



# South Whidbey TILTH

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

Volume 39, Number 2

Summer 2021

## Tilth Celebrates New Farm Stand



The finished farm stand at the Tilth entrance.

On June 9, 2021, South Whidbey Tilth members along with members of the University of Washington Design/Build Team met to celebrate the completion of a new farm stand at the entrance to the Tilth campus on Thompson Road.

A key part of Tilth's mission is making locally grown food more available to the community. Because the Tilth Farmers' Market season ends mid-October, and apples, pears and nuts ripen in the late fall, Tilth members looked for a way to attract and welcome more visitors year-round with a beautiful entrance. The farm stand, a pollinator-friendly hedgerow, and an information kiosk are part of the plan.

Whidbey resident Steve Badanes has been a regular customer at the Tilth Farmers' Market for years. He is also a professor of architecture at the University of Washington and runs the Neighborhood Design/Build Studio there. When Steve got wind of the farm stand idea,

he suggested it as a project for students at the Design/Build Studio.

Students started the farm stand design in 2020, working entirely online, but could not meet to build the structure because of the pandemic. The 2021 class took up the project and refined the design, incorporating feedback from Tilth members. The stand is constructed with cedar slats in a trellis-like structure. While looking light and airy, it is actually sturdy because of the lattice-work corner blocks. The roof overhang towards the south was increased to protect from strong winds. The roof is made from tinted polycarbonate, also appearing light while being sturdy.

The materials for the farm stand were sourced from local family-owned businesses, including Hanson's Building Supply on Whidbey Island. Students met to build the structure at the studio in Seattle, then came to Tilth in late May to lay the foundation and raise the structure.



The farm stand under construction in the Design/Build studio.



Students installing the stand at Tilth in May.



After so much pandemic-related confinement and a lot of screen time, students were delighted to be working together outdoors.

The plan is for the stand to be open every day that there is no Tilth market, offering self-service and payment using the honor system. The operation will be

***Farm Stand, cont. on page 6***



## Starting Your Winter Gardens

by Anza Muenchow

Here we are in mid-summer, the garden bounty is arriving—but wait—we have to plan for our winter crops also. Now is the time to plan and plant for the winter harvest.

This month you should continue to plant all the green leafy vegetables you would want on your dinner plates this fall. Here are some cool-season crops that local gardeners enjoy, which you can plant now or in early August: romaine lettuce, arugula, spinach, kohlrabi, carrots, parsnips, beets, turnips and broccoli. They can provide a lovely harvest in September and October. I have had good luck with the lettuce variety called Winter Density, which was delicious in my Thanksgiving dinner salad.

Some plantings (like carrots, beets, chard and kale) will overwinter to give you a delicious early spring harvest. When these plants make it through the winter months, they are not growing very much. The short daylength and cold temperatures allow them to just stay alive. Only the worst weather, like an early deep freeze in November, would kill them off. Covering the plants with several layers of row cover to create a frost blanket could help your garden survive a cold snap in late fall.

Usually we sow leafy greens closely and then thin out the small ones for delicious early snacking. Baby bok choy or broccoli is a treat in salads. Thinning will leave room for the remaining plants to mature without crowding. All these greens like rich soil, with added compost or another organic nitrogen source, like seed meal fertilizer. For best results, keep the seedlings somewhat shaded and well-watered until the fall rains come. I realize this is a challenge to accomplish. I have seen great creativity in how to temporarily shade a garden bed that will later provide a fall or winter crop that craves a winter light source.

There is one more overwintering vegetable I recommend to gardeners in our climate. Purple sprouting broccoli

is an amazing crop but has a long growing period. Usually it is planted out in July, but I think August could give decent results, too. The plants need to get to a reasonable size (over a foot high) before the day length is too short. The plant will grow slowly over the winter but is very hardy in cold weather. Then, as the days begin to lengthen in March, this plant really puts on dramatic growth. All the little branches erupt in gorgeous, delicious purple broccoli florets. They lose their purple color when cooked, and, no little caterpillar larva to remove before eating.

If you haven't limed your garden in a few years, mix a cupful of lime into the soil where you plant the *Brassicas*: broccoli, choy, arugula, kohlrabi, mustard and cabbage. Our acidic rain and heavy, wet soils can encourage the dreaded club root fungus, which stunts and usually kills many of our favorite *Brassicas*. By adding lime, you keep a higher pH in your soil, so club root should not be a problem for these susceptible crops.

