



July 2008

Natural Matters Re-Co-Ver Review



Master Composter Recycler and Naturally Beautiful Backyards Newsletter

Earth-Friendly Garden Tour Inspires

The 2008 Earth-friendly Garden Tour, held on Sunday July 13th, exceeded the last two years' contacts with over 2,400 visits to 15 gardens. All of the gardens received rave reviews from visitors. Garden guests especially enjoyed the specific natural gardening techniques highlighted in each garden. Interestingly, and perhaps due to high gas prices, the core Vancouver gardens were by far the most visited this year.

Five new gardens were on the tour, with two gardens returning from 2006, three in Vancouver, one each in Felida, Camas and Ridgefield, and the US Fish and Wildlife commercial building in east Vancouver behind the Nautilus complex.

Forty-four NBB volunteers participated in the tour - either helping the host gardener with gardening projects before the tour, and/or helping the day of the tour as a garden interpreter or general helper. The host gardeners were extremely grateful for all the support from the NBB volunteers. Guests spoke enthusiastically about the level of natural gardening knowledge that the volunteers had and how gracious the host gardeners were to share their gardens.

An online survey for tour participants will be implemented by the end of August. The survey will evaluate how participants have incorporated what they learned on the tour into their gardening practices, as well as gather general comments on the tour. Volunteer feedback as to what went well and what could use improvement would also be most welcome.

The Earth-friendly Garden Tour is a powerful way to inspire the community to garden without the use of toxic chemicals and synthetic fertilizers. The tour could not happen without the support of volunteers. All of you who helped reached many, many Clark County residents - who we hope will be moved to be earth friendly gardeners - making their yards healthier for children, pets, themselves and the earth. Thank you!

Inside this issue:

<i>Earth Friendly Garden Tour</i>	1
<i>From the MCR and NBB Desk</i>	2
<i>Alternative Composting</i>	3
<i>Volunteer News and Meetings</i>	4
<i>Cardboard Plus Program</i>	5



Below: Bob Tooker and Elizabeth Koch share information at the garden tour.



Greetings from the MCR and NBB Desks

As I put together these volunteer newsletters, I've been selecting quotes by people who capture the imagination and inspire. People like Rachel Carson, the ecologist and writer who wrote about the wonder and beauty of nature. In the 1960's Carson sounded the alarm about the dangers of synthetic chemical pesticides such as DDT, and successfully challenged us to consider the effects of indiscriminate use and misuse of chemicals.

MCR and NBB volunteers also inspire me. Volunteers are special people, like Rachel Carson, they believe that caring and sharing information can make a difference. They give generously without expectation of reward or rec-



ognition, they are truly heroes of our community and our times.

The best part of this job is getting to meet such outstanding people. It has been a pleasure to meet and work with so many of you at the outreach events, workshops, lectures, the garden tour, the ice cream social etc. etc. I look forward to getting to know more of you over the coming months. Please do feel free to drop by if you are in the neighborhood, or call and email with thoughts, ideas, or suggestions on how our sustainability education programs (NBB and MCR) can be improved.

Thanks so much for all you do and for helping to make our community a better place.

My best,
Jo Anne

To learn more about Rachel Carson go to:

<http://www.rachelcarson.org/default.aspx>

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”

-Rachel Carson

Contact us anytime with comments, questions, suggestions, brainstorm, anything at all.

Jo Anne Dolan & Kris Alexander
Columbia Springs
12602 SE Evergreen HWY,
Vancouver, WA 98683
(360) 882-4567

“To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves.” – *Mohandas Gandhi*



mastercomposter@clark.wa.gov
or nbb@clark.wa.gov

The Naturally Beautiful Backyards Program and the Master Composter/Recycler Program are programs of Columbia Springs. They are offered in partnership with Clark County Solid Waste Program and are a cooperative effort of, Battle Ground, Camas, Clark County, Columbia Springs, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal, and Yacolt.



Alternative Composting- Think Outside the Bin

By now, most people are familiar with the idea using a pile or bin to compost yard debris, and some recognize vermicomposting as a way to convert food scraps into a nutrient rich soil amendment. Thinking “outside the bin” reveals that traditional composting in a bin or pile is not the only way to make good use of kitchen and garden residues. Grasscycling, mulching, soil incorporation and food waste digesters recycle yard debris and food scraps while eliminating the management demands of composting. Indoor or patio composting accommodates those without yards, such as apartment dwellers.

Grasscycling is the simplest way to recycle grass clippings. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn returns nutrients and organic matter to the soil. This alternative also keeps herbicide-treated grass out of the compost pile. With proper mowing and watering practices, grasscycling provides a low tech, convenient method for managing lawn wastes.

Mulching is another way to think outside the compost bin while managing organic waste in the yard.



For more information about food waste digesters, visit:

www.seattletilth.org/resources/articles/HomemadeFoodDigester.pdf



Grass clippings, leaves, pine needles, chipped branches, and shrub trimmings are all suitable for controlling weeds and reducing evaporation around trees, shrubs, and other perennial plantings. When placed on the soil surface, these materials also moderate soil temperatures in both summer and winter, and reduce erosion by wind or water. Chip large branches and other shrub trimmings and shred leaves to facilitate decomposition and movement of air and water into the soil.

