Use Less, Share More, Make a Big Impact

Becca Fong, Environmental Programs Director

Are you a compulsive recycler? Do you have tons of ideas about how to repurpose something rather than throw it out? Do you think that using less is a smart way to put your green values into practice? Spring is a time of new beginnings and starting fresh -- a great time to put your recycling passion into action!

We are fortunate to live in a region where recycling and using less are woven into our culture. Seattleites currently recycle or compost over 56% of their waste, according to the 2013 Seattle Recycling Rate Report. Of the all of the garbage still going to the landfill, however 45% of that could still be recycled or composted.

Seattle Tilth has three programs that train volunteers in recycling, resource conservation, composting and community outreach – based in Seattle, Eastside and King County. Volunteers go through an experiential class series and then hone their skills through community-based activities for a term of service. It’s a great way to make a difference in your community, gain knowledge and learn valuable skills.

One of the big hurdles is lack of visibility; garbage and how it’s managed happens largely behind the scenes of modern life. Finding ways to connect individuals to their garbage, to really think about it and their values -- that is how to make lasting changes of reducing waste in our community. Here are some ways you can become a compost and recycling champion in your community.

Start close to home. Talk to your friends and family about your tips and tricks for making composting and recycling easier -- that cool way you’re storing your food scraps that isn’t
Warning: Grown with Pesticides

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

Early in January, Governor Inslee proposed allowing electric vehicles to travel for free on ferries and in toll lanes. This got me thinking about organic potatoes and little pink stickers. Bear with me and I will connect these disparate dots.

Although the governor’s proposal has little chance of passing the legislature, it’s an interesting idea. He’d like to boost the number of electric vehicles in the state from 10,000 to 50,000 by 2020. That’s a big leap in five years, but not unreasonable if the right incentives were in place. Offering monetary incentives is a time-honored way of getting people to make different purchasing decisions than they might typically make, which is why we are bombarded with sales, discounts, cash back promotions and other such strategies.

In 2012, I moved to Bainbridge and became a full-time ferry commuter. In 2013, I traded in my full-sized Prius for a Prius C because cars that measure less than fourteen feet long get a thirty percent discount on the cost of a ferry ride. If our legislators did embrace the governor’s proposal, I’d be at the Nissan dealer tomorrow. Incentives work.

So what does this have to do with organic potatoes and pink stickers? I frequently shop at a market that identifies organic produce with a little pink sticker. Every organic potato, every organic apple and every organic beet has to be labeled with a pink sticker before it’s put out for sale. There’s a cost to the market to get that sticker attached, and there’s a cost to me to get it off. Those costs are in addition to the premium price we already pay for organic produce. Taken together, these costs act as a disincentive to buy organic.

How different would things be if there were incentives designed to increase the amount of organic food that was grown, sold and consumed? We could start by putting the pink stickers on the conventionally grown produce. Even better, we could rework all food packaging so that organic food was the default and required no special label of any kind. Non-organic food would be labeled “grown with pesticides” or “contains 10% non-food substances.” I bet that would change some shopping habits!

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stinky, or how you built your awesome compost pile last season. Get folks together and encourage them to share their ideas.

Take your show on the road. Think about community places and organizations that you belong to that would like to increase their recycling aptitude. Childcare and schools are great places to do fun educational activities, like building a worm bin with teachers, kids and families. You can keep the momentum going and help with worm compost harvesting in a few months!

Go big! Are there community festivals, farmers markets or other times when lots of people are gathered together in your neighborhood? These are great opportunities to make a big impact by helping the events set up their recycling stations. Lots of recyclable materials end up in the trash at big events because there isn’t a way to make it easy for folks to sort their waste.

There are so many ways to get engaged, these are just a few ideas to get started. While there is a lot of work to do, remember that we are all in this together. Working together as a community is how we will make a difference.

Are you interested in being more active in your community this spring and making a larger impact on reduce waste in your community? Find out more about our volunteer training and outreach programs at seattletilth.org. By sharing your excitement, your passion and your ideas, you can help make good use of that stuff that would otherwise just be garbage.
Get Crisp Spring Crops

Amanda Boyle, Events Manager and Laura Matter, Garden Hotline Program Coordinator

It’s the most wonderful time of the year: planting season. We can’t wait to show you all of the exciting new things we have in store at our March Edible Plant Sale! Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of it.

Prepare Yourself

We will have plant lists and descriptions available prior to the sale on our website. Think about what kind of plants you want. Contact our Garden Hotline if you have any questions about plants and what’s right for your garden (206) 633-0224 or help@gardenhotline.org. We will have empty flats available for $1 to help you carry your plants, or feel free to bring your own little red wagon or shallow cardboard boxes.