One of the best things about fall and winter gardens is the lack of flying insect pests, like rust fly, leaf miner or cabbage butterfly. These insect larvae can decimate your spinach, beets, carrots and chard in the spring or early summer. You still have to look out for the slugs and snails, but they are slower and fewer in a winter garden. In general, late fall and winter gardens are a pest-free delight. With our consistent rainy season and cool temperatures, these leafy crops provide well for a backyard gardener.

Making frost blankets, choosing cold-hardy plants, improving the soil and finding the best location for winter light during the short days; This is how we stretch our gardening to year-round harvesting, which we are fortunate to be able to do in the Pacific Northwest.





Remember in-person parties? Let's do it again. Shown above, the 2019 Potluck.

## Tilth Annual Potluck

Save the date—  
August 5, 2021

Don't miss the Tilth annual potluck and raffle, outdoors at the Tilth campus on Thursday, August 5 in the evening. We're looking forward to showing our appreciation to all our supporters and enjoying a good meal together. Keep an eye on your email inbox for the details.

**Planners needed.** We could use help putting the event together.

Got raffle items?

**Raffle items needed!** Help Tilth raise money by donating new and gently used items, as well as experiences and gift baskets.

Please contact Prescott at [membership@south-whidbeytilth.org](mailto:membership@south-whidbeytilth.org).

## Salmonberries, My Favorite Shrub

by Gary Ingram

Last night we had a small gathering at our farmstead and a young lady and I were the only ones feasting on the fat juicy salmonberries that grow in absolute abundance on our land. I told her it's like eating small grapefruits. Her response was a sly smile, sharing a secret that few of us know.

The salmonberry, *Rubus spectabilis*, is a native shrub of the Pacific Northwest that some love and many hate. I personally think it's spectacular. People are surprised when I tell them that salmonberries are in the rose family, as they think of it as a poor man's raspberry. The raspberry is also in the rose family.

Salmonberries ripen about the same time the salmon returns to our streams. Indigenous people of this area would spread these berries on cooked or smoked salmon.

It's a deciduous shrub growing over 12 feet high. It loves wet soil and full sun but will grow just about anywhere on our place, even in the thick alder forest. Most of the berries are orange, like the salmon, but some are a deep and beautiful red. The taste is a combination of sweet, sour and bitter. We do some vigorous hikes around our place and, for me, there is nothing more satisfying than a ripe salmonberry when I'm thirsty.

The salmonberry is the first flowering native plant, blooming out in early spring; its pink flowers feed our native bumblebees and hummingbirds. Bees are invaluable and the bumblebee emerges in early spring just as these flowers open. Bumblebees are annual bees and only the newly fall-bred queen overwinters, coming out in the spring to feast on the nectar of the salmonberry be-



fore laying her eggs. Scientists are now telling us the bumblebee is in danger, as it has been losing much of its natural habitat. Enter the salmonberry, a thorny bramble that people hate but is critical to our native creatures.

I've been trying to raise honeybees for over 10 years with mixed success, while the bumblebee has flourished here on our farm.

The health benefits of the salmonberry for humans are off-the-chart good. Like its cousin the raspberry, you name it, and it has it.

We see much of our land as a type of bird sanctuary and our 10,000 or so salmonberry plants feed many of them. Sitting on our deck and watching the western tanager, with its striking colors, feasting on these berries is one of my favorite things to do.

We were walking our road the other evening and two of our neighbors were standing in awe while looking at a mature salmonberry shrub full of ripe berries. They had removed most of the native plants from their 10 acres and planted grass and bamboo. They told us they have a different forest management plan than we do. Ours is simple and takes little energy from us, as we let nature do whatever it wants.

## Conservation Biocontrol, or The Love of Insects

by Janet Richards

My interest in biocontrol started with slugs. I was looking for a way to attract ground beetles and other slug predators to my garden. What I learned is that control is less about pitting one species against another, and more about creating and sustaining the arena where they play out their struggle. It takes an ecosystem.

