



GROUNDDED

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Preparing a Fall Lawn for Winter . . . *By Duane Pitts*

Summer was brutal to our lawn in Moses Lake. Our home was built three years ago, and the area where brown spots exist was compacted by heavy equipment. Most areas are lush green, but some spots in the backyard remained brown despite all the watering and fertilizer that we have applied. I wanted to know what I could do about that.

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In August 2016, I attended a turfgrass management class in Wenatchee led by Paula Dinius, WSU Extension Urban Horticulturalist, Chelan-Douglas Counties. I wondered how best to prepare our lawn for winter. Paula Dinius came to my rescue! She made the following recommendations:

- Thatch your lawn in the fall. Okay, I admit, we have been lax with that, so this year is it.
- Add ¼-inch compost as a top dressing, which will add nutrients to the roots over the fall and during the winter. We haven't done this before, so we will spread compost this fall.
- Aerate the lawn. My oldest son does this each year, so we are good there.
- Combine fertilizer with grass seeding at the same time if you wish. Fertilize we do, but not scatter grass seed to regrow in the brown spot areas in the fall. My son did sow some grass seed earlier in the summer, but he did not rake much. We will prepare the soil by raking out the brown areas, watering those spots well, and then sowing grass seed so it will germinate and set roots before winter sets in. That's my plan.
- Water well. We do that -- on a regular schedule with our sprinkler system. And that might be one of our problems with the brown spots: the nitrogen in the fertilizer leaches out and doesn't get to the roots long enough. [See photo.]

Dinius suggested an easy way for homeowners to test water percolation in their lawn: Dig a slit 6" to 8" down and see how far the water penetrates. If damp soil does not reach AT LEAST 4" down, then the lawn will suffer during the fall (when grass roots grow the deepest) and over the winter. I used that advice and tried my own lawn slitting. I sampled three areas of brown lawn in the back yard, and discovered that the soil was wet at least 6" down.



Another idea Dinius suggested is to mow the lawn at the proper height from spring through fall. The recommended height is 1-½" to 2-½" for Kentucky bluegrass, fine fescues, and perennial ryegrass. She noted that mowing lower helps increase weeds and decrease the depth of grass roots. Thus, mowing within the recommended range allows the roots to grow deeper, reduces the population of crabgrass and other weeds, and readies the lawn for winter. Lawn grasses, like trees and shrubs, need moisture to survive winter and be ready to grow when spring arrives. Now I have to convince my son to leave 2" to 2-½" of grass after the next mowing and thereafter, as shown in the lawn photo with 1" left.

If I thatch, add compost, aerate, fertilize, and water well, and have my son leave taller grass when he mows, then my lawn will be ready for winter. Until I find out why we have brown spots, I am set for winter. Maybe for a future article I will write about how I resolved the brown spot issues.

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ROLY POLIES: FRIEND OR FOE? . . . By Kris Nesse

If memory serves, roly polies were among my earliest friends. I can remember seeking them out in my mother's backyard and spending hours watching them roll into an armadillo-like ball at a light touch. They always seemed innocuous, if not downright friendly. In my 2016 garden, I noted huge populations of these interesting creatures, and even suspected them of tunneling grooves in my cantaloupe skins, making some shallow holes in sweet potato roots, and even caught one red-handed (I mean black-and-many-footed) in a low-lying tomato. At a late-summer presentation I gave to a local club, one question dealt with pill bugs invading homes and how to control them. It was time for research.



Photo Credit:
University of Kentucky

Pill bugs (the ones that can roll up into a pill-like ball) and sow bugs (have two tail-like appendages at the rear and don't roll) are not insects. Closely related to crabs and shrimp, they are crustaceans. They breathe through gills and must have moisture to survive. Thus, gardeners find them in damp places, under rocks, boards, compost, or mulch. They sometimes cluster together to prevent moisture loss. They also can occasionally make their way into dank basements.

Pill bugs are considered beneficial as they help speed up decomposition of dead and dying plant material. They also are a major food source for certain spiders.

