

you may not be able to feed yourself or your family exclusively from your own backyard, growing food encourages you to reflect on where your food comes from and who grows it.

Whether you’re a longtime food system occupier, or a newbie looking to start your first container of peas, start off right in 2012. Seattle Tilth has you covered at our March Edible Plant Sale, March 17 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Magnuson Park’s Hangar 30.

We’ll have organic, sustainable and locally grown plants starts for vegetables, herbs, fruit trees and shrubs. We feature varieties perfect for planting in cool spring weather. There will be easy-to-grow plants, unique varieties that savvy gardeners yearn for, garden supplies, seeds and much more. Stay for educational talks and seek out the Garden Hotline with your burning questions! Want first pick? We’ll have a pre-sale on Friday, March 16 from 5:30-7 p.m. for ticket holders.

Get a jump-start on your garden and support Seattle Tilth by stocking up at the plant sale. All proceeds go directly to fund our efforts to educate and empower our community to grow more food.

Use this QR code on your smart phone to find more information about the March Edible Plant Sale – search your app store for “QR code” to download a scanner.
Seattle Tilth
Learning Gardens and Farms
Find Us Now!

Our learning gardens and farms feature ideas that you could try on a smaller scale for growing food organically. Stop by!

Use this QR code to learn more about our gardens and farms with a detailed map. (Search your app store for “QR code” to download a scanner.)

Bradner Gardens Park
Creative raised beds, annual and perennial vegetables, dry stream bed, windmill, P-Patch, children’s garden, city fruit trees, drip irrigation, rain catchment, cistern, bee hives, picnic area, covered gazebo and wheelchair accessible beds, plus bathrooms and meeting rooms.

Good Shepherd Center Adult Garden
Our original learning garden, solar greenhouse, cordon and espalier-style fruit trees, blue elderberry, persimmon, cane berries, drought tolerant plantings, pollinator border, straw bale and hugelkultur beds, green roof, rain garden, 12 acre park, picnic area, playground, bathrooms and farmer’s market on Wednesdays, May-October.

Good Shepherd Center Children’s Garden
Located behind the Good Shepherd Center, this garden captivates children with annual and perennial vegetables, sensory garden, animal trail and wildlife tunnel, giant kiwi vines, fruit trees, container garden demonstration, worm bins, compost area, with a playground, bathrooms and picnic area nearby.

Pickering Barn In Issaquah
The historic barn frames our annual and perennial vegetable crops, deer and rabbit fencing, large cistern and numerous rain barrels, green roofs, outdoor classroom, native garden, grapes, dahlia demonstration bed, drought tolerant plantings and fruit trees with a picnic area and farmer’s market (Saturdays, April-October) nearby.

Rainier Beach Learning Garden
Raised beds made from stacking blocks and rough hewn logs, burlap sack planters, gabion benches, native plant garden, worm bin, compost area, outdoor classroom, sensory garden, drip irrigation with playground, bathrooms, tennis court and playfield nearby.

Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands
Our newest farm is host to annual and perennial vegetables, raised beds, native plants, five large greenhouses, giant blueberry bushes, wetlands, nature trail, large compost area; on 10 acres.

Seattle Tilth Farm Works
39-acre site with greenhouses, production-scale row crops, nature trail, picnic area and fire pit, large farm equipment, tractors, and stunning views of Mt Rainier. Farm stand opens in June.

Seattle Youth Garden Works
Production-scale row crops maintained by our youth crew, drip irrigation, picnic area, wetlands and Union Bay nature trails, Elizabeth Miller Library, UW Botanical display garden. The SYGW farm stand is at University Farmer’s Market on Saturdays, May-October.

Thurgood Marshall Elementary School Garden*
An example of a small school garden with annual vegetable crops, colorful mural, native garden, worm bin and peace bed.

