Imagine this photo in color! The Tomato Tasting in 2005 boasted 50 varieties to taste. Take notes on your favorites this year for next year’s planting.

And the Best Tomato is...

Laura Niemi

We’ll be putting on the Tilth Tomato Tasting again this year at the Harvest Fair on Saturday, September 9, from 11 am–1 pm. Only ten dollars gets you a chance to sample and rate all of the tomatoes we’ve grown in the garden, including some new varieties that we’re experimenting with for next year. During your visit, you can tour the Tilth garden and see many of the tomatoes being grown.

There is no question that tomatoes are a gardener’s favorite. At our recent Edible Plant Sale we sold over 9,500 tomato plants, that’s 2,200 more than last year and 3,000 more than 2004! In fact, 45 percent of our vegetable starts were tomatoes – and we sold them all. This tells me that not only is Tilth being recognized as the place to buy tomato starts, but a lot of people out there are growing our tomatoes. If you were one of the shoppers at the Tilth Edible Plant Sale this year, then you know that there were almost 50 varieties of tomatoes to choose from. Some of you studied the plant descriptions on our website and came with your lists in hand, others sought advice from our plant sellers. Most of you must have asked yourselves, “with so many choices, how do I know which ones are the best?”

“Best” when it comes to tomatoes is very subjective. It all depends on what kind of tomatoes you like – big ones, little ones, red ones or odd-colored ones. Of course you have to take your garden’s space, sun exposure and heat into account when choosing the best variety for you, but in addition to all of those things you have to consider flavor. Aside from the love of gardening and the excitement of watching our food grow, most vegetable gardeners are motivated by the knowledge that what we grow ourselves tastes so much better than what we can buy in most stores.

Each year in the Tilth gardens we grow all of the tomato varieties sold at the Plant Sale, so we can decide which tomatoes to sell at next year’s sale. We judge their vigor and disease resistance as well as compare them to others in their class – then we consider

Continued on page 3
Tilth is an EnviroStar!

Seattle Tilth has received five stars – the highest rating – as an EnviroStar for our efforts to reduce hazardous waste and use of hazardous materials. The EnviroStars program is a service of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Park’s Hazardous Waste Management Program. Laurel Tomchick, manager of the EnviroStars Program comments “Seattle Tilth has been a proactive leader in organic based landscaping, from providing classes, to creating a children’s organic garden, to running the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline. Please continue to reinforce your position as an industry leader in preventing pollution and sustainable practices.”

Watch for Seattle Tilth’s name in special EnviroStars promotions and advertising in the upcoming months.

Transitions

Sam O’Brien has become the Children’s Garden assistant teacher. He was recently a project coordinator for Seattle Youth Garden Works. Charlotte Moss has joined the Tilth staff as bookkeeper/office manager, a part-time position that is allowing her to continue her part-time position as the office manager for PlantAmnesty. Amy Ockerlander has joined the staff as a Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline educator. Most recently, Amy worked at Swan’s Nursery.

Board members BJ Hedahl and Andy Waldbaum have both moved out of town and stepped down from the board. BJ bought her dream home on Camano Island and Andy was transferred to Hartford, Connecticut. In May, the board elected new members Beth Lenholt and Renee Rhone. Beth is a technical writer for Boeing and has volunteered for Tilth for many years, most recently as “Super Volunteer Coordinator” for the Edible Plant Sale. Renee worked with board member Brandon Pemberton at Chef’n Corporation, where she was recently promoted to Director of Finance and Operations.

Save the date!

Mark your calendar for Thursday, October 12 for a special benefit concert at Ballard’s Tractor Tavern. The concert will feature the Tall Boys, a Seattle-based old time string band, who will get everyone’s toes tapping and couples swinging on the dance floor. The full lineup will appear in the next newsletter.

What happened to July?

You may have noticed that your last newsletter spanned May and June, while this issue covers August and September. What happened to July? Over a year ago, an ad hoc editorial committee discovered that if we shifted the bi-monthly newsletter by one month, we would have better lead time for letting you know about our major special events like the Harvest Fair. The extra lead time this summer is allowing us to get this expanded issue to you early.
And the Best Tomato is ...  
Continued from page 1

their flavor. A Chianti Rose beefsteak tomato may only produce four or five ripe fruit in an entire growing season, but if the plant is healthy and the fruit tastes phenomenal, then it’s a keeper.