While not usually considered pests, pill bugs get blamed for garden mischief because they are so common and will readily feed on vegetables already damaged by disease or other pests. Once in a while they feed on young shoots and roots or nibble on fruits or vegetables (strawberries, melons, squash, etc.) that lie directly on or near damp soil surfaces. If gardeners or homeowners identify pill bugs as pests, they can take these simple steps to reduce populations:

- **Limit soil moisture** by watering early in the day so soil dries by evening when pill bugs become active. Raised beds may help prevent pill bug problems. Also, using coarse mulch materials or other methods (pebbles, strawberry baskets, cans) to keep fruits and vegetables off the ground can eliminate minor damage.
- **Reduce populations** by collecting pill bugs when clustered or putting down boards, rolled newspapers, or halved melons or grapefruit (cut side down) and shaking bugs into soapy water in the morning.
- **Limit their access as home visitors** by decreasing or limiting space under door thresholds. Caulk or weather strip (especially on basement windows), seal foundation cracks, and use other methods to bug-proof homes. Remembering that pill bugs are completely harmless and do not cause any inside damage or bother humans or pets may help a homeowner stay patient enough for the bugs to quickly dry up and easily be vacuumed or swept away.

WSU Pestsense guides do not recommend any chemical management of these little crustaceans. For now, I'll appreciate these beneficial nutrient recyclers in my garden and simply pay attention to population density.

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Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted here with permission of the author and the Grant County Journal newspaper. It first appeared in the Journal, September 29, 2016, Page 1, Volume 108 No. 97 of the Community section. #

Seed Library Takes Root . . . By Kim Jorgensen, Community Editor, Grant County Journal Newspaper, Ephrata

A new program is taking root at the Ephrata Public Library. Grant-Adams Master Gardeners are finalizing plans for a seed library, which will allow local gardening enthusiasts to 'check out' unusual, native and heirloom vegetable and flower seeds, cultivate the plants, then harvest the seeds and deposit them back in the library.

A grand opening and seed swap is planned for Saturday, January 28, at the library, 45 Alder St. NW, Ephrata. The seed library is the brainchild of Grant-Adams Master Gardeners Deana Riley and Pat McAfee, with support from Ephrata Librarian, Aaron Loeffelbein, who received permission to implement the project from the North Central Regional Library.

Riley moved to Ephrata "from the wet side of the state" in 2011, and completed the Master Gardener training program a year ago. "I figured it was better to get instruction on what plants did well here, rather than trying and failing at everything," she explained. "Now I'm more interested in what they can give back to us in the form of seeds." After joining the Master Gardeners, Deana read an article about the Richmond Seed Library in British Columbia. "There are a lot of these seed libraries popping up all around the country," Riley said. "Because Ephrata is, in many ways, driven by agriculture, this is another step in getting other members of the community, including children, involved in gardening."



Master Gardener Deana Riley and Ephrata Librarian Aaron Loeffelbein show off a former card catalog that will house seeds for the Grant-Adams Master Gardeners' Seed Library, a new adult services program hosted by the Ephrata Public Library. Local residents can 'check out' seeds, cultivate the vegetable or flower variety, then harvest the seeds at the end of the growing season and return a portion of the seeds to the library.

McAfee, who previously worked as a substitute librarian and has been a Master Gardener since 2003, proposed the idea of housing the seeds at the Ephrata Public Library. “We had been discussing options for expanding adult services,” Loeffelbein said, “and this was actually one of the programs I had read about.” Then Pat shared her idea. I told her “it’s so funny you should mention that, since I was already thinking about it. Everything just fell into place.”

Loeffelbein also plans to document the process of getting the seed library going, and share that information with other branches in the North Central Regional Library system. “Everybody at the North Central Regional Library is excited about this program, and will be following what we can do,” McAfee said. “It’s a win-win situation for everyone.”

Master Gardeners will be hosting events at the library and at the community garden to encourage people to become seed stewards, including hands-on workshops covering seed gathering, integrated pest management and even basic vegetable gardening, “if the need is there,” Deana explained. “Down the road, we can even add bulbs to the seed library if the community wants to go in that direction.”

“This is a way to bring seeds to the people that are regionally diverse, but still do well in the area,” McAfee added. She should know — Pat says her gardening style “is all about experimentation. The gardening fever starts in January and February when the seed catalogs come out.” She has successfully grown artichokes, “but it has taken a lot of trial and error to carry them over from year to year.”