Using animal predators to control pests is called biocontrol. You can buy predators, for example, lady bugs, hoping they stick around in your garden to eat aphids. However, introduced insects tend to disperse rapidly and leave your garden entirely. They are often from non-local populations, which only adds to their inability to live in their new home.

Attracting native predators of pests to your garden is called conservation biocontrol. It involves providing habitat (forage and nesting sites) for native beneficial insects so that they live in your garden and eat your pests. Conservation biocontrol can involve attracting other animals, but it is most often about attracting insects.



The number of insects has been reduced 45% globally since 1974

In my experience, insects are not widely popular, even though less than 1% of identified insects are what we humans consider pests. Lately, their role in pollination has made bees more popular, and we plant flowers in our gardens to attract them. But planting a lavender garden and walking away is not enough. Bees need not only pollen, but year-round habitat. Native bees nest either in the ground or in cavities, so need warm, bare soil, fallen logs, dead trees, stumps and spongy plant stems.

And what about other invertebrates? Take butterflies and moths, for example. They do a bit of pollinating but are not the pollination superstars that bees are. However, in their larval stages, they are important food to birds. In North

America, some 96% of land birds feed insects to their young (mostly caterpillars and adult moths). Adult birds make hundreds of feeding trips to the nest each day, and so need lots of

caterpillars. As adults, moths and butterflies need nectar, but they also require a place to lay their eggs. As it turns out, it's the native trees, shrubs and grasses that provide these nesting sites, but are in shorter and shorter supply as we clear land and replace the landscape with lawns and introduced flowers, shrubs and trees.

The sad news is that the number of insects has been reduced 45% globally since 1974. It is possible that many of us haven't even noticed. Causes for this loss include pesticide use and a warming climate, but also very important is the reduction of habitat.

Every resource I read advised increasing habitat by planting native plants. Recent research presented in *Nature's Best Hope* (Douglas W. Tallamy, 2019) shows that native plants can support a larger variety of insects. For example, the common reed (*Phragmites australis*) has replaced large areas of wetland in the Eastern U.S. It is now considered naturalized because it has been in North America for nearly 500 years. A study from 2002 showed that this species of reed supports 170 species of insects in Europe where it is native. In North America, it supports only five species.

In the Pacific Northwest, red alder supports about 227 species of moths and butterflies, native willows support 339, and North American goldenrod, 59. Next time you see caterpillars in an alder tree, instead of thinking that you must kill the insects to save the tree, consider

***Biocontrol, cont. on page 5***



Bees need not only pollen, but year-round habitat.

## Biocontrol, from page 4



Monarch butterfly caterpillar



Monarch butterflies are specialized to milkweed

that you could be doing more harm than good. The alder provides habitat for butterflies and moths in their larval stage, which provides food for birds, allowing the birds to survive. In almost every case, the alder tree will be fine.

Native plants support more insect species than introduced plants because insects and plants co-evolved over tens of thousands of years. Most plants evolved to taste bad so that they are not eaten. Milkweed, for example, contains cardiac glycosides (it even sounds like it tastes bad) and also has a milky latex sap that glues the mouthparts shut of any insect that tries to eat it – except monarch caterpillars. These larval-stage butterflies can block the flow of the sap to the milkweed leaves by the way that they eat. The specialization between monarchs and milkweed is well-known, and the disappearance of milkweed from our landscape has imperiled the monarch's survival. This specialization is not exceptional. Ninety percent of plant-eating insects are specialized.



## Tilth Conference 2021

Live in Lynnwood  
November 19-21, 2021

**The Innovative WA Farmer: Sharing What We've Learned** is this year's theme for the Tilth annual conference. The conference will be held in person at the Lynnwood Convention Center. The weekend will focus

on learning, building relationships and sharing best practices for growing a healthy food system.

Join a community of farmers, producers, researchers and food system professionals for keynote speeches, presentations for all experience levels, an industry trade show and fun social events. The conference will include some virtual participation. For details, visit the website at [tilthalliance.org/special\\_events/Conference](https://tilthalliance.org/special_events/Conference).

I have seen many non-native plants covered with bees, which used to make me think, Eureka! But now, I wonder if perhaps those bees are generalists in their foraging. I learned that many species of bees are specialists. They rely on certain native plants for forage because of the plant's bloom time, flower shape or color, and pollen morphology. If I want to help prevent these bee species from disappearing, I need to plant natives.

