



Before the straw bale was planted ..



and later in the summer

## Straw bales create productive use of small garden spaces

By Lorra Cornetet, Queen Anne P-Patch

On a cold day last March, as I sat planning my garden and wondering what I could do with one awkward corner that receives little sunlight, I came across a newspaper article about straw bale gardening. Wow, I thought, this could be a novel solution for that area. The bale would stand about two feet high and function like a tall raised bed. The bale is essentially a container. The inside breaks down first while the crust remains intact. At the end of the season, it could be mulched and used to feed my soil. I was sold!

Off I went to the Seattle Farm Supply store. I paid \$20 for my straw bale and schlepped it to the patch. Be forewarned — a straw bale is quite heavy and makes a big mess in the back of your car.

After maneuvering the fresh bale into that shady corner, I watered it thoroughly. At the end of the first week I treated it with pure fish emulsion. That nitrogen-rich fertilizer sped up the decomposition process and stank to high heaven! Over the next two weeks the inside of the bale registered more than 120 degrees. When it cooled to 100 degrees, it was time to plant.

I spread a shallow layer of soil on top, punched in two openings and put in cucumber and winter squash starts and a small basil plant. I dug out two more holes on the sides of the bale and planted a pumpkin start and seeds for summer squash.

### The challenge of keeping the bale watered

Our warm, dry summer made it a challenge to keep the bale moist. The article recommended using a drip hose, but instead I used water spikes.

The overall results were interesting. The cucumber produced some fruit, then faltered and died. The basil was quickly crowded out by the burgeoning pumpkin plant. The winter squash did very well. The summer squash eventually grew out of a shadowy side of the bale and flourished. By the end of September my once-solid bale was a mere pile of almost completely decomposed straw, full of fat worms and ready to be worked back into my soil.

All told, I harvested four cucumbers, two large jack-o-lantern-sized pumpkins, six Kabocha squash and about a dozen yellow summer squash. All this bounty from an area in my plot that was previously unusable!



## King County Seed Lending Library

*Sharing seeds, sharing health, fostering community*

## Seattle is home to the new King County Seed Lending Library

A seed library is a depository from which members of the community can “borrow” free seed for their gardens. Borrowers grow the seed, and let a couple of the choice plants go to seed. Seeds are then collected from these plants and brought to the library for others to borrow. All participation is free of charge.

Through seed-sharing, KCSLL promotes:

- Preserving open-pollinated/heirloom varieties
- Improving local food systems
- Encouraging self-reliance
- Building community
- Fostering a culture of sharing
- Having fun!

KCSLL is a nonprofit seed lending library run by volunteers. Not only do they warehouse seed; they also provide free classes on seed-saving as well as several seed swap events each year.

KCSLL is located at the Seattle Farm Co-op, 1817 S. Jackson Street. The two organizations fit well together because the co-op’s aim is to give urban gardeners and farmers better access to a wide range of local and organic urban farming and gardening supplies.

For more information about the King County Seed Lending Library, visit <http://www.kingcoseed.org>. You can sign up for a free seed-saving class on the events page and friend the organization on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/KingCoSeed](http://www.facebook.com/KingCoSeed)) to receive event announcements.

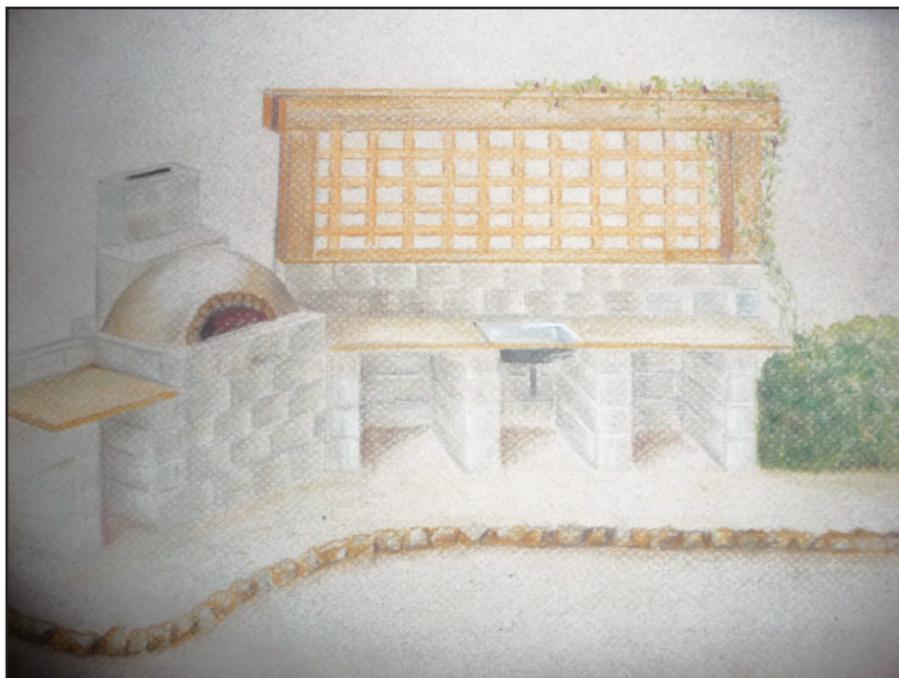
# If you build it: The story of the Barton Street pizza oven

By Kate Farley

Last fall, on October 12, we held our third annual Barton Street P-Patch Harvest Festival -- our first year with our newly built wood-fired pizza oven.

The Barton Street oven project got started with a thundering rumble, as seven tons of donated granite rolled out of a truck and onto our raw P-Patch site 2½ years ago. A pizza oven was one of the ideas that popped up early on at our P-Patch community meetings.

As it happens when the work and realities of building a P-patch hit hard, the idea for a pizza oven went in and out of dormancy, like a smoldering fire that just wouldn't light. I admit I used the idea occasionally as a dangling carrot when the going got particularly tough. "Tote that bale, lug that stone; there'll be a pizza oven in this P-Patch one day!"