“We hope to make the seed library a family activity, and generate more interest in the Ephrata Community Garden,” Riley said, adding that the space on C Street SW needs to be revamped. “The Master Gardeners are working with the city and the garden caretaker, Grover Hamlett, on weed abatement — getting it ready for next spring.”

Riley explained that the history of seed libraries goes back to the pioneer days, when settlers carried seeds with them on the migration west. “They were among their most prized possessions,” she noted. “We’ve lost a lot of that culture, although Native Americans in some areas are still doing this.” An example is the Cherokee purple tomato, Pat added, that has become wildly popular due to the efforts of one man — Craig LeHoullier, a retired chemist from Raleigh, North Carolina, who obtained the heirloom seeds in 1990 from a man in Sevierville, Tennessee, who told LeHoullier that the variety had been in his neighbor’s family for more than 100 years. “A lot of these seeds have very unique stories,” McAfee said.

Donations of seeds are needed to get this program off the ground, Riley said, but they must be open pollinated or heirloom seeds — not hybrid varieties. “We want to encourage gardeners to get out there now, as the growing season is coming to an end, and see what seeds they can harvest,” she noted. They are best stored in paper bags — not plastic, which can retain moisture — and should be labeled with the seed variety, scientific (Latin) name, the source, and the date the seeds were gathered. In the card catalog, seeds will also be categorized by ability level — beginner, intermediate and advanced.

Riley said she has also received donations of seed from the Seed Savers Exchange, which sent about 70 different varieties. “We’ve received a lot of information and tips from them and the Organic Seed Alliance in Port Townsend, too,” she added. “We don’t know what kind of response we’ll get, but most seed ‘librarians’ say if you have a 10 to 40 percent return, you’re doing well.” McAfee added, “We understand that sometimes things don’t work out. Poor soil conditions, unexpected weather and even a vacation at a crucial time can create a crop failure. “People don’t need to feel discouraged if that happens,” she added. “The important thing is that local gardeners get involved in the diversity and variety of seeds and plants that are out there.”

If you would like to donate seeds to the Ephrata Seed Library, contact Pat McAfee at 754-4270, or bring them to the seed swap on January 28.

MGs KEEP LEARNING . . . *By Kris Nesse, Barbara Guillard, and Duane Pitts*

Along with love of gardening and nature, and a desire to serve, individuals drawn to the Master Gardener Program generally love to learn. That's true of the five Grant-Adams MG volunteers (Terry Rice, Linda Crosier, Barbara Guillard, Duane Pitts, and Kris Nesse) who traveled to the Chelan-Douglas County's 2016 *Ready, Set, Grow Educational Gardening Conference* in Leavenworth on October 28-29. The keynote and breakout sessions included experienced and skilled presenters, providing inspiration and cutting-edge science for gardeners.

Keynote speaker Ben Thompson, an Urban Forestry Specialist for Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Urban and Community Forestry Program, advocated strongly for rethinking "our relationships to trees and landscapes we steward." He argued that trees and green spaces set the tone for human experience while also providing 'ecosystem services.' Washington State is the second fastest growing western state (after California) and is expecting population growth by 2020 equal to several cities the size of Spokane or Tacoma. Such densification, and concurrent climate change, point toward the urgent need for strategies to elevate horticulture in our communities. In Thompson's view, more tree canopy and more green space means higher quality of life for all.

Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott, a well-known WSU educator, Urban Horticulturist, ISA certified arborist, author, and one of the inspiring people behind "The Garden Professors" blog and Facebook page, told her audience to "Take It All Off." Emerging research indicates that bare-rooting trees and shrubs prior to planting "eliminates barriers, allows for root correction, ensures planting at grade, enhances root growth, and improves survival." Kris Nesse found this an extremely persuasive presentation that included plenty of examples of what container-grown root systems look like when one "takes it all off."

An original member of the first WSU Chelan County Master Gardener class (1996), Bonnie Orr is also an avid gardener, volunteer, and educator speaking on local radio stations, writing newspaper columns, and demonstrating gardening techniques on "Green Thumbs and Dirty Knees," a NCWLIFE TV Channel. Bonnie discussed how to "Create a Garden With Year Round Color." She suggested including plants with at least three seasons of interest and had plenty of pictures and plant lists of ornamental grasses, trees (many with exquisite bark), shrubs, bulbs, and perennials. She also demonstrated a pruning technique designed to stagger the blooms of some perennials for a much longer show.

