



8th Annual HGSA Summer Conference & Trials

Where does Cool Season Garden Seed come from ?

September 10 to 12, 2014 • La Connor, Washington

ITINERARY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

AFTERNOON:

Arrive in La Connor, Washington. Our conference hotel is the La Conner Country Inn www.laconnerlodging, centrally located near the center of beautiful downtown La Connor and overlooking the scenic Swinomish Canal. We're staying in the heart of the Skagit Valley, a world renowned cool season seed production area. Hence the theme of this year's meeting, "Where Does Cool Season Seed Come From?"

EVENING

Welcome reception

Settle in, and then attend the evening opening reception, hosted by *Sakata Seeds*. Spend a little time catching up and socializing with new and old friends. Enjoy dinner on your own afterwards at any number of downtown restaurants within walking distance.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

MORNING:

Breakfast: We'll start the morning with breakfast at the hotel, where we will hold our HGSA Membership meeting before we dive into this year's trials and tours.

- I. **HGSA Summer Membership Meeting: EZ from Seed** <http://www.ezfromseed.org>
Becoming a gardener has taken on a new cachet and growing your own food continues to be the "next best thing". We'll talk about how the HGSA can continue to help all members to educate and grow their markets. Outline what the HGSA is doing and have a proactive discussion of what we should do to sustain and promote growing from seed.
- II. **HGSA 2014 Summer Trials & Sakata Seed Cool Crop Research Trials**
Our first stop will be about 25 minutes northeast to the Sakata Vegetable Research Station in Mount Vernon, WA. We will have over an hour to view our HGSA members' vegetable and flower trial entries. We can also evaluate the Sakata sales and research trials, which concentrate on cool crops such as spinach, beet and Swiss chard.

AFTERNOON:

Lunch: A special outdoor lunch hosted by *Syngenta Seeds* will be held a short 15 minute drive away at **Azusa Farm & Gardens**. Arguably the most beautiful garden center in the lower Skagit Valley, it holds a Japanese teahouse-style store, state-of-the-art greenhouse/shade-house structure, themed display gardens, and surrounding cut flower fields.

III. **Master Gardeners Panel** -Taking advantage of this outdoor setting, we will host our annual guest panel of local Master Gardeners/Garden Media folks on the topic of "Marketing 201: What Do We Need to Tell Gardeners?" The panel will give us feedback on gardening from seed and promoting seed packet sales from a consumers point of view. This discussion will also follow up on our Spring Mailing "**Seed Buying 201**".

IV. **Sakata Conditioning facility**

Onward just 5-minutes down the road to Burlington, WA, where we will have a personalized tour of Sakata's new administrative office and processing facility.

The office houses domestic and international sales, finance, IT, production, stock seed, the seed laboratory and logistics functions in adjacent is the new 115,000 square foot processing facility.

This facility processes and maintains a large portion of the cool season commercial seed and contract production seed for many Sakata entities. Shipping & receiving, seed enhancement and milling departments are located within this facility. Directly across the way is the production support facility which maintains the equipment used for stock seed and production departments. Sakata is proud to tour HGSA members through these new state-of-the-art facilities.

V. **Progressive Pumpkin Company (Bay Baby Produce)**

Our last stop of the day is just 10 short minutes away, planted between the beautiful Puget Sound and the rugged North Cascade mountain range. Started by two innovative women, Michele Youngquist and Liz Mitchell, PPC began with about 30 acres of small pumpkins. The company has since developed a proprietary painting and production process that is able to provide consistent, top quality miniature painted pumpkins. Today, PPC grows about 100 acres of miniature pumpkins for the fall and Halloween season, as well as gift-quality apples and pears custom decorated by a proprietary process that is completely edible.

EVENING:

Dinner: A special evening, hosted by *Wild West Seed*, will begin with our evening reception, featuring wine & beer from the area's local wineries. For dinner, a local chef will create a wonderful regional menu for us to experience the fresh summer flavors from Washington State. Dinner is hosted by *Seeds by Design* and *Renee's Garden*. Come, relax and enjoy the breathtaking view of the Skagit Valley.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

MORNING: **Breakfast:** Gather at our hotel for breakfast before we depart for another day of tours and informative sessions.

I. **Bellewood Acres Apple Farm**

Take the opportunity to network with fellow HGSA members on our ride north to the beautiful Bellingham area. The first stop is in Lynden, WA at BelleWood Acres - home to one of Northwest Washington's largest apple orchards. You can pick your own apples and your own pumpkins from their pumpkin patch, and enjoy fresh, locally grown produce at their farm market. Become part of the farm with a ride through the orchard while you learn about pollination, pest control, water-use and harvesting. After a trip through the cider line,

distillery and bakery, end the tour with a tasting of BelleWood apples and other farm fresh products.

AFTERNOON:

Lunch: We will stay at Bellewood Farms for a tasty local lunch sponsored by *Hammer Packaging*, while we hear from our special guest speaker who is coming all the way from Amsterdam!

- II. **Guest Speaker and Round Table Discussion - *Seed Packaging Trends “What are the European Trends in Gardening?”*** An informative and interactive session centered on trends in European Home Gardening market. Our guest Speaker is Robert Wacker from Floramedia. He will host many spirited questions and answers to follow from the attendees.
<http://www.floramedia.com/>

III. **Cloud Mountain Farm Center**

Our final stop is 20 minutes east in Everson, WA. Started in 1978, this 20 acre farm in Everson, WA has evolved over the years. Starting as an apple orchard and garlic farm and expanding into vegetable crops and nursery production, Cloud Mountain is known for researching, propagating and growing the best varieties for the Pacific Northwest. By 2010, they were growing more than 1000 varieties of ornamentals, tree fruits, vine fruits and a diverse mix of vegetable crops using organic practices.

Cloud Mountain became a nonprofit community farm center in 2011, dedicated to providing hands-on learning experiences to aspiring farmers, experienced farmers, and home gardeners. They are also working with farmers to create cooperative accessibility to processing equipment in order to develop and expand markets for locally grown fruits and vegetables.

EVENING:

Closing Reception Our last years hosts, *High Mowing Seed* and *American Meadows*, will join us for farewell refreshments back in La Conner. Following the reception, enjoy a leisurely dinner on your own in the Downtown area. A listing of recommended restaurants will be provided. Downtown La Conner is a wonderful place to stroll and has many excellent restaurants in all price ranges.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 – OPTIONAL “Day After” one half-day TOUR

Ed Hume Seed Company

Puyallup, WA Our fellow HGSA member company is providing a great tour of their operations one hour south of Seattle. See the packaging facility, which utilizes Ballard/Brown bag seed packaging machines, as well as the display and trial gardens. Ed Hume is kindly hosting us for a BBQ lunch after our tour. After lunch, we will be heading directly to the Seattle airport, arriving comfortably by 2 PM.

On behalf of HGSA and this year’s host Sakata Seed America, Inc. we look forward to seeing you in September! Keep in mind that there will still be many more activities that can be enjoyed if you can extend your stay in the Seattle area as a treat for yourself!