



NW Fruit

September 2021

President's Message

A few thoughts on pruning;

Over the past few months, I've been spending quite a bit of time working in the Fruit Garden. I really enjoy the one hour commute each way from my home in Seattle to Mount Vernon nearly every week. On the road, I spend a lot of time thinking up strategies for organizing our garden management and creating more opportunities for our members and volunteers to enjoy and support the Garden. It's been very inspiring to observe how a number of volunteers have stepped forward to take on important leadership roles to accomplish many tasks and projects that contribute greatly to the quality of our orchard.

But what I really love is what brought me to this orchard in the first place and what brought me to a career in horticulture. I love doing thoughtful garden pruning. Each week, after a few minutes of conversation, I take my station for the day. The last few weeks I've been working on the Gravenstein row. Earlier in the year I worked on a Rubinette, the Ashmead's Kernel, a walnut, and the Mulberry. I'm really looking forward to working on the 8 Jonagolds, but haven't had the time yet. Each tree has its own needs and as I'm working, I'm focused on creating a strong, open structure that will maximize the health and life span of that tree. And I'm in no hurry. Though I'm hoping to stimulate healthy new shoots and branches where they are needed with most cuts, if I am not aggressive enough, it can be rectified next year.



The Gravenstein Collection *Photo by Bob Baines*

Skilled pruning is done in many different ways for many different reasons. I've learned a lot at trainings for commercial orchard pruning and have been amazed by the speed that orchard pruning crews accomplish their goals of maximizing fruit production, developing and maintaining productive tree structure, while minimizing their labor costs. My goals are very different. Years of pruning in Seattle Parks and now in our display orchard have led me to pruning for tree health, longevity, and aesthetics. The truth is, sometimes I wonder if I really know what I'm doing. Well, that narrative running through my brain as I'm snipping away, does make sense to me. The Gravensteins that I have been working on for four years are in pretty good shape and have been producing nice crops. And as long as I'm not being paid by the hour, it works for me.

Bob Baines, President

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Sample the Apple & Pear Harvest!

Current members only this year.

Saturday, October 9th, 2021

11 am to 1 pm

If the email by which you received this newsletter starts with “Hello NW Fruit Member” then your membership is current through October 2021. If it starts with Hello NW Fruit Friend” then your membership is *not* current for the event.

On October 9th we will have our Sample the Apple & Pear Harvest Day. Masks and social distancing will be required for the event so to make things easier this year **only current members will be allowed to participate in order to not have to register people** – we will just check each person off our list of members and each person can stamp their own hand.

The event will only involve picking fruit, with brief instruction how to pick the fruit without damaging the tree first.



Fruit Garden Report

At the Fruit Garden Committee's last meeting in July we moved forward with plans for the Garden. Thanks to our volunteers the Garden sheds were successfully moved to their new location.

The Committee agreed to the removal of several diseased sweet cherry trees this Fall. They will be replaced with disease resistant cherry trees later in the Spring.

A sub-committee was formed to consider putting in a Pollinator/Beneficial Plants row which would be a demonstration area for the membership and the public. Attracting pollinator insects to increase fruit production is an increasingly important area of interest.



Moving the sheds.

New labels are being put on trees and plants in the Garden, thanks to John Keefe and Kim Siebert for all their work. As the next Apple/Pear Day event approaches the Fruit Garden Committee members will be helping to make it a successful and fun day.

Hope to see you then.

Colleen Sanders

Members Meeting Last Saturday of the Month

We plan to have a ZOOM meeting for current members on the last Saturday of each month, except for November and December, so that members can connect with the board members and ask Fruit Growing questions and give us suggestions or just shoot the breeze if that's what we feel like doing.

We have been isolated from the members during this past year due to covid restrictions, and even though we are going to have the Apple & Pear day event we still like the idea of connecting together this way.

The next meeting is this Saturday, September 25, at 10 am. The zoom information has been sent to all current members along with this newsletter.

**NW Fruit
Board meeting
June 19th, 2021
By ZOOM**

Attending: Bob Baines, Ira Collins, Kim Siebert, Sam Benowitz, Colleen Sanders, Jay Scott

Guest: Tom Wake

A quorum was present the whole meeting.