Learn As You Go

Be sure to read the educational signs and ask any of our friendly and knowledgeable plant sellers (sporting orange vests) any questions you may have throughout the sale. Check out our short talks inside the sale that will guide you through companion planting, spring gardening with cloches and other spring topics. Visit the Seattle Tilth booth for books and educational materials, Garden Hotline educators, as well as seeds and supplies.

Find Something New and Exciting

Consider new varieties and old standards when picking your veggies this year. We will be offering a number of new Asian greens including the spicy flavored ‘Shungiku’, also known as edible chrysanthemum. Though not a true chrysanthemum, this fast growing green is a standard leafy vegetable in hot pot recipes. Or, take home some ‘Gunsho’ choi sum, a prolific leafy veggie that is very popular in Asian countries. The entire plant is edible and actually benefits from waiting until it is beginning to flower to use.

Be sure to leave room for ‘Autumn Star’ – a new green called “kalette,” a non-GMO cross of Brussels sprouts and kale from England. The fusion of the nutty flavor of Brussels sprouts and sweetness of kale is sure to be a pleasant surprise for the long season gardener. Intended for fall harvest and planted in spring, this kalette will do well touched by a kiss of frost. We are also bringing in a new kale variety developed by Oregon plant breeder Frank Morton called ‘Rainbow Lacinato’, a blend of popular dinosaur kale and ‘Redbor’. Producing a multi-colored and cold hardy kale is a sure thing for our northwest kale palette.

Super charge your diet with all of the vitamins, fiber and phytonutrients that these veggies have to offer. We’ll see you March 14 at Pacific Market Center!

RECLAIMING OUR FOOD SYSTEM

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Food waste is composted and used by farmers and growers to enrich soil and continue the cycle.

Seattle Youth Garden Works participants spend each season learning that building a local and sustainable food system is a collaborative process. There are many ways for each of us to participate and to transform our current food system. Learning about environmental restoration, growing food at home, shopping at farmers markets, signing up for a CSA share, taking a cooking class and composting at home are all great ways to get involved.

The Seattle Youth Garden Works crew ends up referring to our food system—rather than the food system—as they learn that it belongs to us all. This way we can understand the social and environmental impacts, be more intentional and conscious about feeding ourselves, and have agency over our choices as they relate to our food system.
The Seattle Tilth CSA connects eaters directly with new, immigrant and youth farmers from Seattle Tilth’s farm programs along with other family farmers around the region. Members pick-up a weekly box full of farm fresh, organically grown produce for 20 weeks between June and October.

Meet CSA Member Trish

Trish has been a Seattle Tilth CSA member since our first year in 2013. In appreciation for our returning members, we wanted to share a bit about her story, and our members tend to be pretty awesome people. Trish and her sister grew up on a subsistence farm and joined the Seattle Tilth CSA because they love super fresh, seasonal vegetables and supporting new farmers.

Hey Trish, why the Seattle Tilth CSA? What are the challenges? Be honest!

We had been trying to find a CSA that fits what we wanted, and I saw a flier at an Edible Plant Sale. We really liked the purpose and mission behind the Seattle Tilth CSA. I like that I get to see a couple days ahead what I’m going to get and can seek out what’s not going to be in my box this week. The diversity of produce in the Seattle Tilth CSA box is really great. However, summer can be a really busy time at work, so sometimes I just barely make it to the pick-up location before the time ends. I usually have my sister pick it up if I’m going to miss it.

What was your favorite produce in the box this year? Has joining a CSA changed the way you eat?

I was so excited that you guys did mushrooms this year! I’ve never had a mushroom in a CSA before; that was so awesome!

As a CSA member, I cook more. You want to respect all the work put in by the people growing it, and I don’t want to see it go to waste in the fridge.

What does Community Supported Agriculture mean to you?

CSA connects you to where you get your food from and the farmers get connected to who is eating their food. It’s the spirit of working together and helping each other survive in our world.
Aromatic Foraging
Get to Know Your Scents

Joanna Stodden, Children’s Garden Coordinator

Winter in the Maritime Northwest encourages us to batten down the hatches, winterize our windows, routinely wear damp clothing and wait one more day before running out in the rain to empty the kitchen compost. Needless to say, this time of year harbors smells in our houses that persuade us to buy scented candles, potpourri or incense. Many of these products contain synthetic chemicals that are harmful to us—so why not make your own herbal sachets? Winter is a great time to forage outside and you just might be surprised by how easy it is to bring some fresh scents inside your home. Enjoy one of my favorite projects.