A third alternative to traditional bin or pile composting is soil incorporation. By mixing food scraps deep into the soil, non-fatty foods decompose and fertilize the surrounding plants. Chop food scraps and mix them with the soil at the bottom of an 8- to 12-inch deep hole or trench. Cover completely with clean soil. Shifting the location of the pit or trench around the garden provides nutrients for the entire planting area over time. Food scraps can also be deposited in a container with the bottom cut out and set over a hole in the ground. When the hole is full, cover it with soil. The container can then be moved to another location

A food scrap digester combines soil incorporation and a traditional

bin system to process food waste. A simple food waste digester can be made using a sunken garbage can. Using a galvanized metal can with a tight fitting lid, drill or punch about 20 drain holes in the bottom of the can. Drill 20 more holes in the sides of the lower third of the can, which will be covered by soil. In a well-drained spot, dig a hole about half as deep as the container and set the can into the hole, pushing the soil back in around the sides and tamping it down with a shovel.

A digester will fill in about 6-12 months depending upon the food habits of the household. Harvest the compost by shoveling the upper foot or so of undecomposed food off to one side and shoveling the dark, soil-like compost out of the bottom of the digester. For completely finished compost, install two digesters. When one digester gets full, start using the second one. After 6-12 months, all the compost in the first digester will be finished and ready to harvest and use.

A compost bin or pile is a great way to divert organic material from the waste stream and produce a valuable end product, but try thinking outside the bin and expand the composting experience to accommodate a variety of situations.

-Kris Alexander

Volunteers Making a Difference

July went by like this year's berry season. It seemed to come late, and the warm sunny days were all the sweeter knowing that they won't be around for too long.

The very successful garden tour the second weekend in July was followed by an ice cream social the next week. Over forty volunteers attended the volunteer party.

Volunteers sampled wonderful topping for ice cream sundaes, including treats such as fresh berries, homemade Oregon grape jelly (thanks Kris!), and strawberry rhubarb compote. Folks also enjoyed live music and took worm family photographs.



In July volunteers also helped with Greenfest, children's summer camp at Columbia Springs, a wormshop, the farmer's market, and the NBB lecture series which hosted two lectures this month.

A Shout Out of Thank You!

A big thank you to all these rocking MCR and NBB volunteers and to the garden tour host gardeners who helped out in July.

Donna Allard, Kris Alexander, Diane Adkin, Donna Allard, Linda Aronsohn, Amy Carpenter, Wayne Chandler, Jan Bazala, Bobbi Bellomy, Chrissy Cole, Gayle Collentine, Taffy Constable, Anne Cotton, Julie Daly, Betty Davenport, Bill Drummond, Greg Duvic, Bianca Elmer, Molly Evans & Scott Lukens, Sue Faight, Peter Fels, Susie Foster, Kathie Gilmore, Christine Grabowski, Richard Hanford, Mark Harries, Nancy Helget, Toree Hiebert, Mary Hinojosa, Pat Hogan, Anne Holbert, Phil Kimery, Sarah Kleven, Gretchen & Michael Kriss, Elizabeth Koch, Vickie Lacy, Ed Lebo, Jan MacKenzie Nancy McQuillan, Sharon Mapes, Jan MacKenzie Kristen McHenry, Ginger May, Kay Mueller, Patty and David Page, Anna

Petruolo, Ruth Philips, Linda Rectanus, Sheila Reynolds, Lisa Robbins, Carlos Rodriguez, Erin Rowland, Barbara Samuels, Laura Sauer-milch, Christine Schluter, Kristi Schrag, Sheila Shuleeta, Peggy Sue and Owen Snooey, Bob & Kelly Tooker, Alishia Topper, Hannukah Valencia, Denver Wear, Dorothy Wear, Barbara Welsh, Audreen Williams, Kathy Winters,



Volunteer Meetings

NBB Aug. Volunteer Meeting

MCR Aug. Volunteer Meeting

Thursday, August 21 6:30 to 8:30pm

Location TBD

We are still working out the details for the August meeting, which will combine MCR and NBB volunteers and do something fun and educational. The new leader for the Naturally Beautiful Backyards program will be introduced at the meeting. So stay tuned!



Cardboard Plus Recycling Program

How It Works

Place The Following Items...

**Loose in
Your Bin**

Flattened
Cardboard

Mixed Paper

Junk Mail

Newspaper

Clean Buckets

**In a
Clear Bag**

Metal Cans

Plastic Bottles, Tubs

Milk Cartons

Plastics numbered
1, 2, 4, & 5

Pallet Strapping

**In a
Clear Bag**

Clean Film Plastics
Including:

Pallet Wrap

Bubble Wrap

Shrink Wrap

Plastic Bags

**Do Not
Include**

Glass
Styrofoam
Soiled Paper

Tissue

PVC



Food Wrappers
Freezer Boxes

Place All In Cardboard Plus Container Together

Questions? Please call Waste
Connections Customer
Service at (360) 892-5370



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