*The original sketch for the oven and work area*

## A cardboard model for inspiration

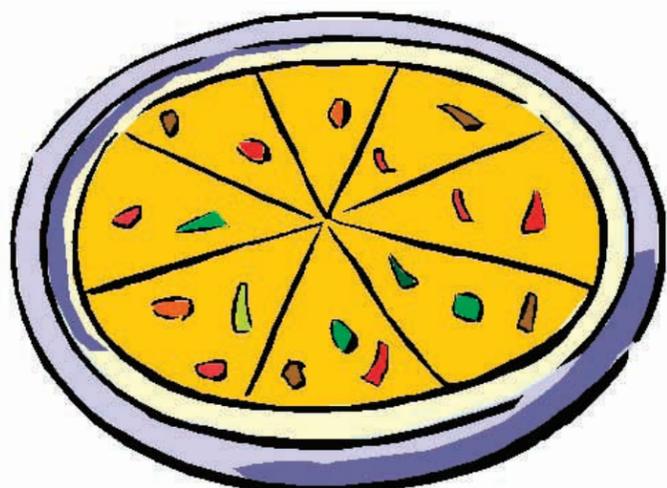
Our first community oven was donated by artist Mikal Donnelly: it was a cardboard model made from a large appliance box, which served to keep the dream alive for many weeks. Unfortunately, after a couple of rains it slumped into a soggy pile, and the oven fantasy went dormant again. There were nights when I'd wake up in a sweat, thinking, "What am I gonna do with all that stone?" I worried we wouldn't get the oven built, and would hang up the project to plant fruit trees instead.

As 2011 turned to 2012, we became preoccupied with finishing the basic required elements of our P-Patch. When those requirements were completed in spring 2012, plots were assigned and all interest in building and construction vanished as everyone got busy raking their soil and planting their seeds. After all, planting is why most people join a P-Patch!

## More rock and mortar nerds needed

Slowly I came to realize the truth... I was the only rock and mortar nerd in the group, the only one with a love for schlepping and mixing mortar-y products. That seven-ton pile of stone was sitting there waiting for me, calling to me, trumpeting its raw potential! I'm not a quitter, but I had to ask myself the hard question: was I tough enough to go it alone?

One day I doodled up a picture of what the oven could look like and posted it inside the shed door. Immediately the "coals" were glowing again. For months I kept busy hammering in stakes and outlining the potential countertop structure on the ground with bright flagging tape, and every couple of days I'd move them a few inches this way or that, trying to keep momentum on an idea that wanted to be born. Typical ruminations during the process: was that huge pile of stone going to have to move? Is that where the oven needs to go?



In an effort to keep ourselves productive and busy, we sorted stone into buckets, ready to go when our still-unknown builder showed up. There was one P-Patcher who would often walk by the staked-out site; his eyes would get huge and a smile would come to his face. He'd say something as simple as "Mmmmm, pizza." Just like that, he became my motivational speaker. He believed, and so I kept believing. He would frequently talk about a new oven plan he saw on the internet, and the thought that we could maybe build the oven ourselves started to creep into my brain.

In September of 2012 we went out on a limb and used the last of our quickly dwindling Department of Neighborhoods funds to buy the concrete materials for the foundation. It was a bold move, but there was brilliance in our boldness. In late October that year, soon after the materials were purchased, our oven builder appeared! One day Hillary Luthi casually strolled through the P-Patch and mentioned that her husband, Chris Luthi, builds pizza ovens and was looking for a site to build a community oven. Now we had the fire going.



*Harper (6) and Beckett Luthi (4) are already skilled P-Patch workers. Their architect dad, Chris, led gardeners through the building of the pizza oven.*

*(Photo by Kathleen Heinz)*

Fast-forward to today, and we can look back at the journey we took from then to now. That was seven tons of granite and hundreds of pounds of concrete, mortar and rebar ago. That was countless volunteer hours, well-earned calluses and a lot of hard work ago. Today our community asset is finished, and all we have left to build are the pizzas.

People gathering together around a wood fire is as old as the hills, and nothing brings people together like the anticipation of tasty food and the smell of the wood smoke cooking it.

We built it, and they are coming...



*The pizza oven is ready to use!*

*Thank you to architect Chris Luthi and his family for all the time and expertise donated to creating the center of our community gathering space!*

# Size really doesn't matter

By Rebecca Nelson

There has been a lot of discussion at the Picardo P-Patch over the past year about plot sizes. The Department of Neighborhoods sought to decrease the maximum plot size to 800 square feet, and some gardeners with larger plots were, understandably, not in favor of the idea.

While I personally did not attend any of the meetings on the subject, I did hear about the ongoing discussions. One of the reasons I heard for keeping the rules as they are now was that larger-plot farmers were more likely to donate produce to food banks.

I cannot say whether the “larger plot equals more donations” relationship exists, but it got me thinking about my own 200-square-foot piece of Picardo and how I had never, in five years of gardening, donated one single thing to the food banks. Not one radish, not one pea. Nothing.

Why hadn't I ever donated produce from my plot? I started thinking about my crop selection habits in past years: a large variety of vegetables, which all went home to my family's dinner plates. If in one season's crops I had only room for two rows of carrots, I'm ashamed to say it didn't even cross my mind that even a few of them would still be appreciated in the food bank closet.

My solution to my food bank donation aversion was to go big: I planted only one type of vegetable throughout my entire plot, with the idea that I would donate half the harvest to local food banks.

I planted nothing but potatoes: three different varieties (early, mid, and late season), but all potatoes. Monoculture, P-Patch style.

This choice paid off in a number of ways. Weeding my patch was the easiest it's ever been, my water use went WAY down, my children had a ball digging up the starchy treasures at harvest times, and about 38 pounds of spuds found their way to the food bank barn.

Fellow P-Patchers: As the approaching gardening season brings seed catalogs to our mailboxes, I challenge you to rethink your plot planning for 2014. I chose donation over diversity in 2013, and the whole growing season took on a new meaning for me. No matter our plot size, looking at our gardens in a new way can benefit more than just our own dinner plates.

I'm not yet sure what I'll plant in my plot for this year. But whatever grows there, it will be shared. Every potato, every radish, every pea does matter.



## Acorn squashes to last for many winters

Photo and text by Dona Anderson, Queen Anne P-Patch

As I was watering my P-Patch last summer, I noticed our adjoining neighbor's acorn squash were heading our way, into our plot. I tried to head them off at the pass, but they were determined to intrude. From little acorns, they grew prolifically into nice, big squash. I never saw the owners at their garden and, since their squash were in ours, I picked 12 of them! (Don't worry; there were plenty left.) They were such beautiful acorn squash that I had to make a paper cast of one. I was so happy with it that I made more... until I had a plate full of them.

