16650 State Route 536, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 in cooperation with the Northwest Washington Research & Extension Center (NWREC) of Washington State University

Free Summer Classes for Members

These classes will be held on Saturday mornings, from 9 to 11, in the Fruit Garden, and are free with **current NWF membership**. Classes are taught by volunteers with years of fruit growing experience. Each class has a separate registration, which must be completed at least 7 days in advance of the class date for our planning purposes. All classes **meet in the Gazebo** located in the Master Gardener area at 9AM. Note - if you have questions about any of the classes, contact Jake Jacobson. We welcome new members, new volunteers.

Use this <u>SignUpGenius</u> link to register for one or all the classes.

To become a member of NW Fruit use: <u>Become a Member</u>.

August 2 – A learning tour of ripe fruits with Sam Benowitz: From Plums, Cherries, Pluerries, and Peaches to Goumis, Elderberries, Seaberries and Mulberries – We will walk through the six acre Fruit Garden to learn and sample flavors of the many different fruits, discussing the best cultivars, methods and recipes to use for your home garden. Class size is limited to 25 members and this class starts at 9:30.

August 9 – Growing Figs in Puget Sound with Ned Garvey: The NWF new fig planting is designed to help homeowners become familiar with varieties that can be productive in the western Washington climate. Ned will demonstrate pruning and winterization methods. Class size is limited to 25 members.

Aug 16 – Bud Grafting Class with Larry Crum and Sam Benowitz: Bud Grafting, also known as chip budding or T-budding, is a type of grafting where a single bud is used as the scion. This method is used to propagate fruit trees particularly in late summer or early fall, before the trees go dormant. We will show how to select healthy, plump buds from the current year's growth, how to prepare the scion and rootstock, insert the scion and secure the graft along with follow-up tips. Class size is limited to 25 members.



Next spring's bloom, this summer's bud.

Sept 13 – Summer Pruning with Bill Pierce: This class is an in-depth exploration of summer's but summer pruning methods for fruit trees. Despite being considered "off season pruning", summer pruning has its place in the home orchard. It may be necessary to repair damaged tree limbs or, in vigorously vegetative trees, to discourage long, weak, leggy growth. This also helps manage the tree's overall size. Class size is limited to 25 members.



Fruit Garden Report • May 2025

We are having good volunteer turnouts on Thursdays, often 20 people or more and we need every one! As Hazel has commented, it looks like a 'mast year' for fruit set. Thinning is important now. We have added **Saturday morning** 9 to noon for more volunteers to join in.

We have added several new plants in the last three years while also taking some out. Our discussions often reiterate that we must be conservative about adding more plants next year to enable us to better keep up on maintaining what we have.

Pruning: Most of the trees are pruned. We have a great group of knowledgable pruners who train the newbees. In April and May we pruned to remove tent worms. We have a good crew helping Beth on the **blueberries**. We are also starting to net the **cherries**, blueberry nets will follow.

Planting: About 50 new plants are planted, with ongoing irrigation and mulching. New planting includes Elderberries, Haskaps, Tea, Plums and Quinces along with a couple of Persimmons that can ripen in our region. Peter Rueckert is one of our local experts on these fruit, along with the numerous Ribes.

Mowing: Our new Zero-Turn is working well although it is noisier than the other mower. Peter Palmer is getting very good at mowing closer to the trees. Peter, Mike Harding, Morna Leonard and Larry Hedgepeth are working along with Jay Scott on coordinating our old riding mower, the new Zero-Turn plus hand mowers to **manage the orchard floor**. More volunteers are welcome to assist this group.

Mulch: From WSU professor Linda Chalker-Scott I have been learning about mulch. Our NWREC small fruit advisor, professor Lisa DeVetter recommended Linda's publications and her advice for

Fruit Garden Report, continued

best practices on mulching fruit trees etc. We want to place arborist wood chips soon on our newly planted trees. See article on page 6 of this newsletter. This mulch is called **hog fuel** at our supplier, **NorthHillResources.com**

The **new shed** and the old ones are in the process of being organized. Since we got the new shed this winter, Tom and Hazel have been improving shed organization.

