



South Whidbey Tilth

Serving farmers, gardeners and consumers interested in environmentally sound, sustainable and socially equitable agriculture

Volume 35, Number 1

Late Winter 2017

About Us and What We Are Doing of Late

by Prescott, president

Since 1982, South Whidbey Tilth, a nonprofit agricultural organization, has worked to promote public health with local, community-based food production without synthetic chemicals. Increasingly, human health has been compromised by a global, corporate agribusiness system that produces, sells and promotes the vast majority of the food available on the market today. The evidence is all around us that large-scale factory farming has failed to deliver healthy food. There is an epidemic of chronic, food-related illnesses. More young people than ever before suffer from high blood pressure and diabetes. And there is growing evidence that most of the young people today will not live as long as their parents.

As South Whidbey Tilth members we address one of the root causes of this deadly crisis, our relationship to our food and how it is raised. On the 11-acre Tilth land base at 2812 Thompson Road on State Route 525 we do this in a variety of ways.

We operate a seasonal Farmers' Market that allows local growers to provide fresh, healthy produce directly to consumers. In addition to the farmers, we have concessionaires who offer nourishing choices for breakfast and lunch to enjoy at one of the picnic tables on the green, while listening to local



Last summer's sustainability potluck was shared with Slow Food Whidbey Island. Everyone enjoyed a fine time with good food, raffle prizes, music by Danny Ward and good company.

musicians. Artisans bring unique crafts to vend at the market, including fiber artists with spinning wheels. Kids have access to a sandbox and outdoor toys in the center of the market while adults shop or visit with friends. There's plenty of parking and clean restrooms.

The Farmers' Market runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Sunday, beginning April 30.

Thanks to Whidbey Telecom and a generous donation for the line installation, there's WiFi on the Tilth land.

A vendor orientation was Saturday, February 25 at Trinity Lutheran Church's annex in Freeland. The 2017 vendor agreement, policy and rules are now posted on the market page of the *South Whidbey Tilth website*.



Late season produce found last season at our market.

We are interviewing for an intern who will be managing the market and garden plots this season while he or she learns through our classes and that of the Grow Whidbey intern program. Our intern will also gain experience and skills on the job and with other interns on Whidbey.

In a small classroom Tilth offers classes about soil building, gardening, seed saving, invasive weed control and mushroom identification, and more. Kids in a small, nature-oriented private elementary school, Calyx, spend at least one day a week on the Tilth land exploring the woodland and fields and working in their own on-site garden. Families and individuals also lease community garden plots where they have access to water, fencing and tools.

Dorcas Young of Lesedi Farm leases a quarter acre from Tilth to grow produce for several markets, for her concession



Members of Island Strings are frequent performers at the market. They will play for the May Pole dancing on opening day.

Tilth happenings, see page 3

Increased Growler Flights Impact Central Whidbey Farming

Fellow Tilth member, Linda Bartlett, wrote the following appeal about the Navy's draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Friends, neighbors, and Rosehip supporters,

I am writing to you today to ask you to take action on an issue that threatens our ability to farm here in Central Whidbey. You may already be aware that the Navy has issued Draft EIS (environmental impact statement) regarding a dramatic increase in the number of Growler flights in Central Whidbey. The Draft EIS proposes increasing the number of flights at the outlying landing field (OLF) from approximately 6,000 per year to over 35,000 per year or an estimated 135 flights per day. Should this occur, we will be unable to continue to farm in Central Whidbey. Please comment on this Draft EIS. Like the Who's in Whoville, we need to join our voices to be heard.

Being directly in the flight path, the existing number of flights is already challenging and, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH), dangerous for me and my employees. With 135 flights a day there would be very few times when it would be safe for us to be in the fields.

We are also extremely concerned about the contamination of the groundwater and local wells (8 of which have now tested well over the EPA limit) with perfluorooctanoates (PFOAs) from the use of fire-fighting foam at OLF and Ault Field. This issue has not been addressed in the Draft EIS. The increase in flights increases the potential for an accident and the further use of this toxic chemical and puts our aquifer at risk.

Many of us live here for the beauty of this open agricultural area rich in local food choices. Others before us stepped up to protect it from development. We must now speak up to protect the quality of life we all cherish.

I have included information about the Draft EIS how to comment, and upcoming community meetings. This is a Draft EIS. To have a voice in the final EIS you must submit comments on this draft before February 24th.

