



President's Message

I began my first term as a WWFRF Board member in April 2010 and served as temporary president most of 2011. Now, at the end of my first quarter as a full term president, there is one word that seems to capture what I am thinking about. That word is change.

We have added the trade name *NW Fruit* to *Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation*. This reflects our website URL (nwfruit.org) and addresses the fact that our role in research has dramatically changed since the organization was founded. Now, our board members and Fruit Garden volunteers are actively engaged in finding the best fruit growing information, both current and historical, and sharing it with our membership and the Pacific Northwest Fruit Growing community at large through our website, Fruit Garden, and educational events.

The recommendations for Maritime NW Fruit from the varietal trials are a unique legacy of the WSU NWREC Fruit Research Program begun by Dr. Robert Norton.

The varietal fruit trials at NWREC have been gone for 10 years, but important fruit management research such as research on Apple Anthracnose and Spotted Wing Drosophila is continuing and their cider program is world renown.

Here at NW Fruit we've seen changes as well. Our fruit garden committee remains active and engaged in creating new projects. The insect exclusion netting is an exciting development that should result in less pesticide use and a greater harvest. Our Apple and Pear sampling event remains an excellent opportunity to taste and take home a bag of delicious fruit typically unavailable from grocery stores. Our Winter Field Day is the premier fruit education event for gardeners and orchardists in Western Washington.

Now that I have the time to volunteer in the Fruit Garden several times a month, my appreciation of the importance of the volunteers to the garden and the organization has grown dramatically. But even more significantly, I am finding that the time I spend thinning fruit and pruning is my happiest time of the week. I can see that most of the volunteers share those feelings. For me, that's the biggest change - what a happy surprise.

Bob Baines, President



Bob thinning apples in the Fruit Garden

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Fun in the Fruit Garden

Fruit Garden volunteers have many learning opportunities in the Garden. Join the volunteers Thursday mornings at 9:00 am to noon in the Garden for fun, friends, learning, and the opportunity to serve your community.

If you would like to volunteer in the Fruit Garden contact Tom Wake at info@nwfruit.org



Fruit Garden Volunteers enjoy a snack at break time.

Board Meeting June 23, 2018

2:00 to 4:30pm in the meeting room on the 3rd floor of the Skagit Co-op. All members welcome.

PLEASE SEND YOUR DONATION ALONG WITH THIS FORM

Enclosed is my gift of:

☐ \$5000 ☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 \$_____ (Make check payable to WWFRF)

To make a donation by credit card go to: NWfruit.org and click on support.

Please designate my monetary gift toward: ☐ Where it is needed most!
☐ Fruit Garden

I would like to volunteer! ☐ In the Fruit Garden
☐ At the Winter Field Day
☐ On sampling days
☐ By doing work that can be done from my home

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email address _____ Phone # _____

Please make my gift: ☐ In Honor of: ☐ In Memory of:
(Name of person) _____
Address of person or person's family (So we can notify them) _____

Thank you.

Please send to: **WWFRF**
C/O Joanne Hilgart, Membership
6160 Everson Goshen Rd
Everson, WA 98247-9766

2018 Summer Pruning Workshop

Saturday, August 11

10 am – 1 pm in the Fruit Garden

\$15 for non-members, free for members

See NWfruit.org for more information

NW Fruit Commercial Members

Outdoor by design – custom landscape design, installation and maintenance–
<http://www.outdoorsbydesign.com/>

Gardening with Beneficial Microorganisms, both Indigenous and Effective

by: Peter Jackson

Editor's note: We encourage members to share their thoughts and experiences in the newsletter, and we encourage the Fruit Garden volunteers to bring their project ideas to the Fruit Garden Committee. This article is about a Fruit Garden project initiated by Peter Jackson. It is not a technical article with citations, but a sharing of ideas. The Fruit Garden is a place of learning and this learning extends to various, sometimes opposing, views on fruit culture.



Photo by Rei Yoon of mycelium under a mulch layer around a Persimmon tree in my backyard

Due to thousands of years of logging, mining, farming, fishing, and many other forms of unregenerative resource extraction, the current analysis of soil health worldwide leads to dire conclusions. We have turned life-giving soil into lifeless dirt. At least two-thirds of the world's surface has been devitalized by the hands of man, which is reflected in the life at the mouths of our rivers, in our own digestive systems and the agricultural lands turning into a second Dust Bowl. The microorganisms necessary for healthy soil and healthy life in general have been largely destroyed in these areas.

Our bodies, like the soil, are dependent on microorganisms for health. The microbes in our digestive system help us digest plants, produce some of the vitamins we need to be healthy, and help stimulate our immune system. Sadly, our food is grown in soil denuded of minerals, soaked with chemicals, and then generally overprocessed with a focus on shelf life instead of dietary needs, and this has a negative impact on our gut microbes. Probiotics can help improve our gut health, but going beyond probiotics, we have to understand the whole system, and not isolate things into discriminate parts. The bigger picture is that nature is a community, and we are a part of that community. That is where Natural Farming, which works on the principle of biomimicry, comes in.