Tallamy describes keystone plants, that is, native plants that support the greatest number of insect species. The National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder website lists plants in your zip code ordered by how many moth and butterfly species they attract. Audubon also has a website recommending wildlife-friendly plants according to your zip code (website addresses given at the end of this article).

Now I want to attract any and all types of insects to my garden. They pollinate 87.5% of the plants and 90% of flowering plants globally, provide pest control, perform decomposition and release nutrients. In other words, they sustain plants, and plants sustain animals. Because of my dive into conservation biocontrol, my plan is to

try to introduce more and more native plants—especially keystone species—into my garden and yard, while keeping the friendly introduced plants. And, if I'm lucky, some slug-eating insects will set up house.

### Resources:

The Nation Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder website, [www.nwf.org/nativeplantfinder](http://www.nwf.org/nativeplantfinder).

Audubon Native Plants Database, <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>.

Tallamy, Douglas, *Nature's Best Hope*, 2019

Eierman, Kim, *The Pollinator Victory Garden*, 2020

WSU Extension publication, *Beneficial Insects, Spiders, and Mites in Your Garden: Who They Are and How to Get Them to Stay*, 2014, [pubs.extension.wsu.edu/beneficial-insects-spiders-and-mites-in-your-garden-who-they-are-and-how-to-get-them-to-stay-home-garden-series](https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/beneficial-insects-spiders-and-mites-in-your-garden-who-they-are-and-how-to-get-them-to-stay-home-garden-series)

Xerces Society publication, *Habitat Planning for Beneficial Insects – Guidelines for Conservation Biological Control*, 2016, [xerces.org/publications/guidelines/habitat-planning-for-beneficial-insects](https://xerces.org/publications/guidelines/habitat-planning-for-beneficial-insects)

**Farm Stand, from page 1**

refined as Tilth learns how to best equip the farm stand to get as much produce to people as possible, and as new ideas for sellable goods come in.

Tilth has raised over \$11,000 to pay for the farm stand and is looking to raise \$4,000 more to add a cold-storage unit and signage.

Many thanks those on the Tilth Farm Stand Committee for their hard work: Prescott, lead, with Kirstin Clauson, Ida Gianopulos, Don Krafft, Anza Muenchow, David Prisbrey, Fred Rouge, Lynae Slinden and Melissa Young.

Tilth thanks the many donors who made the farm stand a reality:

**Key Donors**

Goosefoot Community Foundation  
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions  
Matt Brock  
Kirk Kirkconnell  
Karen Konzen  
Don Krafft  
Paula Richards  
Vivian Stembridge

**Grassroots Donors — \$10 to \$100**

Eli Adadow  
Laura Adams  
Dave and Karen Anderson  
Sue Baldwin  
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Dianne Shiner  
Sheila Mohn and Kumudini Shoba  
Lynae Slinden  
Carol Squire  
Vivian Stembridge  
Lynn Swanson  
Tom and Catherine Vincent  
Sue Ellen White

**Membership & Donation Form**

Members receive periodic emails, including a link to our quarterly online newsletter and monthly information bulletins. You can choose to also have a printed copy of the newsletter mailed to your household.

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.

I want to receive email updates.  I want a printed copy of the newsletter mailed to me.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

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

## President's Message

by Gary Ingram



This is my 45th year living in the Puget Sound region and I've never seen a summer begin like this. Wow.

The past couple weeks I've hung out at our Sunday Farmers' Market on the Tilth campus. In stark contrast from last year's market, it's so nice to hear live music again and to see young children running around while the adults sit at tables eating the incredible food created and prepared in our commissary kitchen by David and Leah of OSM Eats.

The one complaint I hear is that we need more produce. Last week we had two booths with green produce: Maha Farm & Forest (with Purple Shift), and our community produce booth. If you want a good selection of organically grown produce, come early. There is always a good selection of pies and cookies, in-season fruit and cut flowers along with craft items. On July 4, we celebrated 50 years of the South Whidbey Tilth Farmers' Market!

The other farmers' market on South Whidbey is at Bayview. They moved it from the parking lot of the Bayview nursery to a grass field. This morning I went there for the first time and the experience is not like ours. It's just a big outdoor market.

