

May 2026 Newsletter

GROWERS

We grow
Vegetables & Berries
for Soups, Salads,
Stews & Stir-Fry.



FOOD BANK GROWERS

PT GLEANERS

We glean
Apples, Pears,
Plums & Figs from
Backyard Orchards.

In this month's newsletter...

- Year-to-Date Statistics
- NEW: FBG Merchandise!
- Events
- KPTZ "In The Garden" Podcast
- "The Big Drip" Fundraising Campaign
- "Food For Thought" Lecture Series
- May 2026 "In The Garden" w/ Dianna



Year-to-Date Statistics

Produce Grown = 764
pounds!

Volunteer Time = 1230
hours!

We're hard at work in
FBG Gardens all year
long!



Jefferson County Farmers Market

Thanks FBG Team
(Barbara, Mado, Kim and
Milly) for representing us
at

JCFM in Port Townsend
on Saturday, April 25th!



Stay Involved *in the community*

Rhody Parade

Saturday, May 16th at
1pm
*in Port Townsend
Uptown to Downtown*



In the Garden *on KPTZ radio*

Listen Here

Join Julia Cordz, Barbara
Faurot, Mary Beth
Haralovich and Dianna
Wiklund weekly on
Thursdays from 6-6:30
pm.



The Big Drip *Fundraising Campaign*

Donate to the Big Drip F...

Little drops of cash add
up so that we can
support our volunteers,
gardens and schools that
feed our local
community.



NEW: FBG Merchandise!

FBG has recently rebranded and we have a new logo!

Order a t-shirt and show off your support for the Food Bank Growers!

[Buy FBG Merchandise!](#)

Food For Thought: Owner's Manual for your Body: Ergonomics and Body Care for Gardeners

with Ericka Mack

Tuesday, May 12th from 6-7 pm

The Grange is located at
1219 Corona Avenue in Port Townsend.



"In The Garden" with Dianna

May In the Garden

May looks to be warmer and drier than average, with a low of 47.7°F to a high of 58.8°F and 1.65" of rainfall over about 13 days. What this means for our gardens is that it is time to irrigate and mulch, Mulch, MULCH!

The best way to keep water in the soil where roots can access it is by mulching around plants and not exposing the soil to the air. Keep your soil covered as much as possible. I like to mulch over my soaker hoses so all of the water stays down where

the roots can use it. So this month I am going to focus on Mulching, how to and what it is. With that said, I will start by talking about compost.

COMPOST AND MULCHES EXPLAINED

Compost is any organic matter left to decompose, whether it is leaves, veggies, or manures - basically anything with a carbon molecule attached. That means no rocks.

Hot compost is when a compost pile is built up in such a way as to produce a lot of heat as things decompose. Like a pile of fresh lawn clipping that starts steaming. When it reaches 131°F to 150°F (55°C-65°C) for at least three days, it will kill off pathogens, weed seeds and parasites. All manures should be composted for at least 1 year; although some of them do get very hot, it is still best to be sure all possible pathogens are dead.

Cold compost takes longer to kill off most of the pathogens and parasites, but it does not take out weed seeds. It does break down organic material and allows it to become available as nutrients for plants. It is easier to maintain a cold pile as you do not have to monitor the temperature, just wait.

Mulches (most of them) are a form of cold compost. It is material we spread in the garden to help prevent weeds, keep the soil moist, warm up the soil as it decomposes and help keep roots from freezing or drying out. Mulches do so many wonderful things for our garden. They help keep water from evaporating out of the soil while also helping hold the soil in place as rain or irrigation tries to wash it away.

Mulch can be very many things: lawn clippings, leaves, straw, wood chips, hog fuel, compost, old cotton sheets and weeds without seeds that we have pulled from the garden. There are non-organic mulches, but these do not break down to benefit the garden so I don't tend to recommend them. Spread any of these materials or a mixture of them anywhere there is not a plant growing. Try to keep them an inch or two back from the stem of the plant. Don't forget to keep your pathways covered too, as you can lose water from there as well. For pathways, I put down cardboard that is overlapped 1-4 inches and then cover it with wood chips or sand to hold it in place.

