Market season has started and we’re off to a great start. The South Whidbey Tilth Farmers’ Market opened for its 47th season on April 29 with our very own first Annual Nettle Festival. J.C. May had tossed those words about at a council meeting back in November. Being asked to be the market committee chair back then, I thought it was a good — nay, great? — idea and ran with it. South Whidbey Tilth’s mission is to promote environmentally sound and sustainable agriculture. Not only that, but I think a big part of Tilth is the connection with the land and Earth in general. While nettles aren’t exactly a commonly farmed vegetable crop, they certainly are a wonderful wild-harvested food and medicine source. And they can actually be a component of sustainable agriculture as a fertilizer. Such an event speaks to Tilth’s connection to the natural world and its mission to be environmentally-sound land stewards. And it helped promote the Market! With wonderful presenters, the day really was a great draw. Julie Charette Nunn spoke to the herbal and shamanic medicine side of things. Then Bryn McAfee imparted her knowledge of making cordage out of nettle fiber. The annual maypole winding was also a great hit with a wonderful turnout of the students and families of Island Strings playing the beat for those wrapping the ribbons around the maypole. Sample tastes of nettle recipes including soup, pestos and tea were laid out with recipe fliers to take home. Thank you to everyone who attended and to those who helped make it possible!

We have some wonderful new vendors this year. David Prisbrey and Leah Claire are leasing land at Tilth and growing and selling vegetables as Old School Market Farm. They are also planning to build a farm stand at Tilth later in the season. Nadine Weatherby of the Buzzmobile Café is dropping in to sell fair-trade espresso drinks, iced Italian sodas and more. Blackberry Moon Farm returns with raw local honey, pastured pork, local artisanal cheeses from Appel Farms in Ferndale, Washington, and their own goat’s milk soap. Maha Farm and Forest return with their high quality produce and plant starts. Full Cycle Farm attended the first market with an abundance of lush plant starts and early spring produce. The Community Produce Booth is back selling participants’ organically-grown excess produce. Check out page 5 of the Market Policy for more information at www.southwhidbeytilth.org/market.html.
President’s Message: Council Updates

Last winter, I was elected as president of South Whidbey Tilth to serve at least another year. The nominating committee worked hard and succeeded in filling most of the five available positions. In a process to develop leadership skills, each council member has agreed to facilitate one of the monthly business meetings this year. They are also spending more time working with their committees outside of business meetings.

We reelected FRed Rouge to position 2, Kirstin Clauson to position 4 and Ida Gianopulos to position 6. FRed chose to continue in the vice president role, Kirstin is the new chair of the market committee and Ida is continuing as land steward chair. The council is still looking for someone to be secretary. I will take notes and file organizational papers while others are facilitating meetings, but I still have a lot to do to oversee the organization.

Edward Hueneke, Andréa Linton and Angie Hart are in the second year of their two-year terms.

I’m impressed by how committed the current council is to solving problems and clarifying policy.

We will be looking for a candidate to be our intern/apprentice in the coming year. Ideally that person should be on board by March to help prepare the Farmers’ Market season.

We considered eleven candidates this year, but for various reasons we didn’t find the right person. We stopped the search on June 1 and will keep the funds raised for the future.

Happily Kirstin Clauson has agreed to contract as the 2018 Farmers’ Market manager. She has the experience and enthusiasm to do the job well.

Join us for monthly business meetings to learn what we do and how you can help us serve our community more effectively. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m on the Tilth campus through August.
South Whidbey Tilth Newsletter – Spring 2018

Tilth Membership Moves to a Common Annual Renewal Date

by Andréa Linton, membership chair

Conserving resources includes conserving the time of our volunteers. Currently the Tilth membership renewal plan requires monthly monitoring, monthly renewal notice generation, then follow through with member renewals. To conserve volunteer time spent on the membership renewal process the South Whidbey Tilth membership committee has proposed that membership renewals be moved to a single, yearly membership drive. This proposal has been accepted by the Council; we would now like to share the transition process with you.