Winter Potpourri
Tear up equal amounts of herbs into a bowl to stimulate aromas, and place them inside a recycled square of fabric (at least 4 inches). Keep it simple: fasten the fabric with a piece of string or twine, which makes it easy to switch out spent herbs. If you have kiddos or pets who would like to play ball with the sachets, there are several free sewing patterns online.

Experiment with ingredients based on what is available in your neighborhood. Pro tip: a great way to make instant friends with neighbors is to ask them if you can have a few sprigs of rosemary or lavender from their yard, and in turn gift them one of your sachets.

Happy foraging! Here are a few items you can find this time of year:

- **Fir needles.** Winter storms provide easily accessible branches.
- **Lavender buds (fresh or dried).** Place under your pillow for a restful night’s sleep!
- **Rosemary needles (fresh or dried).** Improves memory and is often used as an antidepressant.
- **Cinnamon sticks.** Keep in your car to increase vitality.
- **Dried orange peels.** They lift your spirit, bringing peace and happiness to your mind.
- **Cedar shavings.** The scent is grounding and relaxing.

Purchase them at any pet store.
Garden to Table
Tap Into Your Roots With Burdock

Leika Suzumura, Community Kitchens Northwest Program Manager

Even with the days tilting towards the brighter half of the year, we are working our way through winter in steady supply of root vegetables. Burdock root, sometimes seen more as a weed than an edible food, is one that comes with a bundle of hidden benefits packed into its unassuming sturdy and smooth tap root.

Like many edible plants found in our gardens, burdock has the dual purpose as culinary ingredient and herbal medicine. Perhaps best known as a blood purifier, its use ranges from skin conditions like eczema to diuretic, and new research is exploring its affect against cancer. Nutritionally, it is high in fiber, especially inulin, commonly referred to as a “prebiotic,” or food to our intestinal probiotics.

In the kitchen, it can be tossed into soups or stews, or stir-fried with other vegetables. This recipe is a traditional Japanese side dish that lets burdock have center stage with its root cousin, carrots.

Kimpira Gobo - Sesame Stir Fried Burdock Root

Ingredients
2 tablespoons sesame oil
2 small burdock roots, peeled and cut into matchsticks
1 carrot, cut into matchsticks
1 tablespoon brown sugar
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon sesame seeds (optional)
1 green onion, sliced for garnish

Instructions
• Place a pan on medium heat and add oil.
• Place burdock and carrots in pan and sauté until they start to get soft, about five minutes.
• Add sugar and mix to coat vegetables evenly.
• Add soy sauce and stir until evenly mixed; let it cook for another five minutes, stirring occasionally.
• Garnish with sesame seeds and green onion if desired.

Passion for Permaculture
Melissa Dison, Assistant to Programs and Administration

Permaculture can inspire the ways we design our landscapes, our businesses and our lives. I like to think of permaculture as a toolbox of solutions for repairing and enhancing systems. The possibilities of creating better systems for food, energy, medicine and relationships are all realized within the community of a Permaculture Design Course (PDC). The PDC community itself has much to offer—you’ll meet people from across the Puget Sound who are open to sharing resources, services and job opportunities.

Permaculture also inspires enormous passion and enthusiasm in its students. Here’s what recent graduates of Seattle Tilth’s PDC say about it.

“There is a misconception that permaculture principles and ethics apply only to agriculture. This simply is not the case. We can apply these practices on all levels of life. It is the best business class I have ever taken.” – Gwen

“A year later I’m finding that I routinely apply the principles of permaculture design to almost everything I do - personally, socially, spiritually. Toby brought the subject matter alive in a way that was memorable and edifying.” – Sinan

“The focus in this course is global and important for making our world a better place.” – Rebecca

Learn more in our Intro to Permaculture class on Saturday, February 28, at Bradner Gardens in Mt. Baker neighborhood. Or register for our Permaculture Design Certification Course that starts in May.

Permaculture Ethics and Principles

- Ethics
- Care for the earth
- Care for people
- Return the surplus

Primary Principles for Functional Design

1. Observe.
2. Connect.
3. Catch and store energy and materials.
4. Each element performs multiple functions.
5. Each function is supported by multiple elements.
6. Make the least change for the greatest effect.
7. Use small scale, intensive systems.

Principles for Living and Energy Systems

8. Optimize edge.
9. Collaborate with succession.
10. Use biological and renewable resources.

Attitudes

11. Turn problems into solutions.
13. The biggest limit to abundance is creativity.
14. Mistakes are tools for learning.
Rocket and Peas, Please!