Minutes from last meeting – Kim read the minutes from January 16, 2021, and the short meeting from April 10, 2021. The minutes were approved.

Financial Report – Kim screen shared the financial report sent by Dennis Davenport. There were no questions.

Membership report – We currently have 90 paid memberships.

Fruit Garden update

Committee report – Colleen

The FG committee voted to put the 4 center apple trees in section W5 into organic sustainable management. 106 labels have arrived and John Keefe is working on getting the fasteners. The stooling beds have been planted in the nursery. Thank you to Sam for asking Raintree nursery for the donation of the rootstocks. Colleen motioned that we put a temporary no cost 3 x 4 inch sign on a stake in the nursery to thank Raintree Nursery for the donation of the rootstocks. Passed with Sam Benowitz abstaining.

Manger report – Tom

WSU covid policy has changed to allow people who sign an attestation form saying that they have been fully vaccinated will be able to work in the FG with no masks and with not 6 foot social distancing. Masks and social distancing will continue for those who have not had vaccinations. We will probably be able to have events but for members only. The volunteers are still not allowed to share food.

Pollinator committee -

Bob Gillespie, a newly retired entomologist from Wenatchee Valley College, will be helping a newly formed Pollinator sub-committee to design plantings for the FG to attract beneficial insects and pollinators.

Old business

Shed moving update – Colleen - The shed pads have been cleared and the plan is moving forward.

Webinar update – We will discontinue the ZOOM webinar add-on after the July 10th webinar. We will make the videos from the webinars available to the public on our website. Bob will set up and host

monthly topical regular ZOOM meetings beginning in the 1st part of August that current members only can attend. There will be an educational talk and then people can ask fruit growing questions. Ira will promote the meetings on the website and send the direct link through email to our current members only. Registration will not be required.

New Business:

Begin planning for October fruit sample day –

We need to plan an educational presentation. We need someone to chair the event.

Discuss additional activities for the summer –

We may do a tour for the Master Gardeners.

Winter Field Day 2022 – We need to start planning the event.

Data from past fruit trials at WSU – Sam will get in touch with Jackie King to see if we can obtain the boxes with past WSU fruit trials that were never digitized but that have paper copies. If they are available Sam will arrange to get the boxes and sort through to find the information we may want to digitize.

NW Fruit ZOOM Board meeting August 28th, 2021

Attending: Bob, Kim, Sam, Dennis, Colleen, Jay, Larry, Joanne, Ira, Celeste
Guests: Tom, John Keefe. Bill Davis was attending for part of the meeting.
There was a quorum present the entire meeting.

Minutes from last meeting – Kim read the minutes from the June 19th meeting and they were unanimously approved.

Financial Report – Dennis – FG revenue is down from the budget since we haven't had any events. Expenses are also down. We currently have \$18,240 in the general fund and \$21,732 in the Fruit Garden fund.

Membership report – Joanne – We currently have 72 paid memberships.

Fruit Garden update

Committee report – Colleen The FG has been open to the public for 3 weeks. John Keefe is working on putting up the new labels for trees. Several diseased cherry trees will be removed from the FG.

Sam suggested that perhaps we could get a permaculture designer to work with a volunteer so that we could put new plantings in the FG if needed. Colleen will chair a committee with Bill,

Dennis, Jay, Bob, John, Tom, Kim and Sam to explore this idea and review the FG management plan to see if we need to make any changes to the document to move forward.

Old business

Shed moving update – Colleen – The sheds have been moved. The shelves will be put up on the sides of the sheds next.

Monthly topical meetings for current members – We are currently planning to have a zoom meeting the last Saturday of the month at 10 am. This will give the BOD a chance to mingle with the membership more.

We could also have a weekly Wednesday night meeting that people could come to in order to talk about what will be happening in the FG when the volunteers come the next day.

Begin planning for October fruit sample day – We need someone to chair the event. Bob will contact Carol Miles to make sure we have the go ahead for the event.

Winter Field Day 2022 –

We need to start planning the event. Griffin Berger was suggested by Larry for a speaker and it was agreed that he would contact him to see if he would be able and willing to be a speaker at the event.

Data from past fruit trials at WSU – Sam learned that the boxes with the data have already been discarded a year ago. Nina may be able to find some of Kristan's records.