In May you should have received an annual membership renewal letter. The committee will have prorated your current membership and will ask you to renew at a one-time adjusted membership charge. Your renewed membership will then run from June 2018 to June 2019. Then, in June of 2019, another annual membership renewal drive will begin but at the regular level of $25 per person, plus $10 for each additional adult household member. This will achieve our goal of having only one membership renewal date.

The council will be reviewing the membership dues rate during the next year. Please contact the membership committee if you have suggestions at membership@southwhidbeytilth.org.

Getting Ready for Fair Time

The Whidbey Island Area Fair Premium Books are published already. Let’s start planning our entries for the Agriculture Department now. The entry date for perishables is Tuesday, July 17.

South Whidbey Tilth is managing the department with the Deer Lagoon Grange again. We’re looking for volunteers to help clean up the Burrier building before fair time. We especially need volunteers to accept entries and judges. The Agriculture Department includes vegetables, fruits, herbs, grains and grasses, honey, compost and more. During the four days of the fair, July 19 to 22, stewards are needed. You’ll be contacted later to sign up for a shift. As a steward you get into the fair free on the day you volunteer.

The Tilth education committee is working on an educational display featuring the importance of soil carbon sequestration and how individuals and agribusiness can make a difference in the fight against climate change. Some research resources include the books Grass, Soil, Hope by Courtney White, The Soil Will Save Us by Kristin Ohlson, Cows Save the Plant: And Other Improbable Ways of Restoring Soil to Heal the Earth by Judith Schwartz, and Growing a Revolution by David R. Montgomery. Get involved and learn by contacting Angie Hart at education@southwhidbeytilth.org.

Go to the Whidbey Island Area Fair website, fair.whidbeyislandfair.com, for more information.
South Whidbey Acoustic Music Festival, June 24

The ninth annual Acoustic Music Festival on South Whidbey hits the stage at the South Whidbey Tilth Farmers’ Market at 11 a.m. on Sunday, June 24. Market hours are extended until 4 or 5 p.m. There will be coolers with ice so customers can label and store their produce purchases. Watch for more information in coming weeks. We could use some extra help setting up, taking donations for musicians, staffing the Laughing Cat and such. The musical lineup is Bekah Zachritz, the Hoe and the Harrow, Toni Talia Marcus and Andre Feriante, Rick Van der Kam. More information is on Facebook; look for South Whidbey Acoustic Music Festival.

South Whidbey Tilth Farmers’ Market Survey

by Janet Richards

In January, South Whidbey Tilth launched a market survey. We wanted to understand who comes to our farmers’ market and why, so that the Market can continue to support and grow our community.

We had 104 responses — a big thank-you to all of you who responded.

Over a third of the respondents come to the Market almost every week. Another third come at least once during the season. The rest come monthly.

Mainly people come to the Market for produce, to support local farmers and economy, and for the community. The most common wish was to see more produce at the Market. The idea of a “Taste of the Week” — information about preparing a particular fruit or vegetable — was also popular.

Most people find the Sunday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. time of the Market convenient, so there is no move to change this. Even so, we are considering extending the Market to 3 p.m. starting June 17. A majority (59 percent) thought they would attend an additional weekday evening market in the summer.

An enthusiastic group was interested in promoting and improving the Community Produce stall. Currently this stall is available for anyone in the community to bring produce.

We have plans to build a new farm stand just outside the Tilth entrance so that produce from local farmers can be continuously available for sale.

There were many good ideas about how to promote the Market. We have posted signs on the highway about a quarter- to a half-mile from Thompson Road. (Thank you to Alison and Mike Deilke and Bayview Vision Clinic for allowing us to post on your land.) Also, fliers about events happening at the Market are posted on bulletin boards and in the local press.

A smaller, but enthusiastic group of respondents were interested in promoting and improving the Community Produce stall. Currently this stall is available in the Market for anyone in the community to bring produce. A volunteer will handle the selling.

