

Master Gardener & Backyard Gardening



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY STEVENS COUNTY EXTENSION

Protecting our natural resources includes educating residents for knowledge about sound horticultural practices including water conservation and water quality protection, sustainable landscaping, integrated pest management, and control of invasive species. Adoption of these practices by home gardeners can impact the economy and ecological value of home and public landscapes.

Master Gardener Program since 2002

- Total number of Master Gardener volunteers.....128
- Total number of Master Gardener volunteer hours over 2,500

In the past five years, our staff and Master Gardeners have taught a variety of classes to over 6,000 Stevens County residents. A sampling of the classes:

- Youth gardening at the public library
- Gardening demonstrations and plant clinics at farmer's markets
- Adaptive gardening
- Putting your garden to bed
- Demonstration garden at the Fairgrounds
- Raised bed gardening at the nursing home
- Composting and vermi composting
- Grafting

Our office handles a steady flow of questions about a wide variety of gardening and farming questions. Identifying insects, plant diseases, and weeds is season long. We work with landowners to assist with evaluating soil test results, deal with weed control issues, and grazing management. These inquiries represent significant acres of Stevens County landscape that will experience improved stewardship. Identification and control of insects, diseases and weeds in gardens and crop lands are regular subjects. We try to include management principles along with specific remedies so people are more observant and can be more timely and effective in their pest control efforts. We collaborate with the Spokane office on horticulture and agronomic questions and with Lincoln County on livestock issues.

Master Gardeners presented "Starting Seeds" and "Good Bugs, Bad Bugs" at the Colville, Chewelah and Kettle Falls libraries as part of the Summer reading program. Kids learned how seeds grow and were able to plant a sunflower to take home. With color photo flash cards participants were encouraged to guess if a bug was good or bad. 78 youth participated, ages 2 to 8 years old.

Master Gardeners Improve Quality of Life for Long-term Care Residents

When WSU Stevens County Master Gardeners designed and built two raised-bed gardens (shown above) in a local long-term care facility, they hoped residents would assume responsibility for care of the gardens.

Their hopes were met and exceeded when not only residents but residents' families became involved in caring for the gardens.

Recently, one of the residents passed away but the deceased resident's family continued to care for the garden adopted by that resident. The family members have continued to tend for the garden, glean its produce and sharing it with the residents. A facility staff member observed that the garden and interaction with residents seemed to help the family grieve.