But just as a “best” rating is subjective, so is flavor. I personally like sweet and fruity tomatoes like Jaune Flamme and Limmony. Others are looking for tomatoes with a “true tomato” flavor like Moskvich. So who is to say which tomato has the best flavor? A great way to determine which tomato varieties are your favorites is to try them all at the Tilth Tomato Tasting.

All of the proceeds support the Demonstration Gardens. If you love tomatoes, you can’t miss this event! For more information and to buy advance tickets, go to: www.seattletilth.org/events/tomtaste06.

Creating Garden Harmony

Kathy Dang

Seattle Tilth will offer an intensive permaculture workshop, Creating Garden Harmony: a Permaculture Workshop for the Urban Dweller from August 10–13. Permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems that have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems. It begins with careful observation of one’s site and strives to replicate systems and patterns found in nature. Its goal is to create a permanent landscape with minimal inputs where relationships between plants, animals and people are nurtured.

This three-day workshop will provide participants with an introduction to permaculture and offer skills for interpreting and applying these principles in an urban setting. Last year’s permaculture series was a huge success, so we’ve restructured the four-part class series from last year into a weekend-long course, in order to offer an intensive overview of permaculture and more in-depth hands-on projects.

Classes will be held in our two demonstration gardens at Bradner Gardens Park and the Good Shepherd Center. Specific topics include, garden planning and observation, integrating natural patterns in the garden, backyard wildlife, perennial food gardening and plant and people communities. This course is designed to inspire the city gardener to think and act more permaculturally and to provide resources for them to make further connections related to permaculture in the Seattle community. Co-sponsored by the Seattle Permaculture Guild (seattlepermacultureguild.org).

This workshop costs $105 per person or $95 for Tilth members. Advance registration and payment is required. Limited space is available so register early. To register, download a registration form from www.seattletilth.org and mail it in with your payment. Scholarship applications are available upon request.

Congratulations to the Master Composter/Soil Builder Class of 2006!

TOP LEFT Instructor Howard Sten and Imhotep Ptah prepare materials for composting yard waste. TOP RIGHT Marquite McKenny and Jen Mullen feed a green cone with food scraps. LEFT Participants learn to bed a worm bin.

Look for Master Composter/Soil Builder volunteers at these events this summer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University District Farmers Market</th>
<th>Lake City Farmers Market</th>
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<tr>
<td>Magnolia Farmers Market</td>
<td>West Seattle Street Fair</td>
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<td>Columbia City Farmers Market</td>
<td>Ballard Seafood Fest</td>
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<td>Lake City Pioneer Days</td>
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<td>Seattle Hempfest</td>
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Donations for Master Composter/Soil Builder Volunteer Training

City Peoples’ Mercantile
QFC Wallingford Sol Colibri Coffee

Stoneway Hardware Tweedy and Popp Ace Hardware
Tilth Team Leads Record Breaking Plant Sale

Special Thanks
Volunteer Coordinator: Beth Lenholt
Seattle Parks Liaison: Rose Ellen Brittenham
Staff: Laura Niemi, Dianne Boulay, Kathy Dang

The following businesses donated over $500 worth of refreshments for our Plant Sale volunteers:

Chaco Canyon Cafe
Delicious Planet
Earth Conscious Organics
The Essential Baking Company
Fish Brewing Company
Flying Apron Organic Bakery
Full Circle Farm
Grateful Bread
Mighty-O Donuts
Pioneer Organics
Pudge Brothers Pizza
Sol Colibri Coffee

Thanks to our amazing volunteers!

