

THE ISLAND AGRARIAN

NEWS FROM SAN JUAN ISLAND GRANGE #966

**GROWERS, MAKERS, AND KEEPERS WORKING TOGETHER
FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Grangers in Action

By John Latimer



Greg also sells pruning equipment and ladders to make the job a lot easier. You can contract Greg for pruning assistance, tools, and equipment at greg@theplanted-pantry.com or on Instagram @plantedpantrylandscapes.

Greg Meyer of The Planted Pantry hosted a fruit tree pruning workshop to show community members the tricks of the trade. The January 18 workshop was attended by about 25 people and included pruning information and helpful tips.

A big thanks to Greg for showing us the proper ways to do winter fruit tree pruning.





**SAN JUAN ISLAND
GRANGE #966**

San Juan Island Grange #966 is a grassroots, non-partisan advocacy group supporting a resilient community on San Juan Island.

The Grange serves San Juan Islanders with legislative programs and community activities, such as talent and craft contests, scholarships, and more. You don't have to be a farmer to belong, though many are. Our elected officers are volunteers, and our "work" is done through committees. The heart of our mission is fostering community well-being, and we enjoy gathering to celebrate this.

We are a 501(c)(8) organization, accepting donations towards our programs and to maintain Grange Hall, in downtown Friday Harbor.

Officers of San Juan Island Grange #966 may be found at sanjuangrange.org/officers.html

Our bylaws and resolutions may be found at sanjuangrange.org/structure.html

San Juan Island Grange #966
P.O. Box 2013
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
(360) 378 6632
admin@sanjuangrange.org
rentals@sanjuangrange.org
facebook.com/SJIGrange966

Island Agrarian Classifieds!

The Island Agrarian is the newsletter of the San Juan Island Grange. *The Agrarian* informs Grange members of events, projects, and community issues; publicizes Grange activities; and celebrates the work of Grangers in support of the Grange mission.

The newsletter features several regular columns, as well as classified ads for goods and services offered by or of benefit to island growers, makers, and keepers.

Classified ads:

- Relate to island gardening and ag, value-added production, services, and strategies for sustainability
- Promote community resilience
- Support regeneration and preservation of natural resources
- Should be concise
- May be edited
- May be rejected for publication

To submit a classified ad, please email snowberryfarm@rockisland.com.

FERRY BOAT SEEDS IS HIRING!
 Located in the heart of San Juan Island, Ferry Boat Seeds grows and cleans vegetable and flower seed commercially. Ferry Boat Seeds runs a small field crew, with crew activities dependent on experience, farm needs, and season.
 Typical day: 8:30 - 4:30 (flexibility possible) with 30-minute paid lunch- and work-breaks
 Starting pay: \$18.00 - \$22.50, plus benefits, depending on experience. Housing not provided.
 Employees must secure housing prior to starting.
 For more information on the farm and farm crew responsibilities, go to <https://www.ferryboatseeds.com>. To apply to join the crew, please email Louisa@ferryboatseeds.com.

Letter from the President

Our recent Grange vision/planning/budget meetings have got me thinking about how we can be more effective in our mission to “support a resilient community....” This is what comes to mind:

Have a Vision! Imagine that we are successful in creating a “resilient community of growers, makers and keepers” on San Juan Island. What would it look like? How would we grow food, build houses, manage our farms and woodlands, and teach our children? What would our relationships within the community be like?

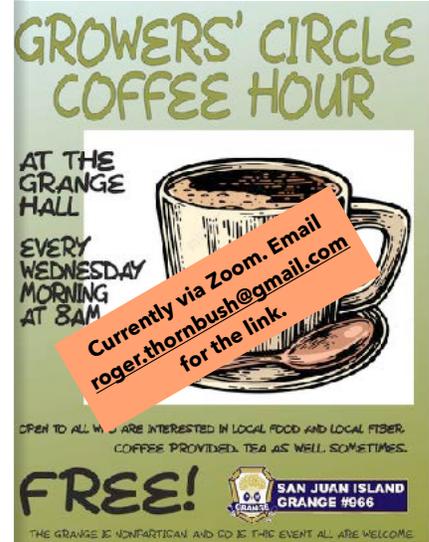
Think small, think local! It helps to focus on solutions that we can implement for ourselves right here. Let’s not put all our efforts into trying to fix the nation or world, expecting benefits to then come our way. The best ideas come from the margins, not from the center, and we are about as marginal as you can get, here off the coast of Washington.

