



South Whidbey Tilth

We cultivate living soil and community to build an environmentally sound and socially equitable food system

Volume 38, Number 2

Summer 2020



Happy Birthday Tilth

by Prescott

June 19, 2020 marked the 38th birthday of South Whidbey Tilth. As we recognize and honor Juneteeth as the day in 1865 that slaves in Texas were finally informed of their liberty, we also remember our founding in the Greenbank Clubhouse. Then, as now, we come together as a group of gardeners, farmers and community members on South Whidbey Island who support an environmentally sound and socially equitable food system. The word tilth refers to the quality of soil and its ability to support a healthy ecosystem. We teach and promote how to build carbon-rich, living soil as the foundation of vibrant and biodiverse agriculture.

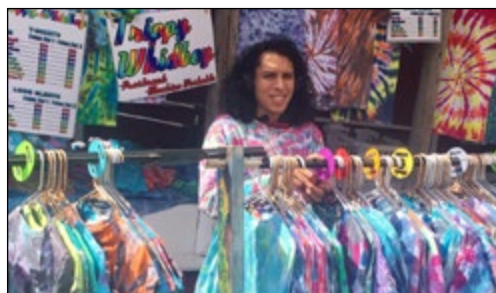
Congratulations to us all.

New Flags for the Tilth Market

Every Sunday at Tilth we fly colorful roadside flags to announce that the market is open. Next time you come to the market, remember to look up and admire our brand-new flags, designed and made last fall by Alex Martinis. The original flags were installed to help make the market more visible along the highway. Made by Melanie Sceva, they were wonderful for the seven years we had them, but our vigorous summer weather finally rendered them faded and torn.

Alex Martinis is a regular vendor at the market. Look for him in the big red booth on Sundays where he sells his tie-dyed goods: shirts, dresses, towels, socks and more. Thank you, Alex, for refreshing our colors!

Right: Alex Martinis, owner of Trippy Whidbey



Market in the Time of Coronavirus

by Janet Richards

This is my third summer on Whidbey Island, and the first year I have gotten involved as a volunteer at the Tilth market in a significant, regular way. I wasn't planning to spend my Sundays at Tilth. As a new council member, I was focused on my duties as communication chair and secretary, busying myself writing minutes and editing email messages.

Then all of us were asked to stay home, and we had to be careful when going to the grocery store, if we went at all, and I asked myself, could there be infrastructure collapse and serious food shortages? I'm not inclined to doomsday thinking, but when considering the current ecosystem stresses, even without the coronavirus threat, I might very well be asking myself these questions sometime soon.

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The Café Mam Story

Coffee lovers listen up. If you have not already tasted the coffee brewed at the Tilth market, please do! Thanks to Prescott, Tilth has been buying Café Mam coffee for years, and orders coffee in bulk for people in the community who want to buy it.

Café Mam (pronounced “mom”) sources its coffee from indigenous farming cooperatives in the Chiapas highlands in Mexico. The growers are mostly the Mam, Tzeltal and Mochó people, who use agricultural and trade practices that take care of the entire biosystem. The coffee is shade-grown, certified organic and fair-trade.

In 1982, Dahinda Meda, an ecological restoration specialist in the U.S., was asked by a group of farmers in the Mam region for his help with erosion control on their lands in the Sierra Madre. A few years later, two of his students there formed a cooperative of coffee farmers, and Dahinda agreed to buy the cooperative’s first crop. He and his family



at Royal Blue Organics blueberry farm in Eugene, Oregon roasted and sold it as some of the first organically grown and fair-trade coffee in the U.S. Thus, Café Mam was born, and the relationship has helped the growth of sustainable coffee sales and the strength and breadth of the cooperative ever since.

We think that Café Mam is good coffee at a good price, and we try to pass that good price on to coffee drinkers in the South Whidbey community. As well as supporting sustainable agriculture, Café Mam donates 2% of its sales to nonprofit organizations dedicated to organic agriculture, social justice and environmental causes.