Barbara Guillard attended Walla Walla Community College's Gwen Stahnke's session on renovating lawns. With client gardening problems in mind, she asked questions of this turfgrass expert who had many years of experience to draw on. Barbara wanted to know when to overseed a lawn in our area—some time in September is best—and how to fertilize that reseeded lawn—use a slow-release fertilizer. She has found attending these classes helps change perspective on many gardening practices followed out of habit. Master Gardeners learn new ways of doing things and new plants to do them with.

Duane Pitts enjoyed the presentation on vegetable pests and diseases by Sharon Collman, founding member of the MG program in 1973. Sharon gave several obvious but often-ignored principles of good gardening. She advised, "Most plant problems (60-70%) are due to climate, soil, water, and planting mistakes." Collman stressed that overwatering will account for many of the problems. Secondly, she stressed using "certified seed of pest-resistant varieties for the area where you want them planted." This avoids or minimizes the damage done by those pesky pests! Turbo cucumber and Corvallis peas are examples of pest-resistant varieties. For the Corvallis peas, Sharon recommended planting early so the virus that affects peas is less likely to take over until after they are harvested. Third, she stated quite firmly that leaves do NOT need the water, as soaker hoses and drip lines get the water where it needs to be with less water lost to evaporation. Otherwise, extra water in unwanted areas can cause a planting bed to become weedy. Her fourth hint dealt with covering plants to protect them from pests. Her advice is to leave the floating covers or the wire hoop covers in place until the final picking. We often ignore these pointers and then wonder why our vegetables aren't doing as well as we want. Sharon's advice is solid. I hope to remember it all come spring planting time!

Members of the group also attended these sessions: Exploring Herbs From Garden to Table, Pruning Ornamental Shrubs, and Preserving Your Garden Bounty. Grant-Adams attendees truly appreciated the planning, organization, and quality that Chelan-Douglas MGs put into this conference.

MG State Foundation Board Gets Down to Business . . . *By Barbara Guiland*



It was a lovely trip to Yakima on October 21st. I think it is the most beautiful time of the year in the Yakima Valley. The harvests are coming to a close, the grapes are being crushed, the trees in the orchards and fields and yards are ablaze with color, the hop yards flavor the air, the weather is warm but bracing, and the rivers run clear and bright.

I attended one of the four annual meetings of the state Master Gardener (MG) Foundation board. Each of the 34 counties with a MG program is invited to send a representative, and about 20 counties do but not always the same twenty. It has taken several years, but some dedicated MG volunteers from across the state are bringing the focus of the state organization back to its intended reason for existence. The mission of the board is to advance the education of the thousands of Washington State Master Gardener volunteers. The following sentence is the Washington State Master Gardener State Board mission statement in its entirety:



“Our mission is to support best practices and advanced education for Master Gardeners in Washington.”

This is the background of this organization’s education conferences as I see it: In past years the larger counties like Clark, King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Benton-Franklin competed to hold annual conferences that would appeal to all MG volunteers in the state, with the state board acting mostly as a behind-the-scenes player, collecting a little money if the conference made money. This meant the volunteers of the winning county had to go all out to market it, hire speakers, provide content (engage leaders for classes) for an education conference covering at least two days, and seek out housing opportunities for as many as 500 attendees. Volunteer burnout was high in the host counties.

When the conferences were held on the less-populated side of the mountains, fewer MGs attended, again defeating the mission of the foundation to provide advanced education for all state MG volunteers. Furthermore, the expense of attending an advanced education conference had become prohibitive for attendees since the expenses of the conference for the counties had become much higher. Often the lure of holding a conference for the respective county was the opportunity to make money for its own foundation. The state foundation, just like our local foundation, funds activities that support the program, but the county foundation that chooses to host a state conference is directly responsible for its success. This clearly had to change if there was to continue to be state-wide Advanced Education Conferences.

No county foundation was willing to hold the conference in 2016. The next one is set for Yakima in September 2017. No county has come forward for 2018. The state board focused on discussing how the foundation could fund and run the Advanced Education Conference itself if counties were no longer willing to step forward to hold it.