Now we have a wonderful new farm stand built by UW students. Be sure to check it out if you haven't seen it, as it's very impressive. The goal is to have produce and eggs for sale on non-market days.

The South Whidbey Farmers' Market is a wonderful place to hang out, listen to live music, eat a stunning meal and buy things from local people.



## 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.

### 2021 COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICES

President: Gary Ingram .....206-718-8938 [president@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:president@southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Vice President: Anza Muenchow.....206-794-3443 [anzam@whidbey.net](mailto:anzam@whidbey.net)  
Finance: Edward Hueneke .....360-499-1682 [edgrant012@gmail.com](mailto:edgrant012@gmail.com)  
Secretary: Janet Richards.....425-361-9242 [janetri9@outlook.com](mailto:janetri9@outlook.com)  
Membership, CR & Dev.: Prescott.....360-682-8642 [membership@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:membership@southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Education: Don Krafft .....408-595-3070 [education@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:education@southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Land Steward: Ida Gianopulos .....503-730-0199 [landsteward@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:landsteward@southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Market: OPEN (interim Anza Muenchow)..... [anzam@whidbey.net](mailto:anzam@whidbey.net)

### PROJECT LEADERS

Native Landscape: J.C. May .....360-331-1004 [mayjc45@gmail.com](mailto:mayjc45@gmail.com)  
Community Garden: Ida Gianopulos 503-730-0199 [landsteward@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:landsteward@southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Community Produce: Molly Quade.....[comm.produce@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:comm.produce@southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Newsletter editor: Janet Richards...425-361-9242 [janetri9@outlook.com](mailto:janetri9@outlook.com)

### CONTRACT SERVICES

Market Manager: Kirstin Clauson..... 360-395-8842 [market@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:market@southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Bookkeeper: Edward Hueneke..... 360-499-1682 [edgrant012@gmail.com](mailto:edgrant012@gmail.com)

### MEMBERSHIP

South Whidbey Tilth membership is \$25 annually. Additional people in a household may join for \$10 each. To update your membership information, contact [membership@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:membership@southwhidbeytilth.org) or leave a message at 360-321-0757. Membership renewals are due every June and members will be sent 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. 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 and Paula Richards.

### 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.

Mail: South Whidbey Tilth  
PO Box 252, Langley WA 98260  
Phone:360-321-0757  
Email: [info@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:info@southwhidbeytilth.org)

Website: [southwhidbeytilth.org](http://southwhidbeytilth.org)  
Facebook page: [facebook.com/SouthWhidbeyTilth](https://www.facebook.com/SouthWhidbeyTilth)  
Physical location: 2812 Thompson Road, off State Route 525

## CALENDAR

Check the online calendar at  
[southwhidbeytilth.org/calendar](https://southwhidbeytilth.org/calendar) for the latest updates.

### JULY

- 15-18** Whidbey Island Fair
- 18** Tilth Farmers' Market with music by the Muse and Eye, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 20** Tilth Council business meeting, 6 to 8 p.m.  
Zoom meeting, [president@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:president@southwhidbeytilth.org)
- 25** Tilth Farmers' Market, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 25** Education at the Market, *How to eat from your garden all year round*, taught by Anza Muenchow, 1 p.m.
- 4** Farmer's Shadow garden discussion group 7 p.m.,  
[education@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:education@southwhidbeytilth.org)
- 5** Tilth Annual Potluck and Raffle
- 8** Tilth Farmer's Market with music by saxophonist Tim Wright, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 8** Education at the Market: *Seed saving*, taught by Brian Kenney of Deep Harvest Farm, 12 p.m.

### AUGUST

- 1** Tilth Farmers' Market with music by Matt McDowell and Nick Toombs, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 3** *Is a Small Farm in Your Future?* Cultivating Success online workshop, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.,  
[cultivatingsuccesswa.org/is-a-small-farm-in-your-future?](https://cultivatingsuccesswa.org/is-a-small-farm-in-your-future?)
- 15** Tilth Farmers' Market 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 19** Tilth Council business meeting (tentative), 6 to 8 p.m.  
[president@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:president@southwhidbeytilth.org)
- 22** Tilth Farmers' Market 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 29** Tilth Farmers' Market with music by the Muse and Eye, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.