Top working: Larry Crum led top working classes. We have added quite a few varieties to our multigrafted apple and pear trees as a way to accommodate more varieties without having more trees. Larry is working with Lori Brakken and Sam on topworking trees in the west trellis, and grafting on M27 in the nursery to propagate **25 heritage varieties, apples** that originated in the Pacific NW which could become lost if we don't make a place for them here. We can do this without taking up additional space. The board will follow the project and consider if there is enough support to expand the project in the future.

Thanks to Colleen reporting about it and Bill Pierce contacting them, our garden has joined the *Potagers du Roi* an international espalier organization headquartered in Versailles France. Our espaliers, as designed by Kristan Johnson, display numerous unique patterns and are maintained by Carol's Butz and Jacobson, Jennifer Fairfield, Bill Pierce and others. Now, afficionados from around the world may come to see them. When you travel – consider espalier destinations; report back on what you see! More about *Potagers du Roi* on page 12.

Garden Management: Though people have stepped up in significant ways we still need to accommodate Tom Wake retiring and Colleen's longer commute now, passing the baton on many important tasks. Richard Fairfield has stepped up as a garden committee co-chair. Peter Palmer and Larry Lundeen have stepped up helping Tom with some of the work he does. Tom has documented his many liasons and suppliers, along with his weekly and annual chores and routines. Come to the garden, join in!

Sam Benowitz, Fruit Garden Committee Co-Chair

Progress on Heritage Apple Project



The eight Karmijn apple trees, espaliered in cordon form in Sector W2, are now hosting eight grafted varieties from the collaboration of Lori Brakken and Larry Crum to preserve Pacific Northwest apples of historic and cultural significace. These grafts are doing well and may be expected to bear fruit in 2027 or 2028.

Photo from Scott Terrell

Membership Report

We are now using a member management software platform, GlueUp. **On May 29th** our members received two emails from NWFruit. The first, "Update to Your Membership," **describes** the account access and benefits of the new platform. The second email, "Welcome," provides a link to **establish** your membership within the platform.

From these emails, when you click to 'Access Your Account Now' you are hyperlinked to this address: https://app.glueup.com/my/HOME. When you click to 'Manage Your Member Account' you are hyperlinked to this address: https://app.glueup.com/MY/MEMBERSHIPS/ACTIVE/. From there you have options to complete your profile, to download the GlueUp app for mobile, to sign up for Tom Wake's weekly email to garden



May 29 email: Update Your Membership

volunteers, and to visit the Dashboard home for NWF on the platform. You don't have to create a username or password, you simply have entered the platform for NWF membership.



May 29 email: Welcome to NWFruit

It's all a bit geeky and awkward as we learn, adjust and customize the platform to fit our NWFruit mission, which is to advance fruit horticultural programs for the Western Washington maritime climate through advocacy, research, education, and demonstration for the benefit of the general public and the small farmer.

During the coming weeks we plan to flesh in the **Calendar of Events**, at present the tab is there but no events are set up yet.

Thank you for your interest in getting tech savvy with us. We have had many requests to improve communications and updates from NWF so this is what we are trying to do. All members are encouraged to participate in this effort. Please contact me at membership@nwfruit.org -- Your skills and experience are welcome!

Membership Chair, Sue Williams



Many Hands Can Lighten the Load

Please consider joining the **Membership Team**.

From home you can help NWF
with database know-how. Or
offer some time for our events
by helping at the Registration Tables

Send a note of your availability to info@nwfruit.org.

<< Sparkly Aronias, blooming in April.

Benefits of Membership

Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation (WWFRF), aka NW Fruit is a 501(c) non-profit organization created thirty years ago. Your annual membership dues support the foundation that maintains the six-acre Fruit Garden, a collection of hundreds of varieties of fruit. It offers members and the community hands-on opportunities to learn about fruit growing in our region through advocacy, education and demonstration.