You may have noticed that we are trying to raise the profile of Café Mam at the market. We now have 1-pound bags for sale at the market each week. Additionally, you can take advantage of good prices and more selection by special ordering yours to pick up at the following market. To sign up for the coffee email list, contact Gary Ingram at gary@cbwhidbey.com.

Market, from page 1

The need to vitalize local food sources and create a resilient local economy became even more urgent so that everyone would have continued access to food. I, along with many people, either started gardens or planted more rows this year. At Tilth, we became committed to making the market happen.

First, we spent much time debating if the market could or even should open. We worried we might endanger more than help our most devoted customers and volunteers, as so many of us are in high-risk groups. Diligently and respectfully, we entertained different opinions, got informed, had debates about masks, gloves and sanitizing, and did the best we could.

I have to say it’s been a joy to be at the market, seeing people in person for a change. Six feet isn’t so very far if you’re standing in the same sunshine (or rain, as it were). Fears of shortages seemed ages ago as bunches of greens and berries started to appear. I almost believed we weren’t in the middle of a pandemic, so relaxed and healthy was the atmosphere. But two months ago, we were uncertain, and to be honest, today we are still uncertain. Will there be a resurgence in cases? Will unemployment and social unrest disrupt our infrastructure? And the usual uncertainties: will my beans come up this year? Will we have tomatoes? Will the slugs eat *all* of our kale starts?

What this pandemic has taught me is that uncertainty is my friend. It gets me off my chair, where it is too easy to take things for granted. Uncertainty keeps me searching, observing, learning and lending a hand. It gets me to do it sooner rather than later because, after all, I just never know.



Market Call for Volunteers

With the sunshine on its way, the Tilth market is getting more and more pleasant: abundant produce, creative crafts, warm breezes, tasty food and people with smiling eyes. Helping make the market happen is a relaxing and satisfying way to spend a few hours on a Sunday. There is something for everyone: meet and greet marketgoers, help vendors sell produce or keep your hands busy helping to set up and dismantle market equipment. The more volunteers, the merrier; come be part of the teamwork. Contact the market manager and market committee at market@southwhidbeytilth.org.





Save the Date

South Whidbey Tilth is planning its annual picnic dinner on the Tilth campus for August 13. Because this year is special, reservations will be required. Look for your invitation coming soon.

Nominations for Tilth Council of Trustees

Are you passionate about Tilth's mission to support and promote an environmentally sound and socially equitable food system? Maybe now is the time to become more engaged in the process. The nominating committee, Anza Muenchow and Andréa Linton, are gearing up to groom candidates for the Tilth Council of Trustees in 2021.

The council consists of 8 positions. Only Position 1 is associated with a particular role, that of president. The trustees in Positions 2 to 8 take on the various roles depending on their skills and interests. These roles are vice president, secretary and committee chairs for the following standing committees: market, land stewardship, finance, education, membership, community relations and development (fundraising).

All trustee positions are two-year terms. To avoid the possible situation of a complete turnover of the council in any year, four positions are elected one year, and the other four the following year.

Here is the list of positions up for election in 2021, the people who are currently in those positions and what roles they are fulfilling:



- Position 3: Edward Hueneke, Finance
- Position 5: Andréa Linton, Membership, Community Relations and Development
- Position 7: Anza Muenchow, Education
- Position 8: Prescott, Market

Consider talking to a council member about Tilth's current projects. Tell us what you're interested in. Come to a business meeting—they are on the third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m.—the next one is July 16. You can shape the future of Tilth by taking on any level of volunteering. Contact membership@southwhidbeytilth.org.

Local Food

For many, farmers' markets are a relaxing and safe way to shop. But not for everyone, and now it's easier than ever to find local produce.



