

WENDELL & TANYA BERRY IN SKAGIT VALLEY

Mark Musick, Vason Island, WA

Wendell Berry and his wife Tanya travelled to the Skagit Valley this past May to visit with local farmers, WSU research staff and graduate students at the invitation of Stephen Jones, Director of the WSU Northwestern Washington Research & Extension Center in Mount Vernon.

Wendell and Tanya also visited with several key people in the regional Tilth movement, including Woody Deryckx, Tom and Cheryl Thornton, and Anne Schwartz. Woody first met Wendell in 1974 at the Agriculture for a Small Planet Symposium in Spokane, which was the catalyst for the regional Tilth movement, and Tom was a founding board member of the regional Tilth Association. Anne Schwartz has served on the Tilth Producers of Washington Board for 32 years, including 12 years as President. Jules is also a current Tilth Producers Board member and assists with planning WSU/Tilth Farm Walks.

The following evening Berry gave a reading at Seattle's Benaroya Hall. A crowd of 2,400 people filled Benaroya's auditorium for a spellbinding hour of poetry and storytelling. Following his reading, Berry answered questions from the audience. "People have to re-learn a lot of things we've succeeded in forgetting," he said. Wendell called for leadership from the ground up. "If we're ever going to have good agriculture, we need good intelligence established on millions of small places across the land."

The evening ended with the audience rising in a standing ovation to honor Wendell's incisive inspiration and guidance for a new generation undertaking the challenging of re-establishing sustainable communities based on agrarian values and ideals.

Wendell Berry talked with Tom & Cheryl Thornton of Cloud Mountain Farm and Anne Schwartz of Blue Heron Farm during a tour of Hedlin Family Farm near La Conner. Photo by Hannelore Sudermann



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