

# Whidbey Island Growers' Association

Meeting notes 2/12/18

## **Merritt Wolfkill Feed & Fertilizer Presentation**

Merritt Wolfkill of Wolfkill Feed & Fertilizer, Inc. made a short presentation to the group about the organic fertilizers they have available to island growers again this year. If local farmers can assemble a large enough order, the Organic Farm School has agreed to be the pick up point. In past years, Merritt has delivered directly to farms in his truck. In order to keep costs low for farmers, he would like to see us order enough to be delivered by semi-truck. See the attached price list and contact Merritt with questions and orders.

Merritt would like to assure Whidbey Island farmers that as soon as he has enough orders (22 tons), he'd be happy to bring over a semi-truck load of the orders to the island. He'll be talking to his regular perennial customers in the next couple of days and hopes to get your orders for Nutri-Rich products soon in order to allow him to bring a truck on the ferries to Whidbey Island to deliver at the Organic Farm School. He'd also like to provide the following helpful information for if you are interested in purchasing:

- Contact: [m.v.wolfkill@icloud.com](mailto:m.v.wolfkill@icloud.com); (425) 754-1112 (cell); (360) 794-7065 ext. 105 (office); (360) 794-3561 (fax)
- <http://www.stutzman-environmental.com/> will take you to Nutri-Rich product information, application rates, etc.
- <http://www.naturesintent.com/> will navigate you to information on Calpril, Dolopril, 7-2-4, feather meal, and fish bone meal products.

## **Announcements from Attendees**

Vincent Nattress from Orchard Kitchen showed a new sign that a local sign painter did for him highlighting his membership with Whidbey Island Grown. Cost was \$150 and done by Laura at 360-331-2119. The Whidbey Island Grown Steering Committee meets now on the first Tuesday of each month and will be discussing branding and style guidelines as part of their upcoming meeting. Contact John Burks, Whidbey Island Grown Steering Committee Chair, with questions [jeburks@frontier.com](mailto:jeburks@frontier.com).



Paige and Kyle of Bell's Farm were excited to announce that Strawberry Daze is back this year, June 30th from 10-5.

David Stern from Sherman's Pioneer Produce announced that their stand will be open beginning Memorial Day and is looking to partner with local farms and sell their products at their stand.

Melony Edwards talked about the Food Tank Summit in Seattle on March 17 at Seattle University in which she'll be a panelist. An all-day conference featuring discussions with researchers, farmers, chefs, policy makers, government officials, and students.

Aaron Varadi from the Organic Farm School says that they will begin their new class on March 19<sup>th</sup> and are still accepting applications. Assistant farm manager Raelani Kessler was also in attendance and says that they still have frozen chickens available.

Prescott of South Whidbey Tilth told us about Tilth's upcoming Nettle Festival on April 29, the opening day of the market. Prescott also mentioned that planning is underway for Earth and Ocean Month. Contact Marian Myszkowski at Goosefoot to list your event and see [whidbeyearthday.org](http://whidbeyearthday.org) for final list of events.

Jerry from The Cove Café and Milepost 19 Farm reminded us about MusselFest on March 3-4 and that Slow Food Whidbey Island will have a Thai cooking class on March 22 at the café.

Kim Tiller gave an update on Whidbey Island Natural and progress on her farm.

Claire Lichtenfels talked about the recently formed group, Washington Women in Food Systems, and a recent meeting she attended in Seattle for this regional group.

Stephen Williams talked about a visit to the newly opened Farms and Market in Everett. He, John and Loren visited to learn more about how Whidbey Island Grown might participate. Because the operation is so new, many details have yet to be fleshed out and he felt that it would be better for them to work out some of those managing and tracking issues before Whidbey Island Grown gets involved. There are other opportunities for local farmers to sell their products here on the island, including farm stands like Sherman Pioneer Farms in Coupeville.

John Burks also mentioned that he may be able to get someone from [Barn2Door](#) to come and talk about their platform to sell into the Seattle restaurant market.

**John and Vincent gave an update on Whidbey Island Grown (a little hazy on who said what so forgive me if I just blend it together.)**

- Whidbey Island Grown membership renewals are now being accepted and an email has gone out to all previous members. There will be a kickoff social event for members at Greenbank Farm on Sunday March 25. There are lots of commitments from Whidbey Island Grown member businesses to participate and provide refreshments. Gloria from Whidbey Party Girls has asked farmers to provide table arrangements from their farms.
- Vincent made a presentation to the Rotary Club and there was interest in a community supporter level at around \$20. No member benefit other than that they support the group and a bumper sticker.
- Melony represented Whidbey Island Grown at Sound Waters University and Whidbey Island Grown may also possibly have a presence at the upcoming Whidbey Gardening Workshop at the Conservation District booth.

**WIG (Whidbey Island Grown) vs. WIGA (Whidbey Island Growers Association) - what's the difference between them?**

A discussion was had about the confusion over the difference between these two groups. For the record:

- [Whidbey Island Grown](#) is a member-based branding and marketing effort to promote Whidbey farms and farm products, and Whidbey as a culinary destination through businesses like restaurants, lodging associations, grocery stores, etc. that source, in part, from local farms.

- **Whidbey Island Growers Association** is a free, monthly educational and networking gathering open to all farmers, growers and other supporters of Whidbey agriculture. That said, it can still be confusing. Attendees voiced their confusion about the vision of each group and are still confused about the benefits of becoming a member of Whidbey Island Grown.

Some thought the monthly Growers Association and Whidbey Island Grown were the same thing.

Some people, when describing Whidbey Island Grown, hear people say “Oh, the farm tour.”

Vincent talked about the benefits of having more new farmers on Whidbey and the corresponding need for more purchasing of locally grown food to support these new and existing farmers. *Whidbey Island Grown* is a promotional effort to support more farmers, more land in agriculture and the economic viability of small farms and the local economy.

To help eliminate some of the confusion, two suggestions were made.

- The first is to always use this hashtag #WhidbeyIslandGrown when promoting on social media.
- The second was to avoid using the acronyms WIG and WIGA and instead, use the full name, at least always for Whidbey Island Grown.

Kelsi also took suggestions for name changes to the Whidbey Island Growers Association and will put them together in a survey for you. This survey is included in the follow-up email to the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ask Kelsi for a link to it if you are unable to locate that email. Email [kelsi@whidbeycd.org](mailto:kelsi@whidbeycd.org).

Lastly, Kelsi presented a proposed schedule of topics for the year along with the suggestion that we will try to occasionally have the meeting at South and North locations like we did last summer for the summer social. Everyone liked the current offerings of the schedule. We will post the finalized schedule once we have secured it.