Another thing mulches can do is allow the fungal mycorrhizal network to spread through the garden. This is a very important system that works with plant roots to

increase the area where they can access nutrients. The mycorrhizal are the root system of fungus and they work in a symbiotic relationship with plants. They pull in water and nutrients from a very large area (about 80% more than the roots themselves) to help feed the plants. This is the big deal behind **No-Till Gardening**. If the soil communities and fungus are left untilled, they can bring in much more of what the plants need without additions from us.

In No-Till Gardening, weeding is done more carefully so as not to damage the mycorrhizal network too much. Most weeds can be killed by cutting them off between the stem and roots, then leaving them in the garden as mulch. This is an easy way to keep nutrients in our soil by not taking the weeds out. Some weeds still do need to be completely removed, like plants with tap roots which are not killed by cutting the stem (like dock and dandelions). They can be carefully pulled out in early Spring while the soil is still moist. Invasive species should also be removed as well as anything that can hurt you, like nettles or blackberries.

No-Till is easier on the soil and it is also easier on us. Since we are not turning over the soil or digging in compost or amendments (just adding them on top), it is a lot less painful for the back. My back, at least, really likes not having to dig into my beds each year. The active soil organisms will pull any amendment sprinkled on the surface down to the roots. Lightly loosening the soil with a broad fork or garden fork creates channels for amendments and compost to seep further down into the soil. This enables all the soil critters to do the work for me.

The only time my garden gets dug into these days is when I harvest potatoes. I have not found a way to plant potatoes in the ground without digging (but I have taken to planting a lot of them in bags and bins which are easier to harvest from).

So the most important thing we can do for our soil friends is really nothing. No digging, no turning, no plowing, no rototiller - just let them be and allow them to gently build on top, a few inches at a time. Add compost and amendments as needed. And mulch them. Mulch, mulch, mulch is the best thing we can do for our garden soil and our plants. Not to mention our water bills.

PLANTING

Right now is the best time to plant just about anything. Early spring greens are in

full glory and the soil is warming up so that our warm weather crops can go in. Watch for a window of really warm sunny days to plant out **corn, beans and squash**. Keeping them covered under floating row covers, hoop houses or cloches can give them just enough more heat to get off to a good start. I cloche my corn and it really seems to help.

Tomatoes and peppers will also need special attention to get going well. Water them with warm water (about 70 - 80°F) and keep them covered until they are well established and no longer fit under their covers.

Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and friends benefit from cloches. I tend to transplant out under cloches made of clear plastic bottles. This helps prevent transplant shock, keeps the birds from pulling them up and may even help keep the slugs away. Mulch around the outside of cloches unless they are really large; then you can add some mulch inside as well. Remove the cloches when the leaves start touching the sides or the plant starts growing out the top.

CONCLUSION

Now is the time to start considering growing strategies, like planting summer lettuce on the north or shady side of the corn. Interplanting can be very useful in keeping the soil covered. Plant quick growing things, like radishes, around the edges of slower growing plants; harvest before they get over-shadowed.

It is fun to see where you can plant a multitude of things in one bed to get the most harvest and keep the soil covered. It can be like a fun strategy game you play with your garden. Have fun and see what you can do while enjoying your time helping your garden grow.

Happy Gardening 🥕🥦

Dianna Wiklund

WSU Master Gardener

Everyone is Welcome!

We're so grateful for our volunteers! Feel free to join us and explore opportunities to grow, glean, or help remotely. Just let us know what interests you, and we'd love to get you involved!

Volunteer Sign-Up

Thank you FBG Community!

Copyright (C) 2026 Food Bank Growers. All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, you may [opt-out here](#).

FoodBankGrowers.org

Our mailing address is:

Food Bank Growers

P.O. Box 1432

Port Townsend, WA 98368