### P-Patch 2014 Discount Coupon

This is your P-Patch discount coupon, good for 10% off on purchases of *garden-related* merchandise only at the following participating merchants. Present your coupon *before* the cashier rings up the sale. Happy Gardening!

- **City People's Garden Store**  
2939 East Madison, 324-0737
- **City People's Mercantile, Sand Point**  
5440 Sand Point Way, 524-1200
- **Emerald City Gardens**  
4001 Leary Way NW, 789-1314
- **Furney's Nursery**  
21215 Pacific Hwy S, 878-8761
- **Greenwood Hardware**  
7201 Greenwood Ave N, 783-2900
- **Indoor Sun Shoppe**  
160 Canal St, 634-3727
- **Magnolia Garden Center – P-Patch Plants Only**  
3213 W Smith, 284-1161
- **Sky Nursery**  
18528 Aurora Ave N, 546-4851
- **Swanson's Nursery**  
9701 15th Ave NW, 782-2543
- **Urban Earth**  
1051 N 35th St, 632-1760

P-Patch Program, 700 5th Ave, Ste 1700 PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649, 684-0264

## The P-Patch Trust provides tools for gardens, as well as opportunities for site leadership development

By Mark Huston, P-Patch Trust board member

One of the important ways the P-Patch Trust – soon to become GROW – helps the P-Patch Program staff is by providing support and training for site leadership. The Trust's board of directors understands that effective site leadership is essential to the success of the P-Patch Program. We work to recruit, mentor and support site leaders to enable the gardens to function well, and also to make them fun and rewarding.

The Trust hosted a thank-you luncheon for garden leadership members last fall. The gourmet bash featured all-vegetarian taco and burrito fixings. The food was obviously a hit, because it was vacuumed up in record time! Door prizes included a number of tools such as shovels, hose nozzles and a digging fork, as well as gardening books.

The Trust also supports the P-Patch Program by purchasing and providing a wide variety of tools to gardens that need them. Because tools

are expensive, maintaining an adequate supply at the P-Patches can be a challenge. The Trust also helps gardens acquire tools by sharing ideas and techniques for fundraising and grant-writing.

At the fall gathering, site leadership team members agreed that a series of “best practices” roundtables would be helpful, in addition to formal leadership training sessions, to allow garden leaders to discuss challenges and successes. The first of these programs will be a session on fiscal sponsorship for P-Patches on Saturday, May 3, from 10 until noon at the Northeast Branch of the Seattle Public Library, 6801 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. Everyone is welcome to attend, whether or not you are presently a site leader at your P-Patch.

For more information about this program and other opportunities for site leadership development, please contact me at [mark.h@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:mark.h@ppatchtrust.org).

## The Trust is still GROWing!

The board of directors of the P-Patch Trust announced in the last edition of the *Post* that it is formally adopting a new name – GROW – to reflect its broader mission and reach in the Puget Sound area. That change is still in process because of the complexities of obtaining approval from state and federal regulators. Until the new name is accepted by all involved parties, the Trust will continue to use both names when needed to avoid confusion.

Coming next issue: a look at GROW's new logo!

# A letter to the P-Patch community about grappling with homelessness

By Elyse Gordon, University P-Patch

To P-Patchers new and old, homelessness is a familiar topic. As open public green spaces offering water, wildlife and solace, our gardens have long been resources for the city's homeless populations. Every P-Patch negotiates this relationship differently; most times, the use of resources is minimal and respectful. As individual gardeners and garden communities, we each hold our own opinions about appropriate responses to homelessness and community gardens. Could we, as the P-Patch community writ large, have a more unified response?

This question is timely: since the closure of the Nickelsville encampment in West Seattle, there has been heightened conversation about homelessness in Seattle. In my own garden, the University P-Patch, one incident has required many of us to clarify our own opinions about homeless individuals, garden resources and responses.

## Acceptable and unacceptable uses of P-Patches

Our garden is nestled into a densely populated corner of the U-District, next to I-5. The sounds of new apartment and condo construction carry into the garden. It is not uncommon to see homeless or otherwise transient folks using the water supply in our garden, perhaps brushing their teeth. Sometimes they are just enjoying a meal on the bench that overlooks our beautiful garden.

Recently, though, one of our gardeners discovered that the untended plot near his own had been used as a latrine. This, of course, is both unpleasant and unsafe. Having human waste at the northern, upland area of our garden poses health risks, soil contamination and general unpleasanties.

The incident created quite a buzz: during one workday, some gardeners began chopping down an old vine, in effect making it harder for homeless individuals to sleep or stash their things out of sight. An email went out urging us to take action and be diligent if we ever observed misuse of the garden.

A second email quickly responded, encouraging compassion and asking that our appeals to the City advocate for adequate, long-term resources for homelessness. Rather than blame these individuals for lacking other resources, this gardener practiced a reframing of the issue: let us use this incident as evidence to show the City that it is not doing enough to address homelessness.

I do not pretend to know "the solution" to homelessness (if such a thing even exists!) But I, like the compassionate gardener in our P-Patch, would hope that as a community, P-Patchers could extend compassion and push for city-wide measures to address homelessness.

Let me practice my own reframe to help illustrate this point. Last summer, the City closed the Nickelsville encampment and offered the Mission Gospel Church \$500,000 to help relocate the 100 or so displaced Nickelsville residents.

Admittedly, Nickelsville had its share of issues, but so does any space or project that has been claimed by citizens in moments of desperation and creative resistance. The little-shared story about Nickelsville, of course, is that three new encampments were created in its stead.

## Questions with no obvious answers

I keep wondering what the response would be if instead of Nickelsville, the City threatened to close down the Picardo P-Patch or Marra Farm -- some of the city's largest communal gardens. Would relocating people to new, smaller gardens (with as-yet untended soil, limited infrastructure, and no existing leadership) be sufficient? Would providing a huge sum of money to the gardeners be any substitute for the relationships, solace, memories and labor that had emerged from their gardens? Most likely not. I imagine small-scale insurrection.