Two of my own personal heroes have been working to change the face of agriculture starting in their home countries. Master Cho Han-Kyu of South Korea works with a system called indigenous microorganisms, or IMO, and Dr. Teruo Higa of Japan works with a system called effective microorganism, or EM. They are pioneers in the fields of *syntropic consortiums of microbes*, communities of microbes which are interdependent and communicate with each other. Previously the

focus had been on single species and their isolated effects, yet nature does not exist as a sterile laboratory, but is a cacophonous symphony. Both of these men have helped create systems that fall under the umbrella term of natural farming, although a lot of it does harken back to traditional practices.

By capturing microbes from undisturbed ecosystems, we are promoting diversity of bacteria and fungi, which provide services such as nitrogen fixation to plants. It has its genesis in ancient compost techniques that were sped up by utilizing microbes from the forest captured with a buried rice ball. Diversity is the goal when applying forest microbes which have adapted to the local environments.

Other microorganisms, such as lactic acid bacteria and yeasts can be added to the soil to increase resistance to disease and increase available nutrients.

Whether being used to bioaugment the soil, bioremediate our polluted waters, or create bionutrients that build the soil food web, the microbes are as much responsible for current food production as all of humanity's greatest achievements. Truly the hidden half of nature is no longer so invisible to us in modern times. Recent research is showing how interconnected the ecologies of our own microbiome are to diet and surroundings.

Having researched and experimented with various components of these systems of natural farming in my own gardens and orchard for several years led me to create a website, www.cascadiannaturalfarming.org, to spread this information. When I joined NW Fruit as a volunteer last spring I became interested in testing these systems in the Fruit Garden. By July I had been granted approval of a proposal to test out a homemade preparation of IMO4, of which I sourced the initial microbes from underneath a feral apple and a wild hawthorne. I also applied a liquid culture similar to EM-1 crafted from LAB serum, spent yeast from brewing mead, and a phototrophic archaeobacteria brew using a recipe from Malaysia. This year the study was expanded to include another row of espaliered apples being inoculated with a commercial mycorrhizal product to test the efficacy of ~30 known species against the diversity of tens of thousands of soil borne microbe species. So with a control that is the vertical cordon espalier being kept with its same maintenance as prior to my volunteering, I am measuring anthracnose resistance and sugar content differences in the Belgian Espalier inoculated with Fungi Perfecti's Mycogrow product and the Welcome Espalier inoculated with the homemade IMO liquid and solid cultures on in the North East corner of the Fruit Garden. It will be interesting to see the results in the future!

Natural Farming has many diverse methods of employing microbes to aid in our production of nutrient dense food. Many of those same microbes are ubiquitous in environments around the world. From helping in the creation of soil and plant matter in a cycle of regeneration, to preserving our food in the days before refrigeration, beneficial microorganisms shape a large part of our planet's history. When applied science is combined with traditional farming techniques, the power of biology is revealed.

See www.cascadiannaturalfarming.org for more information.

Peter Jackson has recently joined our Board of Directors.



Photo By Kristan Johnson of IMO4 mulch (right) in comparison to degraded soil (left) on the Welcome espalier.

Fruit Garden Report

Hello everyone,

Thanks to our wonderful Fruit Garden Volunteers, we have accomplished most of our goals this past year and look forward to another plentiful year!

We continued expanding our plantings of peach-leaf-curl-resistant trees, added a couple of hard to grow apricot trees, included 2 cherry plum crosses, lots of new Honeyberries, and the much heralded Cosmic Crisp Apple introduction from WSU research program (thanks to Raintree Nursery donations!)

Also planted is a new espalier of very dwarf Karmijn de sonnaville apples which will allow us to easily drape the Bee Screening over the wires to keep the bad critters off. We think this type of training may be the way of the future for home gardeners who don't want to spray. After successful trials last year, we are experimenting by applying significantly more Bee Screening onto various apple trees, including some of the existing espaliers. Our new super safe ladder has been a great addition to our installation process!

We are very happy that we have installed our official Donation Box (thanks James!). It's bright red and located next to the main Fruit Garden Map kiosk.

As planned, the Landscape Paper we applied on the blueberries a couple of years ago has composted itself into the beds, and it appears to have been very effective at disrupting the Mummyberry infestation. It also had the added benefit of allowing us to organically suppress many of the weeds, so we plan to expand some of that learning onto some of the other plantings. These will be marked by new "No-Spray" signs.

Fruit Garden volunteer Peter Jackson is expanding his soil experiments by implementing a second Mycorrhizal test, this time using "Myco Grow" on adjoining Honeycrisp vertical cordons. The purpose is to boost Rhizomatic nutrient uptake and increase tree health.

I need to point out that the espaliers have never looked so good, thanks again to all of the volunteers! We hope to see you at the fruit Garden soon!

Kristan



Volunteers putting bee netting on a tree. From left to right, Ann Thompson, Florence Simm, Lesley DeKray on top and Bill Pierce below, Simone Spiess.

August 23 Volunteer Appreciation Day

On Thursday, August 23, we will have our volunteer appreciation day with a luncheon served at noon after the normal volunteer work day. All volunteers are encouraged to come.