Thank you for your voice.

Linda Bartlett, Rosehip Farm, Central Whidbey farmer



WHAT IS TILTH?

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

South Whidbey Tilth Association is a nonprofit corporation and a chapter of Washington Tilth Association.

MISSION

Washington Tilth Association is an educational and research association, the purpose of which is to support and promote biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture.

South Whidbey Tilth Association is a diverse network of people working cooperatively within our organization and in the community. 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.

2017 COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICES

President: Prescott..... 360-682-8642 . president@southwhidbeytilth.org
 Vice President: FRed Rouge 646-573-6132 ... fred4x4@hotmail.com
 Finance: Edward Hueneke 360-331-5806 . edgrant012@gmail.com
 Secretary: OPEN
 Membership, PR & Dev.: Andréa Linton . 360-221-1310 .. andrea@whidbey.com
 Education: Angie Hart 707-498-9086 . tah23@humboldt.edu
 Land Stewardship: Pete Little 425-232-6830 . dpete@hotmail.com
 Market: Judy Kaplan peacefuljudyone@gmail.com

PROJECT LEADERS

Native Landscape: J.C. May..... 360-331-1004 . mayjc45@gmail.com
 Community Garden: Linda Good 360-221-6439 . llgood@langleywa.com
 Webmaster/Email: Marc Wilson..... 360-579-2890 . info@southwhidbeytilth.org

CONTRACT SERVICES

Market manager: 360-321-0757 . market@southwhidbeytilth.org
 Newsletter editor: Prescott..... 360-682-8642 . prscot@whidbey.net
 Bookkeeper: Jeanne Celeste..... 360-331-6135 . bookkeeper@southwhidbeytilth.org

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, one per household. To update membership information, contact Vivian at vivian2b4@gmail.com or leave a message at 360-321-0757.

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. Submissions of letters, articles, book reviews and photos are encouraged. 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.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE SPRING NEWSLETTER IS MAY 10

Newsletter committee: A.T. Birmingham-Young, Michael Seraphinoff, Stevie Linton, Prescott and Marc Wilson.

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.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Mail to: South Whidbey Tilth
 PO Box 252, Langley WA 98260
 Phone: 360-5321-0757
 Email: [info \(at\) South Whidbey Tilth \(dot\) org](mailto:info(at)SouthWhidbeyTilth(dot)org)
 Website: www.southwhidbeytilth.org
 Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SouthWhidbeyTilth
 Physical location: 2812 Thompson Road, off SR 525

Soil Building and Vole Control 2016 Focus

Thanks to a grant from the Whidbey Island Garden Tour, the South Whidbey Tilth Community Gardens have a functional compost facility. Pete Little headed up a crew to mix and pour the concrete foundation.

Tom Vincent used much of his Master Gardener internship to teach hot composting principles and maintain the compost materials in the bins.



There is a fresh batch ready for use by community gardeners in the pea patches.

The Garden Tour grant also

included funds for a weed whip to control high grass around the gardens. The vole population loves the tall grass around the fenceline where they can hide and populate while dining on garden produce.



Pete Little and Fred Rouge mixing cement for the three-bin compost facility.

Tom also worked with Linda Good to maintain the worm bin donated by BugaBay. He harvested the worm castings on a regular basis for the community gardeners.

Compost bins, see page 4

Tilth happenings, from page 1

and catering business and for the farm stand, soon to be open daily.

Noncultivated areas on the land contain native plants and trees to protect the neighborhood watershed and provide wildlife food and habitat. On the western side of the land is a Garry Oak meadow and woodland trails with dozens of native understory plants in a mature fir grove. Join us in April for a teaching work party to learn about the plants while maintaining the trails. There is also a facility for the salvage and propagation of native plants acquired last year from the Native Plant Stewards. Thanks to a \$300 grant from the South Whidbey Garden Club and several donations, the \$1,200 cost for the facility was achieved. The South Whidbey Garden Club also granted \$150 this year toward extending power to the facility to hold classes.

Finally, in cooperation with the Washington Department of Transportation, we maintain the roadside edge without herbicides; instead native vegetation has been established.