Leah Adangryf
Matilda Alair
Nancy Allen
Maru Almeida
Melissa Amrina
Aimee Appell
Gail Badner
Alice Baggett
Hugh Bailey
Laura-Mae Baldwin
Ellen Barth
Darcy Batura
Jessica Bean
Jen Beauvais
Caren Beecher
Carol Bennet
Johanna Berking
Betsy Bertiaux
Judith Biarro
Wendelien Bolomey
Brad Borland
Tom Bowden
Karen Bratesani
Kelsey Broderick
Karen Brooks
Deborah Buckley
Sarah Burdell
Kelly Cannon
Rob Carr
Ada Chan
Stella Cheung
Susan Chiat
Dan Clarkson
Oliver Collins
Gwen Colwell
Karen Conger
Gretchen Corbin
Bill Crawford
Norm Critics
Nina Cross
Kate Dabe
Hilary Dahl
Kyle Davis
Laura Davis
Robin DeAlva
Elizabeth Dequine
Christina Dixon
Sean Dominoski
Maggie Douglas
Barb Drake
Mara Dyczewski
Lise Easom
Jean Edelhertz
Cyndi Edwards
Pam Elardo
Susan Ernsdorff
Stephanie Esmond
Dianne Everson
Mike Ewanciw
Jean Fee
Chelan Finney
Chad Fisher
Aviva Flowerman
Naoko Forderer
Catherine Futtrup
Janet Gabbert
Sue Gibbs
Ronni Gilboa
Jeffrey Gopetsch
Lynn Gottlieb
Sabra-Jenks Graham
Kirsty Grainger
Larry Grant
Marci Greenberg
Tessa Gross
Heather Grube

Thanks to Depth of Field Photography for great plant sale photos.
If your check written at the Edible Plant Sale on Saturday May 6 has not yet cleared on your bank statement, please call Seattle Tilth Executive Director Karen Luetjen at 206-632-1999. A number of checks were misplaced by our bank after they were deposited and your information could help relocate them. Meanwhile, Tilth has received full credit for the deposit.
2005 Annual Report

Karen Luetjen, Executive Director

In 2005, planning activities circulated around our readiness for responding to the City of Seattle’s Request for Proposal for the continuation of the Natural Soil Building Program (NSB). The NSB program includes the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline, the Master Composter/Soil Builder Volunteer Program and many other services that Seattle Tilth is pleased to provide for the city. Coordinated by NSB Program Manager Colleen Quinn, the planning workshops and surveys involved the entire staff, board and scores of members and supporters. Specific activities are described below. The five-year NSB contract was awarded to Seattle Tilth in late October. The total five-year NSB contract value is over 2 million dollars and demonstrates Seattle Tilth’s leadership in urban resource conservation.

The Board of Directors adopted a revised Finance Policy, developed talking points for outreach and made plans for retooling the Annual Meeting to broaden its appeal.

We launched the new Seattle Tilth website in July under a contract with OneNW, a non-profit organization whose mission is to aid environmental organizations with their technical needs. Former Board President Bill Thorsness was instrumental in the planning and development process, and helped with the big job of migrating content from the old site to the new.

Seattle Tilth received beneficial coverage from these media outlets and many others: Farmer’s Almanac Television, NBC’s Today Show, King County’s Yard Talk Cable TV Show, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Seattle Times and KUOW 94.9.

Other planning priorities included analysis of our business plan, development and fundraising, and examining our strategic partnerships. Staff developed new program formats to help increase earned income and made plans to increase donations of supplies and services to keep costs down and enhance the hospitality for volunteers.

Support

Members and Donors: We are deeply grateful to each person whose support advanced the programs of Seattle Tilth. At year end, there were 800 Tilth members in good standing, in addition to 55 lifetime members.

The following people made contributions in 2005:

Anonymous (5)
Mary & Richard Anderson
Gretchen & Basil Anex
David & Penny Atcheson
Kyle Davis & Jessica Bean
Caren Beecher
Victoria Bennett
Sue Berlin
James A. Degel & Jeanne Berwick
Erika Peterson & Annie Bilotta
Brad Borland
Dianne & Paul Boulay
Jackie Branz
J Klein & AG Brizo
Vickie Brodine