WIGC Food Hub

Whidbey Island Grown is now a cooperative (WIGC for Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative), owned by growers, buyers and community partners. Their mission is to support local agriculture and build a resilient local economy on Whidbey Island. South Whidbey Tilth is a member.

WIGC launched a Food Hub in May 2020, an online marketplace where producers from all over Whidbey Island can offer their products for sale to the community. Every week, producers list what they have available on the Food Hub. Starting on Friday and through Tuesday, customers can log into the hub to order products such as fresh produce, herbs, meats, baked goods and more, all locally grown and made.

Customers pick up what they order the following Friday at one of three farm stands: Bell's Farm (Coupeville), Sherman's Farm (Coupeville), or Mutiny Bay Blues (Freeland).

For more information about the Food Hub, visit whidbeyislandgrown.com.

Goosefoot Directory

The Goosefoot farm stand directory is online this year. In a few clicks you can find Whidbey Island roadside farm stands, farm stores and farmers' markets. You can search for specific products, and restrict your search to certain areas of the island. Information includes addresses, dates and hours of operation. Have a look at whidbeyfarmstands.com.



Our Garry Oak Meadow

Last April, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we had planned a work party to renovate the understory of native flowers beneath the Garry oaks in the upper meadow at Tilth. Unfortunately, the work party was cancelled, but as we begin to open up here on Whidbey Island, nurturing these plants gives us great opportunities to get out, stay adequately distanced and help the Earth.

Back in 2001, Tilth undertook an agroforestry project to restore native forest on the campus to “...address the problem of ongoing degradation of native forest lands, as landowners log, bulldoze and burn forest tracts in the often-mistaken belief that they are improving the agricultural potential of the land.” The project included native plant propagation, clearing of competitive non-native grasses and blackberry, planting a native understory in a stand of existing Douglas firs, and establishing a Garry oak meadow. The maintenance of these restored areas is ongoing.

The Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*), sometimes called white Oregon oak, trees were planted in containers from seed obtained on Whidbey Island in 2002. As part of a habitat improvement project funded by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service, 30 Garry oaks were planted in the upper meadow

with grasses and flowers between 2004 and 2008. The intention was to use plants that would naturally occur in a Garry oak meadow, providing food and habitat for wildlife.

The plants include Oregon sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), spring gold or common lomatium (*Lomatium utriculatum*), prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Douglas’s aster (*Aster subspicatus*), few-flowered aster (*Aster modestus*), Pacific sanicle (*Sanicula crassicaulis*), chocolate lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria* spp.), common camas (*Camassia quamash*), great camas (*Camassia leichtlinii*), lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), showy fleabane (*Erigeron speciosus*), and Romer’s fescue (*Festuca roemerii*). This wonderful variety was chosen from a list provided by Marianne Edain (Frosty Hollow Ecological Restoration) of over 50 plants that have occurred on central Whidbey prairies. Yay to diversity!

As with most restoration work, unwanted species eventually reappeared in force. In 2014, a group of volunteers cleared Himalayan blackberry, thistles and pasture grass away from the Garry oaks to allow the native plants established underneath to spread. Wood chips were placed around the oaks and plants.

If you were to wander up to the meadow today, you would see several healthy oak trees, and the understory again in need of renovation. Only a few



weeks ago, Prescott discovered beautiful native plants blooming, such as the camas pictured. This summer and fall are perfect times to continue the restoration and help maintain the biodiversity. Volunteers will learn to identify the native plants so we can begin weeding out the competing non-natives. If you are interested in this project, contact Prescott at prscot@whidbey.net.



Niwatori, the rooster born at Tilth

Livestock at Tilth

Have you noticed the chickens on the Tilth campus? Having chickens was a seasonal thing for Calyx Community Art School students when they met at Tilth. Linda Good and others homed the hens through the winter. Then Tom Vincent built a sturdy coop and the chickens were able to live at the Tilth campus all year.