- Field Days and Workshops are free to members.
- Apple & Pear Sample-the-Harvest Day, second Saturday in October, offers garden tours and lectures on growing and harvesting fruit. Members are offered samples of apples, pears, grapes, and sometimes cider, to take home. Crop quantities vary from year to year.
- Winter Field Day, second Saturday in March, offers tours, lectures on fruit growing, grafting demonstrations, plus sale of scionwood and rootstocks for grafting apple, pear and other fruit trees.
- Workshops are held in Spring and Summer on learning to prune apple, pear, plum, and cherry trees, as well as blueberry bushes, grape and kiwi vines.
- As a member you may volunteer to work in the Fruit Garden on designated days. Members receive instructions on maintaining the trees, safety, and growing conditions in the local climate. Membership is required for all volunteers to work in the garden.



Cherries ripen in July! from Isabel Wilson



- A picnic for volunteers is held in the summer.
- Members receive the NWFruit newsletter three times a year with current information about the organization's activities and fruit growing.
- Membership ensures your inclusion in occasional emails about Field Days, special events and workshops that occur through the year.
- Membership helps NWF pay expenses for: Events: auditorium, speakers & publicity Garden Maintenance: tools & equipment
- Members may attend board meetings, join committees and participate in committee planning.



allelopathy (inhibiting seed germination) – Use that in a sentence three times today!

Much About Mulch

Conversations with WSU Professor Linda Chalker-Scott

Sam: We can get arborist wood chips, two options are a < 4" chip that has a bunch

of big pieces and a < 2" that has been sent through the chipper again.

Linda: The coarser chips are better. You need deep mulching (8-12") for good weed

control and the finer chips interfere with water and air movement when they are too deep. Our research at NWREC showed zero weeds after two years with 12" coverage. Do be sure to mow weeds/grass as close to the

ground as possible before mulching. Herbicide is not necessary.

Sam: Should we add some organic fertilizer under the mulch or not?

Linda: Your mulch will generate its own compost layer over time and you won't

need to add anything (except, possibly, nitrogen this first year).

Sam: We generate a lot of prunings but we have some Black Knot among our

plums, and several apple trees with anthracnose. Should we avoid chipping

and using our prunings?

Linda: Pathogen spores are everywhere. Wood chips will create a soil environment

that will support trees to make them less susceptible to anthracnose. You are using drip irrigation, thus no upwards wetting from the ground. But if you're concerned you could reserve the diseased tree chips for landscape use elsewhere. Anecdotally, I can tell you that our dogwood anthracnose disappeared permanently since we started using wood chips on our Seattle

landscape back in the early 2000s.

Sam Please tell us about the life cycle of

anthracnose, scab and plum black knot ...

Linda: I'm going to leave this question to my

UCANR colleague, pathologist Dr. Jim

Downer, as it is right up his alley.

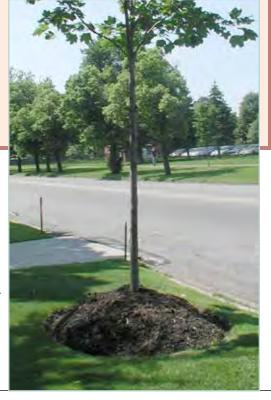
Dr. Chalker-Scott included WSU bulletin #FS106E in her email with Sam:

Arborist Wood Chips as Landscape Mulch

Learn more about allelopathy in FS106E.

Beware: The mulch volcano >> may escalate pest and disease problems. Taper the mulch to circle the trunk, more donut style.

from FS106E pg 5



Northwest Fruit (aka Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation)

NWF	Membership Form Ple	ase check one box ONLY:
	ite <i>legibly</i> so your membership is functional throembership dues by credit card go to: NWFruit.org	,
Name	2nd Name	2nd Email
		State Zip
- - -	eck all applicable lines to designate type of mem \$25 FOR ANNUAL <u>INDIVIDUAL</u> MEMBERS \$40 FOR ANNUAL <u>FAMILY</u> MEMBERSHIP (I \$ FOR <u>GIFT MEMBERSHIP</u> FOR: (Please inc \$200 FOR ANNUAL <u>COMMERCIAL</u> MEMBE (Includes 3 people, and includes a link fr	HIP (One person only) Parents with their minor children) Flude <i>For Whom</i> , above at <i>Name</i>)
	Donor Form Ionation by credit card go to: NWFruit.org/Dona	ate.
Enclose	d is my gift of:\$5000\$1000 \$500	\$100\$50\$25 \$
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Your gift i	s tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by	law. Please consult your tax accountant for details.
		Thank you!
	d like to volunteer! D is required for volunteering with NWF.)	In the Fruit Garden On Field Days & events _ By doing work that can be done from my home
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	Please make your check payable to >> and MAIL your completed form with check to this address:	PO Box 864