By partnering and co-sponsoring programs (like this 2005 fruit tree pruning workshop led by PlantAmnesty), Tilth provided more benefits and educational opportunities for our members.
Mary Embleton
Gwen Evans
Mina Fall
Paul Farley
Andrea Faste
Tom & Mary Felkins
Lois Fish
Naoko Forderer
James Van Horn & Darlene Franz
Polly Freeman
Marilyn Freeman
Janet Gabbert
Terry Gaddis & Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis
Jewell D. Gibbs
Jennifer Gordon
Keith Rodli & Katharine Grant
Alex & Harvey Greenberg
Jane Groppenberger
Hakim Family
Betty Hall
Judith Hance
Ann Harrang
Jody Harris
Becky Braniff & Ben Haskell
Katherine Haven
Donald Guthrie & Elizabeth Hebert
Chavi M. Hohm
Jean E. Johnson
Mary & Gifford Jones
Heidi & Shannon Kane
Rebecca Kettwig
Lee Kimber
Larry Barello & Leigh Krueger
Miriam Landy
Kristin Larson
Lucy Lauterbach
Michelle Anne Layton
Evelyn Lester
Anya LevySmith
Lotus & Howard Linton
Chase Barton & Meredith Lohr
Sandy Smith & Mary Smith
Nora & Sean Ludviksen
Karen & Duke Luetjen
Stan Lundgaard
Yvern Germain & Diane Martin
Anne Matsen
Bill McJohn
Antje K. McKinley
Andrea Mercado
Leah Gerrard & Drew Middlebrooks
Scott McClay & Lisa Morrow
Joyce Moty
Sara Mueller
Mel Vandergriff & Linda Newman
Colleen Nicolette
Nancy Nordhoff
Patty O’Hara
Linda Park
Irene Patten
Matthew Pearson
Suzanne Pedersen
Sarah Wilke & Brandon Pemberton
Joanne Jewell & Rob Peterson
Phinney Neighborhood Association
Karen Prince
Lynn Pruzan
Christina Purdy
Cynthia Putnam
Barbara Reid
Birgit Grimlund & Robin Reiels
Debra Revere
Chris Rhinehart
Fabiola Rodriguez
Martha Rose
Julie Russillo
Frances, Ann & B.J. Schade
Percy Tierney & Carol Scheuffele
Kimberly Schwartz
Kimberly Christensen & David Sielaff
Jayne Simmons
Craig & Alice Skipton
Alice & Eric Smith
Amy Stephenson
Judith Sterry
Bill Parks & Beth Struckhoff
Susan Peterson & Paul Taub
Neal Thayer
Sue Thompson
Susie & Bill Thorness
Percy Tierney
Norm Tjaden
Karen Miller & Ivette Valdes
William Vanderwilt
Andy Waldbaum
Kristin Walter
Mary C. Walton
Chris & Erica Welch
Edie & Roger Wells
Jonathan Wenger
Laura Wideburg
Bruce Williams
Mark Yamamoto
Peter Covell & Judy Youngstrom
Winning the 2005 People’s Choice Award at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show would not have been possible without the hundreds of hours of preparation by volunteers and crew members. Before the load-in at the Convention Center days before the show, the truck was fully loaded with the wood, steel and concrete elements of the “Feel the Heat” garden. The garden was designed by Cameron Scott of Exteriorscapes LLC and underwritten by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Additional donations or matching funds were received from individuals through:

- Altria
- Attachmate WRQ
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Boeing Employees Community Fund
- Cingular Wireless
- Costco Wholesale
- King County Employees Charitable Campaign
- Microsoft Corporation

- Nintendo of America
- Home Street Bank
- Safeco Insurance
- State of Washington Combined Fund Drive
- Symetra
- United Way of King County
- Washington Mutual
**Grants:** In 2005 Seattle Tilth received grants from the following foundations and agencies:

- Burning Foundation
- Hans and Elizabeth Wolf Foundation
- Jeffris Wood Foundation
- Patagonia Sage Foundation
- Washington Foundation for the Environment

**Contributed Supplies and Services were received from:**

- Peter Ackroyd and Joan Alworth
- Asteroid Cafe
- Aw Pottery
- Ballard Market
- Bootleggers Band
- Cedar Grove Compost
- Chaco Canyon Café
- City People’s Mercantile
- Compton Lumber
- Costco
- Keala Hagmann & Bur Davis
- Eden Landscaping
- Environmental Home Center
- Essential Baking
- Exteriorscapes L.L.C.
- Fish Brewing Company
- Folk Voice Band
- Full Circle Farm
- Georgetown Brewing Company
- Bria Hedahl
- Home Depot
- Homesite
- Kaspar’s Restaurant
- Liz Katz
- Rebecca Ketwig
- Sarah Kulfan
- Roger Reed
- Little Rae’s Bakery
- Lucky Palate
- Marenakos Rock Center
- Kate McCoy
- Steve & Renee McMillan
- Metal Design
- Jim Michael, Clear Vision
- Mighty-O Donuts
- Molbak’s
- New Renaissance Cakes
- New Roots Organics
- Northgate Chiropractic
- Organically Grown Company
- PCC Natural Markets
- Pioneer Organics
- RainTree Nursery
- Rock Mountain Products
- Sawdust Supply Company
- Schnitzer Steel
- Seamonster Lounge
- Second Use Building Materials
- St. Benedict’s Church Tillerator
- Walt’s Organic Fertilizer
- WE-Design
- Suzy Whitehead
- Whole Foods
- Windfall Lumber
- Zazou

