



## Now is an excellent time to visit our Alliance “Schoolyard Habitat” Demonstration Garden!

In 2009, Peninsula High School Senior **Hanna Broback** led us in a project to dig out part of an invasive monoculture—Himalaya Blackberries and Canary grass—on the bank between Crescent Creek Park’s baseball field and the Masonic Temple on Vernhardson where the Gig Harbor Cooperative Preschool lives.



Grant money allowed CVA to buy dozens of native plants, and dozens of volunteers plunked them in rather iffy soil. We watered for the first two summers, but since then the plants have been on their own with occasional weeding work parties to let them know someone cared. And, yes, we did have to erect fencing to discourage the resident deer from loving the plants to death. Rabbits, garter snakes, birds, bees & butterflies, have also been seen appreciating the habitat.

We’ve enjoyed the beauty of these plants through the turning of seven seasons and we’ve learned just how vigorous the natives are. They are doing what all plants do—competing for soil and sun.





Just like most other landscape ornamentals, they need pruning to encourage pleasing shapes and good air circulation. Some have become too big for the spot we gave them. Time to move the furniture a bit.



### Work parties are fun!

There are now many healthy shoots of these native beauties you are welcome to dig and transplant to your own backyard habitats:

Red osier dogwood (bright red stems in the winter, white blooms in spring)

Beaked Hazelnut (already dripping with ‘catkins’)

Nootka Rose (rosehips feed all sorts of wildlife, blooms for hummingbirds)

Coastal strawberry (vigorous groundcover)

Snowberry (blooms spring, summer, and fall, seeds for hungry birds in the spring)

While you are welcome to drop by any time to visit, prune or dig out a shoot for yourself, “Work-party Chair” Mary Manning is setting up February 1 and 8, 10:00am to noon, for fence repair, weeding, and catching up with the neighbors. **Give her a call 253-853-5239.**

### What’s up with our Stewardship Plan? Looking for projects in 2015.

Nine years ago neighbors in Crescent Valley helped write a stewardship plan for conserving and enhancing the health of our watershed’s rich variety of wildlife. It’s why we live here.

National Wildlife Federation gave us an initial boost with grant money. Lu Winsor and Russell Foundation grants followed. We have road signs alerting travelers to the watershed boundaries; we have partnered with other county government and non-profit groups on invasive eradication and replanting with native varieties.

We encourage residents to register with National Wildlife Federation as a Backyard Habitat because, if enough of us do, we could be known nationally as a “Certified Community Wildlife Habitat”—contact Chuck Meacham 253-858-9388 for details. Just a feather in our cap, but a nice one.

Plan to attend our **Crescent Valley Picnic**, a sunny Sunday in May, and the **Chum Festival**, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Beyond that, you can

### Nominate a conservation topic we can work on together.

Hope to hear from you. Lucinda Wingard, 253-858-3647

