

<http://sandpoint.org/bcmastergardeners/>

# The Garden Gate

March 8, 2005



## Home and Garden Show

March 12-13 at Bonner Mall

Presenters will include:

Saturday 11 a.m.

Jennifer Costich-Thompson

**Starting Seeds Indoors**

Saturday 1:30 pm - Rich del Carlo

**Spring Pruning for the Home Gardener**

Sunday 1 pm - Nancy Hastings,

All Seasons Nursery

**Hanging Baskets**

Schedule of Booth Volunteers:

Friday 3 - 5 pm Booth Setup

Bill Lamson, Don Childress, Penny Barton,  
Rae Charlton

Saturday 10 am - 2 pm

Jennifer Costich-Thompson, Sylvia  
Hirning, Valle Novak

Saturday 2 pm - 5 pm

Joyce Lane, Mary Bruhjell, Barb Moore

Sunday 1 pm - 2:30 pm

Marj Carlson and Rae Charlton

Sunday 2 - 5 pm End & Booth Cleanup

Janae Dale, Bill Lamson, Don Childress

Call Penny Barton 265 9733 if questions.



## **GSI - Garden Scene**

**Investigation: A course in pest diagnosis and management**

This course covers insects and mites, infectious diseases, and abiotic (environmental) diseases and will focus on the pest

and beneficial organisms that call your garden their home. You will learn diagnostic methods will help you distinguish one pest from another, and friend from foe. Pest management will emphasize an integrated approach and low-impact treatments. There will be a heavy emphasis on live material and hands-on learning.

The course is offered on Wednesdays from **April 27 - June 8**.

Two sections are offered:

Mornings 9:00 - 12:00; or

Afternoons 1:30 - 4:30.

Classes will be held at the Extension Office. **Call Patti to sign up - 263-8511.**

Fee is \$40 (\$28 if you already have a good hand lens). This course is being offered to Master Gardeners first, but empty spaces will be opened to the general public after March 15. **Call Now!**



## MONTHLY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Hi: I'm **Gail Swan** - newly elected to the Master Gardeners Board of Directors. I graduated from the program in 2004. I am relatively new to Sandpoint; I retired from my lengthy career as an Operating Room Nurse in 2001 and moved here shortly thereafter.

My husband and I are skiers (we met on a ski hill in Washington), and we spent several ski seasons looking for the perfect place to retire. We started skiing at Schweitzer about ten years ago and really loved it here. My sister and her husband ski with us and wanted to retire in the same place, so they came out to see what the area was like and gave their approval. We all bought property in Sandpoint and are definitely here to stay. I've been into some kind of gardening most of my life - veggies as a

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kid growing up on a farm in Wisconsin, and then mostly house plants - lots of them, including orchids. I got into yard gardening, ornamentals mostly, when I got married and had my own yard. Rhodies and azaleas do very well in Western Washington so I planted lots of each in our huge yard.

I wanted to take the Master Gardeners class here so I could learn about what grows here in North Idaho and also to learn what the problems are. I've gotten much more than that - I've met lots of really nice people and made many new and interesting friends. Now I'm in the process of re-doing my entire yard here so I have several years of entertainment ahead of me!

I hope to meet those of you who read this at some of the Master Gardener events. \*\*\*

Directory and Scrapbook report from Gail - Currently there are 32 certified MG's, 10 associate members, 3 emeritus. Patti will be asked to type the directory again. Jan brought scrapbooks and materials to turn over to Gail.

Bake Sales and Plant Clinic - Bill Lamson May 7 and June 4 at the Farmers' Market for four hours each day. It will require at least two people for each shift to sell baked goods and to answer plant clinic questions.

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Alternative Schools report from Jan and Barb - Jan has met with the teacher at LPO and is arranging for some local presenters to teach classes. Bob volunteered to teach a class on greenhouse sanitation. The school is planning to add new fans to the greenhouse. Barb is checking on a curriculum being used in Post Falls and is helping with setting up the greenhouse at Priest River alternative high school.