New Business:

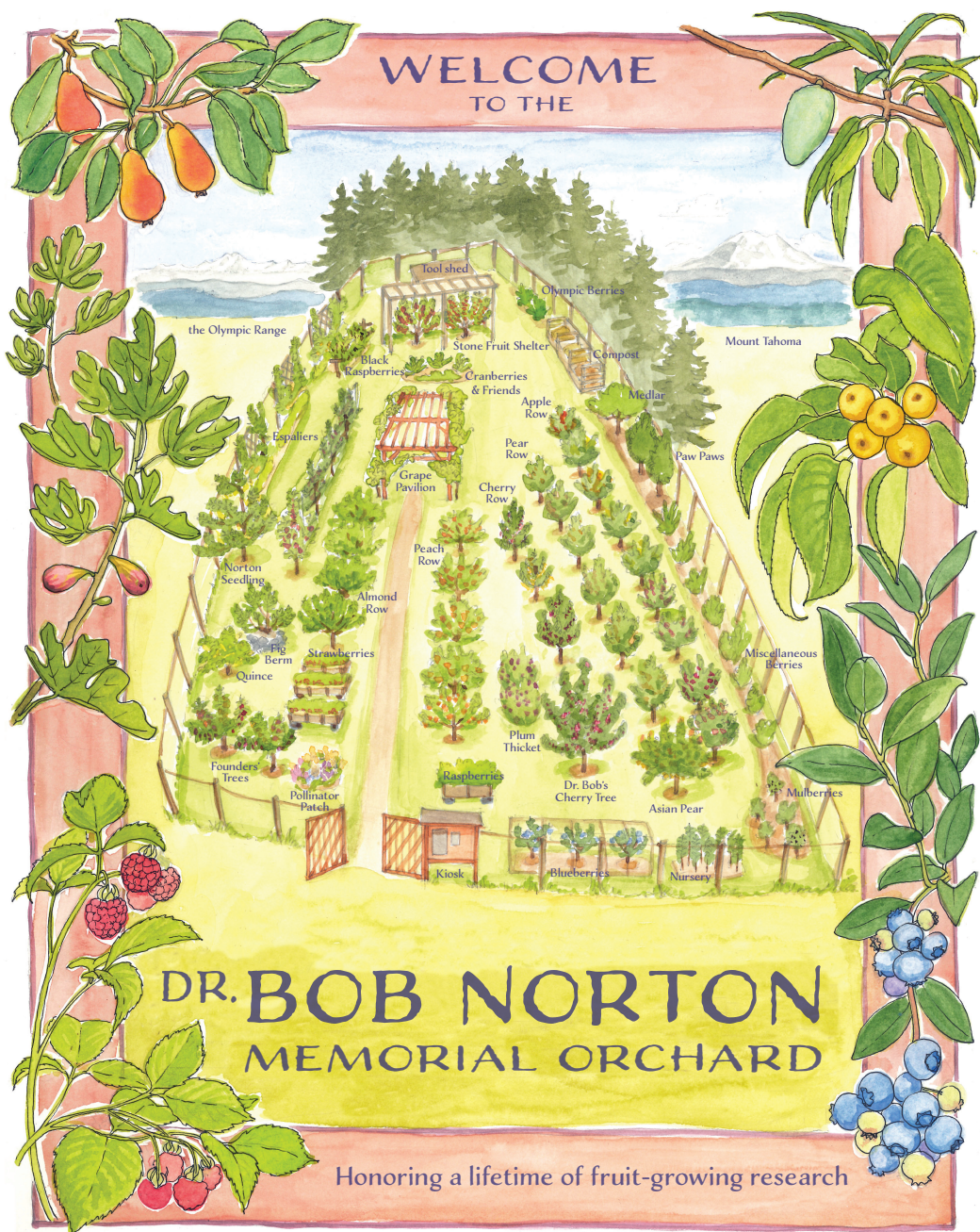
Dr. Bob's memorial and Vashon orchard – Sam – Maybe we could have an apple tree that Bob Norton bred in our orchard in the future. Sam is going to ask Emily McCrae, the director of a Vashon orchard that honors Bob, share with us at our next board meeting.