*Check-in at office if you visit during the school day.
The Sophisticated Peasant

The Good Work Before Us

When I read—as I’m sure many of you also read—about the Seattle woman who traps, kills, cooks and eats Sciurus carolinensis, the eastern gray squirrels which roam about her back yard, I was impressed, big time. I felt moved to nominate her for Sophisticated Peasant Queen of the Year, especially when I learned that she also keeps goats, chickens and bees at her Green Lake neighborhood home.

There could be a problem with that nomination, however, because of her reported claim to be “kind of upper-middle class,” which The Committee might see as an automatic disqualification. I would argue that no one without at least one live-in domestic servant could claim to be upper-middle class, but the important point is that this woman is a shining exemplar of urban peasant living at a high level of sophistication.

She may deny the peasant nature of her resourceful hunting and gathering, but her actions speak louder than her words: she may be middle-class, she may be Woman, but she is also Peasant.

Is urban squirrel-harvesting a sustainable practice? I don’t suppose anybody knows. It depends on how many of us decide to emulate her, but all evidence to my eyes suggests that eastern gray squirrels are in abundant supply. Maybe a little light culling will do the population some good.

Are they organic? Well, they’re wild aren’t they? How can they be otherwise? I read with incredulity a letter published in a recent edition of the PCC newsletter from someone questioning the organic provenance of wild salmon. Surely this is taking our regulatory zeal too far. Anything that grows in the wild is by definition un-farmed, un-managed, and therefore outside of the system that declares some products—animal or vegetable—to be organic or otherwise.

We can exercise intelligent discretion—you would not knowingly harvest wild foods from a toxic waste site—but we do not need, and should not expect, governmental approval for all that we consume.

Oh, dear. I seem to have found my way up onto a high horse by accident. Let me ease my way down back to safer ground. It will soon be spring, don’t you know, and we’re going to be very busy tending our gardens, and that work will sort out our priorities better than any number of words. Good luck to you, and Earth bless us, everyone!

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

Garden to Table

Relishing Stems

Leika Suzamura, Community Kitchens Northwest Program Manager

I must admit that, on occasion, I compost vegetable stems due to a lack of creativity and an aversion to mixing the tough texture of stems with the delicate leafy goodness of hearty greens.

I decided to find a way to actually enjoy cooking with edible stems after reading that stems are generally more alkalizing to our bodies – as opposed to the more acid forming nature of the standard American diet high in sugar, fat and meat. I am happy to say that this recipe is a success. I consistently get compliments and inquiries on how to make it. Who knew that compost bound scraps could be so good!

Community Kitchens Northwest advocates the idea of “intuitive cooking,” meaning we are able to make food taste delicious by focusing on flavor combinations, without necessarily following a recipe. Our approach combines the intuitive style with a rough outline to give the more structured cook a starting point. I encourage you to experiment and try a variety of different ingredients, using the five flavors, sweet, salty, sour, bitter and pungent as the base to create combinations that are sure to please.

Stem Relish

**Ingredients**

- Sweet: ½ cup dried or fresh fruit, try fresh cherries, Granny Smith apples or raisins
- Salty: 1 teaspoon salt
- Sour: 2 Tablespoons vinegar, lime or lemon juice
- Bitter: 2 cups stems (beets, collards, chard, kale or cilantro), diced small
- Pungent: ¼ cup red onion, diced

**Directions**

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl and let marinate for 15 minutes. Adjust flavors as needed. Pack relish in a mason jar. Relish will keep in the fridge for two weeks.
Q. Which common urban pest is going to take the biggest bite out of my garden -- crows, slugs or rats -- and how do I defend it?

A. Urban gardens are challenged by sharing space with these notorious critters. As for bites, it is good gardening practice to know your pests, their habits, habitats and unique contributions to your garden. Rats, crows and slugs cause different types of havoc.

The intelligent crow is a mischief maker. If you arrive at your garden to find your seedlings strewn across the garden beds and your plant markers rearranged, you have been visited by a crow. Do not put shiny bird tape up. Crows LOVE sparkly things and view this as a personal invitation! Instead, protect your seedlings with floating row cover that is secured around the edges. This will keep the wily crows out, warm the soil and protect your plants from other pests at the same time.