Last summer, eggs were placed under a broody hen and two hatched. One chick grew up to become an enormous rooster with a sweet personality. Linda Good named the rooster Niwatori, which means “garden bird” in Japanese. It soon became apparent that the coop couldn’t contain the three hens and such a large rooster. After much discussion, ranging from pot pie to a new home, we found Niwatori a nice farm home on North Whidbey.

If you are interested in helping care for the hens in exchange for eggs, contact Prescott at prscot@whidbey.net.

Early Summer in Gary and Pam's Garden

by Gary Ingram

In mid-March, when the governor issued his order to stay at home, my real estate business came to a screeching halt. Our home is on five acres and we border the back part of South Whidbey State Park, known as the Classic U. Our property is very private, and we have trails to the park and walk through it every evening. I have a farmer friend who told me he has been practicing social distancing all of his life—I can relate to that.

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the vole problem we had in our large garden last year. My solution was to dig a 10-inch deep trench along my garden fence and install 24-inch hardware cloth. Hardware cloth is a galvanized fencing that has ¼-inch square holes. I was told that voles will dig only an inch or two down, and they won't climb a fence. We also have about 10 feet between our growing beds and the fence, so while I was trenching, I decided to dig out all of the grass and weeds in order to plant flower seeds. I worked on this project seven days a week, five to six hours a day, for three and a half weeks. When I was finished, I had to make an appointment with my chiropractor! I'm too old to do this. So far, even though we see voles outside the garden, none have gotten in.

Two of my favorite vegetable garden plants are runner beans and collards. We grow two varieties of runner beans: scar-



Scarlet runner bean tepee. Image courtesy of University of Wisconsin Master Gardeners

let and Painted Lady. They are grown throughout England for both eating and as an ornamental. Hummingbirds love them, as do bumblebees.

Someone gave me some seed 20 years ago, and I have been growing them ever since, always saving some of the dried beans for the next year's crop.

I grow the runner beans on 10-foot bamboo stakes made into a tepee.

I plant them mid-May four poles to a teepee and six plants to a pole. The plants grow to 12 feet and are covered with flowers most of the growing season. I usually have between eight and ten teepees of beans in our garden.

To eat the beans, I let them mature on the vine. I harvest when the pods are large and turning yellow; they don't need to be dry or brown, but I want to get them all picked before the first frost. I bring the beans inside, remove the large beans (they are the size of a lima bean), dry them in large baskets and store them in ½-gallon jars.

Any recipe that calls for lima beans works well. My wife, Pam, found a recipe for baked lima beans that we've used for years: two cups of dried beans (cooked), a can of chopped tomatoes, hot peppers, onions, garlic, some mustard, Worcestershire sauce, a splash of tamari sauce and lots of cheddar cheese. You can add any type of meat from bacon to sausage if you wish; we use goat sausage. Bake this for an hour. Pam has a problem with tomatoes now, so we use pumpkin in place of tomatoes.

We just started planting collard greens a couple of years ago and they seem to be well adapted to our climate. We plant them in early spring and within a month we can start picking leaves. Our spring planting last year lasted through February of this year! The plants get huge and one leaf will feed one person. We don't seem to have any pests attracted to them.

I love to take one large leaf per person and slice it into ¼ inch strips about two inches long. Put the slices into a quart pot with a steamer rack and cold water. They are done as soon as the water boils—don't cook them longer. For a sauce, we use four tablespoons of olive oil, two tablespoons of wine vinegar, juice from half a lemon and two cloves of garlic chopped. Put a tablespoon of this on the collard greens and enjoy.

Tilth Gets Grant from Port of South Whidbey

by Lynae Slinden, Vice President

In lieu of tourism grants, the Port of South Whidbey chose to award money for businesses needing to make adjustments due to the coronavirus pandemic. The maximum grant was \$1000.

South Whidbey Tilth's grant application was accepted for the full amount. We are thankful to the Port for their prompt and generous support, which helped us offset some costs for, among other things, an extra handwashing station, a new canopy for the market entrance, sanitizers and take-out food containers.

