



South Douglas News

South Douglas Conservation District

Spring 2020

Assisting cooperators to adopt, implement and promote conservation practices which encourage good land stewardship and the protection of natural resources.

SPRING CHIPPING DAY—JUNE 10

We will be offering FREE wood chipping, June 10.

This is a great way to get rid of those branches you have been gathering while staying at home. Guidelines of what the piles should look like are on our website. The chips will stay with you. They are good for mulch or walkways. Some landowners have had the chips put into a trailer and hauled down to the Stemilt Organic Recycling Center in south Wenatchee.

This is the fourth year we have offered this service. Landowners from Waterville down to Rock Island have reduced fire danger around their homes as the piles that were ready to be chipped were reduced to mulch and chips. This program is intended to create a defensible space around homes and outbuildings in case of fire.

Contact us at 509-745-9160 for more information. Call to be sure you are on the current list. Register by June 3. More photos are available on our website – southdouglasscd.org



Murder Hornets? See page 3.



LOCAL
POSTAL CUSTOMER

South Douglas CD Cost Share Program

Do you have a project that improves or protects natural resources? We have helped design and fund projects from windbreaks to terraces to fuels reduction. Check out our website for more information.

ANNUAL TREE AND SHRUB SALE—CANCELLED

Due to the shutdown of businesses and social distancing, we had to cancel the sale for this year. We had ordered bare root plants that we could not cancel so they are planted and waiting for next year. A few customers were able to have partial orders filled. We could not get the potted plants we had in the catalog. A great disappointment to many but next year's sale will be back.

Sale is first Saturday in April!

BENEFITS OF GARDENING

With the “Stay Home-Stay Safe” order in the State of Washington, people are turning to gardening to keep their sanity during this trying time. Garden centers, both local and on line, are running low on seeds and supplies. People are looking to supplement their diet with homegrown produce. Lawns are being replaced with gardens and raised beds. Farm stores are having a hard time keeping baby chickens in stock as people are thinking of backyard eggs. (Check for local laws for how many chickens you can have. Remember it will take a year before the chickens are reliable layers)

But whether you plant an acre or have a couple of pots on your patio, gardening has many benefits. Dozens of articles have been written about the value of gardening. Just a few. . .

- ◆ **Healthier Brain**—Gardening can reduce your risk of dementia. It helps regulate mood and improve sleep (probably because you are tired from weeding all day)
- ◆ **Boosts mental health**—Having access to a garden or green space decreases depression. Simply walking down a green pathway improves your mental health, while a space without any greenery (like a shopping mall) decreases mental health. Gardening reduces anxiety, anger, stress and tension levels.
- ◆ **Reduce toxic burden**—Growing your own garden lets you reduce exposure to pesticides and insecticides by choosing non-toxic, organic practices.
- ◆ **Boost your nutrition**—homegrown produce from garden to table loses few nutrients in the short time before it is ready to eat. Produce from the grocery store can lose half of its nutrients and vitamins by the time it is picked and you put it on your table.
- ◆ **Increased Vitamin D levels**—Gardening, walking, bicycling and fishing all decrease the risk of Vitamin D deficiency.
- ◆ **Increased longevity**—People who stay indoors to avoid sun exposure have higher rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and pulmonary disease than those who have daily sun exposure. Even 30 minutes of outside exercise each day significantly decreases mortality rate. Just wear your sunscreen and put on a hat.

MURDER HORNETS

Two Asian giant hornets (*Vespa mandarinia*) were found in Whatcom County. A small colony was also found in British Columbia. These hornets are quite large—two inch body with a three inch wing span—and can sting through clothing. But like other hornets and wasps, they try to avoid humans, unless you step on their nest or poke them with a stick. They are a much greater threat to honey bees. They can devastate a honey bee hive within hours, taking the dead bees back to feed their young. Honeybees provide pollination to many crops in Washington State, and the lack of bees would mean significant agricultural loss. If you see a giant hornet, or think you do, contact the WA Dept. of Ag(1-800-443-6684) The good news is they don't forage further than a half mile from their nest, and the weather extremes on this side of the mountains will discourage any colonies.

Many wasps and hornets are good garden insects, if you stay out of their way. They eat bug larvae, so are a good natural insecticide. Late summer or fall they can become a pest, as they are looking for protein and the larvae they were eating are now mature.

But the bees, wasps and hornets are keeping your gardens and meadows thriving. (Mosquitos cause more human deaths each year than bees or other stinging insects.)

Dandelions make an excellent pollinator garden. Just mow before they go to seed.



The Kids are Driving Me Crazy!!

With school cancelled and parks and playgrounds closed, many children are inside their homes. But some outside time is “essential” for the well being of both children and their parents. What can you do?

- When you go outside keep your distance. Practice social distancing by staying at least six feet away from other people. Wear a mask, if needed, and take your hand sanitizer to use .
- Take a walk around your neighborhood. How many types of bees can you find? What birds are at the birdfeeders or singing? What are the shapes of leaves that you see?
- Keep a journal of changes in nature as the days and weeks go by. What blooms when? Which new birds have you seen?
- Plant a vegetable garden with your family. Include flowers that bees and pollinators appreciate.
- A very good source is the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Go to their site and search “homeschooling.” A large variety of activities will keep me busy until we are again free to roam.

Birds, Bees and Bats—Oh My!! Workshop March 20, 2021 at the NCW Fairgrounds in Waterville.
Speakers and agenda pending.

MONARCH BUTTERFLY SANCTUARY

LaShaunda's Garden is a monarch butterfly garden in Douglas. Developed by Barbara Lowe, it is in memory of one of her foster children. When Barbara sees a milkweed blooming or a butterfly in the garden, she is reminded of her daughter. The garden was first planted in 2017, with Barbara and her children doing most of the work. Barbara is the leader of a service group of local school children known as the Cando Kids (Creating A New Dimension of Optimism). The Monarch caterpillar only eats milkweed, and different milkweed varieties as well as nectar plants have been planted. The Monarch was common in Eastern Washington until about 20 years ago, when the total population declined. Barbara saw her first one in 51 years up by Grand Coulee a couple of years ago.

Barbara has distributed milkweed seeds from Douglas up into the Colville Reservation. She has worked with students from Omak to scatter seed bombs filled with milkweed and nectar plants seeds. South District CD would like to work with her to further develop an education program. Through the District tree and shrub sale, we have sold milkweed as well as other plants pollinators utilize. Watch for availability at our spring sale.

The Viceroy Butterfly is quite similar to the Monarch, but they are smaller (3 inch wingspan vs 4 inches for the Monarch) and they have black bands across their wings. Have you seen one?



*When you are out in your garden, sing or hum a John Prine song.
The greatest songwriter of all time died of the corona virus.
Enjoy your garden and JP's music. 1943-2020*

Free Firewise Assessments

We can come to your property and evaluate your fire risks and strengths. The 15-30 minute review can alert you to simple things you can do to reduce fire hazards. Call us and we can schedule an appointment.

South Douglas Conservation District

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Please Remember to Recycle

How do we get the word out? You may know a veteran who is looking for work. You may be a farmer, looking to semi retire. Maybe your farm mechanic has more work than he can complete alone and needs help.

The Vets on the Farm program works to pair farmers who need help with veterans who are looking for work, designed for veterans transitioning back into civilian life. Areas of interest include but are not limited to small scale production agriculture, livestock management, equipment maintenance and custom farm work.

South Douglas Conservation District is starting a new program in Douglas County. Spokane CD has a strong growing program. All Conservation Districts in Washington State hope to develop the program. Look for information on our website.