Of course, encampments are but one response to the massive homelessness facing Seattle. The idea of closing a P-Patch is also not a true comparison to the material challenges individuals face while living in encampments. Instead, this is part of a larger story. Unlike many cities in the country, the P-Patch community is lucky to be a municipally-run program. That puts us in a unique position! We can strive for collaboration and partnership, solidarity and alliances. We can advocate that resources be allocated with attention to long-term solutions: access to mental health care, open (non-concessionary) drop-in centers, subsidized public transportation for low-income riders, and more attention toward getting families into permanent housing.

## Practicing empathy for all parties

Certainly, I empathize with my fellow gardeners' responses to our garden-turned-latrine. This was incredibly unpleasant for all involved (especially our work party leader of the day who had to clean it up!). And yet, can we simultaneously recognize these unpleasanties, empathize with those who perhaps have no other resources available, and also see how we are part of a larger city community that is trying to make Seattle more livable for all?

Let us not take the easy route of identifying discomfort, cleaning up the

traces of it, and moving on to tend our plots. For the garden is much like the city as a whole: rats, human waste, a leaky pipe, a hornet's nest, an untended plot—all of these are signs or symptoms of an unhealthy (eco)system.

The whole system deserves our care and attention, not just the one symptom. This fact is what already unifies us as gardeners! We share a commitment to the communal, to the common good. Let's extend this commitment to issues of homelessness and, as P-Patchers, become advocates for long-term, compassionate solutions that recognize the overall health of our gardens, our communities and our city.

## A big decision about beets



*Miles Hagopian, age four, grew his first garden last year with his grandmother at the New Holly Youth and Family P-Patch on South Beacon Hill. "I can't decide whether I like the red beets or the golden beets better," Miles said. He likes them best chopped up in a salad with a tasty dressing.*



**Participants in the Sawhorse Revolution are recognized for their skillful work in building the new Judkins P-Patch shed.**

## Expanding gardens celebrate the work of young and old

By Laura Raymond, Levy Projects Coordinator  
P-Patch Community Gardening Program

As dusk descended on a cold November evening, a handful of people trickled in to the Judkins P-Patch and got to work. A few people strung up lights. Others erected a makeshift table, a board laid across two sawhorses. A tablecloth and cupcakes emerged and were laid on the table along with information about the guests of honor. The stage was set for a celebration.

The party was thrown in honor of a special crew of youth. These talented young men and women had spent more than a month's worth of afternoons in the garden constructing a beautiful new toolshed. Designed by High Quality Modern, the shed features a unique charred wood exterior finish that originates in Japan and Northern Europe.

The workers who took the design from paper to finished structure were participants in a project called Sawhorse Revolution which engages youth in hands-on education in construction and building trades.

Throughout the evening, gardeners and neighbors dropped by the garden to thank and recognize the Sawhorse Revolution crew. Camera flashes, the students' evident pride in work well done, and connections between friends and neighbors lit up the dark in the garden that night.

At the Maa nyei lai ndiec "Ferdinand" P-Patch on Beacon Hill, a different celebration began in a similar fashion. As gardeners trickled in, some set up tables and laid out freshly cooked rice, green beans, and spicy herbs. Others strung up tarps to provide protection from sun and rain. A dedicated contingent prepared a locally raised pig for the grill.

The party was thrown to celebrate the community of gardeners and their families. Most gardeners at this P-Patch are seniors. They are expert gardeners with lifetimes of knowledge and hard work to share with their community. The men and women, most well upwards of 60 years of age, had spent the better part of several weekends deconstructing thousands of feet of fence and hauling huge piles of rocks to create space for new garden plots and a community gathering space.

At the party, the elders took the lead, with their adult children lending a hand. Some carried grandchildren on their backs as everyone joked and chatted across the generations.

Funds from the Seattle Parks and Green Spaces Levy are supporting the expansion of both of these gardens, which are adding space for more garden plots and improving their gathering spaces. The new gathering spaces will be the sites of many future events celebrating the contributions of the multiple generations that make these P-Patch community gardens such special places.



**Two generations of gardeners at Maa nyei lai ndiec P-Patch take a break from their hard work to expand the garden.**

## Book Review: *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman

Joanna Cotler Books, Harper Trophy. First published in 1999; revised in 2004

Reviewed by Marcia Rutan, Picardo P-Patch

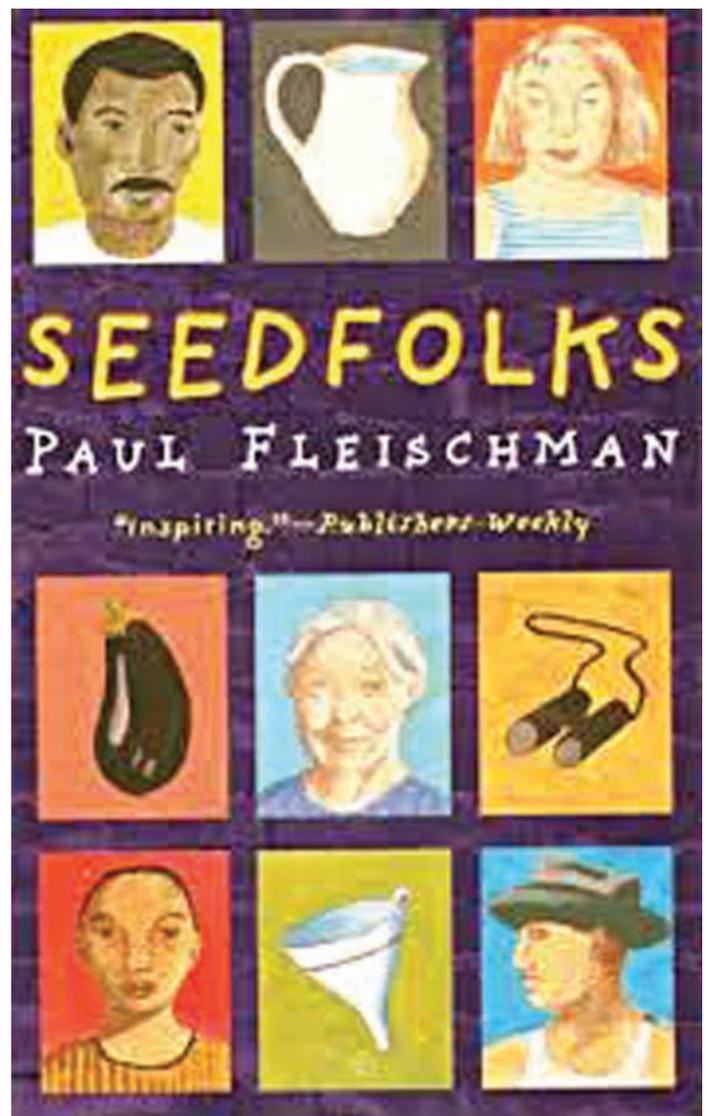
Just because a book is old doesn't mean it's outdated. *Seedfolks*, a timeless classic, takes the reader on an unforgettable journey where isolated city dwellers slowly grow into a community as their ad hoc gardens transform a bleak vacant lot.