Plant Sale report from Judith - LPOHS wants to run their sale for a week, possibly two, including Saturdays May 21 and May 28. MG's will conduct their plant sale on May 21 and leave what is left, if anything, for the HS to sell. Contributors will be asked to give attention to presentation of their donations and encouraged to label all plants for sale. It was suggested that the area be decorated in advance to advertise the sale.

### Mickinnick Trail Update

Work is progressing on the Mickinnick Trail. About half of the trail has been cleared, although it is not yet open to the public. The parking lot and vault toilet have been installed by the City of Sandpoint.

The Landscape Committee of the Native Plant Society will begin planning the landscaping of the berm at their March meeting. A planting date of late spring or early summer is anticipated. To volunteer contact

Ann Wimberley 264-5379 or  
[afwim@yahoo.com](mailto:afwim@yahoo.com)

Home Horticulture Classes report from Don - The committee is working on a mission statement, and one part is to augment the Master Gardener treasury. It was discussed, voted upon, and passed that everyone, including MG's will pay \$10 per class. Classes will be held in the classroom of the extension office 6-8 pm every other Wednesday. Valle has some presenters lined up for the Spring session.

April 6 - Dianne Green, Garden and Companion Planting (facilitator, Barb)

April 20 - Laurie Brown, Seed Propagation (facilitator, Janae)

May 4 - Berries and Small Fruits by Joe Runk

May 18 - open

June 1 - Loie DeLa Vergne, Perennial Flowers

June 14 - Landscaping with Shrubs and Perennials by Kirk Johnson

June 29 - Lois Wythe, Herbs, Edible and Ornamental

The cost of handouts was discussed. MG will try to absorb the cost, to be paid from the fee. If the handouts are expensive, the cost of the class may be increased.

### Garden Tour from Barbara Moore

Sunday, June 26. Signs from last year will need to be updated. Committee will select the gardens to be used. Single sheet information handouts including addresses of each site will be available for posting and distributing at various nurseries, etc., with tickets to be sold at office and perhaps one nursery just before the tour. Tickets will be available at each garden site. The committee is considering getting sponsors to be listed on the tickets to help defray costs. May purchase gifts for each garden owner.

### To recertify this year

requires 18 total hours:  
clinic, 9;  
community service, 4;  
education, 3;  
other, 2.

Bob Wilson stated that those taking the advanced class will be required to do another 6 hours at the plant clinic. The number of MG's at the plant clinic will be changed from 3 to 2 for each session. There will be a shortage of people this year because there is no regular class.

The advanced MG class has six people signed up so far. The seven sessions include pest identification and management. The class will be advertised to the general public in mid-March. If not enough people sign up for two classes, they will be combined to one class.

### Upcoming conferences

**Small Farms Conference** - March 18-19 in Moscow

**Special Gardening in the Rockies Conference** - April 14-16 in Casper, Wyoming

**2005 International Master Gardener Conference July 24-27**

Every other year an international Master Gardener conference is held. This summer the Saskatchewan Master Gardeners in conjunction with the University of Saskatchewan are hosting the event in Saskatoon. This coincides with the Province of Saskatchewan's centennial celebration, so you can be sure this will be a top notch event. Two keynote speakers will be featured. David Tarrant, who is on the staff of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, is the author of several books, and is the former host of CBC TV's *Canadian Gardener*, will be speaking on *A Global Look at Gardens*. David Cavagnaro, both an avid photographer and horticulturist (what a great combination) will be talking about heirloom plants in his presentation - *Gardener's Legacy - A Heritage of Plants*. There is a terrific selection of classes (many are repeated so you don't have to skip one to see another) demonstrations and tours. Also, there are some very interesting pre-conference tours available as well. I have catalogs at the extension office if anyone is interested in going. I know I am.

Bob

For registration and class information

[www.mastergardener2005.usask.ca](http://www.mastergardener2005.usask.ca)

## Waterlife Discovery Center

The Landscape Committee of the Native Plant Society plans to re-evaluate the plantings done last fall with the help of the Master Gardeners at The Waterlife Discovery Center. A planting date to add more plants will be set for late spring or early summer. Contact Ann Wimberley if you wish to volunteer.