The 2017 Volunteer Appreciation Day

WWFRF Board Meeting

February 3, 2018

2:00 – 4:00 pm

At the Snohomish Co-op

Board members attending: Bob Baines, Mike Ewanciw, Kristan Johnson, Kim Siebert, Jay Scott, Ira Collins

Board members online: none

A quorum was present for the entire meeting.

Board Members – Kim announced that Randy Lee has resigned from the board of directors because he will soon be moving out of the country. We now have 10 board members.

Membership – John Valentine sent a report by email – We have 90 paid members. We need to send out a renewal notice. Kim is going to work on it.

Financial – Mike – Mike will send out the End of the year financial report for 2017 by email.

Financial Review – Kim reported that it was done in December.

Budget – The board members attending signed the official working copy of the budget that we voted on in November. This copy will be updated with notes when ever changes are made to the budget to increase financial transparency.

Winter Field Day 2018 plans – In order to thank volunteers at the WFD we will give each volunteer this year a mug. Mike said he would take care of publicity for the event. Kim will send him a press release. The emphasis for the Winter Field Day for 2019 will be peaches, nectarines and apricots. Getting enough volunteers for the event is a problem. Mike will ask the STFS members if some of them will help with the scion wood area since we give them the left over scion wood.

Partnership with Cloud Mountain Farm – Kim motioned that we donate \$1000 to Cloud Mountain Farm in support of tree fruit research. Seconded by Kristan. Approved unanimously.

Extra educational events for next year - We will do at least one educational workshop this year.

Liability Insurance – Mike is waiting for a quote that may be less expensive.

New Business

Lifetime memberships – Kim motioned that we give a lifetime membership to Bill Davis. Ira seconded. Approved unanimously.

Action Items: Send out renewal reminders – Kim and John.

WWFRF Annual General Membership Meeting followed by the Annual Board meeting

March 3, 2018

Held at the Winter Field Day

Followed by the Board meeting

Financial Report – Mike Ewanciw -

Membership Report – John Valentine – Membership is back well over 100 after today's event.

Update - Kristan Johnson – We recently gave \$1000 to Cloud Mountain Farm to support their Fruit Research program.

Presentation/Vote of Board nominees by the Nominating Committee

Kim nominated Peter Jackson for the Board of Directors. Passed unanimously.

Sam, Kim, John, and Jay were re-elected to the Board of Directors. Passed unanimously.

Board Meeting

Board Members present: Bob Baines, Kristan Johnson, Sam Benowitz, Kim Siebert, Ira Collins, John Valentine, Richard Hallman, Peter Jackson, Joanne Hilgart, Mike Ewanciw and Jay Scott.

Nomination of Officers – The following slate of officers was unanimously elected.

President – Bob Baines

Vice President – Ira Collins

Treasurer – Mike Ewanciw

Recording/Corresponding Secretary – Kim Siebert

John Valentine will be moving out of state in June. He will continue his duties as Membership Chair and train Joanne Hilgart to be the next membership chair.

Kristan motioned that we eliminate the office of Coordinating Secretary. Seconded by Bob Baines. Passed unanimously.



Above: Volunteers prune one of the apple trees in preparation for pest barrier netting.

Below: Florence Simm joins two pieces of pest barrier netting.





Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation Membership Form

DATE: _____
NAME: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ 9-DIGIT ZIP: _____
TELEPHONE: (____) _____

Please check all applicable lines to designate type of membership and/or extra donation:

_____ \$25 FOR ANNUAL **INDIVIDUAL** MEMBERSHIP *(One person only)*
_____ \$40 FOR ANNUAL **FAMILY** MEMBERSHIP *(Parents with their minor children)*
_____ \$ _____ FOR **GIFT** MEMBERSHIP FOR: (Please note for Whom Above)
_____ \$60 FOR ANNUAL **SUSTAINING** MEMBERSHIP *(Individual or family membership with higher level of financial support)*
_____ \$125 FOR ANNUAL **COMMERCIAL (List Only)** MEMBERSHIP *(Includes 3 people, and also includes business name on our website)*
_____ \$200 FOR ANNUAL **COMMERCIAL (Full)** MEMBERSHIP
(Includes 3 people, and also includes a link from our website to the commercial members' website)
_____ AN **EXTRA DONATION** of \$ _____ FOR **GENERAL FUND** **FRUIT GARDEN**

I would like to volunteer to help as follows (please check all applicable lines):

_____ FIELD WORK IN THE **FRUIT DISPLAY GARDEN** (usually held every Thursday from 9am-12noon; March-Nov.)
_____ HELP AT THE **WINTER FIELD DAY** (1st Saturday in March)
_____ **BY DOING WORK I CAN DO IN MY OWN HOME USING MY COMPUTER OR TELEPHONE**

Please make your check payable to: WWFRF and MAIL your completed membership form and check to:

NW Fruit (WWFRF)
C/O Joanne Hilgart, Membership
6160 Everson Goshen Rd
Everson, WA 98247-9766

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Please check your label to see if your membership needs renewing.



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