Don’t try to do it alone! We recognize that combining efforts with others creates synergies, where the result is bigger and better than the sum of the parts. More importantly, though, we derive personal benefits to our mental health from being part of a community. Working with others gets more done and makes you feel good while doing it.

Live our vision! It’s not all work, either. Gardening, eating together, dancing, and barn-raising all do good and feel good. Let’s incorporate some of the fun features from our vision into our lives today.

San Juan Island Grange can serve an important role in building a human-scale, environmentally sound, and resilient community. Based on our recent visioning session, we plan to guide our members to work together to achieve our mission. Please stay tuned, and renew your memberships!

Roger Ellison, 2025 President



Notices

Save the Date!
3rd Annual Seedy Sunday Seed Swap and Give Away
 and
Seed-Starting Workshop!
 February 23, 2-4pm
 at Grange Hall

Doug Rowan has stepped down from the Executive Committee for health reasons. An election to fill his unexpired term will be held at the regular Grange meeting, on March 5.



Tools for Overmarsh

Overmarsh Farm Commons is gearing up for the growing season. We'll start gardening in the spring and are looking for donations of garden tools and equipment.

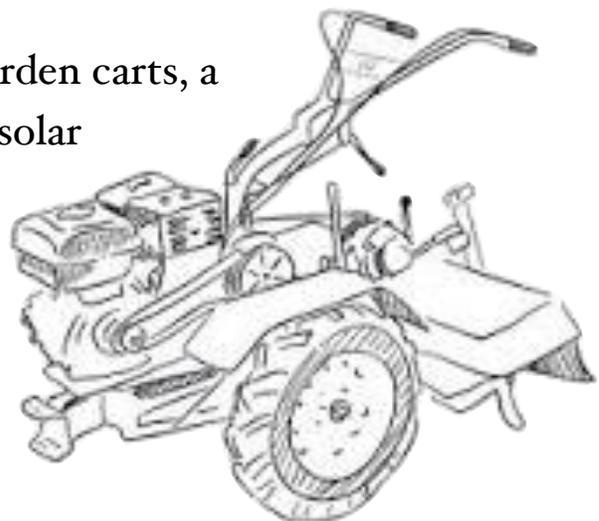
If you have any of the items listed below that you no longer need and would like to donate to our community garden, you can either drop them in the wooden box in front of Grange Hall or, for larger items, email sanjuangrange@gmail.com and we'll pick them up.

Small tools: Shovels, garden spades, hoes, rakes, hand trowels, hori hori knives, plastic buckets, spading forks, pitchforks, hoses, watering cans

Larger equipment: Wheelbarrows, garden carts, a chipper, electric fence netting and/or solar charger, and a walk-behind tractor

Other: Mobile shed(s) to store tools and equipment

Thanks in advance to all donors!



Growers' Circle Digest

By Roger Ellison

On December 11 we talked about how to do an experiment on the importance of light levels to growing plants.



Grafted tomatoes are available commercially

We then moved on to discuss grafting different solanaceous plants together, eggplant onto tomato roots, for instance.

Grafting tomatoes onto vigorous disease-resistant tomato rootstocks has been a commercial option for a while. [Growing Grafted Tomato Plants: Transplanting, Care & Harvest](#)

It looks like you can graft eggplant and tomato plants together. Google it to see what comes up!

You can do interesting grafts with fruit trees, as well, for example, various fruits onto hawthorn: [Grafting onto Hawthorn - Crataegus \(propagation forum at permies\)](#) or apples onto native crabapples: [Pacific Crabapple Project — Northwest Meadows](#)

How about a heritage orchard at Overmarsh? A new orchard, but planted to old varieties as a teaching tool and a bank of genetic options for an iffy future. The Overmarsh team is talking with Madrona Murphy of Kwiaht about establishing such an orchard.