Fruit Press – Griffin Berger has offered to donate a fruit press to NW Fruit. Storage of the unit might be a problem, maybe WSU could store it. After some discussion we voted to accept the press with 8 yes votes and Sam abstaining.

Vashon Orchard now is a Memorial for Dr. Bob Norton

By Emily McCrae

The Orchard is a nine year old labor of love, a living memorial to Bob's legacy. Bob served as the group's head horticulturalist until his passing. Many of the trees we're growing are ones Bob himself grafted, including 2 "Fruit Basket" multi-stemmed dwarf trees, dedicated to the founders of Sunrise Ridge and the health clinic services on island. The Orchard Team is committed to growing healthy soil to benefit healthy plants, trial new varieties and demonstrate successful fruit growing techniques, inspired by the passion and knowledge of our beloved Dr. Bob. We dedicated a young Gabriel cherry tree donated by Peter Van Well. Bob and Emily worked on the patent of this early ripening blush cherry. If you're on Vashon and interested in visiting the orchard please contact orchard Manager Emily MacRae at egmacrae@yahoo.com.



This map was commissioned by the Vashon Island Fruit Club for the dedication and naming of the demonstration orchard at Sunrise Ridge in August 2021. Map artwork by Annie Brulé.

Memorial for Dr. Bob Norton

By Sam Benowitz

On August 15th I attended the memorial for Dr. Bob Norton at the orchard that Bob founded on Vashon Island where he lived for many years after he retired as the Director of the WSU Mt. Vernon station. He founded the orchard with the Vashon Island Fruit Club.

The club does a great job on the orchard that includes a wide variety of fruit and nut trees, berries and vegetables. It, along with the demonstration garden at the WSU Mt. Vernon station, cultivated by our NW Fruit group volunteers, are both living memorials to Dr. Bob's life.

Bob Baines, our NW Fruit president and I talked with Emily McCrae who is the director of the Vashon orchard and we all agreed to work more closely together on our orchards in honor of Bob.

Bob was born on January 3, 1926 and died on February 3, 2021. He was 95 years old and active until months before his death. Bob's children and their families and Carol Norton, Bob's wife and her family attended the memorial and they gave moving accounts of many things Bob had done with each of them and how much they loved and missed him.

Carol now lives with her daughter and her family on Vashon Island not far from where Bob and Carol lived. A kind horticulturist who lives on Vashon is taking care of the orchard at their home which is now rented.

For those who knew Bob, it is not surprising that rather than fully retire, Bob established amazing orchards at his home and at the Sunrise Ridge orchard. He kept testing many fruit varieties.

It was Dr. Norton who started testing fruit varieties on the edges of the Mt. Vernon station more than 50 years ago. He brought thousands of cultivars from trips around the world to the station. He started to have fruit tastings at the Seattle Center and other locations that were attended by thousands of gardeners. His testing and outreach made the best varieties from around the world to be available to thousands of gardeners in Western Washington.

What Dr. Norton did for fruit growers in Washington is unparalleled. The great array of proven fruit varieties and growing techniques for our unique climate tested for success by Dr. Norton, assisted by Gary Moulton and Jacky King, doesn't exist in other states.

Dr. Norton's family was surprised at how amazing and unusual Bob's contribution to fruit growing was to fruit growers throughout the nation.

We will all miss Dr. Bob's knowledge, kindness and presence at our NW fruit tastings and seminars at the Vernon station that we hope to start back soon after being disrupted by covid.

It is a sad time for all of us following the death's of Bob and Kristan Johnson. We will miss them both so much.



Bob demonstrated pruning at the Winter Field Day



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 **WWFRF FRUIT DISPLAY GARDEN** (usually held every Thursday from 9am-12noon; Jan-Nov.)
_____ HELP AT THE **WINTER FIELD DAY** (1st Saturday in March)
_____ **NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW** in Seattle (usually held in February every year)
_____ **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:

WWFRF
C/O Kim Siebert, Secretary
7904 56th DR NE
Marysville, WA 98270



Website: NW Fruit.org

Mission: WWFRF exists to advance fruit horticultural programs for our unique Western Washington maritime climate through advocacy, research, education, and demonstration for the benefit of the general public and the small farmer.