Another challenge addressed by the board was ways to encourage more attendees to state conferences. Some counties have filled the need for advanced education by holding regional conferences. Linda Bailey of the WSU Foundation introduced an idea of having the state MGF board set up an WSU Foundation endowment that could be large enough in time that the monetary interest earned by the endowment would cover the cost of the annual state conference, thus making it unnecessary for the counties to take on cost of the presentation of the advanced education. In the meantime, Katherine Eaton, board president, urged foundation board members to take back requests to their counties for ideas about how to raise money locally that specifically fund the state conference.

The final business of the day was information about the Advanced Education Conference in Yakima, now called "Can You Dig It?" Most notable of the invited speakers to date are Dr. Peter Raven, Richie Steffen, and Marianne Bonetti. Dr. Raven, Director Emeritus of Missouri Botanical Gardens, is a world-renowned botanist and writer. He was director for 40 years of the Missouri Botanical Gardens (Google it!), which was founded in 1859 and is one of the oldest botanical institutions in the US. The garden is a center for botanical research and international science education. Richie Steffen is the Curator of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden. His latest book is *The Plant Lover's Guide to Ferns* from Timber Press. The botanical garden collection, which is 5 acres in Seattle overlooking Puget Sound, was willed by Mrs. Miller to serve as a resource to the horticultural community of Washington State. It is focused on the propagation of new and unusual plants from around the world as well as plants well adapted to the maritime climate of Western Washington. Marianne Bonetti is a horticulturalist who writes a syndicated column on gardening. She has also written gardening books including *"Easy Answers for Great Gardens"* and *"Edible Gardening in Oregon and Washington."* It's always exciting to meet and listen to the special guests selected for the state conferences.

Some of the pre-conference field trips scheduled include A Day at a Winery where you will experience the steps of the process from picking to pressing to fermenting to decanting. I believe this trip comes with lunch and a glass of wine. You can Hike the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy, which also includes lunch. There is a trip to a state-of-the-art packing house to see how it is done these days (I remember how it was done in the old days when I was 15 and 16!), a hop yard tour, and a Yakima underground tour which includes historic Yakima buildings.

The Yakima Master Gardener Foundation will be putting out a call for volunteers from across the state to help with the mechanics of setting up, supervising classes, and tearing down the 2017 Yakima conference. Grant-Adams Master Gardeners planning to attend the state conference should consider volunteering to help with its administration.

MGs Tour Manito Park and Botanical Gardens . . . By Barbara Guillard

On South Hill overlooking downtown Spokane are a series of visually appealing gardens beautiful in any season that are open daily and free of charge. How fortunate we are to live so near to this Spokane treasure and to have Mary Shinn as our guide to its gardens. Mary is a former Grant-Adams Counties Master Gardener and also a member of the Friends of Manito, the nonprofit volunteer group that supports the park. Cynthia Calbick, Edris Herodes, Terry Rice, Linda Crosier, and I joined Mary for a 2-hour walking tour of the gardens on a splendid fall day in September 2016.



Master Gardeners Cynthia Calbick, Edris Herodes, Linda Crosier, and Barbara Guillard with Mary Shinn at Manito Park



Manito Park Bench Cafe

Mary filled us in on the history of the 90-acre *public park with its arboretum, botanical gardens, and conservatory. It has had a long and checkered life beginning in the late 19th century* with purchase of land at the top of a prominent hill overlooking the city by a real estate developer, who during hard times deeded the property to the city of Spokane. The area was early on called Montrose, named probably for the many wild roses that grew there.

In 1903 the park was renamed Manito, and 10 years later the famous Olmstead Brothers (landscape architects who designed NYC Central Park among others) were consulted about the city park plans and approved them. Other changes were made during the 1930s and in the following years. At one time the park had included a popular dance pavilion and

a zoo, remnants of which can still be seen in sections that have been allowed to go native or remain as they were: basalt cliffs and rugged native plants.

