

WIMGA



March 2020

WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
Serving its members since 1992

WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

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WIMGA Vision - The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association will be the collective voice for the local Master Gardener Associations and individual members in active support for their horticultural projects and services; build networks to enhance outreach, share ideas and promote projects; and help extend UW-Extension's educational role to the public.

2020 ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE

The Washington County Master Gardeners welcome our fellow MG's to **West Bend Mutual Insurance Company's Prairie Center** on the south end of West Bend. The 2020 State Conference will be Friday and Saturday, September 11 & 12, 2020. Attendees will have the opportunity to have a guided tour of the huge, mature restored native prairie.

If all aspects of gardening captivate you, it's going to be hard to narrow down your choices per session. Fifteen breakout sessions on Saturday cover soil and compost to houseplants, fruit growing and garden art. Watch for more information about two new topics – the gardens of Monticello and Birdscaping. Registration materials will be ready in May.

If you have a garden shed you love, we want to see it! Please send photos of your unique outbuilding. We will collect the pictures and feature them in a slide show during the conference. Send your digital photos to wcmastergardeners@gmail.com. Put Garden Shed in your subject line.

Taking pictures of your plantings is almost as much fun as gardening. Bring along your best shot and we have a spot already designated to show off Master Gardener garden and nature photography.



WIMGA GRANT REPORTS

Don't forget to send in your Grant Reports by July 31. Grants awarded in 2019 are listed on page 11. Requests for a WIMGA Grant are due by October 1 each year.

Crawford County ***Kids in the Garden Program – Root Box***

Although it was delayed for almost a year by flooding in the garden for which it was intended, the new root box, for which Crawford County MGVs received a \$400 WIMGA grant, is finally built and installed. "It's standing in the snow and just waiting for spring to



The new root box, shown with doors closed, is all ready for planting come spring

come," said Donna Teynor, who wanted the root box to supplement the Kids in the Garden program which she oversees. "I want the kids to actually see the roots of growing plants," she explained.

She and another MGV, Carley Borcharding, got the idea after seeing two similar containers in other locations: Rotary Gardens in Janesville, and Bookworm Gardens in Sheboygan. Thanks to a third MGV who built it and installed it, Joe Morovits, that box is now a reality, and he is building another one for Grant County MGVs.

The box measures four feet long and about 30 inches high, and stands about five feet high.

The front of the box is made of plexiglass, and when the attached doors are opened, plant roots will be visible. It is built so that the soil and old roots can be removed each year and fresh soil and plants can easily be added.

As of now, Donna thinks she will plant penstemon rubra (red fountain grass), with its long, deep root system, possibly a bean plant, and something else that's rather shallow rooted.



With the doors open, roots will be visible through the plexiglass

She also plans to plant a few carrots right along the front of the plexiglass so children can watch them grow. The box is located in St. Feriole Island Memorial Gardens in Prairie du Chien, where Kids in the Garden is held, and can be viewed by anyone who visits the gardens.

We love your WIMGA projects, horticulture articles or Grant ideas. **Send us your stories and pictures.** Some things to note about your WIMGA projects: the number of volunteers and hours spent, contribution to the community whether in education or with place-making and collaboration with UW-Extension.

Meet Your WIMGA Secretary Diane Kachel

I completed Level One training in 2004 and have been a Certified Master Gardener Volunteer ever since. My husband, Mike Hotter, became a Master Gardener a few years later since he usually gets involved with whatever project I work on.

My interest in gardening comes from several sources. I grew up on a farm and was expected to help with my mother's half-acre vegetable garden, plus when I got older; the field crops. I have fond memories from both of my grandmothers and plants. One grandmother showed me how to plant a tomato properly, along with always having a row of gladiolus in her vegetable garden. The other grandmother could grow African Violets like crazy (I'm still trying to figure out her secret) and I have division of a Bird's Nest Sansevieria that always sat on her kitchen table.



As a Master Gardener Volunteer, I was part of the core group who worked on obtaining membership within the WIMGA organization so we could become an association. I helped to start a couple of our on-going projects including Rotary Waterfront Park and Rock River Community Gardens. The main project I work on is a school garden at Jefferson West Elementary School. We are in our ninth year and have been successful due to the support and dedication of the principal, high school agriculture teacher, community, and the master gardener volunteers.



Other interests and activities I am involved in include a soccer club, video-taping church services; sewing; knitting; crocheting; cooking; photography; genealogy and traveling. I hope to retire soon so I can dedicate more time to my other interests and perhaps teach myself how to do tatting, knotted lace made by hand with a small shuttle, used chiefly for trimming.

To Raise or Not to Raise

*Bridget Kelley – Volunteer Master Gardener, Registered Aromatherapist
Member of St Croix Valley Master Gardeners*

I've grown up with in-ground gardens for my whole life. They are a lot of work to get going, maintain and clean up, not to mention unwanted visitors that have easy access.

When we built our retirement house with no or low maintenance as the criteria and knowing gardening can take a toll as we grow older, especially bending over, we decided to put in raised beds. We put in seven beds and low beds for raspberries and blue berries, where we can control the PH within each bed.



These beds are 4'x'8'x30", made with 2x6's, landscaping timber and corrugated metal. One of the issues when making your beds tall, is that they need a lot of dirt! We used a hundred of years old method that kills two birds with one stone – the Hügelkultur Method. In other words, adding old wood to the bottom of your beds. Not only does this help fill the beds, it adds organic material, helps retain water, delivers nutrients to the soil, provides good drainage, extends the growing season and is a way to recycle old firewood.