We have introduced a “Taste of the Week” event at every Market to tie together local produce, healthy eating, and community.

Finally, thank you to the volunteers who put in time to maintain and repair the Tilth site to make it market-ready. On April 22, many Tilth members came to put on the finishing touches — mowing, painting, weeding, scrubbing and fixing. It was a lively “spring cleaning.”

A thriving market relies on ongoing volunteer effort. If you can spend some time to help put some of these great ideas into practice, please email the Market Manager, Kirstin Clauson at market@southwhidbeytilth.org.

Shared Incubator Commercial Kitchen:

Goosefoot continues to make progress in developing a shared incubator commercial kitchen to meet the needs of value-added producers and to assist in small business incubation. In May 2017, Goosefoot and the Port of South Whidbey signed a memo of understanding to collaborate on expanding the Coffman Building commercial kitchen at the fairgrounds, add new equipment and undergo necessary renovations. An architect for the renovations has been selected. Once the Port has received project cost estimates, a contract with Goosefoot will be signed.

A Food Forest at Tilth

A new project was hatched this spring on the Tilth land by a group with a special interest in permaculture design. It has been evolving over this past winter. Several years ago the Calyx School created a garden on the land that incorporated a number of permaculture design principles. The garden had been nurtured in recent years by Mary Alice Kois, the mother of Lisa and grandmother of Aaliyah. She was also known to many of us in Tilth and was a frequent visitor to our Farmers’ Market. She died in a tragic accident almost two years ago, and a number of us already think that the new food forest ought to bear her name.

This spring we had the arrival on south Whidbey of Netsah and Michael Zylinsky, long time Tilth members and permaculturalists. They are best known to us as the organizers and designers of the Imagine Permaculture Food Forest on Bayshore Drive near the Island Transit bus station in Oak Harbor. They were looking for an opportunity to carry on with their work here on the south end of the island, just at the time when some of us were turning our attention to the Calyx garden. It had languished over the past year in the absence of Mary Alice.

This spring a group of us formally launched the project with the initial design plan drawn up by Netsah and with a notice for help to the Tilth membership, see the garden page on the South Whidbey Tilth website.

Ariel Childers and Aaliyah Kois of Calyx, the Zylinskys and a number of Tilth volunteers began meeting every Thursday morning at the site. Netsah, in consultation with our work group, issued a call for trees and shrubs for the first stage of development of the design, including apple, pear, peach, apricot, nectarine, plums, sweet red cherry, mulberry and fig. Donations came in just after the message went out, including a $250 cash donation.

Most of the trees have been planted as have many of the secondary shrubs, such as Rugosa rose, aronia and pomegranate. The garden will also incorporate some nitrogen-fixing plants and trees, such as locust and Autumn olive, Indigo bush, Mountain mahogany, grapes and others. The greatest concern at the moment is keeping the new plantings well watered as the warm, dry weather comes on. The irrigation system in the garden is in the process of being repaired. Weeding, mulching, watering and some planting will be ongoing through the summer and into fall. If you would like to learn more about food forests and help with some of the work, contact Netsah at 360-765-3420.

Chickens at Tilth

Three new chickens were settled into their remodeled home as of late February. Tom Vincent built an addition to the coop that is also a good fit for human caretaking. We could use at least two more people to sign up to do Saturday, Sunday or Thursday. It’s a pretty simple process, and the volunteer gets the eggs on the day of their duty. The girls are laying well right now, and with some supervision we have been able to let them range free at times.

Chicken care basically involves making sure the birds have food and water, sweeping poop and dirty straw on the shelf into a can and putting clean straw down.