During the preparation for the World's Fair in Spokane in the 1970s, the Japanese Garden was completed and the Gaiser Conservatory was refurbished and opened to the public. In the last few years, the conservatory has had rehabilitation and upgrading paid for through some original family trusts. Like many parks, it also has playground equipment for children, a café, and open fields that can be used for sledding in the winter. It's a popular place for wedding photos as well as weddings and other celebrations. In addition, the park includes six botanical gardens: Duncan Garden, Gaiser Conservatory, Rose Hill, AARS Dahlia Test Garden, Lilac Garden, and Japanese Garden.



Duncan Garden
Barbara Guillard photos



The Gaiser Conservatory

Regardless of the time of year, Duncan Garden, a formal 3-acre European garden with a large granite fountain, is the largest jewel of Manito Park's crown. Its beds change with the seasons, but it's always spectacular. We began and ended our walk at Duncan Gardens. The trees and plants in the Joel E. Ferris Perennial Garden are always intriguing to gardeners as they assess what they can learn about growing and controlling perennial plants that might thrive in their own gardens.

Gaiser Conservatory, located north of the Duncan Garden, houses desert and tropical plants. Other greenhouses on the grounds are used to grown plants for every season including the many poinsettias grown for the holiday season.



American Dahlia Society Trial Garden

Over 150 varieties of roses are represented in the rose gardens, including an All-America Selections test garden. In 2007 the nonprofit organization AARS named Rose Hill the number one test garden in the nation. The Dahlia garden is one of The American Dahlia Society's eight trial gardens. A judge was working in the garden when we visited. We also walked through



The Tsutakawa Japanese Garden

the Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden that was dedicated to the city in 1974.

The Friends of Manito (TFM) is a nonprofit group that supports Manito Park by providing funds for improvements for general enhancement. Three major plant sales are given each year with approximately 100 volunteers working months before to prepare the plant material, making the events the premier plant sale event for Spokane gardeners. Throughout the year, TFM also offers educational programs to further promote the community's use and enjoyment of Manito Park. Since its beginning, TFM has contributed over \$525,000 to Manito Park. If you'd like to read more stories about Manito Park and the exciting history of early Spokane, visit the website of the Spokane Historical Society: <http://spokanehistorical.org/items/show/66>.



Rose Hill



Photo credit: I Love Libraries facebook page. No attribution.

Volunteers Work in the ML Demonstration Garden . . .

By Cynthia Calbick

Seven young men (from Yakima and Moses Lake) helped veteran Master Gardeners Cynthia Calbick and Barbara Guiland in the Moses Lake Demonstration Garden at the library in Moses Lake in late September. Everyone was willing and hard working with great helping attitudes to complete all the tasks set before them.



Six of seven volunteers

In the drought-tolerant garden, the men dug out much of the flame grass (miscanthus) that had spread into a large area and crept into the roots of other plants. They removed the

aggressive Russian sage (perovskia) with all its suckers and volunteer plants, half the wire vine (muehlenbeckia), the guara and Colorado Four O'clocks, all of which had moved out of their accepted boundaries.

Over in the Native Plant section of the garden, our helpers pruned the sage (trilobata) and removed its fronds full of seeds and helped to dig up as many gaillardia volunteers as they could find. Our volunteers at first did not know what "*limb up a shrub*" meant, but with very little demonstration, they turned what had been a very bushy cliff rose (purshia) into a very attractive small tree. This plant with pruning will continue to look like a small tree for quite a while.

Finally, the solarizing black plastic and stakes that had been placed over a small area in the native plant garden last spring was removed. This was done to eliminate weeds and seeds heated beneath the plastic. Our young men's enthusiasm did not wane until after they had cleaned up all of the material they had produced plus a bag of cookies and crackers. They were a congenial group that both Barbara Guiland and Cynthia enjoyed working with.



Diane Escure is shown planting a dwarf Russian sage

Just days after the cleanup, Barbara Guiland, Diane Escure and Cynthia Calbick put a few replacement plants into the garden. (Plants are listed below.) One plant Cynthia is especially interested in watching is the dwarf Russian sage (lacy blue), which has a tendency to spread.