From nine-year-old Kim painfully misses her father. Elderly Anna has witnessed the neighborhood change with wave after wave of immigrants. Young African-American Curtis is trying to win back his girlfriend with tomatoes and Amir, from India, is reminded of his childhood in New Delhi. These neighbors tell their distinctive stories, and humor, sorrow and joy grace their tales throughout this remarkable little book.

Recommended for readers 10 years old and up, this collection is written powerfully but simply. As an adult I was fully engaged and touched to the core. As a P-Patch Gardener, I could especially savor the miracle and beauty conveyed as both the garden and the community grew. I appreciated the multi-cultural emphasis, the diversity in age and gender, and the variety of challenges facing each character.

Author Paul Fleischman is a Newbery Medal award winner who plies his craft skillfully. At the end of the collection he shares his own story of becoming a writer (he is the son of children's writer Sid Fleischman) and a gardener (his mother's passion). He describes how *Seedfolks* sprouted and developed over a long period of time and illuminates the healing that can come with planting seeds. This book is highly acclaimed, including starred reviews by *Publisher's Weekly*, the *ALA Booklist*, and the *School Library Journal*. The *Christian Science Monitor* states: "The size of this slim volume belies the profound message of hope it contains."

In these challenging environmental, political, and economic times, we all need more help. *Seedfolks* might just be the inspiration for you this spring.





JANUARY      FEBRUARY      MARCH

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
ASPARAGUS		seed	transplan har
BASIL			
BROCCOLI			plant st
BEANS (GREEN)			
BEETS		harvest	
BRUSSELS SPROUTS	harvest		
CABBAGE			
CARROTS	harvest		
CAULIFLOWER			
COLLARDS			
CORN			
CUCUMBER			
EGGPLANT			
FAVA BEANS		seed	
GARLIC			
KALE		harvest	
LEEKs (WINTER)		harvest	
LETTUCE (OAK, RED-SAIL)			
LETTUCE (SIMPSON)			
ONION SETS			pla
PARSNIP		harvest	
PEAS (SNAP)		seed	
PEPPERS			
POTATOES			
PUMPKIN			
RADISH			seed
SPINACH		seed	
SQUASH (SUMMER)			
SQUASH (WINTER)			
SWISS CHARD		harvest	
TOMATOES			
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# Planning low-maintenance P-Patch crops

By Karen Brattesani, Haller Lake P-Patch

I am most enthusiastic about gardening in the spring, because by July I am trying to cram in every single summer activity before it's too late. Because it's hard to get to the P-Patch every day to water and harvest, I try to plant crops that can thrive on their own without much TLC once they've germinated. This doesn't mean I leave them to fend for themselves all season, but some crops need watering only every 3 to 4 days, and don't mind drying out a bit between waterings.

Harvesting can become another demand in a busy summer. It's against P-Patch rules to let produce go to waste and, hey, who wants all those yummy organic veggies to sit around after we've done all that work to get them started? Unlike peas, beans and zucchini, which need to see the gardener's shadow every other day lest they produce monster specimens or too-tough-to-eat veggies, some plants are happy to wait an extra week to 10 days while you're hiking, biking or swimming. Here are some of my favorite crops to grow for ease of germination, watering or harvest -- or all three.

## Onions and greens: plants for all seasons

In the winter, it's easy. Onions from sets and leaf green starts from the nursery can go in from mid- to late-February, and the rains can take care of them until May. If you didn't get your garlic in by fall, it can be planted at the same time. If you plant the onions densely, you can pull every other one before they bulb and use them as green onions for salads, then harvest the rest at full size in July.

As the soil warms in March and April, I sow spinach and lettuce from seed. My bargain with these delicate leaf greens is that they'll be harvested and gone by the time they would need me to water them. I also sow parsley and carrots. Parsley seeds need constant moisture for about three weeks, while carrots want water for one week or until they germinate. Our spring rains usually oblige. Both need harvesting only when you feel like it. My kind of plant.

Cilantro can be sown from April on. Let a few plants go to seed, and they'll come up year after year. Those more experienced with cilantro say that once you have it, you always have it. Fine with me; I add it to stir-fries, salads and tortillas.

Kale, broccoli and cauliflower can be sown in spring for crops that produce through summer, fall and possibly winter. Kale is a particularly patient leaf green, ready to harvest when you want it.

A few perennial herbs, such as oregano, sage and rosemary, are easy companions in the P-Patch, especially if you don't share a common herb garden. Rhubarb can tuck away in a corner for pies all season. And there's nothing like a reward of strawberries, either spring-bearing or ever-bearing, to motivate a trip to the patch in June and July.

## Basil: the best summer crop?

By summer, most of these plants will need watering only twice a week, but great summer crops need harvesting only every week to 10 days. Basil is my candidate for the best summer crop; I put up lots of pesto last year. Under my small hoop house, I planted well-hardened-off basil plants and I seeded Delicata squash. They both needed daily watering for a week in June, until the basil roots were established and the squash germinated. Then, watering every four days was enough. I harvested basil every 7-10 days, based on the hint that they were ready each time they began producing flowers. I corralled the Delicata squash back into my patch at each visit. Then I harvested the winter squash in just two batches in September and October.

I do save some crops for my small home garden. Peas, beans, asparagus and summer squash are planted where I can see them. They insist on a thorough picking almost daily, and even bush peas and beans need some stringing up to keep the plants neat. Summer spinach and lettuce are good candidates for the home garden because they need constant watering in the heat to avoid bolting.

I know I haven't mentioned a favorite P-Patch crop. So, where do you put tomatoes? I put them wherever I have the best sun and enough room for a large cage. Most of us are anxious to harvest tomatoes once they finally start to ripen in August and September. If that is a busy time for you, grow them at home if you can, so they will call to you as they color up.