Volunteers Shades and Personalities

Volunteer Beth Jones

How did you first encounter the Fruit Garden?

Beth has lived in Mount Vernon since 2006, so she knew about the WSU extension station and the Discovery Gardens there. She approached the Master Gardeners but determined it's not the right time in her family life to commit to the diligent schedule there. Found the Fruit Garden mission a better fit.

What called you to blueberries at the Fruit Garden?

"The variety and the colors from spring to fall." Colleen Sanders and another volunteer had a good work group going, for blueberries, so Beth has learned and built on experience. Beth says blueberries are 'forgiving.'

[I would say it's Beth's longevity of commitment and intelligent observation, over five years and through all seasons, that is the background to the 'forgiving' hardiness of the blueberries. LWW]

Volunteer Beth Jones Photo from Scott Terrell What keeps you coming back?

"It was especially a great project during Covid when I first got involved. It was outdoors, consistent group, made for a safe place to volunteer. The many skills and strong horticultural background among the volunteers gives you a sense of effectiveness. Nowadays it's gratifying to see new, younger volunteers joining in, adding to our numbers among the regular volunteering crew. There's always plenty to do!"





Volunteer Cynthia Reynolds

How did you find NWF?

"Through a friend, Bill McCord. He sets a good example with his regular attendance, long term commitment and variety of tasks he has worked on. When I moved here from Monroe WA a few years ago, I was keen to learn about pruning. Plus I love all living things." At the Fruit Garden Cynthia found excellent mentoring from Mike McWilliams.

What is your career background? Cell Biologist -- I am not a botanist.

What keeps you coming back?

"Several of the volunteers are kinda shy, they don't talk a lot but they know so much, there is a sweetness in the atmosphere among the volunteers."

How does your knowledge of biology feed your experience at the Fruit Garden?

"I got my doctorate at the Rochester Institute in NYC while my husband was at Cornell Medical School. We moved to Maltby WA where I found health science lab research at the Howard Hughes Institute at University of Washington, in molecular biology with a focus on cellular membranes, how lipids work with or through the membrane structure.

"Long answer, that was then. In recent years I've enjoyed learning about plants; as said, I love all living things. And again, I appreciate the long knowledge accumulated among these volunteers."

Volunteer Ken Miller

A brand new Fruit Garden volunteer, since early April 2025, Ken grew up in Edmonds and has lived in a number of other Western Washington areas prior to moving to Mount Vernon more recently, where he and his wife Tania have 18 trees in their yard, including five cherries, eight pears and four plums.

NWF Volunteers, continued

With numerous plum-related questions in mind, Ken consulted the "wazoo" website to find the WSU Skagit County Extension office near Skagit Regional Airport, 11768 Westar Ln. There Ken learned about the North West Research & Extension Center (NWREC) at 16650 WA-536, about the Fruit Garden, and about Gary Moulton's Fruit Handbook for Western Washington, bulletin #EB0937,

Ken joined NWF, has been a Thursday regular this spring and has attended two Saturday classes. I found Ken weeding in the nursery on a recent Thursday and helping Sam apply tag labels to the young grafted trees there.



Once demonstrated at our May 31 class on Thinning & Pest Management, netting the tree is less intimidating. Handouts, process and participation; all were useful.

Volunteer Peter Rueckert

Where in Austria were the gardens of your youth?

We lived in Styria province, about fifteen kilometers outside Graz in southeast Austria. My three brothers and I grew up in the woods and meadows there, it is a fruit and wine producing region.