We welcome new members to learn, share and teach. We enjoy outreach to the larger community through informational displays at various venues. We have prepared a display about environmentally friendly, safe lawn and garden products using such resources as the database Grow Smart, Grow Safe® (www.growsmartgrowsafe.org). Both consumers and retailers want effective pest control and gardening advice. With the products from Bayview Farm & Garden, we displayed these

tips and gave out fact sheets at the Whidbey Island Area Fair in 2015. Since then we've shared this material at both Sound Waters 2016 and 2017. It will be at the Master Gardener Workshop on March 4 at Oak Harbor High School.



Michael Seraphinoff shares about safe pest control products at Sound Waters 2016.

Watch the *South Whidbey Record* community events page and other local media sources for information about our organization's programs and activities throughout the year. Visit our website www.southwhidbeytilth.org or call 360-321-0757. Like us on Facebook as both South Whidbey Tilth and South Whidbey Tilth Farmers' Market.

Good Compost Requires Persistence

by Linda Good

At the Penn Cove Water Festival in the spring of 2014, I was talking to Janet Hall, who was the judge of compost entries at the Whidbey Island Area Fair. I had decided not to enter my worm compost that year because it didn't do well the previous two years, but she encouraged me to try again and suggested I age it more. So I took some worm bin castings and put them in a couple pots. I stirred and watered it regularly, keeping it in the greenhouse.

That year, 2015, I got blue ribbons plus \$6 and an award of merit, which shows that persistence pays! I've been doing vermiculture for years and am one of the BugaBay worm bin stewards at Tilth.

If you have been considering getting a worm bin there will be a vermiculture seminar at Tilth on Sunday, May 21. Each person who registers will be eligible to win a residential-size BugaBay Original In-ground Cedar Worm Bin (value \$105, a pound of worms and an educational



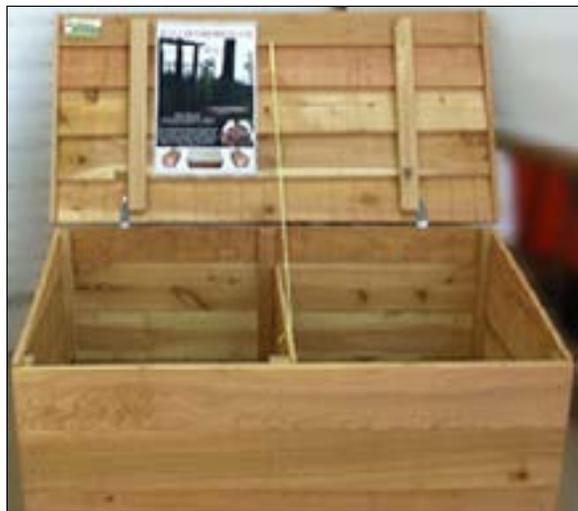
Good Photo

Caring and feeding instructions are posted next to the worm bin. Add at least two inches of manure from the plastic box after adding food or garden waste, then moisten with water.



Prescott photo

Linda Good's blue-ribbon compost at the fair. Her award of merit is pictured just below it.



A ticket for this worm bin will be drawn from the vermiculture seminar attendees May 21 at South Whidbey Tilth.

DVD, *Garbage to Gold*, total value \$135. Contact Angie, tah23@humboldt.edu, to register. Thanks for your interest in compost, vermiculture and gardening!

Note: During hot dry summers, to help conserve water one suggestion from Bayview Farm & Garden is to use mulch, which is a layer of material such as compost or wood chips, applied to the surface of an area of soil. This helps to conserve moisture and soil fertility.

Compost bins, from page 3

The bins are empty at the moment to allow repairs to the worm bin by Todd Spratt of BugaBay. In the future, please do not take worms for your own worm bin. Get your own supply from BugaBay or the Washington State University (WSU) Waste Wise program.

Tilth Community Gardeners will soon receive the 2017 agreement and must respond by March 31 to retain their plots. After that available plots will be open to new gardeners.

In early March the fence in the lower garden will be repaired. We'll be asking for volunteers to help or bring food for hungry laborers.

Market Season Volunteers

Consider signing up for several Sunday shifts this season to staff the community produce table, hospitality booth, or the Laughing Cat Beverage Bar. We also need restroom cleaners each week. Call 360-321-0757 or email market@southwhidbeytilth.org.

Home gardeners consider bringing extra produce to the South Whidbey Tilth Farmers' Market. We plan to have a "Community Produce" stand. You get 75 percent of sales. The volunteer who agrees to coordinate the booth that day receives 15 percent. Ten percent sales commission goes to Tilth.