**2005 Program Activities**

**Demonstration Gardens at the Good Shepherd Center and Bradner Gardens Park**

Innovative new programs for adults were debuted in 2005 including an urban permaculture program and a monthly gardening clinic series. A summer session of the 30-hour Comprehensive Organic Gardener Program was added bringing the total to three COG courses per year. The Edible Plant Sale in May broke previous records for attendance and income, with proceeds directly supporting adult education programs. In continuing partnerships with Safeco’s Neighborhood Academy and local nurseries we offered organic gardening classes throughout the region. Through our partnership with the P-Patch Program, we expanded programming of the “Organic Gardening: The Basics” curriculum, to include an advanced gardening series. Our non-English classes for the year included, classes in Spanish and Laotian languages. An overhauled garden crew volunteer program continues to help us maintain the demonstration gardens in exchange for hands-on learning about organic gardening. In all, over 1,000 people learned about organic gardening through our demonstration garden programming in 2005.

**Children’s Garden**

Volunteers and staff offered Earth Steward programs in the children’s garden for students in the spring and fall in addition to free in-classroom programs supported by a contract with Seattle Public Utilities. These programs “Soil in a Box” and “Use it or Lose It” were developed by Seattle Tilth and fulfill science requirements for second grade students. Summer camps and classes for kids as young as two-years-old were as popular as ever, supported by the work of summer interns. The multiple-session Teaching Peace Through Gardening” series was held at Thurgood Marshall Elementary School where children revived a fallow school garden.

**Natural Soil Building Program**

The Natural Soil Building Program is a Seattle Public Utilities contract managed and provided by a team of five Seattle Tilth employees. The 2005 program included: compost bin distribution, Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline services, basic and advanced Master Composter/Soil
Builder volunteer training, Natural Yard Care Neighborhood workshops, storm-water seminar, and project management. The Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline educators and the MC/SB volunteers provide public outreach for this program.

The NSB program targeted Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels’ 60 percent recycling goal, holding a truckload bin sale in April and providing continuing bin sales through the Seattle Conservation Corps at Sand Point. Thirty-four Master Composter/Soil Builders completed over 40 hours of MC/SB Basic Training and then fulfilled 1,403 outreach hours. The Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline provided assistance to 8,552 Seattle and King County residents by phone, email or in person and within these contacts 18% of the calls were from King County residents, 36% of the calls were on IPM topics and 64% were on compost and natural lawn care topics. Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline staff provided five IPM presentations to King County professionals and attended twenty-seven lectures/seminars on Natural Soil Building topics for continuing education.

**Other Programs & Events**

**NW Flower & Garden Show**

In the third and final year of our partnership with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* a team of dedicated volunteers led by volunteer Nancy Evans and garden designer Cameron Scott of Exteriorscapes LLC created the “Feel the Heat” garden, which won the People’s Choice Award. The garden featured innovative hardscaping designed to extend the growing season and provide year-round outdoor living spaces.

**City Chickens**

More sessions of City Chickens 101 were held and we offered one advanced class called City Chickens 201. Some of the hosts for the July City Chickens Coop Tour reported that more than 200 people visited their backyards.

**Harvest Fair**

In 2005 we debuted the Tomato Tasting fundraising event and expanded the fall plant sale to include perennials and winter vegetable starts. Despite heavy rain and cool temperatures, more than 2,000 people attended and sales at the farmers market were brisk. The fair included a full schedule of music and children’s activities, as well as the noontime Harvest Parade.
Naked Gardener

Rock ‘n’ Roll

An evening stroll around the garden in mid-June – glass in hand – is a pleasant interlude, as long as you’ve done your springtime work. If you haven’t you’re surely not alone in this, and there’s always another opportunity, another spring.