Sue Hartman, Garden Hotline Educator

Q. I love to eat Asian greens from my small garden plot. What can I grow that isn't in the mustard (brassica) family?
A. Peas! Instead of growing this plant just for its pods, save the shoots and tendrils for a little variety. Peas love cool weather and grow quickly in small spaces; so before you know it, you will have delicious shoots to toss into salad or stir fry. They add crunchiness and fresh flavor to sandwiches and pastas and are an excellent source of vitamins A, C and K. Hmong farmers introduced these healthy pea shoots to the American diet.

Peas are also great for your soil because they capture nitrogen. Rotating plants from the brassica family with plants from other families reduces the risk of clubroot, a soil-borne fungal disease. Leave pea roots in the soil when they are done producing to return nitrogen to the soil. All pea varieties are edible, but some varieties such as ‘Oregon Giant’ and ‘Cascadia Sugar Snap’ are resistant to pea enation virus and powdery mildew, making them good choices for the Pacific Northwest.

Start harvesting by cutting or pinching off the growing tip when the plants are 6 to 8 inches tall, just where the lower second set of leaves joins the main stem. As the vines regrow, continue to cut off the top 2 to 6 inches every 3 to 4 weeks. Remove and eat any flowers and pods that form. Keep harvesting until the taste turns bitter or you are ready to plant something else.

Q. What can I grow that is tasty, fast and easy?
A. The British term for arugula is “rocket,” which is a good depiction of how quickly this plant takes off! Arugula has been cultivated as an edible herb since Roman times. In modern US and Europe, it’s commonly eaten raw or added to pizzas and pastas. In Asia, seeds are pressed into oil and used for pickling, while arugula liqueur is a unique delight in Italy. For a spicy spring pesto, puree arugula leaves with olive oil, garlic and nuts.

Annual arugula (Eruca sativa) likes cool weather, making it a good choice for early spring gardens. This brassica family plant grows in full sun to partial shade. Keep the soil evenly moist to prevent early bolting. Harvest annual arugula in a large batch just above the soil level, or cut baby leaves back to an inch and let them regrow for a repeat harvest. Fun tip: when the temperature rises, add flowers produced by the plant to salad for texture and flavor.

Wild arugula or ‘Sylvetta’ (Diplotaxis tenuifolia) is a perennial plant with a sharper flavor and more deeply lobed leaves than annual arugula. The upright growth habit and quick rate of growth help reduce the risk for downy mildew disease. It can be harvested for a long time and will overwinter in mild climates. Keep the edible flowers cut for better leaf production. ‘Surrey’, is a cross between wild arugula and ‘Astro’ annual arugula. It grows faster than wild arugula and has the milder flavor of ‘Astro’.

THE GARDEN HOTLINE IS SPONSORED BY:
Make a Resolution to Grow a Great Garden in 2015

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
Start Seeds Indoors, $36/$25/$54
Sat., Feb. 7, 10 a.m.-noon, BGP
Wed., Feb. 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC

Smart Garden Planning, $36/$25/$54
Sat., Feb. 7, 2-4 p.m., BGP
Tue., Feb. 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC
Wed., Mar. 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC

Organic Gardening 101, $55/$46/$90
Sat., Feb. 14, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., GSC
Sat., Mar. 21, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., BGP

Composting 101, $36/$25/$54
Sat., Feb. 21, 2-4 p.m., GSC

Comprehensive Organic Gardening, $275/$235
March 25-April 15, BGP
Wed., 7-9 p.m. and Sat., 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Permaculture and Sustainable Landscapes
Grow Fruit in Small Spaces, $36/$25/$54
Tue., Feb. 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC

Intro to Permaculture, $45/$35/$68
Sat., Feb. 28, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., BGP

Urban Livestock
Backyard Beekeeping 101, $36/$25/$54
Wed., Feb. 11, 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC
Sat., Mar. 7, 10 a.m.-noon, GSC*

Beekeeping 201: Start Your Hive, $36/$25/$54
Wed., Feb. 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m., GSC
Sat., Mar. 7, 2-4 p.m., GSC*
*Beekeeping Combo: non-members, take both beekeeping classes back-to-back on Saturday, March 7 for just $65!

All About Chickens, $45/$35/$68
Sat., Feb. 21, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., GSC
Sat., Mar. 21, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., GSC

Raise City Rabbits, $36/$25/$54
Sun., Mar. 22, 10 a.m.-noon, BGP

Save the Date for 2015 Events
Annual Meeting: February 23
March Edible Plant Sale: March 14
May Edible Plant Sale: May 2-3
Chicken Coop and Urban Farm Tour: July 11
Harvest Fair: TBA
Gala Auction: September 26