- Agastache Acapulco, with salmon and pink flowers that attract humming birds
- Agastache Ava with lavender flowers; a dwarf variety of Russian sage
- Delosperma, ice plant in two different colors, orange-red fire spinner and white nugget
- Gaillardia grandiflora Arizona sun that is mahogany red centers with bright yellow edges
- Nepeta *faassenii*, select blue, a sterile hybrid with no seeds
- Perovskia atriplicifolia lacy blue, a dwarf variety of Russian sage
- Salvai Dorrii desert purple sage, all parts of this plant is aromatic, for dry spots only. It has violet pink flowers
- Schizachyrium *scoparium*, prairie blue stem with stems that turn red in the fall
- Soponaria lempergii *Max Frei*, a giant pink-flowered late summer ground cover

2016 Books and Gifts for Gardeners . . . *By Barbara Guillard*

At this time of the year, I think about books for gardeners because that is what I want for myself. I would also recommend, after buying our own MG gloves for sale, a trip to the Moses Lake Museum and Art Center if you like handmade gifts more than books. I visited last week and found glass, wood, and pottery vases and bowls; small and large metal birds for indoors and out; bird feeders and bird baths in glass and ceramic; aprons; handmade fingerless mittens as well as many paintings and cards that might thrill a gardener. Ann Schemp, MAC Curator, assured me even more items would be available by mid-November.

In the meantime, consider a book for winter reading. *The Seed Garden: The Art and Practice of Seed Saving*. This book, as comprehensive a volume on seed saving that any gardener would want, is filled with many wonderful pictures. It has won an award from the American Horticulture Society and is a product of the Seed Savers Exchange.

Check out *The Invention of Nature* and *Founding Gardeners* by Andrea Wulf. If you like history and biography, these two books will fill many happy hours because you'll read about the creation of the whole field of horticulture. I read *Founding Gardeners* after a trip to the Washington, DC area and visits to the gardens of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. The United States began as a nation of revolutionary gardeners! *The Invention of Nature*, which I am now reading, tells the story of another early and famous plant scientist, Alexander von Humboldt, now mainly known only because of the many towns, rivers, lake, mountains, and rivers that have been named for him.

Taming Wildflowers: Bringing the Beauty and Splendor of Nature into Your Own Backyard by Miriam Goldberger was published last year. I love its chapter on pollination and plant evolution. You will love its discussion of specific wildflowers that we grow in our own gardens and the photos.

The Informed Gardener and *The Informed Gardener Blooms Again*, are two books by Linda Chalker Scott that really get down to the practical business of finding out what really works to help us grow beautiful gardens without harming the environment. Everyone has advice, but hers is science based.

Plant Identification Strategies Class



Paula Dinius, WSU Chelan County (Wenatchee) Extension Urban Horticulture Educator, offered Master Gardeners an engaging 2-hour class on plant identification using a methodology developed by Thomas Elpel, author of *Botany in a Day* (6th edition, HOPS Press; 2013).

Participants were asked to bring flowering plants from the garden or a potted plant and a hand lens to aid in identifying different classifications of plants during the class, which was held on September 27th in Moses Lake.



Master Gardeners Cynthia Calbick and Mary Lou Hobson



Kris Nesse examines specimens under a high-power microscope.

After giving a quick overview of botanical terms used to describe plant anatomy and characteristics, Dinius led the class in dissecting various plant parts and identifying/recording the specific characteristics to easily determine which family of plants each sample belonged to.

The class instruction sharpened the participants' ability to carefully observe plant patterns of eight plant families found in Northern America: mint, mustard, parsley, pea, lily, grass, rose, and aster.



Instructor Paula Dinius answers questions during class.

Save the Date

Date	Event
11/29/2016	Building Soils for Better Crops and High Residue Farming. WSU Extension http://irrigatedag.wsu.edu/hrfworkshops/
1/11/2017	Twentieth Annual Noxious Weed Conference at Big Bend Community College. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
1/28/2017	Ephrata Seed Library—Grand Opening and Seed Swap at Ephrata Public Library, 45 Alder St. Noon - 3 pm
4/22/2017	Third Annual Columbia Basin Eco-Gardening Symposium with an emphasis on Vegetable Gardening at Columbia Basin Technical Skills Center, 900 Yonezawa Blvd, Moses Lake 9 am - 1 pm Sign up through the Grant County Conservation District: http://www.columbiabasin cds.org/eco-gardening-symposium
9/21/2017	Annual Master Gardener Advanced Education Conference in Yakima

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