## Potatoes: carefree but sneaky

Potatoes are carefree plants, but they can insist on hiding tubers in the ground for next year, in spite of your thorough digging. Because they are in the same family as tomatoes, you probably don't want to take up a lot of space growing both of these at once, and they'll do best if rotated out of the spot where you last planted them.

The ultimate goal is to make your P-Patch productive and to put the fruits of your labor to good use. Remember that many P-Patches make weekly donations to the food bank. You can ask your fellow gardeners to pick your extra produce for the food bank if you can't be on hand on the right day.

If care and harvesting have been a challenge, this is the time to plan to grow low-maintenance crops at the right time in the season. And be sure to give whatever you can't use to a friend or food bank.



**Seattle's P-Patch Community Gardening Program thanks the following  
for their contribution of organic seeds  
which enable the Program to better serve the community:**

**Adaptive Seeds:** [www.adaptiveseeds.com](http://www.adaptiveseeds.com) / [www.facebook.com/adaptiveseeds](http://www.facebook.com/adaptiveseeds)

**Molbak's:** <https://www.molbaks.com> / <https://www.facebook.com/molbaks>

**National Gardening Association:** <http://www.garden.org> / [www.gardeningwithkids.org](http://www.gardeningwithkids.org)

**Supporters like these have enabled P-Patch gardeners,  
over the past 41 years, to:**

- **grow community**
- **nurture civic engagement**
- **practice organic gardening techniques**
  - **foster an environmental ethic and connect nature to peoples' lives**
  - **improve access to local, organic, and culturally appropriate food**
- **transform the appearance and revitalize the spirit of their neighborhoods**
- **develop self-reliance and improve nutrition through hands-on experience**
- **feed the hungry (in 2013, P-Patch gardeners donated 29,067 pounds of food)**
  - **preserve heirloom vegetables, flowers and herbs**
- **build understanding across generations and cultures through gardening and cooking**



# P-Patch kid

By Gabriel Scheer, Republican P-Patch

After 4½ years on the waiting list, we were assigned our P-Patch the spring before our daughter was born. She is now three years old.

I couldn't have predicted how wonderful a place it would be to engage our daughter with the food we eat, the soil from which it springs and the community of people we belong to. It has proven to be one of the most delightful activities we share as a family, and it provides countless lessons and experiences for which we are endlessly grateful.

We regularly go down to our garden together, and have done so since she was a baby. She runs eagerly around, talking with other gardeners, exploring what's growing and identifying and tasting edibles. For the most part, she doesn't even eat things in others' gardens. (Harvey, Cindy and Erica: thanks for sharing.) She eagerly picks worms from the freshly turned soil, delights in sowing seeds and shows friends around our abundant patch, proudly proclaiming, "fresh tomatoes are one of my favorite foods."

In short, our P-Patch — which I was excited to get, if only for the fresh, delicious produce — is in fact an incredibly rich place in which our child can grow. We feel so fortunate to have this opportunity!

# Roosevelt light rail project produces a fine crop of mushroom logs

By Ruth Callard, Freeway Estates Community Orchard

In 2011, Sound Transit announced that two majestic scarlet oak trees would have to come down to make way for the Roosevelt light-rail station. When I heard the news, I got a little knot in my stomach. I knew I would miss those trees and I could see how bleak the landscape would be without them. They represented slow, steady growth amid the rapid changes in the neighborhood. They were like medicine. So, what to do?

When we got the final word that there was no saving the trees, my partner Nancy and I sat down to ponder how we could make the most of a bad situation. We decided that we could facilitate a community event celebrating the trees and providing urban food education via mushroom growing for both adults and youngsters.

We made contact with Kristin Hoffman of Sound Transit and expressed our interest in using logs from the trees for a community mushroom inoculation event at the Freeway Estates Community Orchard (FECO). Sound Transit liked the idea and it was mentioned in their newsletter.

## 100 small logs from two large trees

The twin oaks were big, having been planted about 60 years ago. Today we're left with about 100 small logs that will live throughout the neighborhood, as part of our community mushroom inoculation project.

Logs can be cut from a live tree from the time of leaf-drop to bud-break. The sugar in the sapwood is highest during this period, and the bark is snug on the log. We barely made it: the logs were felled October 28th when more than half of the bright red leaves had fallen. We asked the contractor to cut as many logs as they could that were between four and eight inches in diameter and three feet long. The average log weighed about 40 pounds.

The logs were rested for a couple of weeks, because they respond to the cutting by producing anti-fungal compounds which degrade in about two weeks. After the rest period, the logs had to be quickly inoculated to ensure the desired fungi, rather than a competitor, were established in the logs.

## The advantages of oak for growing mushrooms

Oak is a favorite for mushroom growth. The bark is thick and tough. It retains moisture and provides a barrier against competing fungi. Oak also is a dense wood, which allows for a higher yield of mushrooms per log.



**These lovely old scarlet oak trees in the Roosevelt neighborhood produced 100 small logs for growing mushrooms.**

FECO teamed up with the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association (RNA) and particularly the Sustainability Group of the RNA. Several volunteers hauled about 100 logs from the construction site to the orchard on Halloween and stacked the logs in the shade of a big willow.

We chose Sunday, November 17, as our inoculation date. An article and a coupon were put in the Roosie (RNA newsletter) to permit locals to have first pick of the logs.

Care instructions for the logs were prepared for the neighborhood "loggers."

The most important thing is to retain log moisture during the six to 12 months of incubation. The log should weigh the same throughout the incubation period. The logs had about 40 percent moisture content at the time of felling.

Next year, neighbors will soak their logs for 24 hours to force "fruiting" (the production of mushrooms). Mushrooms are harvested just after the veil breaks, while the cap edge is still rolled

under. After the harvest, the logs will need to rest one to three months before they are incubated again for continued mushroom production. From one log, you could harvest as much as two pounds of Shiitake mushrooms.

A 3½-ounce serving of dried Shiitake mushrooms is a good source of fiber, protein, B vitamins (except B12), vitamin D, magnesium, potassium, manganese, phosphorus, copper, selenium, zinc and choline.

Find some shade at your P-Patch or garden, and be on the lookout for trees that need to be taken down!

## More resources:

- <http://www.fungi.com>
- Sno Valley Mushrooms in Duval
- Fungi Perfecti
- Field & Forest Products, (FieldForest.net)
- Northwest Mycological Consultants, Inc.