How did you find the WSU NWREC Fruit Garden?

When I bought my place in Snohomish county, near White Horse Mountain in (about) 2019, there were four apple trees there. It took a while, but eventually I found





^ Hauschberg elderberry does well in coastal Denmark.

^ Laced Up elderberry offers a dramatic landscape accent.

NWREC and the Fruit Garden. I wanted to learn about growing in this maritime climate; it's a bit warmer where I'm from. What keeps you coming back to help out at the Fruit Garden?

As I spent time I appreciated what I could learn but I also realized I could teach, since from I was a kid I knew the ways of fruit. At the Fruit Garden I saw medlar, persimmons, aronia, cornelian cherries and others, all more familiar to me than to my new Fruit Garden friends.

As youngsters we were told that kings and queens prized the **medlar** fruit. It's the last of the season's fruit to harvest and even then, you wouldn't eat it fresh from the tree like an apple. It ripens slowly and stores well, becoming sweet in a cool cellar, eventually rather soft so you can peel and eat it. Admittedly, among today's many options, medlar is not that great. But to the nobility of earlier centuries it was a popular choice.

Persimmons I have encountered in my business travels. They are grown in the south of France and Italy. When I was in Japan I saw persimmons ripening in trees when there was snow on the ground – very tasty and sweet. These colder climate fruits require the cold night of frost to stimulate the starch turning into sugar. Persimmons smell very sweet, there is a tradition to put a persimmon on the armoire to perfume the house for a month!

Cornelian Cherries - These I knew in Austria and Germany. Many years ago I gave my father a cornelian cherry tree. It's still growing, I see it when I visit my brother there. In southern Yugoslavia cornelian cherries grow wild, the fruit is bigger. Their flavor is rich when you let them ripen on the tree to become really dark red. They'll mess up your cherry pitter, they don't fit! That's one reason they're not often used for pies or jam.

More often used for juice, or mix the ripe juice 26% with brandy – this makes a favorite at ladies' social.

Elderberries – Overtime I have encouraged the Fruit Garden committee to try elderberries. They are robust, some varieties are native in west coast US, they flower and fruit prolifically, with healthy medicinal qualities. When they flower you can snip the "umble" or bouquet stalk of flowers, dip them into batter for delightful sweet pancakes. Or the flowers can be processed for tea or a non-alcoholic Elderflower "saft," another pleasant drink.

As Peter and I talked, nearby volunteer Ken Miller reminisced about a trip with his parents to Idaho in '79, harvesting elderberries along the highway which they used for a home brew.

Thank you volunteers!

from Laura W. Wilson, NWF newsletter edtor

Weekly Work Parties – Find Schedule at NWfruit.org

Thursdays 9 to 12

Saturdays 9 to 12, check website for Saturday dates

We continue the Saturday work day opportunity, for aspiring volunteers who can't come on Thursdays. Dress for the weather and bring a pair of hand pruners. Come help with seasonal pruning, fruit thinning, and watch the summer fruit ripen! Park in the parking area on the North end of the Garden. We learn to do, in each season, all the activities needed throughout the year to maintain our beautiful orchard – the same skills you need for healthy fruit trees at home. Plus we get to sample ripe fruit in season.

Note: NFW Membership is required for volunteering in the Fruit Garden.

Please contact Tom Wake for details, at info@nwfruit.org.



Volunter Morna Leonard pitches in, using either of our mowers.

Thank You's

from NWF board member Mike Harding
March 26

Huge appreciation goes to the **Skagit Community Foundation** for accepting our grant applications. One of the grants enabled the purchase of a **John Deere ZTrak Zero-Turn Mower** that was delivered to us last week. It's very fast and efficient and will improve our mowing results considerably.

In addition, **Papé Machinery** was the supplier and earns our thanks for their help in procuring the mower and delivering it. They gave us a very good price and have been extremely helpful in getting us up to speed.

Excellent customer service!