If you have gardened even reasonably well, your inventory of pleasures will probably exceed mine, not that mine is shabby. I note the swelling pods of sugar snap peas, the flourishing potatoes and lettuces, the young pole beans eager for the climb ahead. I see the rhubarb and the ripening raspberries, and I salivate at the thought of pies to come. And then there are the treasures I didn’t plant: the 7-feet-tall-and-climbing foxglove, the Feverfew and Sweet Cicely, the bracken and Lemon Balm and – new this year – Corncockle.

Much of this is familiar. Besides the Corncockle, what else is new? Two things: we have built a new potting shed on our new deck. As everyone knows, such ventures inevitably come with unexpected complications, and this serves to keep life challenging for those of us who might otherwise become complacent. In this case the challenges of construction were greatly relieved by the skillful young carpenter we hired to do about 98% of the actual work. Given my limited capacity for new challenges, I think this was a prudent move.

A small challenge did arise post-construction, however, owing to the fact that the potting shed door has no latch. My wife (who is the major shareholder in this venture and also the primary beneficiary) placed a grapefruit-sized rock against the bottom of the door to keep it closed. I complained that sliding this rock back and forth repeatedly would damage the surface of the new deck, which is a material composed of reclaimed wood and plastic.

“Not at all,” she replied. “The stone is round. It will roll away.”

Now for many of you the phrase “roll away the stone” will carry a biblical resonance, as it did for me. This is a powerful association, and one you might expect to lend itself to all kinds of wordplay, clever references, etc., so you could say my wife handed me a fine opportunity just then. I generally leap at those. The problem was that I couldn’t come up with anything, and I still can’t. No wit, no wordplay, no plumage display.

So all I had left was my dry objection to the scratchy stone, unleavened by wit or humor of any kind, good, bad or indifferent. Fortunately for me, my wife waggishly wrapped the rock in an old sock thus preserving both the deck surface and the good humor of our relationship. Now, when it rains, we can look out on the deck at the soggy-sock-wrapped-rock.

The potting shed was designed to incorporate some old windows that I’ve kept around for several years with just this purpose in mind. I have a tendency to keep many sorts of things lying around for years with some purpose in mind. That “purpose” is often vague and seldom achieved, so it is a particular pleasure to see these old windows finally reaching their destiny, so long forethought of.

Once the shed was built, much sowing, potting, transplanting and re-potting immediately ensued, with the result that the gardens are productive and lovely and getting lovelier as the summer matures. We often remark how fine it is to have such a space dedicated to this purpose, after years of trying to sow seeds and transplant seedlings in a variety of unsatisfactory locations, such as the dining room table.

What’s more, it adds even more interest to the evening stroll and another entry to the inventory of pleasures. And who – glass in hand – could object to that? Rock on!
Fall’s around the corner—time to plant that winter garden!

There are few things more satisfying in life than stepping outside in those chilly gray months and harvesting your own kale, or to see fresh snow peas and carrots sprouting for harvest in early spring. To join the company of such satisfied gardeners, start planting now! Kale, chard, winter beets, spinach, green onions and loose leaf lettuce go into the ground throughout August. As temperatures start to cool in mid-August–early September, put in arugula, cilantro and overwintering cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower, as well as another planting of lettuce greens. Late September is your chance to plant that amazing early spring duo—garlic and snow peas—and to plant your beets and winter-hardy spinach and carrots for spring harvest. Give an organic boost to any beds you want to put to sleep for the winter, by planting cover crops of fava beans, crimson clover, field peas, rye, wheat or barley (or any combination) September–early October.

To ensure a lasting crop through the chillier months, use cloches (floating row covers) or cold frames over your crops. These provide a buffer from the wind and frost and hold warm air close to your plants. Cloche fabric is available at most nurseries. A heavy fall mulching of leaves, straw or compost (four inches of straw or leaves, two inches of compost) for all your winter beds will help keep soils warm and frost away from tender roots. Mulch will also promote a vibrant microbial soil community of beneficial bacteria, fungi and critters. Just keep an eye out for those slugs! Call the Hotline, 206-633-0224 lawnandgardenhotline@seattletilth.org, for more information and creative year-round gardening ideas!

Fall is a great time to get a head start on creating new beds—using sheet mulch!

