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Whidbey Weekly

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Beautiful Weeks Roses
Assorted Varieties On Sale
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\$15.99 & \$19.99
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Freeland ACE Hardware

1609 E. Main Street • Freeland • 360-331-6799 • acehardware.com • Monday-Saturday 8am-7pm • Sunday 9am-6pm

Earth Day Plant Sale
Saturday, April 21, 10am-2pm
Greenbank Farm • 765 Wonn Rd • Greenbank

Hundreds of locally grown plants to choose from.
Perennials, shrubs, grasses and much more!
Vegetable starts, herbs & fruits.
New Garden Art to add something special to your landscape.
"Garden Market" with some great finds.
Great raffle items, try your luck!
Fresh baked goods.
Come early for the best selection!

Presented by the Greenbank Garden Club

Welcome The Whales

PARADE & FESTIVAL
Saturday, April 14, 11am-5pm
& Sunday, April 15, 10am-5pm
Langley, Whidbey Island, WA
Part of Whidbey's Earth and Ocean Month!

Saturday, April 14
11am - 1:30pm: Langley Methodist Church
Educational displays, slide shows, family activities, costume making
1:30pm: Downtown Langley
Whale Parade (up 2nd St, down 1st St) Parade staging 1 pm @ US Bank parking lot. Come as your favorite critter!
2pm - 2:30pm: Langley Waterfront
Music & celebration, whale watching from shore
3pm: Langley Methodist Church
Educational Presentations: Senior Ecologist Russ Holmes; and John Calambokidis, Cascadia Research

Sunday, April 15
10am - 12pm: Langley Waterfront
Beach clean-up. Help protect gray whale feeding habitat!
11am - 2pm: Langley Whale Center
Meet The Artist event with Sue Coccia of EarthArt International (artist of this beautiful Gray whale!)
3pm - 5pm: Mystic Sea
Orca Network gray whale cruise on board the Mystic Sea.
Please contact cindy@orcanetwork.org for more information

Sponsored by Orca Network and the Langley Chamber of Commerce
www.OrcaNetwork.org • www.VisitLangley.com



DO YOU KNOW YOUR SOIL?
WHIDBEY'S SOIL BASICS THROUGH FIVE FORMING FACTORS

What is soil? Soil is the unconsolidated surface of the earth's crust where plants grow. Soils are classified by a taxonomic system into "series" (individuals) that are mapped throughout the United States and its territories. Soils have specific characteristics that influence use and management. Let's look at how the five soil forming factors – time, geology, climate, biology and topography – affect soils on Whidbey Island.

A Glimpse Into Whidbey Island's Soils

Time

Whidbey soils are young. They are generally only about 12,000 years old. That's young for soil! This is how long ago the ice sheet covering Whidbey Island melted. Due to their young age, soils haven't fully developed characteristics expected by the influence of these factors (low pH, weathering of soil minerals, highly leached, red subsoils, etc.)

Geology

The island's soils are mostly of glacial origin. They have mixed mineralogy, because many types of rocks and minerals were collected, moved, mixed, and ground up together by the glaciers that existed here thousands of years ago. As the ice from these glaciers retreated, it left brackish and non-brackish lakes in areas with fine-textured materials. These fine-textured materials are what we know as silts and clays. There were streams, too, that once existed and were localized to extensive areas of meltwater outwash that left layers and piles of sandy and gravelly material. Additionally, there were areas of compacted material, known as densic layers, which previously supported the weight of the glacier up to a mile thick. In more recent history, there have been additions of silt-sized volcanic ash to the surface of soils in many areas of Whidbey Island.

Climate

The cool, damp marine climate of Whidbey Island plays the role of weathering soil minerals and lowering pH over time. But this process has only just started because our soils are youngsters. Due to cool temperatures and lush growth of vegetation here on the island, our soils here tend to have higher organic matter in surface layers than would be expected in a warmer or dryer climate.

Biology

Dense coniferous forests historically covered most of Whidbey. Having large areas of conifer forests minimizes soil erosion, results in high organic matter in surface layers, and promotes chemical weathering and movement of iron and aluminum oxides – all important ecosystem functions. Again, the young age of soils on Whidbey has limited chemical alteration and weathering of its soils. High input of woody residue with forest vegetation has resulted in high organic matter content and brown color in surface layers. Native Americans who burned prairies on the island are responsible for dominance of grassy vegetation and dark colored topsoil in these areas. Present day humans are part of biology too; when doing land clearing and site development we can damage soils by removing more fertile topsoil layers, exposing less productive subsoil. When we add compost to our gardens, we can rejuvenate fertility of soils. Careful planning and consideration of your resources ensures that soils are taken into account in land use planning.

Topography

Topography affects soils on Whidbey Island by influencing the rate of erosion and drainage. Where we have steep slopes that are not well vegetated, like along bluffs, there is minimal soil development due to constant erosional losses. Wetlands, or even bogs, can form if soils in low lying areas are lakebed sediments or densic material with a combination of restricted drainage. Soils on convex (curved outward) surfaces generally tend to be better drained than soils in concave (curved inward) low lying areas.

Well, how can you find out about soil on your property, or on land you are thinking of purchasing? USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service's Web Soil Survey – <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/> – is a great resource available online to obtain custom soil reports. These reports you create for your area of interest contain soil maps, soil map unit descriptions, and numerous tables and interpretations such as: Water Features, Soil Physical Properties, Forage Productivity (hay, pasture), Forest Productivity, Potential for Nitrate Leaching, Building Site Development Limitations, etc. Check it out! If you need assistance with your soil report, please give us a call at Whidbey Island Conservation District (360-678-4708) and we can assist you.

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