Market Reconstruction March 18 at 10 a.m.

Much discussion happened at the January 14 Market committee meeting and at the February 25 Vendor meeting about redesigning the market site in order to address a concern that the market is too spread out or sprawling, and that customers would feel better in a more compact market area. Perhaps some aging structures should be dismantled, (the old, decrepit booth that Brian has been using in recent times is a possible candidate.) Saturday, March 18th at 10 a.m. is a work party to tidy up the area and possibly paint, repair and/or dismantle building(s). Opinions were offered as to which buildings to work on. It was suggested that an area above the pavilion be leveled for the musician stage.

Pruning for High Fruit Production



**Saturday, March 11
Noon to 2 p.m.**

South Whidbey Tilth Sustainability Campus
2812 Thompson Road, off SR 525

Instructor Gary Ingram
Cost \$15 ~ \$8 for Tilth members

Classroom and orchard training
best times to prune different types of trees
organic pest and disease control
fertilization • tree selection

Information or registration
707-498-9086 • tah23@humboldt.edu

Choosing the Best Garden Seeds and Sowing Methods for Our Climate



Sunday, March 19 • Noon to 2

South Whidbey Tilth Sustainability Campus
2812 Thompson Road, off SR 525 about 2 miles south of Freeland

\$15 for nonmembers
\$8 for South Whidbey Tilth members
additional \$5 - \$10 for trays of seedlings (optional)

Instructor Anza Muenchow
Local farmer and WSU Extension Island County
SNAP Education Coordinator

- Make your gardening more fun and more productive
- Choose the best seeds for our climate.
- Get those seeds to grow both indoors and outside.
- Trays and seeds available to plant during the class and take home



Preregistration is helpful, please contact
Tilth education: 707-498-9086 or tah23@humboldt.edu
www.southwhidbeytilth.org/garden.html

Join, Renew or Donate to Tilth's Projects

Join or renew your South Whidbey Tilth membership. A single household membership is \$25 and \$10 for each additional adult household member. One newsletter is mailed or emailed to each household. *Please list each member's name.* Enclose \$25 (for one) + ___ (number of additional household members x \$10) = \$ _____

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

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

25 South Whidbey Tilth Farmers' Market Vendor meeting, Saturday, 3 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church's Annex in Grigware Hall

MARCH

4 WSU Master Gardener Workshop, Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Oak Harbor High School, \$45; whidbeygardeningworkshop.org

11 Pruning Workshop, Saturday Noon to 2 p.m. at South Whidbey Tilth Sustainability Campus, 2812 Thompson Road

13 Whidbey Island Growers Association, Monday, 5:30 p.m. potluck, followed by topic of interest, Island Nordic Lodge, 63 Jacobs Road, Coupeville; to be contacted email kelsi@whidbeycd.org or call 360-678-4708

16 Business meeting, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church community building in the nursery; all members are welcome to participate

18 Farmers' Market Work Party, Saturday, 10 a.m., for details contact Michael at mjseraph@whidbey.net

19 Seed Starting Workshop, Sunday at Tilth, Noon to 2 p.m.

19 Tilth Film Night, Sunday, 6 p.m. potluck, screening (tentatively SEED: the untold story) at 7 p.m., R.S.V.P. for a place and directions: mark@movingimages.org or melissa@movingimages.org.

20, 21, 22 SEED the untold story, 7:30 p.m., Monday through Wednesday at the Clyde Theatre

APRIL

Earth and Ocean Month, all of April, look for action and service activities at www.whidbeyearthday.org

11 or 14 Business meeting (Changed this month only) at 6:30 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church community building in the nursery; all members are welcome to participate, contact Prescott for details, 360-682-8642 or president@southwhidbeytilth.org

22 Whidbey Earth and Ocean Action Day, Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Bayview Hall, www.whidbeyearthday.org

30 South Whidbey Tilth Farmers' Market begins, continuing every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

ONGOING

Work day Tuesday mornings 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Tilth

Note: the minutes of the monthly business meetings of the South Whidbey Tilth Council of Trustees are posted on its website, www.southwhidbeytilth.org. Select "About" from the menu and scroll to the bottom of that page.

Free Range News is an emailed listserve of timely information about local and regional agricultural events by Christine Williams. Subscribe for free at cwilliam@whidbey.com.

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SOUTH WHIDBEY TILTH ASSOCIATION

Post Office Box 252
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