

Orchard members

The WRM Orchard Committee Board consists of Issa Parker, Linda Ellsworth and John Clancy. OPAL suggested that we write our documents with an eye to 40 years in the future, and also for an eye on giving some feeling for the initial development of, in this case, the orchard, so that future members will have a feel for the ongoing nature of this project. With this in mind, and with help from other orchard members, we have revised our Orchard Guidelines, and now we submit them for your review (see attachment). Also, I'm including below a brief summary of the latest enhancement approach to our orchard.

John Clancy is contacting Robin Kucklick for another pruning tutorial sometime in this January or February. We are establishing both a google document and a physical work and harvest log to be placed in the shed. We will email when a particular orchard project is slated so you can see if you want to participate. And we are completely aware that we, along with the orchard, are a work in progress. Thank you.

The Orchard Committee

WRM Orchard Health Management

The following approach has been inspired by the Bullocks, Robin Kuklick and, mostly, Michael Phillips, a long time orchardist and author of the book, *The Holistic Orchard*. The following does not do justice to these people, but it does give an introduction to some of the thought behind the design. For the many of you who probably have more knowledge and experience with contributing to holistic orchard health, please be patient with me. Thanks.

Fungal Duff Management,

Fruit trees grow best in a forest edge ecology where there is a fungal dominance in the soil. Having a fungal dominant soil means the activity of saprophytic and mycorrhizal fungi is allowed to flourish so that the feeder roots of trees get the kind of nutrition that they need in the form they need it, when they need it. A bacteria dominant soil is optimum for garden, not orchard. Grass sod interferes with fungal dominance and promotes bacteria dominance, especially when the grass is mown frequently, thus preventing dynamic accumulators of mineral nutrition with deep tap roots such as comfrey and dandelions from growing. And yet, we want the orchard to be walk and hang out friendly for kids and adults.

The solution consists of creating conditions in a five to six foot circle around each tree that favor fungal dominance by:

- circling each tree with a Hugelkultur berm. This essentially means digging a trench, filling it with deciduous, hardwood material i.e chips, twigs, saplings etc

(we are currently using the alder saplings that we have from thinning in the wetlands), placing compost over the sapling sections, placing the dirt and sod over the compost, placing the dirt and sod from the trench over the compost. The slowly decaying hardwood provides a haven for the type of fungal growth necessary for optimum tree health.

- laying cardboard down inside the circle
- planting dynamic accumulators such as comfrey, dandelions, elecampe, hyssop, yarrow, rhubarb, etc on and around the Hugelkultur berm, and laying down ramial wood chips (rough cut hardwood chips)

This way, we can have mowed areas surrounding islands of the diversity required for fungal dominance, bioavailable nutrition for the trees, and shelter and food for beneficial predators.

None of this should cost anything as we already have alders and plants.

I have created two rough examples of these rings – one around each mulberry tree – for everyone to take a look at. At this stage, they aren't pretty, but they should be quite beautiful this spring and summer.

In case you can't open the attachment, it is included immediately below.

Wild Rose Meadow
ORCHARD
(revised 12/2013)

Wild Rose Meadow (WRM) Orchard is an ever-evolving project planted South and Southeast of the WRM Community Garden. Discussion of starting an Orchard began in the OPAL board room when the CCRs were being drafted. There was an existing Orchard on the property when OPAL purchased the WRM acreage. That Orchard had to be moved and those fruit trees were planted at Oberon Wood. Since the community space between the West and South clusters was the perfect space to be used as the Community Garden and Orchard, great pains went into preparing the space for both uses, in part to replant the Orchard that was removed.

Initially some of the ground preparation and fencing was done by Kucklick Landscape (including the large gate at the end of the West cluster walkway). Much of this happened in stages as what is now considered the Orchard had been temporarily used as a storage area for construction materials. The majority of the fencing was installed by residents fulfilling their sweat-equity requirements, a work party from the Christian School, and other resident volunteers. One resident built the West gate and the Northwest gate.

In 2011, the WRM neighborhood improvement fund paid for the purchase and installation of the first 18 fruit trees as well as the final construction of the final 2 gates. Smiling Dog Farm donated 14 fruit trees and most of the berry bushes (not including the

raspberries). An Orcas Island woman donated a number of black current bushes. A large work party of many residents helped to plant the initial 18 trees and the raspberries (that were donated by 2 residents). Every other tree, bush, or plant was purchased, donated or salvaged and planted by Orchard members. The Orchard currently has 35 trees and over 100 plants total. It should be noted that though Kucklick Landscape did get paid for much of the initial work setting up the Orchard and Garden, Robin Kucklick (owner) donated many hours of his time without pay to help with this project as he wanted this community space to be as vibrant and fruitful as possible.

The orchard is divided into several categories: Mixed Berries, Raspberries, Fruit Trees, Ornamentals, and Grapes.