President's Message

by Gary Ingram



These are challenging times. My parent's generation had World War II, mine had the Vietnam War and the hippies, and now my grandchildren have a pandemic.

Our Sunday Farmers' Markets have had very good attendance even with limited vendors. At first we were allowed to sell only food, flowers and soap. Now that we have started to open up, we can expand back into crafts and allow people to eat at our tables, which are spread out for proper physical distancing. Entertainment soon? I hope so.

Why do we require vendors and customers to wear a mask? I was once studying to be an enrolled actuary. Actuaries are mathematicians that work with federally qualified retirement plans, projecting monetary values into the future. I asked one of my instructors what the difference was between an actuary and an accountant. He replied that if you asked an accountant what is two plus two, they would say four. An actuary would say, "What do you want it to be?" The science is out there on wearing a mask, the question is, what answer do you want to hear? Starting in the first week of June, our governor is requiring all business employees that have contact with others to wear masks.

We recently mailed out to members a letter asking for donations. South Whidbey Tilth relies on four major forms of fund raising: membership, farmers' market income, donations and grants. Grants have been a major source of income for us over the years and for the most part they are not available this year. Most grants are going to businesses and individuals impacted by COVID-19. We are asking everyone to help out, as South Whidbey Tilth's mission of cultivating living soil, healthy food and community, is more relevant than ever. Your help, in any amount, is so appreciated.



WHAT IS TILTH?

Tilth (tilth) n. [fr OE Tilian = th]
a. the quality of cultivated soil,
b. the cultivation of wisdom and the spirit.

MISSION

South Whidbey Tilth Association is an educational association, the purpose of which is to support and promote biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture. Our commitment is to advocate, study and teach agricultural practices consistent with stewardship of the natural world. We promote and demonstrate principles and practices of sustainable agriculture, as well as cultivate a variety of opportunities for local market gardeners and farmers. The organization is organized exclusively for educational and scientific purposes under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2020 COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICES

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Education: Anza Muenchow.....360-579-2890 education@southwhidbeytilth.org
Land Stewardship: Ida Gianopulos...503-730-0199 landsteward@southwhidbeytilth.org
Market: Prescott.....360-682-8642 prscot@whidbey.net

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Bookkeeper: Sharon Asplund360-221-6232 sharon@goperitae.com

MEMBERSHIP

South Whidbey Tilth membership is \$25 annually. Additional people in a household may join for \$10 each. The newsletters can be received by email or by USPS mail. To update membership information, contact Membership at membership@southwhidbeytilth.org or leave a message at 360-321-0757. Membership renewals are due every June and members can expect a reminder.

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The South Whidbey Tilth newsletter is a bimonthly publication of South Whidbey Tilth Association. The primary purpose of this publication is to foster communication among our membership and friends with information about our mission and our organization. A newsletter subscription is \$25. We encourage submissions of letters, articles, book reviews and photos. The editorial committee reserves the right to edit for clarity, style and concision. Advertising and opinions in this newsletter are not necessarily the policy of the South Whidbey Tilth Association.

Newsletter committee: Janet Richards, A.T. Birmingham-Young, Prescott, Paula Richards and Andréa Linton.

ADVERTISING RATES IN THE NEWSLETTER

Full page \$70, half \$40, quarter \$22 and eighth \$12. **Classified ads** are also available for a dime a word.

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Website: www.southwhidbeytilth.org
Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SouthWhidbeyTilth
Physical location: 2812 Thompson Road, off State Route 525



What Is Regenerative Agriculture?

by Janet Richards

Through the years, agriculture has been paired with many labels: commercial, traditional, conventional, organic, sustainable, holistic, and now, regenerative. Labels so easily roll off the tongue that sometimes we lose sight of what they mean. Currently at South Whidbey Tilth, regenerative agriculture is being embraced and discussed. What's under the words that we're using to describe the kind of agriculture that we think will transform our world? What do farmers and gardeners do when they practice regenerative agriculture?