# Shiga's garden shed is both practical and charming

By Mark Huston, P-Patch Trust Board Member



I met up with Richard Lemmert in the University District P-Patch known as Shiga's Garden. Richard developed the design for the shed located there, then organized about a half-dozen gardeners to help build it.

Much of the shed is constructed with recycled materials. The corners are made from cypress logs that were lying around. Same with the cedar shingles, although there weren't enough to cover the entire shed. The gardeners took up a collection to buy hardware and other materials to complete the project.

When I had visited the garden in the past, the door of the shed was what caught my attention. It's open, and covered with sturdy wire mesh. This allows curious visitors to look inside a working garden shed and see a few sturdy hand tools — nothing too fancy. The design also includes a number of open panels for ventilation, and each of these openings is covered with fine wire mesh to prevent birds and rodents from setting up shop.

The shed has a clear fiberglass roof, which makes the interior of the structure bright and cheerful. The overhang keeps rain from coming in the door. Richard mentioned that in spring, people put extra plant starts on shelves near the



**Richard Lemmert, designer of the unique shed. The mesh door shows off the well-arranged contents and also promotes air circulation.**

ceiling, so they thrive in a warm and sunny greenhouse environment while they wait for another gardener to adopt them.

This bright and tidy shed makes a great centerpiece for a charming P-Patch garden.

## Garden greens: Easy to grow, easy to cook and easy to eat

By Lori St. Kitts, Picardo P-Patch

Gardening is a very relaxing and enjoyable pastime, but for the new gardener or gardening-challenged, such as myself, it can also be a bit overwhelming and frustrating. So what to do? Grow greens!

Greens are some of the easiest and most forgiving vegetables around because they love the cool, moist, Pacific Northwest weather. You can grow them into late autumn, and some through winter. Greens are also packed with nutrition and lend themselves to a variety of recipes.

When all else fails, my greens have never let me down. Here are some of my personal favorites:

**Chard:** Unlike some greens, it is not known to bolt when the warm weather hits.

**Collards:** Another cool-weather crop that resists bolting.

**Escarole:** Hard to find in the grocery store, escarole is a great crop for harvesting at the end of summer and into autumn. I read somewhere that frost helps to take away some of this green's bitterness, although I have yet to know it to be very bitter.

**Kale:** Like chard, rarely bolts and is partial to the colder climate.

This year I'll be planting two new greens that my family loves to eat:

**Bok choy:** Another easy-to-grow, cold-loving Asian green.

**Gai lan:** An Asian green that is also known as Chinese broccoli and can be swapped for spinach. It loves the cold weather and has a long growing season. My family likes to eat this steamed with a little sesame oil sprinkled on top. With a hearty flavor, it goes well with pork dishes.

Greens can be served in a plethora of ways. Raw greens add heft, flavor and nutritional value. I use them to bolster my soups and stews and as the main topping on pizza. I toss them with salad greens and into my pasta sauces. I also love to add them to smoothies, bake them into bread, serve them with crepes



topped with a lovely sauce and put them into vegetarian quesadillas. I use sautéed greens as a side dish, on top of crostini, nestled into lasagna, tossed with pasta or gnocchi, and swirled into my grits.

### Escarole and Green Olive Soup with Ditalini (Zuppa di Scarola con Ditalini) — Serves 4

I created this soup while living in Tuscany, Italy. It is a delightful, easy and budget-friendly supper soup. There are several versions, some using sausage and beef. This version can be vegetarian if one uses vegetable stock instead of chicken stock.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 bunches escarole, washed, cored and coarsely chopped
- 8 cups chicken stock
- 1 jar large green olives, halved (I prefer Trader Joe's World's Largest Olives.)
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Parmesan cheese, grated (optional)
- 6 oz ditalini pasta

#### Directions:

1. Cook pasta as directed, drain and set aside.
2. In a large pot sauté escarole in olive oil until wilted.
3. Add olives, salt, pepper and stock.
4. Cook about 15 to 20 minutes on medium heat.
5. Add cooked pasta. Serve sprinkled with freshly grated parmesan cheese

# Enjoying your garden bounty all year long

By Betty Lucas, Queen Anne P-Patch

In the winter and early spring we dream and plan for our summer gardens, visualizing all the fresh, tasty produce we will enjoy. But what if we planned our gardens so that we also enjoy the “fruits of our labor” into the winter and early spring?

When I was growing up on a South Dakota farm in the 1950s and ‘60s, my mother would often ask me to get a jar of canned fruit or vegetables from the cellar. Down there were shelves of jarred fruits, vegetables, jams and pickles—a kaleidoscope of colors. It was great to have canned cherries, peaches, green beans and pickled beets in the winter.

You might plan your garden to have excess to distribute to the food bank, but some extra produce can also be used to can, dry or freeze. I find freezing to be the easiest method, but it requires freezer storage, and not everyone has a separate freezer.

For basics about canning, freezing and drying, the WSU Extension website has good information to get you started: [http://clark.wsu.edu/volunteer/mg/gm\\_tips/SummersBounty.html](http://clark.wsu.edu/volunteer/mg/gm_tips/SummersBounty.html)

The site describes when to use the boiling water method of canning (fruits, pickles, and jams) versus the pressure canning method for low-acid foods (vegetables). For specifics on canning fruits, go to <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/pnw199/pnw199.pdf>

## Ideas for using summer produce

Here are some of the ways I “put up” some of the extra summer produce, from my garden or purchased at farmers’ markets:

**Berries:** In addition to making jams, try freezing them for multiple uses later. Just rinse quickly and drain well, then spread in a single layer in a rimmed cookie sheet or cake pan. Freeze for about 2 hours until hard, then put in air-tight freezer bags and tuck them into the freezer for pies and cobblers, or for adding to cereal and yogurt.

**Herbs:** Snip a bouquet of oregano, thyme, marjoram and other herbs. Hang them upside down in a brown paper lunch bag, and tie the top. After the sprigs are dry, pull off the leaves and store in airtight jars. For basil and parsley, I like to chop them up and store in small freezer bags for

use in cooking: that seems to keep the flavor better. And, of course, making your own pesto is easy. Just freeze in small containers.