Those who have volunteered so far are Linda Good for Monday, Phil Prior for Tuesday, Kirstin Clauson for Wednesday, Prescott for Thursday and Tom Vincent for Friday. Some of us are filling in for Sunday and Saturday, so we welcome a volunteer. Contact information for each person is inside the chicken house door, or leave a message at 360-321-0757.
Crafters and artisans include MJ and Audri Cooke of FarmART selling MJ’s amazing pet portraiture as well as hand-dyed and spun llama and alpaca yarn. Saint’s Flowers brings wooden serving boards, games, birdhouses, plant starts and flowers. Ba-de-ah is bringing her beautiful beaded jewelry, skilled rock paintings and decorative gift bags. Louise Holloway-Stanley has a beautiful array of items including lavender sachets, original framed paintings, pillows, plant starts and more. Joanne and Alex Martinis are bringing eye-poppingly gorgeous floral bouquets and lots of fun tie-dye t-shirts to choose from. The Herbal Workshop returns with all natural, organic herbal bar soaps. Grandpa Rufus is dropping in with his unique and beautiful hand-painted spinner toys — which also come with some magically scientific learning lessons.

Chef Edward is in the pavilion cooking up his super yummy brunch and lunch. The Laughing Cat Café is serving delicious organic scones and, of course, hot organic coffee and other beverages. Lesedi Specialty African Foods returned at the end of May to serve up their beloved samosas and other concessions extraordinaire!

We had a wonderful demo by previous intern and market manager Angie Hart on sprouting. New events for the market are getting added to the calendar weekly. We welcome anyone who has skills to share to come share them at the Market! Also new to the Market is the “Taste of the Week” table. Every week a produce item will be featured with samples and recipes to share and take home. A midweek Market is in the planning stages for Wednesday evenings in July and August.

Every Sunday is a glorious day at the Market. Fun, friends, music, good food and shopping. We always look forward to spending the afternoon on the market green. All while supporting the local economy. Thank you for coming, and we look forward to a fun, enriching season. You make it possible!

Adopt a Project

Sisters Paula and Janet Richards moved to Whidbey with their father, Roy, last summer and began working with Tom Vincent on Tilth’s forest understory trail.

Once that project was finished they learned about the “Adopt a Plot” idea. Paula chose to clean up the overgrown turnaround on the driveway where the scarecrow birdfeeder is. She hacked back and pruned the wild Nootka rose bushes and found a Washington hawthorn to replace the ones that had died in the center. She also installed camas, coastal strawberry, Oregon sunshine and several other plants.

The entrance to the Tilth campus is another focus this year. The intention is to beautify the area and create a kiosk to explain all the features on the 11-plus acres. Pete and Mokihana removed and reinstalled the fencing to the gate so the entrance is more inviting. Pete moved the sign so traffic visibility is safer. Land steward Ida Gianopulos has led work parties to clean up lumber, old pots and debris in the front. Tom Grant and Pete have rebuilt an additional tool shed so the other shed can hold some of the gasoline-powered equipment. Lots of other ideas are in progress.

Anyone intrigued by possibilities are welcome to share ideas...or just get your hands dirty by cleaning up the driveway planted areas. We gather to work most Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Grand Opening, from page 1

Share What You Know at the Market

Do you have a special food/farming/gardening/homesteading and/or crafts skill you would like to share this year at the Market?

We are looking for educational activities and events at the Market and thought we’d look no further than our very talented membership.

If you or someone you know has skills such as:

- Food or beverage fermentation
- Pickling
- Sprouting
- Any other kind of fresh food processing
- Cooking, baking, raw food
- Herbal knowledge
- Arts and crafts for both adults and kids
- Any gardening, farming or homesteading related topics
- Movement classes
- What else??!

Let us know with an email to Kirstin at market@southwhidbeytilth.org or Angie at education@southwhidbeytilth.org.
Bee Swarms Are Repopulating the Hives

During the late winter, beekeeper Ziva Naphtali, noticed that the bees in the four hives she keeps in the Tilth orchard had died. She said, “They were alive in January, but gone by the beginning of March. A lot of losses this year have been reported from other beekeepers too.” Ziva has had the hives at Tilth for seven years now and has never lost 100 percent like this year. She hadn’t even bought bees for four years as there were always bees in the hives.