The What—Regenerating Soil Carbon

In short, regenerative agriculture means farming practices that restore and build healthy soil, most importantly, by increasing the carbon content. Carbon-rich soil, in turn, improves the water cycle, yields healthier plants, supports biodiversity and builds resiliency to climate change.

Dr. Christine Jones, a groundcover and soils ecologist who consults on regenerative land use around the globe, teaches that we can use carbon content as an indicator for soil health. In a presentation to farmers in South Dakota in 2018, she started by saying that the organic carbon content of the soil is the key determinant of water-holding capacity and the key driver for both the nutritional status of plants and for farm profit.

Since the expansion of European settlement, soils around the world have lost 30 to 75% of their carbon content. In the American plains, the original grasslands were full of several hundred

species of wildflowers; in fact, there were more flowers in the mix than grasses. European settlement simplified the landscape through plowing and planting monoculture pastures and crops. When groundcover and biodiversity are lost, the soil loses carbon and moisture, which increases aridity and creates droughts, thereby starting a downward spiral of degraded land.

Until recently, agronomists studied plants, soils, microbiology and hydrology separately. When we started to consider the problems of soil along with plants, water systems and microbiology, we learned that soil is a living ecosystem. This ecosystem is the key to restoring carbon to the soil.

The How—Getting Carbon into the Soil

To build soil carbon, Jones suggests that we start with plants and their collaboration with the sun. She reminds us of the definition of soil: weathered rock materials (sand, silt and clay) that are—or have been—in contact with plant roots. We always say that plants need good soil, but first, good soil needs plants. It seems that nothing in life escapes the chicken-or-the-egg paradox.

There are two biological pathways for getting carbon into soil, and they both involve photosynthesis, the process whereby plants take carbon dioxide (CO²) from the air and convert it to carbon in the form of sugars.

The first pathway happens at the soil surface. Through photosynthesis, plants produce biomass. When biomass dies and is on the ground, microbes decompose the organic material and generate

carbon, but mostly in the form of CO² released into the air. This is what we foster when we start a compost pile or cover the soil with organic mulch.

The second pathway is what Jones calls the plant-microbe bridge and happens when living plant roots exude some of the sugars they produce to feed microbes in the soil. In exchange, the microbes and associated fungal networks bring nutrients to the plant and also create a soil structure that is stable, aerated, and can hold water. This “living soil” is, on average, 60% carbon. The plant-microbe bridge is the primary pathway for soil building. In fact, living plant roots build carbon at least five times faster than above-ground biomass (some studies show thirty times faster). But decomposition is still important because the fungi involved in decomposing organic matter on the surface stimulate the soil-building process underground.

In both cases, to maximize carbon intake, we want to increase photosynthesis. There are two ways to do this: build photosynthetic capacity and enhance photosynthetic rate.

Photosynthetic capacity is the amount of light intercepted by green plants in a given area. Covering every natural surface with a diversity of living plants maximizes this capacity. Bare soil has zero photosynthetic capacity.

Photosynthetic rate refers to how fast plants convert sunlight energy into sugars and is determined by many factors such as available nutrients, moisture, light intensity and temperature. It turns out the most important factor

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that affects rate is, you guessed it, the robustness of the plant-microbe bridge.

For example, if you add nitrogen fertilizer to your plants, the plants will love it for the moment, but it reduces their photosynthetic output. Adding nitrogen to the soil in a form that's immediately available to plants makes them lazy. In the absence of ready-to-eat nitrogen, plants secrete sugar from their roots to stimulate microbes living in the soil to transform nitrogen in the air into a form available to plants. Legumes are famous for their popularity with nitrogen-fixing microbes, but all plants can "fix" nitrogen to a degree.