## Master Gardeners' Plant Sale

May 21

When you are planting seedlings this spring, please plant a few extra for the sale. As you work on your yard, moving and replacing plants, please remember to pot up unwanted plants. The income from the plant sale is important to our annual budget, so please keep in mind that presentation does make a difference in how well it will sell, and it is very important that plants be identified with some kind of label. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Judith Pagliasotti at 255-2961.

## Master Gardeners Board Meeting

Next Meeting April 5, Tuesday, 9am  
At the Extension Office ... Everyone welcome

Master Gardeners! Newsletter gardening tips for our April edition please email me at [packriverorganics@norlight.org](mailto:packriverorganics@norlight.org) Thanks, Brenda Fletcher, secretary

## *Organic Matter in the Home Landscape*

*Bob Wilson, Extension Educator/Horticulture*

The value of organic matter in the soil has long been appreciated. The avid vegetable gardener invariably is an avid composter as well, working loads of well rotted leaves, manure and other nutrient-rich products into the ground every spring before sowing their precious seeds. This is not a new idea, but it is how plants were

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## Activities/Calendar plus..

March 12 & 13 - Bonner Mall Home & Garden Show  
Baskets, barrels downtown Sandpoint - Jan Rumore  
April - Plant Clinic sign-up  
April 6 through June 29 - Spring Home  
Horticulture Classes (SHHC) - Don Childress & Valle Novak  
April 6 -SHHC - Diane Green, Garden & Companion Planting  
April 20 -SHHC - Laurie Brown, Seed propagation  
April 27 through June 8 -  
Master Gardener Advanced Classes  
May 4 SHHC - Berries and Small Fruit by Joe Runk  
May 7 Bake Sale at Farmers Market -  
Bill Lamson & Pat Moss  
May 18 - SHHC  
May 21 Plant Sale  
June 1 SHHC - Loie DeLa Vergne, Perennial Flowers  
June 4 Bake Sale at Farmers Market  
June 14 SHHC - Landscaping with Shrubs and Perennials by Kirk Johnson  
June 26 Garden Tour - Barb Moore & Rae Charlton  
June 29 SHHC - Lois Wythe, Herbs, edible & ornamental  
July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade - Sue Lopez  
September - November - Fall Home Horticulture series  
Don Childress & Valle Novak  
August - Bonner County Fair booth -  
Penny Barton & Pat Moss  
October 7 Harvest Party, seed and plant exchange  
December 9 Christmas Party

as of 03/9/2005

fertilized before the advent of chemical fertilizers in the 1940's. Even the USDA's 1957 Yearbook of Agriculture featuring soils had this to say:

"It is easy to touch a match to stubble in autumn to get a clean, bare field for plowing. But a farmer, when he does that, may be creating his own little dust bowl. The city dweller, who has an urge for neatness and a liking for the smell of burning leaves, does not always recognize the value of the organic materials he is destroying. These protective coverings and soil improvers, so freely given, cannot be purchased in a store."

Although the benefits of soil organic matter are well documented in the annals of science, discoveries in recent years have begun to unveil the mysteries shrouding the activity that goes on beneath our feet. For years, the physical and chemical properties of soils were measured and studied, and the soil microorganisms, the real life in our soils, was given only occasional mention. Now a new field of soil ecology is helping us begin to understand the role and value that this miniature web of life has kept hidden for so long. Soil microbes not only help break down organic material, but can improve the root systems of our plants, make hard to get nutrients more available, help defend plants against soil pathogens, and improve the health and vigor of our plants.

*Every tablespoon of soil contains billions of microorganisms!*

Some of these curious microorganisms are called mycorrhizae (meaning fungus-root). These are fungi that grow around and through roots, but do not cause disease. Instead, they work with the plant to extend their root systems. They help the plant acquire water and scarce nutrients and in return are provided with energy and nutrients from the plant in a mutually beneficial relationship. Plants with a healthy mycorrhizal association are not only healthier, but more drought-tolerant as well. Very few plants have been discovered that don't form these relationships. Other soil microbes are now grown and marketed as soil improvers, from compost starter, mycorrhizal inoculants, to disease preventers and nematodes which attack soil insects.