**Apples:** Using a food mill, I make applesauce, which can be canned or frozen. Simple applesauce is also the starter for apple butter, which is wonderful on pancakes and waffles as well as toast. Sliced apples can be frozen in ziplock bags (4 to 5 cups) for apple crisp or pies later in the winter (no worry if they turn a bit brown—they will cook up). We also dry apple slices in a food dehydrator.

**Kale:** Too much kale? Trying making kale chips for snacks, or just chop it and put in freezer bags, squeezing out excess air. Ready to add to soups, stir-fries and more.

**Tomatoes:** Making your own canned tomato sauce or salsa can result in getting them just the way you like them. If you run out of time, but have a lot of tomatoes, just wash and cut them in chunks (no peeling necessary), then put them in freezer bags (pints or quarts). You will have tomatoes to add to soup or stews, cook into sauces, or any other use of cooked tomatoes.



The *P-Patch Post* is published three times per year by the P-Patch Trust. Approximately 2400 copies are distributed each issue. Please submit articles or story ideas to the editors at [p\\_patch.post@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:p_patch.post@ppatchtrust.org).

### The P-Patch Trust Vision

We see inclusive, vibrant Northwest communities fed by organic farms and gardens, and a healthy food culture.

### The P-Patch Trust Mission

We build healthy and diverse communities by:

1. **Advocating for, managing and funding organic community gardens, urban farms and green spaces.**
2. **Providing educational opportunities for growing, sharing and preparing food.**
3. **Acquiring and holding land for organic community gardens, urban farms and green spaces.**

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**YES!** I want to help the P-Patch Trust acquire and advocate for community gardens, and preserve and protect our existing community gardens.

Here is my contribution as a:

**FRIEND: \$25-\$34** (pays the fiscal agency fee for one garden for one month)  
**GARDEN HELPER: \$35-\$49** (pays the plot rental fee for one low-income gardener)  
**SUPPORTER: \$50-\$99** (pays one year of liability insurance for one garden)  
**CONTRIBUTOR: \$100-\$249** (funds a Trust tool grant for one garden)  
**BENEFACTOR: \$250-\$499** (pays a portion of the property taxes on the Trust's gardens)  
**PATRON: \$500-\$999** (pays a significant percentage of the annual support for Lettuce Link)  
**GARDENING ANGEL: \$1000 or more** (pays for printing one edition of the P-Patch Post)

You may be able to multiply your contribution through your employer's matching gift program. Please check with your Human Resources Department for information and the necessary form. Adobe, Amgen, Bank of America, Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks and Chase Bank are among the major local employers that match contributions to nonprofit organizations.

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Thank you! For more information contact us at [p\\_patch.trust@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:p_patch.trust@ppatchtrust.org) or call 425.329.1601

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## Ray's Corner

# Defeating late blight: defense, defense, defense

By Ray Schutte, Interbay P-Patch gardener and past president, P-Patch Trust board of directors

Spring is the time for gardeners to take defensive actions to help prevent late blight in the fall. Blight, *Phytophthora infestans*, translates from Greek as “plant destroyer infestation.” The Plant Destroyer, also known as late blight, is a serious worldwide disease of potatoes, tomatoes and other members of the nightshade family. The Northwest climate, with its high humidity and moderate temperatures, creates a favorable environment for late blight.

Late blight is a very difficult disease to manage organically. Management requires good growing practices, including strict sanitation and proper watering. These tactics alone will not guarantee prevention of the disease, but will improve your chances of being successful.

### Here are 10 steps you can take to make sure you are not the gardener responsible for a Plant Destroyer infestation in your P-Patch:

1. Plant only healthy tomato transplants. Check each plant to make sure it is free of yellowish spots/edges, dark lesions and/or irregular greenish water-soaked spots on leaves and stems.
2. Purchase certified seed potatoes. Certified seed is not guaranteed to be late blight-free, but it is generally less risky.
3. Destroy all volunteer tomatoes and potatoes, especially on compost piles, because they can be hosts for late blight. Bag them and remove them from the garden.
4. Provide a good mulch for your tomatoes, and hill your potatoes.
5. Give your tomato plants space: stake and prune them to promote air movement and reduce leaf wetness. Do not stake and prune when the foliage is wet, because diseases can then be spread by people and tools. Do not prune your tomatoes without sanitizing the equipment. Clean your gardening and pruning tools with alcohol or a 10-percent bleach solution.
6. Water only the soil. Avoid wetting the foliage and stems, especially in the late afternoon and evening.
7. Do not harvest tomatoes when the foliage is wet, because the pathogen sporulates during periods of leaf wetness, and spores can move with people, tools and equipment from plant to plant and field to field.

8. Do not leave fallen fruit on the ground; this serves as a breeding ground. Cull and destroy diseased plants and fruits.
9. Get rid of weeds, because they impede airflow.
10. Should the Plant Destroyer strike, quickly remove all living hosts of the pathogen. This means destroying all piles of culled plants as well as volunteer hosts (potato, tomato, eggplant, pepper), including hairy nightshade.

In its early stages, late blight often shows up on the leaves. It appears as a yellow edge or spot in the middle of a leaf. The Plant Destroyer spreads outward from the initial point of infection and turns the leaf brown, surrounded with yellow. Then brownish-black patches will appear on the leaves and stems. Sometimes a whitish “mold” is visible on the undersides of the leaves. Late blight will also infect fruit, developing a brownish area that is hard to the touch and will not ripen.

### A fast-moving danger

The Plant Destroyer progresses very rapidly. Cool, wet weather favors its development while hot, dry weather checks it. Infected tomato and potato foliage harbors the pathogen, which lies in wait to attack when favorable conditions arrive. Its asexual reproduction produces sporangia and zoospores, which are killed off on the surface by frost and very warm weather.

In the Northwest, we are fortunate in that late blight does not form oospores that remain viable in the soil for many years. Late blight spores can live in potato tubers that are left in the ground, in cold composting piles of garden debris, and in infected weeds such as hairy and bittersweet nightshade.

The Plant Destroyer spreads incredibly quickly: it requires only 24-72 hours to infect a plant and can totally consume it in just five days. It spreads through the air and can infect plants up to 30 miles away. Rain washes the spores into the soil, where it can infect young potato tubers and tomato stems as water splashes up from the soil to the stems.

With all community gardeners working together, the scourge of the Plant Destroyer can be prevented from being a common recurrence.



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