- **Mixed Berries section:** Located directly South of the garden beds. This section includes black and red currant, jostaberry, gooseberry, ollalaberry, autumn olive, gumi berry, eronia berry, 9 fruit trees, and ornamentals. There is more room for berry bushes.
- **Raspberry section:** Located immediately East of the Southern-most garden beds. There are 4 sections that run North and South. There are red and golden raspberries.
- **Main Orchard section:** Located East of the raspberries. There are 20 fruit trees in the main area and 5 plum trees around the swale (3 on the South side; 2 on the North). There is one plum tree along the West fence of lot 15.
- **Ornamentals:** ornamentals line the fence of the orchard and garden. Many were rescued from the berms. Some ornamentals that used to be considered deer-resistant were being eaten down to the quick and dying. The following ornamentals were brought into the orchard from the berms: service berry, American and European high bush cranberry, phyocarpus (red leaf shrub), snowball bush, red twig dogwood, ornamental cherry, rudbekia (black eye susan flowers). The rest of the ornamentals were donated by WRM residents: wisteria (on south gate trellis), rose bushes, forsythia, lady's mantle, rowan trees, butterfly bush, lilac, perennial aster, Siberian iris, pine tree, rock rose shrubs, boxwood, mock orange, bulbs, and a few other items that were donated by Driftwood nursery and Kucklick Landscape. Other perennials and bulbs have been planted around the Orchard and Garden by Orchard or Garden members.
- **Grapes:** there are 4 grape vines. Two plants are planted by the Northeast gate next to lot 16 (donated by Rick Doty). And 2 are planted along the wooden fence of lot 17 north of the swale.

The function of the Orchard Committee Board is to collect the yearly fee, organize work parties, call the bi-annual meetings, distribute information, appoint an Orchard member to weekly reconcile the electronic and paper records of work hours, and annually update the Orchard Guidelines as needed.

Members of the Orchard Committee do not need to be participants in the Community Garden. (The Community Garden has its own set of agreements and guidelines.) Orchard members commit to the care of the trees, berries, ornamentals, and the grounds of the Orchard as well as gate or fence repair. Orchard members meet bi-annually, in the fall and spring, to discuss the needs, improvements and successes of the year. As the current members are amateur Orchard stewards, it's important that what has been learned and what needs to be tried can be discussed.

Harvesting of fruit from the trees and berries will be limited to and divided evenly among active members. Other members of the larger WRM community who are not active members of the orchard may feel free to occasionally graze from the raspberry bushes and trees. The community as a whole helps fund the water that is used in the orchard and garden in the lease fee (\$2.15/mo). Otherwise, regular harvesting is limited to the active members of the orchard. All fruit that is produced is for home use only and may not be used for any profit making business.

Being an active member involves the payment of annual dues of \$35 and the commitment to be actively involved in all aspects of the care of the orchard. Members have many different responsibilities, concerns and interests in their lives and therefore different levels of time and energy to devote to the orchard. A minimum of 40 hours per year per family is required to participate in the harvest. Harvest share will be somewhat influenced by the time each household has put in to the orchard, which means those who put in more hours will get a little bit more of the harvest than those who put in less hours. As of Autumn, 2013, Issa Parker is serving as the Orchard Treasurer, and the annual orchard fees go to her. The fees are for purchase of supplies necessary for orchard health. Orchard Fees are due by January 1st of each year.

ORCHARD
Care Guidelines

The following tasks need to be done by all active Orchard Members. Work hours and activities can either be recorded electronically via a Google Doc or by hand in a Work Log located in the shed.

Mulch: Fall and Spring. The emphasis will be on ramial (rough cut deciduous, hardwood chips) and woody (high carbon) mulch such as sunflower stalks, straw, canes

Weeding: Selective weeding throughout the year around trees and berries and ornamentals, weekly, making sure to let the planted dynamic accumulators (such as comfrey, elecampane and such) grow.

Watering: Summer, weekly, or as needed

Mowing: every 2 to 3 weeks during the growing season, taking care to avoid the fungal duff areas circling each tree.

Weed-eating: every 2 to 3 weeks during the growing season, taking care to avoid the fungal duff areas circling each tree.

Fertilizing: Providing the trees and bushes the nutrients they need through encouraging fungal dominance and providing companion planting is the basic fertilizing approach. This will be supplemented with other organic fertilizer as needed

Pest control: Checking the trees for tent caterpillar egg cases can occur throughout the winter. The first year, committee members checked for egg cases 7 to 8 different times, and we still missed some. Checking for aphids during the summer months is very important. Attempting to provide and care for beneficial accumulators (i.e. plants that attract beneficial predators) is also important.

Wild Rose Meadow
ORCHARD
Agreement

Year: _____

“I/We have read and agree to the guidelines regarding the needs for caring for the orchard and that I/We will participate to equally share the work necessary to tend and improve the trees, shrubs, berries and ornamentals that are in our care. We have paid our yearly dues of \$35 which will go towards any tools or fertilizer or mulch that have need of.”

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Amount and Date Paid: _____

Records of Agreement and Payments/Expenses kept by Issa Parker:

issaparker@centurylink.net; 376-3868, House number 91.