She says, “The loss is a mystery right now. I know they were active in February. They still had food in the hives then, but I gave them more food anyway just as a precaution. I know they didn’t starve because the hives still have honey and/or the feed I gave them in February. Also, there were no dead bees, head first, in cells which is a sign of starvation.”

She noted that Tilth seems to attract swarms, and if anyone sees a swarm, call or text Dan Maxwell of the Whidbey Beekeepers Association at 425-894-8610. Or contact Ziva at 360-531-0647.

During a work party in April, Prescott noticed activity in one of the hives and contacted Ziva who later confirmed that a hive was, indeed, occupied by a new swarm.

By the middle of May, Ziva visited Tilth to see if another swarm had moved into another empty hive. It had. She’d noticed the previous week that that particular hive had the most scouts checking it out. She added, “the hive that only had a few scouts checking it out last Saturday lost the ‘vote’ so it is still empty. But swarm season is not over yet. It’s fascinating to see honeybee democracy at work!” There is a good book, Honeybee Democracy, by Cornell University researcher Tom Seeley.

Most of the Warré-style hives at Tilth also have wasp guards across the entrances, in the form of screened boxes. They help keep mice out too.
Caretakers’ Culture

We built our Vardo for Two to be part of an envisioned community where our way of life and our disabilities and sensitivities become understood and embraced; by befriending time, we have found how long it takes to give-and-take and create understanding and shared resources...

The season has moved from winter to spring and with that shift, the bare limbs have unfurled a glorious pallet of leaf-color, and pollen excites the air with fertility ...and challenges us allergy-prone humans; swallows have nested and their fledglings fill the sky above us with airborne acrobatics; and we move from a virtual solitary winter world-of-two-on-the-prairie to a full range of people activity and change.

The role and culture of caretakers is an evolving one here on the South Whidbey Tilth campus, calling for mindful, and sometimes, messy communications to reach respectful solutions.

We learn to create understanding about multiple chemical sensitivities with the needs of many members who wish to share space and time, while balancing the needs of the land and beings other than humans who are here all the time. Above all else this place is a place of learning and that takes patience.

In early April to prepare for the Farmers’ Market opening, we worked on the entrance, enhancing the look and feel of the boundaries both up front and in the parking area. Mindful construction and ceremony — asking for permission before beginning work and giving thanks when we were done — are integral factors in being respectful of the land, the ancestors and spirit of this place. As an indigenous woman, I practice ceremony day in and day out as part of the give and take of being present.

The subtle yet welcoming change to the entrance leaves space for a future farmstand to the left for selling Tilth-grown fresh produce later in the season and an information kiosk.

The Community Gardens are a place of vibrant and diverse growth. What an incredible gift to be tending a small patch of earth among such soulful neighbors.

Many more photos from a morning walk in the Community Garden can be found on Mokihana’s blog http://vardofortwo2.blogspot.com/2018/05/soulful-neighbors.html by Mokihana Calizar

Editor’s note: Mokihana Calizar and Pete Little are living on the Tilth as caretakers for the campus, learning what that means by negotiating with this community to respectfully share and maintain a kitchen, the two bathrooms, the land and the common spaces near the market area and community gardens. Mokihana has severe MCS (multiple chemical sensitivities) and the best approach to understanding what that means is to communicate with her and Pete. Ask them face-to-face whenever possible or email to clarify and create boundaries, intention and mutually agreed upon responsibilities. Contact Pete at dpete@hotmail.com or Mokihana at mokihanacalizar@gmail.com.
Learn How to Save Lives, June 11

The Whidbey Island Growers Association meeting is hosting the Central Whidbey Fire and Rescue District staff for a one-hour “hands only” cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training class on Monday, June 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Nordic Lodge at 63 Jacobs Road in Coupeville. This is a great opportunity to become trained in an important skill that could very well save someone’s life either on or off the farm or farmers’ market. The class follows the regular potluck.

Anyone who would like to carpool with Prescott, contact her at prscot@whidbey.net or call 360-682-8642.

