



Wisconsin Master Gardener Association

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Greetings, WIMGA Board Members and Local Representatives!

Over the past two years, WIMGA has been undertaking a process to become a more vital organization, supporting our member associations and individual members, as we work with UW-Extension to promote horticulture and environmental stewardship in our communities.

One of the challenges in a statewide organization is stay in touch with each other, and conduct business efficiently. The entire membership receives the WIMGA newsletter six times a year (January, March, May, July, September, and November) by mail or electronically. My intent with this letter is to provide information and updates to all board members and local representatives in the months between newsletters to keep us better connected and progressing on the work of WIMGA.

Meeting Changes

Last year, the Board voted to discontinue the monthly "wisline" meetings in favor of meeting face-to-face for a longer period of time, just four times a year. These board meetings were not intended to replace the two (spring and fall) face-to-face meetings of the Board with local representatives. The plan was to meet approximately every quarter, and so far that has looked like this: June 18, October 15, and January 21. However, October was ALSO our fall meeting with local reps, and since we have always had a board along with these in the past, it worked out fine. I think the board will continue to develop a meeting schedule that enables us to get our work accomplished with the least amount of long-distance travel that we can! Please mark your calendars for the meetings scheduled so far:

- **Saturday, March 18, 10 am – 3 pm:** Spring face-to-face with **Local Reps AND Board** at Hancock Ag Research Station
- **Saturday, April 22, 10 am – 3 pm:** **Board** meeting at Hancock Ag Research Station
- **(tentative) Friday, October 13, daytime:** Fall face-to-face with **Local Reps AND Board** in West Bend (prior to state conference)
- **WIMGA Annual meeting:** Friday October 13 or Saturday October 14, time/date TBD

ACTION STEP: *Please let me know of MG events or other important events that conflict with these dates.*

Board Membership Updates

- Mike Hartz, local representative from the Adams County Master Gardeners was elected the new At-large representative, replacing Matthew Schmitz, whose term ended at the end of 2016. Thanks, Matt, for your service, and welcome, Mike!
- Jan (Hartz) Chapman of Glacial Gardeners resigned from the Board—thanks for her service. Verne Gilles is seeking a replacement for the other Northern District Director position; when he call you, please consider saying "Yes!"

WIMGA 2017 Conference

Vicky Hopp and the Washington County MGVs are working on a great conference for **October 13-14 in West Bend, WI**. They already have some excellent speakers lined up, and the facility is very nice. There will be a Friday night keynote speaker, and lots of breakout sessions on Saturday, as well as vendors. More information will be coming soon!

Strategic Plan

This has been a huge effort by WIMGA, and we are making progress! The Strategic Planning team (Byron Hacker, Jim Culbertson, Rose Kennedy and me) are very grateful for, and pleased by the engagement of so many local reps and board members in this effort! I want to recognize Rose for her work in leading this process. Remember seeing the juggler at the circus who kept all of those balls rotating through his hands? Now add to that a stack of plates twirling on one foot, and playing a harmonica—that's Rose! She has been outstanding at keeping all these processes going—**thank you, Rose, for your leadership!!**

Many board members and local reps are hard at work on one or more subcommittees of this plan. Several of the groups plan to bring their "products" to the meeting on March 18 for Board consideration.

ACTION STEP: *If you signed up for one of the committees, please engage with your committee chair to get reconnected! If you have forgotten where you volunteered, or wish to get involved, please contact rose@thekennedygroup.com or me.*

Some highlights of strategic groups and their planned outcomes:

- WIMGA website: we recognize how important this is and are working with a MGV who is a web developer to bring forth a new and improved website soon!
- Marketing team is creating a power point to help answer the question "What is WIMGA?"
- Newsletter—check out the new look in the March issue.
- Partnership with UW-Extension: Rose, Jim and Becky will be meeting with Mike and Susan in early February. The nEXT Generation project, memorandum of understanding, and more will be on the agenda.
- Other topics in progress: mentoring, promoting collaboration among groups, environmental initiatives, awards and social networking.

Other Reminders

- Make sure that your local treasurer has sent dues and membership list to Byron, and membership list to Susan at the state office.
- Get events planned by your group on the Master Gardener state website: <http://wimastergardener.org/submit-an-event/>
- Don't forget to share with your associations what's happening with WIMGA. Each of you is responsible for communicating WIMGA's work to your groups, AND for bringing concerns from local membership to WIMGA.

Thank you for being involved in WIMGA's leadership! I'm looking forward to seeing you in March and hearing more about how we are accomplishing our vision:

- **WIMGA will be the collective voice for the local associations and individual members in active support of their horticultural projects and services; will build networks to enhance outreach; share ideas and promote projects; and will help extend UW-Extension's educational role to the public.**