



Nathan Hale Urban Farm's

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Permaculture Prattle

The Spring Plant Sale – May 10 and 11 – Best Yet! by Randy Kilmer

This year's Annual Nathan Hale Horticulture Plant Sale will be bigger and better than ever. We have planted many more Sun Gold tomatoes this year because in the past, people snapped them up within the first few hours of the sale, leaving many people disappointed. This popular and prolific cherry tomato will be larger than those we have offered in

the past and ready for transplanting after a bit of hardening off.



Our fuchsia baskets, which sold out last year, are full and trailing beautifully. Make sure you get them before they sell out again this year! We will also have a great assortment of peppers, basil, geraniums, cucumbers, watermelons and other vegetable starts, along with many flowering annuals and perennials. We have enlarged our native plant selection as well. Natives are better adapted to our dry summers than many non-native ornamentals, helping to conserve water and

reduce water bills. In addition to being well-priced, another advantage of our plants over those of most local nurseries is that they are grown without pesticides. Instead of pesticides, we use beneficial insects, such as mites and nematodes, to control insects in the greenhouse. There are thus no pesticide residues to harm you, your children, or the honey bees. Here is a link to our plant list for this year's sale: [PLANT LIST 2019](#) We look forward to seeing you at our Early Bird Event on May 11th from 4 to 8 pm or our public sale on May 12, from 9 am to 3 pm. Buy tickets for the [EARLY BIRD EVENT HERE](#)

We are also starting to propagate more herbs and houseplants in the greenhouse, along with chrysanthemums, irises and other perennial flowers. It is great for the students to learn how to propagate perennials -there are so many ways, depending on the plant – and DIY propagation helps our bottom line.





If you have any perennials that need dividing (many require dividing every few years to continue blooming and thriving), we may be interested in collecting and rooting them for next year's plant sale. Contact Randy Kilmer to contribute perennial divisions: randykilmer@comcast.net

Help Us Harvest the Rain! by Katherine Ransel

It has long been our dream to harvest rainwater from the greenhouse roof and store it for use in our dry, hot summers, as part of our demonstration of sustainable growing practices for our students and community members. Here are some of the benefits that we hope to achieve and demonstrate:



- **Conserve Drinking Water:** Growing population and higher temperatures increase the demand for potable water and put pressure on municipal water supplies. Rainwater harvesting reduces that demand;
- **Reduce Storm Peak Flows:** Lessening storm peak flow volume and velocity in local streams reduces bank erosion and flooding of receiving waters;
- **Promote Plant Health:** Landscape plants flourish with irrigation from collected rainwater as opposed to chemically treated city water;
- **Save on School District Water/Sewer Bills:** The school district is charged for both its potable water use and the related sanitary sewer treatment fees. To the extent we can lower those costs, we are serving the citizens of Seattle.



L to R: Rebecca Midkiff, Simone Dye, Beth Mende, Rowdy Roddick, Olivia Prior, Matt Davis (NH), Marie McNamara, Peter Brask, Randy Kilmer (NH) Katherine Ransel (NH), Max Magee **Not Pictured:** Alex Wohlgemuth, Katarina Kubiniec, Timur Maraghe, Jessica Torvik (NH)

We are exploring using a solar-operated pump to deliver water from the cisterns to the drip system (because our site is virtually flat and we have raised beds, we cannot rely on gravity delivery). If we do so, we will demonstrate another sustainable practice for areas that are off-grid and/or have an abundance of sun during the growing season. Our team is studying whether a solar pump makes sense for our site. It is our good fortune to have a team of engineers from [*Engineers without Borders*](#) to design the system (pictured, left). These generous young engineers hold full time professional positions yet are volunteering their time to help us. We have to must raise the money to purchase the components of the system, at the very least.



We hope to install the system with volunteer labor, but if not, we will also have to raise money for labor costs. Let us know if you want to help us construct the system. The earliest we anticipate being ready to install the system is this fall. [Click here to volunteer!](#) [Click here to donate to this project!](#)

Growing Opportunities for Student-Community Interaction and Entrepreneurship *by Marcia Holiday*



During the past year, the Nathan Hale Horticulture Program has branched out into new markets and products! In May of 2018, we added a post-plant sale visit to Wallingford Farmers Market where our students were able to talk to customers, sell their plants and get real-world sales experience in one of Seattle's most popular farmer's markets. The students sold lots of plants and ate great food in a lovely setting. Wallingford Farmers' Market has invited us back, so please come and see us on Wednesday, May 15, from 3 to 7 pm in Meridian Park at the corner of Meridian Avenue North and North 50th Street.

On December 2, we hosted our Winter Open House, featuring our student-grown poinsettias and student-crafted holiday wreaths for sale. The students also made and sold lovely little lavender sachets, a new feature of our holiday offerings.

We took the poinsettias, wreaths and sachets to the Fremont Sunday Market on December 9, further expanding student opportunities to interact with the public and sell their wares in the "real" world. It was almost too real, with whipping winds and slanting rain all day, but the students were real troopers and clearly had the holiday spirit, taking turns warming their hands on the tall heat lamp in the center of the market and chatting with the surrounding vendors during the day.



The Winter Open House is an annual event, so keep an eye out for the date and time of the 2019 open house on our Facebook page!



The Design/Build Studio Proves that Spring is the Best Season! by Jessica Torvik

In early April, we again welcomed Professors Steve Badanes, Jake Labarre and their class of aspiring architects from the University of Washington's Neighborhood Design/Build Studio (Design Studio). The Design Studio created and constructed our outdoor classroom/gathering space, affectionately dubbed "The Dugout," last spring. So we were thrilled when they agreed to another project with us this spring to further improve our site. They will be working from April to early June to design and build a new tool storage area and a multipurpose arbor structure at our main entry.

When the horticulture program was relocated from the original site near Meadowbrook Pond to our current location, the new site included a red metal "garage" that we have used for tool storage. But its "shot gun" design simply hasn't worked (see photo, right). About seven years ago, a parent volunteer installed some racks for hanging rakes, shovels, and spading forks, which helped, but the dark corners of the shed harbored wasps' nests, falling tools were a hazard, and we had to wade through tools to reach supplies in the back. Moreover, the current entrance to our site is unwelcoming, consisting of only a chain-link fence and gate and a bare asphalt pathway leading to the greenhouse. We have asked the Design Studio students to create an arbor to provide shade and appeal to our main entrance and make the gate more inviting.



The students returned with scale models and sketches during the week of April 15 (photo, left), allowing our board members, Seattle Public Schools grounds and facilities personnel, and our horticulture leadership students to provide feedback and suggestions for the final design. They will deliver sections constructed off-site in mid-May and assemble the finished product in early June.

While the Design Studio's expertise is free, we are responsible for the cost of building materials, which we estimate will be \$35-40,000 for both projects. We are grateful for a \$10,000 grant from the Seattle Education Foundation and a \$5,000 grant from the Nathan Hale Foundation, as well as donations from individuals, businesses, and ticket sales from our Early Bird Plant Sale Events, to fund these building projects. They would not be possible without the support of our community.



NATHAN HALE HIGH
SCHOOL'S

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ornamental
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Plant Sale is co-sponsored by Friends of Nathan Hale Horticulture & Urban Farm 501(c)(3)
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Newsletter editing and design - Katherine Ransel