Continued on next page

Growers' Circle Digest continued

On January 8, we talked about not having had a deep freeze yet this winter. What will that mean for pest populations this year? Will we have buds opening and then getting killed by a late frost when it finally comes? That brought up the need to keep good records and create maybe an island-wide almanac. Any takers? I am partial to the name "A San Juan County Almanac."

Have you tried sowing seeds in milk jugs? Several growers have had success with this technique: [Milk Jug Seed Pots – Learn About Sowing Seeds In Milk Jugs In Winter | Gardening Know How](#)

We talked about [Clubroot Resistant Varieties of Brassicas - Allotment & Gardens](#)



We wondered how many acres of orchard fruit would be needed for our island to grow all its own? That would be an interesting project for sure.

How about a community supply of seeds for sprouts and microgreens, in case the ferry rams the dock? Please offer suggestions of suitable varieties.



Speaking of emergencies, could we do practice drills of fruit gleaning and microgreen growing to hone our responses for when an emergency actually arrives?

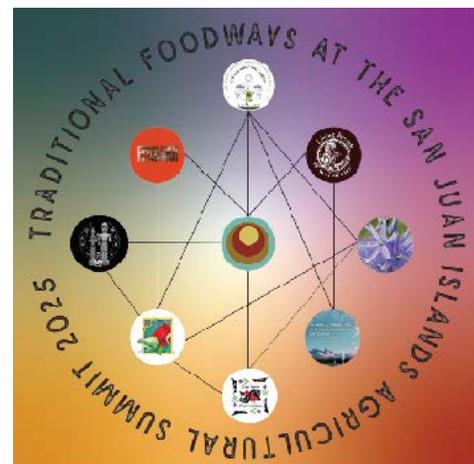


Join fellow island growers for the 2025 San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit on Friday February, 28 and Saturday, March 1. This year’s summit will be on Lopez Island and will feature in-person workshops, an evening community social at Lopez Community Center on Friday, and an in-person conference day on Saturday at Lopez School.

This year’s theme, “Setting the Table for an Abundant Future,” is inspired by the name of the new San Juan County Food System Plan. Summit participants will collectively vision the resilient food future we want to see in our county and learn tangible skills, practices, and tools to use now. Keynote speaker on Saturday will be the CEO of Tree-Range Farms, Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin, who will discuss his whole-systems approach to agriculture.

Information on summit workshops and sessions may be found [here](#). Tickets to Friday, workshops and the full Saturday program may be purchased [here](#), as can tickets for the community social, “Small Plates, Big Table.” Limited scholarships are available ([apply here](#)). For those needing housing, summit organizers can provide a list of options for you to self-book.

Get your tickets now and prepare for the ag event of the year in the San Juan Islands!



Seed Swap Coming Up! Sunday, February 23, 2-4pm at Grange Hall

By Nancy Best

Following in the footsteps of millennia of hungry humans, let's get together to share and give away seeds.

What: Free seeds! This is an opportunity to share within our community. Vegetable, herb, and flower seeds are welcome. If you grew out seeds last year, bring some to pass along. If you ordered more seeds than you need, this is a chance to give them a good home. You can come "seed free" to get seeds your neighbors are donating, as well as spare seeds from the Grange seed bank. Perhaps you will be inspired to return next year with seeds of your own!

New this year: Have questions about pest control, starting seeds, or anything garden related? Master Gardeners will be available to assist.

Want to learn about starting plants in milk jugs? There will be a demo table for that.

Interested in the Overmarsh Farm community garden? Info. will be there for your perusal.

Itching to share your latest gardening project? Email Nancyb1133@gmail.com

Who: Everybody, not just Grange members. Bring your friends and neighbors. The more the merrier for seed swapping!

Why: It's fun. It's free. We've been doing it for 10,000 years. Seed exchanges are a good way to get FREE seeds, try out new varieties, and chat up your neighbors about what works in their gardens.