Do you have an area of lawn that is thin and weedy? Have you been thinking for months about getting rid of it and starting a new bed, but just couldn’t stomach the idea of all the work involved with removing the existing lawn and weeds? Now is the time to create new beds for next spring without all the work. Fall is the best time to sheet mulch problem areas so that by next spring you will have a loose, rich soil—and a great base for planting a new garden. Sheet mulching is a great, inexpensive way to build healthy soil over the winter.

Put several layers of organic material on the ground and let it sit for a few months; the existing weeds and grass will be smothered. Later on you will have dark, healthy soil that is full of organic matter and ready to be planted. You don’t need to use high quality compost or carefully prepared materials for sheet mulching, use whatever is available—newspapers, cardboard, grass clippings, wood chips, manure etcetera. In time it will all break down to create rich soil. Contact the Hotline 206-633-0224 or lawnandgardenhotline@seattletilth.org, for a free fact sheet and additional information on how to convert problem areas into great gardens with very little work by sheet mulching this fall.
Garden Clinics
Throughout the year, Seattle Tilth offers low-cost hands-on garden clinics to aspiring organic gardeners. Each month, the Tilth gardeners teach a seasonal topic on organic gardening. Each clinic is an hour and a half long and takes place in the Seattle Tilth Demonstration gardens. Participants will have a chance to listen, see and participate in the demonstrations for each class. Each clinic costs $15 for Tilth members, $18 for non-members. Pre-registration in required. To register, go to www.seattletilth.org.

Fall Salad Gardening
Sunday, August 27, 11 am–12:30 pm
Bradner Gardens Park, 29th Ave S and S Grand St, Seattle, WA 98144
Fall salad gardens are the easiest thing around and what a payoff! All you need is a little advanced planning, four square feet and you’ll be grazing for months. When you see how easy it is to plant and grow a salad garden, you’ll wonder why they charge $7.99 a pound for the stuff in the grocery stores!

Natural Yard Care—Fall
Thursday, September 28, 6–7:30 pm
Bradner Gardens Park, 29th Ave S and S Grand St, Seattle, WA 98144
Are you looking for ways to create a chemical-free yard? This workshop will present simple and inexpensive techniques that will help you create a beautiful and healthy space for you and your family to enjoy. Fall is a fantastic time to replenish your soil and clean up your yard beds before the winter sets in. Learn how to mulch your garden beds to reduce weed growth and do general yard clean up, including pruning. This is also the time to fertilize your lawn and plant new lawns, so come and learn which organic lawn fertilizers and seeds are best. Fall is also the best time of year for planting. We will help you learn which plants are best for your site and how you can plan your landscape to encourage space for backyard wildlife.

City Chickens 101
Saturday, September 23, 10 am–12 pm
Good Shepherd Center
Room 140 (Senior Center)
This is an introduction to chicken husbandry in an urban and suburban setting. You will learn the most important considerations in caring for a small flock of hens in limited space, including chicken biology, behavior, health, nutrition, housing and city regulations. This class will also cover the wide variety of chicken breeds. Questions are encouraged. You will leave this class with everything you need to know to start raising chickens in your own backyard. Each class costs $22 per person or $18 for members of Seattle Tilth. Advance registration and payment is required. Registration form available at www.seattletilth.org.

Creatures Galore!
Space is still available in this week-long day camp in the Children’s Garden and one other. There are also spots in a few afternoon preschool classes. Check availability at www.seattletilth.org.

City Chickens Book List
Interested in keeping City Chickens? Seattle Tilth has gathered a list of books that will get you started on the right track to be a City Chickens keeper! You can find the list on the Seattle Tilth website at: www.seattletilth.org/resources/articles/citychickensbooklist

Get Dirty!
Volunteer in the Children’s Garden where we offer fun, hands-on garden camps for children ages 1–14 years. Programs like Get Dirty, Ladybug Picnic and Tool Time take place weekdays, June 12–September 1. Call Lisa Taylor at 206-633-0451 x2 to get started as a volunteer.

Green Gardening Program
IPM Workshop
Save the Date!
Wednesday, November 15, 7 am–4 pm
South Seattle Community College
A combination of presentations and interactive discussion. Topics include: Biofertility, Planting to attract beneficial insects, Weed control demonstration, Soil restoration, Pruning for tree health
Pesticide recertification and continuing education credits offered. Breakfast and lunch included in registration. Look for registration materials in September.