Floating row cover is not a slug deterrent; in fact, it can create a sheltered spa for emerging slugs. Slug damage, holes eaten out of the lowest tender leaves of lettuce, broccoli, or dahlia, is one of the more discouraging challenges in the early spring. Have you ever picked a shining, red strawberry only to turn it over and find a perfect melon scoop taken right out of its underside? Slugs, ugh. Slime trails are often present where they have been feeding. Try containers filled with cheap beer or wood planks as traps. The yeast in the beer and the cool protection of the wood will attract them. You can put slugs into the yard waste bin and send them to compost heaven. Or relocated them to wild over-grown areas where they are food for ground beetles and birds.

Compost piles can be great homes for rats if they are not tended regularly. Do not add food to open piles and turn piles often! Rattus species populations can explode in untended, overgrown thickets following a warm wet winter and spring. Known to eat a balanced, nutritious diet when it is available, local rats will strip the pantry of your vegetable garden. Climbing corn stalks and gnawing on your squash, they can strip precious produce in a single night of feasting. Keep produce picked regularly and don’t let fallen fruit remain on the ground. Trapping is usually the most efficient means to control.

Learn more by visiting “Living with Wildlife” wdfw.wa.gov/living/mammals. html and contacting the Garden Hotline to commiserate and help you problem solve.
Expand Your Skills and Garden – 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. 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

Start Your Garden Indoors, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 4; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Thursday, Feb. 16; 6-8 p.m., GSC

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

Prune Fruit Trees, $45/$35/$68
Saturday, Feb. 11; 10 a.m.-1 p.m., GSC

Start with Baby Chicks, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Feb. 11; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 10; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., BGP

Backyard Beekeeping 101, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 11; 2-4 p.m., GSC
Thursday, Feb. 23; 6-8 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 10; 2-4 p.m., BGP

Garden Educator Workshop: Designing and Sustaining Your School Garden, $35/$25
Saturday, Feb. 18; 9 a.m.-noon., GSC

Grow Perennial Edibles, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 18; 2-4 p.m., GSC

City Chickens 101, $40/$30/$60
Saturday, Feb. 25; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 24; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., BGP

Beekeeping 201: Starting Your Hive, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Feb. 25; 2-4 p.m., GSC
Saturday, Mar. 24; 2-4 p.m., BGP

Family Fun in the Chicken Run, $40/$30 (per family)
Saturday, Mar. 3; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

Smart Garden Planning, $36/$25/$54
Saturday, Mar. 3; 10 a.m.-noon, BGP

Comprehensive Organic Gardening, $275/$235
Tuesday, Mar. 6-27, GSC

Garden Educator Workshop: Intro to Organic Schoolyard Gardening, $60/$50
Saturday, March 10; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., GSC

Smart Garden Planning, $36/$25/$54
Thursday, Mar. 15; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Pollinate with Mason Bees, $36/$25/$54
Wednesday, Mar. 21; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Garden Educator Workshop: The Garden Classroom, $60/$50
Saturday, March 24; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., GSC

Raise City Rabbits, $36/$25/$54
Wednesday, Mar. 28; 6-8 p.m., GSC

Use the QR code or visit seattletilth.org/learn for the full list of classes.

Occupy Your Lawn with Edible Plant Starts!
Redeem this coupon for a FREE PLANT (up to $5 in value)
at Seattle Tilth’s March Edible Plant Sale
Sat., Mar. 17, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Early Bird Plant Sale
Friday, Mar. 16, 5:30-7 p.m.
Tickets $25 on Brown Paper Tickets
Magnuson Park in Seattle
6310 NE 74th St, Hangar 30
Valid only March 16 & 17, 2012

Save the date!
Seattle Tilth’s 2012 Events
• Annual Meeting and Potluck, Feb. 15
• March Edible Plant Sale, Mar. 17
• May Edible Plant Sale, May 5-6
• Eastside Edible Plant Sale, May 12
• Chicken Coop & Urban Farm Tour, July 14
• Harvest Fair, Sept. 8