One of the most important groups of microbes for building soil is mycorrhizal fungi. These fungi build far-reaching networks that support plants. In exchange for sugar, they provide access to water, protection from pests and diseases, and deliver nutrients from the soil. These fungi need a variety of bacteria and viruses to function. Different plants support different microbes, and so greater plant diversity encourages a more robust soil ecosystem.

Planting a few different species helps, but the more the better. Research shows that with enough diversity—eight different species is observed to be the magic number right now—something called a quorum forms and there is a sudden jump in total photosynthesis and the production of soil carbon. Because some plants in the mix don't photosyn-

thesize much, it is thought they host a certain microbe which strengthens the mycorrhizal network. Also, soil-building happens at root tips, so having some deep-rooted plants creates deeper living soil.

We don't know exactly why biodiversity builds soil faster. It's an ongoing exploration to learn more about the amazing underground world of soil biology. But we have seen that biodiversity helps the ecosystem that supports carbon-rich soil and gives the plants all the nutrition they need, which in turn increases photosynthesis and becomes an upward spiral of healthy soil.

The Who—What Can We Do?

The experiments that Jones gives as examples concern mainly pastures with perennial grasses and forbs. As a home gardener, how can I improve the carbon-building capacity of the soil? Some ideas that come to mind: use cover crops, increase the mix of plants in cover crops, interplant beds with a mix of crops and other plants, rotate crops and cover crops, plant more perennials, consider maintaining multispecies prairies instead of monoculture lawns, preserve or restore natural areas, never leave dirt bare.

Since soil-building is about increasing both photosynthetic capacity and rate, it's not just how much carbon we can add with any given mix of plants, but also how much land is dedicated to photosynthesizing. There is no one solution; we will make context-sensitive gar-

dening decisions. Each place is a unique ecosystem, so regenerative agriculture will reflect the place and community.

It is clear that regenerative agriculture increases the carbon sequestered in the ground. More carbon in the soil means there is less carbon in the atmosphere contributing to global warming. The resources listed at the end of this article describe how regenerative agriculture, if widely adopted, could sequester more than 100% of the current annual global CO₂ emissions.

The technology and techniques of regenerative agriculture are not new—they have been practiced by indigenous peoples for millennia. The process is as old as plants.

Resources

Summer 2018 Field Day with Dr. Christine Jones: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuM2tnX-KJI

Light Farming: Restoring carbon, organic nitrogen and biodiversity to agricultural soils, Christine Jones: [amazingcarbon.com/JONES-LightFarmingFINAL\(2018\).pdf](https://amazingcarbon.com/JONES-LightFarmingFINAL(2018).pdf)

Terra Genesis International: www.regenerativeagriculturedefinition.com

Regenerative Organic Agriculture and Climate Change, Rodale Institute: rodaleinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/rodale-white-paper.pdf

Regeneration International: regenerationinternational.org

Green America: www.greenamerica.org/food-climate

Members in the News

Gary Ingram, South Whidbey Tilth president, was interviewed in an article in the *South Whidbey Record*, "Garden Pros Offer Sage Advice," dated May 12, 2020. Gary offered tips gathered from years of experience in his garden in Greenbank. Read the whole article at www.southwhidbeyrecord.com/life/garden-pros-offer-sage-advice.

Tilth member and volunteer, **Paula Richards**, was recently featured in *Vitality*, Kaiser Permanente's magazine for their Medicare members. In the article, Paula, who quit full-time employment and moved to Whidbey Island in 2017, mentioned her active involvement in South Whidbey Tilth as a way to stay energized and involved in the community.



Paula Richards, who enjoys painting as well as volunteering at Tilth.

Tree of Life Mural Project

by Cherri Ann Forrest

South Whidbey Tilth and the Tree of Life mural project share a vision: creative regeneration. As a multi/mixed-media artist, I am dedicated to sharing what I call the Dream of Our Regeneration and the deep connection found between the natural and applied arts and sciences that care for the Earth.