In a vegetable garden, where the soil is amended, turned and fluffed to create the perfect bed, it is easy to work in abundant organic materials. But in the landscape, in amongst the trees and shrubs where the soil is not worked annually, how do you improve soil organic matter? The example to follow lies only as far away as the nearest forested stand. In the wild, trees coat the ground with fallen needles, leaves and twigs that sift down from the canopy above. Over time this becomes a blanket in various stages of decay. As organic molecules separate, some are washed down into the upper soil layer, turning it to a rich, dark-chocolate brown. As a gardener, adding organic mulches around your trees and shrubs is the best way to enrich the soil without disturbing it.

Prior to planting a landscape, there is the opportunity to build up soil organic matter, but unless you are willing to improve large areas, it is possible to do more harm than good. Recent research suggests that tree roots do not move easily across changes in soil type. Thus, if you add organic matter to the planting hole, roots may have difficulty growing out into the native soil once they reach the edge of the hole. Only by tilling in organic matter over a larger area do you avoid this problem. And if you aren't going to do a large area, then it is best to backfill the planting hole with unamended soil. And don't forget to mulch. A 2-4" layer of mulch will last for several years. Mulch should be kept at least 6" from tree trunks to avoid moisture retention here or provide habitat for chewing rodents which can strip the bark.

In every way possible, consider where you can add mulch, whether it is simply leaving fallen leaves in place, or adding wood chips or straw, to composting; adding these precious materials will provide a long-lasting benefit to the health of your landscape as well as reduce weeds and conserve soil moisture. Every bag of leaves or grass clippings that goes to the dump is a resource squandered.

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**Master Gardener 2005 CONTACT #'s...**

- |                                |          |  |
|--------------------------------|----------|--|
| ○ President - Barb Moore       | 263-7236 | <a href="mailto:togetmom@hotmail.com">togetmom@hotmail.com</a>                     |
| ○ Vice President - Bill Lamson | 263-3799 | <a href="mailto:lamson@sandpoint.net">lamson@sandpoint.net</a>                     |
| ○ Secretary - Brenda Fletcher  | 265-7944 | <a href="mailto:packriverorganics@norlight.org">packriverorganics@norlight.org</a> |
| ○ Treasurer - Penny Barton     | 265-9733 | <a href="mailto:onecent@surfmk.com">onecent@surfmk.com</a>                         |
| ○ Board Member - Janae Dale    | 265-2205 | <a href="mailto:jjdale@coldreams.com">jjdale@coldreams.com</a>                     |
| ○ Board Member - Sue Lopez     | 263-1949 | <a href="mailto:seniorl@coldreams.com">seniorl@coldreams.com</a>                   |
| ○ Board Member - Pat Moss      | 255-2667 | <a href="mailto:geopat@bossig.com">geopat@bossig.com</a>                           |
| ○ Board Member - Jan Rumore    | 255-1827 | <a href="mailto:rumore@sandpoint.net">rumore@sandpoint.net</a>                     |
| ○ Board Member - Gail Swan     | 265-0181 | <a href="mailto:gswan8274@direcway.com">gswan8274@direcway.com</a>                 |
| ○ Don Childress                | 255-7928 | <a href="mailto:dwc1rsc@televar.com">dwc1rsc@televar.com</a>                       |
| ○ Judith Pagliasotti           | 255-2961 | <a href="mailto:pagliasotti@earthlink.net">pagliasotti@earthlink.net</a>           |
| ○ Valle Novak                  | 263-4688 | <a href="mailto:vallejoy@yahoo.com">vallejoy@yahoo.com</a>                         |

***Bonner County Extension Office***

4205 N. Boyer Avenue  
Sandpoint, ID 83864

***Contact Information***

Phone: 208-263-8511

Fax: 208-263-6191

Bob Wilson

Master Gardener Program Coordinator

[rwilson@uidaho.edu](mailto:rwilson@uidaho.edu)