Whidbey Island Growers Association meetings are every second Monday of each month, thanks to the staff of the Whidbey Island Conservation District.

Join Us or Renew and Choose a Project

MEMBERSHIP  I 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) = $__________

COMMITTEE AND PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

☐ I want to join the Council of Trustees and am interested in serving as _____________________________

☐ Education ___ I can teach a class about _____________________________

☐ I want to help plan programs and lectures

☐ Development: I can help with the following ___ grant writing, ___ data entry, ___ planning,
☐ ___ coordinating an event ______________________; I will help with events like raffles, plant sales, Laughing Cat, etc.

☐ Land Stewardship ___ I am knowledgeable about county codes, ___ I can help with landscaping

☐ I want to help with _____________________________

I have the following skills: ___plumbing, ___electrical, ___ carpentry, ___ other _____________________________

☐ Market ___ I want to join the Market Committee, ___ I’m interested in building a booth with someone

☐ I am also a Tilth market vendor  ☐ I wish to be a Tilth market vendor, send me more information.

☐ Membership and Community Relations ___ I am interested in writing for the newsletter or doing promotions,

☐ Developing social events for members, ___ helping with mailings, ___ joining the committee to plan, ___ website development or maintenance, ___ social media posting, ___ photo archive

☐ I can contribute ___ hours a month, on weekdays (list days) _________________ weekends _________________

☐ 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 ___________________Cell ___________________________  I want to receive: ☐ email updates ☐ newsletter online

Please mail to: South Whidbey Tilth Association, P.O. Box 252, Langley, Washington 98260 or visit www.southwhidbeytilth.org/membership.html
**JUNE**

- **Membership Renewal Month for all South Whidbey Tilth members**
- **10 Woody Virgil** performs pop, rock, blues and country at the Tilth Farmers’ Market, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday
- **11 Whidbey Island Growers Association potluck**, 6:30 p.m., Nordic Hall, 63 Jacobs Road, Coupeville; featuring CPR training
- **16 Whidbey Island Garden Tour**, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, more information at wigt.org
- **17 Grant Fairbrother**, local singer/songwriter, performs at the Tilth Farmers’ Market, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday
- **24 South Whidbey Acoustic Music Festival**, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday at the Tilth Farmers’ Market, market hours are extended
- **19 Business meeting**, Tuesday at 6 p.m. at Tilth Campus to celebrate Tilth’s 36th birthday afterward; all members are welcome to participate, contact president@southwhidbeytilth.org or call 360-321-0757 for more information
- **26 Garden Guide Discussion Group**, Tuesday at 6 p.m. at South Whidbey Tilth

**JULY**

- **1 Ron Fowler performs rock ‘n’ roll** at the Tilth Farmers’ Market, Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **8 Danny Ward performs on his saxophone** at the Tilth Farmers’ Market, Sunday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **9 Whidbey Island Grown Association potluck**, Monday at 6:30 p.m., Nordic Lodge, 63 Jacobs Road
- **15 Garden Creature Workshop** with Deer Lagoon Grange, Sunday at the Tilth Farmers’ Market, children get Grange Bux to purchase weird vegetables and fruits to make a sculpture for the Fair
- **17 Enter perishables in the Fair**, help register entries and judge, Tuesday 1 to 7 p.m., Burrier Annex
- **19 Business Meeting**, Thursday, 6 p.m. at South Whidbey Tilth; all members are welcome to participate
- **19 to 22 Whidbey Island Area Fair**, Thursday through Sunday, fair.whidbeyislandfair.com
- **22 DJ Shanti and Audri Cooke perform** at the Tilth Farmers’ Market 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday
- **23 Tilth newsletter deadline**, send photos, articles, suggestions to prscot@whidbey.net

**ONGOING**

- **South Whidbey Tilth Farmers’ Market**, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Sunday through October 7
- **Thursday Work Party**, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at South Whidbey Tilth Campus, call for specifics, 360-321-0757