<< Fruit cluster before thinning Fruit cluster after thinning >> photos from Scott Terrell









NWFruit Joins *Amis Du Potager Du Roi* to Celebrate the Art of Espalier

By Bill Pierce, 6-3-25

Espalier is the art of pruning and training fruit trees into decorative, 2-dimensional forms, on a trellis. There are both functional and ornamental reasons to develop a tree as an espalier. The late Kristan Johnson, Fruit Garden designer, was particularly proud of the espalier patterns we created, soldered in 2002 by volunteer Bill McCord and others. These patterns have been knowledgeably maintained by our espalier work group.

Earlier this year, we were approached by Michel Schlosser, of the *Amis Du Potager Du Roi* (Friends of the King's Vegetable Garden) in Versailles, France. He invited us to join a world-wide effort to recognize espalier as culturally significant and share information about the art of espalier. The team maintaining our espaliers has accepted this invitation. Soon, our garden in Mount Vernon will be listed along with espalier sites around the world.

Look forward to future events in conjunction with this international group. For more information, see www.amisdupotagerduroi.org.





NWF Interest Groups

NW Fruit volunteers engage in interest groups to manage specific projects. **Some administrative tasks could benefit from modernization**. Your skills are welcome. We use the Work Group model to keep track of seasonal projects, and to coordinate with Garden Manager Tom Wake and Garden Comimittee Co-Chair Colleen Sanders. These work groups offer experience accordingly:

In the Garden

- Blueberries, Cherries, Kiwi, Pears, Heritage Apples, Elderberries, Peaches, Persimmons & more
- Pollinator friendly plantings
- Espalier training
- Construction projects, Irrigation, Organic Growing

Or Administrative Support

Website & Media Updates Volunteer Coordinating Membership/Mailing Communications Event Planning Publicity

NW Fruit Thanks Raintree Nursery

Morton, WA

800-391-8892 • raintreenursery.com

For continuing support

Volunteer in the Nursery

The nursery provides space for up to fifty juvenile trees, potted trees and the stoolbed for growing rootstocks. All these, in time will supply the Fruit Garden as we maintain the varieties and replace diseased cultivars. **So important and what a great place to learn!**

Volunteer Ned Garvey and other experienced nursery people will work with and train the new volunteers as they learn. **Please tell Garden Manager Tom Wake that you are interested.**



Thank You to North Hill Resources

4600 651 N. Hill Blvd, Burlington 98233 360-757-1866 • NorthHillResources.com

For landscaping materials and continuing support





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Educational displays

Salal Native Plant Society
NW Fruit



Sumer is icumen in Outwit the bugs!

Volunteer in the Fruit Garden this summer and learn the ways of Integrated Pest Management.













Upcoming Events

- June 28, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. -- **Master Gardeners' Open House**, at the public gardens of NWREC,16650 State Rt 536. Free admission to all. www.skagitmg.org/home/events/openhouse
- 9 to Noon Workdays Fun and educational Thursday Work Days every week, plus frequently scheduled Saturday work days, for willing volunteers who can't come on Thursdays. Learn about all that's going on, plus new ideas being proposed. For more information contact Garden Manager Tom Wake info@NWfruit.org
- Several NWF workshop days are offered this summer, sometimes with fruit sampling, depending on the season. Free to Members.
- Apple and Pear Sample the Harvest Day, second Saturday in October -- 10/11/25. This event centers around the harvest with educational classes on related garden techniques and information. Members are allowed to keep a portion of the harvested fruit. Details in September Newsletter.
- Cider Making on one or two Thursday's after Apple and Pear Day in the fall.
- December Celebration with cookies and end-of-season farewells. Program may include informative classes to answer home gardeners' questions. Free to Members.
- Winter Field Day -- 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., March 7, 2026 at NWREC, 16650 State Route 536. Free admission with up-to-date membership.
- Annual Membership Meeting March 7, 2026

Annual Volunteers' Picnic ♦♦ Slated For August 21 ♦♦

Volunteers are encouraged to attend our annual Potluck on **Thursday August 21** at noon, following the 9 a.m. to noon work session at the fruit garden. Beverages and a main dish with both meat and vegetarian choices will be provided. If you can, bring a pot luck dish.

Annual Picnic is a lot of fun.

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