The research for the Tree of Life mural began in 2018. The tree, serving as a symbol of renewal, will be painted on the Heart Building—the structure on the Tilth campus that features the mural called Global Heart Treasure Our Island, completed in 2004. The new mural will wrap around the remaining side and back wall of the building to form the Donor Wall of Gratitude, which faces the trail leading to the native woodland and Garry oak meadow.

While the mural’s tree is symbolic in nature, the design is inspired by a massive madrone growing in the schoolyard that now serves as the South Whidbey Community Center in Langley. The madrone makes an ideal model, as it is native, adaptive and evergreen.

The design places the tree—with its multicolored bark—in a cutaway that reveals living soil and seven roots that give rise to seven branches, symbolizing the ongoing covenant between current and future generations. The mural’s background

honors native flora, fauna and cultures unique to the Pacific Northwest. Some of tree’s branches will extend to the tops of the market buildings, while the painting at the bottom of the buildings will reveal another cutaway of the biodynamic soil beneath.

The project’s purpose is to creatively strengthen and enhance our sense of place, to reweave community in a heart-to-heart conversation and to renew a quality relationship with the land. Like many, both the South Whidbey Tilth Association and the Dream of Our Regeneration have been at work for decades, preparing the soil for where we are now. It will take time.

On behalf of the mural project, we want to thank the Hand-in-Hand Partnership for the generous \$500 challenge grant, and all the wonderful people whose matched donations are

making the Tree of Life mural happen. In the spirit of creative regeneration, we invite you to join us in heart and mind as our collective work unfolds. As the pause button is lifted here on Whidbey and community life carefully reopens, engagement (material procurement, nature studies, mini-painting-parties) can resume in the fresh air and on the spacious land. If you are interested in this project, please contact me at treasure-ourisland@gmail.com.



Mural project logo by Cherri Ann Forrest

Join, Renew or Donate to Tilth’s Projects

Join South Whidbey Tilth. A single household membership is \$25 and \$10 for each additional adult household member who wishes to join. One newsletter is emailed or mailed to each household. *Please list **each** member’s name.* Enclose \$25 (for one) + ___ (number of additional adult household members who wish to join x \$10) = \$_____. Membership renewals are June of each year. If you missed this year’s date, please renew now.

I am interested in volunteering: event planning, gardening or landscaping, other

I/we also want to make a \$_____ donation to help with the goals of South Whidbey Tilth, a nonprofit corporation, EIN #91-1456495. Contact me about estate donations to South Whidbey Tilth’s Sustaining Fund.

Please keep my/our donation anonymous. I/we authorize publication of my/our name(s) as a donor.

Name _____ Email _____

Name _____ Email _____

Name _____ Email _____

Mailing address _____ Town _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Mobile _____ I want to receive: email updates newsletter online

Please mail to: South Whidbey Tilth Association, P.O. Box 252, Langley, Washington 98260, or send via PayPal.

CALENDAR

Check the online calendar at
southwhidbeytilth.org/calendar for the latest updates.

JULY

- 5** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 7** Farmer's Shadow garden discussion group, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Zoom meeting
- 12** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.
- 16** Tilth Council business meeting, 6 to 8 p.m. Zoom meeting
- 19** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.
- 26** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.

AUGUST

- 2** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.
- 4** Farmer's Shadow garden discussion group, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
- 9** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.
- 12** The Climate Crisis and the Green New Deal, an interactive webinar presented by Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA)—Whidbey Committee and Sunrise Seattle, watch for updates.

- 13** Annual Picnic on the Tilth campus
- 16** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.
- 20** Tilth Council business meeting, 6 to 8 p.m.
- 23** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.
- 30** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

- 6** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 8** Farmer's Shadow garden discussion group, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
- 13** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 17** Tilth Council business meeting, 6 to 8 p.m.
- 20** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 27** Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.