We used old oak firewood to fill the beds about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. We then filled up to at least 3" from the top with compost, watering as we went along to fill in the gaps in the wood and to have the wood retain the moisture. We then filled the rest with screened black dirt with 25% compost. It's too late now but I should have put a barrier at the bottom of each bed for stopping critters from digging into the bed.

These beds produced amazing vegetables, I watered less than normal, had easy weed pulling, end of season cleanup was a snap and my back was very happy.



This bed is getting ready for garlic planting.

I did a soil test at the end of the season and each bed was low on nitrogen, but that was expected. In the spring – I will amend the soil with new compost and fertilize dependent on what I will be planting in each bed.

Garden & Landscape Expo 2020!

NJ Nancy Jahnel-Barnes

Garden Expo was February 7-9, 2020. Where do you start? What a wonderful event! I believe it gets better every year, if that is possible. My heart went pitty-patt when I heard Joe Lamp'I (aka joe gardener®) was going to be a speaker. I begged to be one of the room-hosts and lucked out! The room was packed with approximately 500 people. As a room-host, I can tell you that makes for work. He was gracious, funny and very informative. He has a long running garden show, **Growing A Greener World®** which I am sure many of you have watched for education credits.



Dr. Death, you have always been my favorite but you now have moved to second place. Poor guy had to bend his knees and scrunch down to get me in the picture.

More than 150 free educational seminars and demonstrations were available. There were window boxes entered for judging, and fun make n' take seminars. I visited Josie Fowler of Puddingstones Farms and came away with a Phalaenopsis Orchid Kokedama that now sits proudly on my plant shelf in my breakfast room.



Sunday was Garden & Landscape Expo's official "Family Day." Children were able to meet PBS's 'Nature Cat' from 10 am until Noon. The first 50 kids in Nature Cat's Backyard that Sunday received a signed copy of *Sally the Stone & Friends: Spread Kindness and Joy!* Needless to say, there were many excited and happy kids. Unfortunately, the typical Arctic Blizzard hit us so our Sunday attendance was down, but many hardy souls showed up.

The 6th-annual Garden & Landscape Expo Farmers' Market was held on Sunday in the Atrium of the Exhibition Hall at the Alliant Energy Center. The Farmers' Market featured farmers, food artisans and local food retailers. Many a seminar attendee came into the sessions I was working that day munching on the goodies from the farmers market.

SCHOOL SUNFLOWER PROJECT

By Hali Dessecker, Barron County MGV

Every spring, the Barron County Master Gardener Volunteers distribute sunflower seeds to area elementary 3rd graders to plant.

Volunteers go into classrooms in the spring and talk about gardening. Sunflower seeds are sent home with students for a sunflower contest. The project supports student interest in plant life and develops gardening skills.

Our volunteers revisit the schools in the fall to measure and "judge" the largest



sunflower grown over the summer. Prizes (hanging birdfeeders) are handed out in each school district to the winning sunflower. The BCMGVs budget money for these prizes annually. The sunflower project reaches 3rd and 4th graders in over nine schools in the county reaching 620

children. From one MGV, "It's fun to talk to the students in the spring and then get to see them again in the fall with their sunflower seed heads."

The Sunflower Project is one of many projects BCMGVs use to reach out to youth.



Starting Plants from Seed Indoors

Nancy Jahn-el-Barnes

With proper care and timing, you can raise healthy vegetable, flower and herb plants indoors to plant outdoors from seed. Flower and herb seeds vary widely. Check the seed packet for when to plant. Be sure to use a new, soil-less seed starter mix available for this purpose to reduce the chances of your seedlings damping off.

Gather materials:

Seed packets,
Container like a dishpan,
Soil-less seed starter mix,
Plant labels, Permanent
marker, Watering can,
Plastic cup to scoop soil,
Plastic cover or clear
plastic, Plastic flat with plug
tray, Individual pots (if
repotting plants), and a
stick to make holes in soil



New Seeds vs Old Seeds

Don't buy more seed than you will use in two or three years. The fresher the seed, the greater the chances that all the seeds will still be viable. Fewer and fewer seeds from a packet will germinate as time passes. Leftover seeds can be saved for the next year. As soon as you're done planting, store seed packets in an air-tight container in a cool place: the refrigerator is ideal.

To keep the humidity low in the container, add a packet of silica gel. A teaspoon of powdered milk in a piece of facial tissue or paper towel will also absorb moisture.

Moisten seed starter mix

Add water to your seed starter mix so that it is saturated like a sponge but not soggy. Let it stand for a few minutes to absorb the water. Stir to make sure all the mix is uniformly moist.

Select clean containers

Seeds can be started in a variety of containers, but a convenient way is to purchase an inexpensive flat with plugs and a plastic cover which can be used for several years. Make sure that any container you use has drainage holes in the bottom.



If reusing your tray, be sure to wash the tray with hot, soapy water and rinse with 10% bleach to water solution to prevent spread of diseases from last year's planting and then air dry the trays.

Add seed starter mix to plug tray. Fill your tray with dampened mix. Plant seeds. Make an indent with the stick to the depth specified on your seed packet. For example, using pepper seeds, place one seed per cell about 1/4" deep. If you are using older seeds with a lower germination rate, you may place 2-3 seeds and thin later. (Some plants like lettuce need light to germinate. Place these seeds on top of the mix and do not cover with more seed starter mix.)



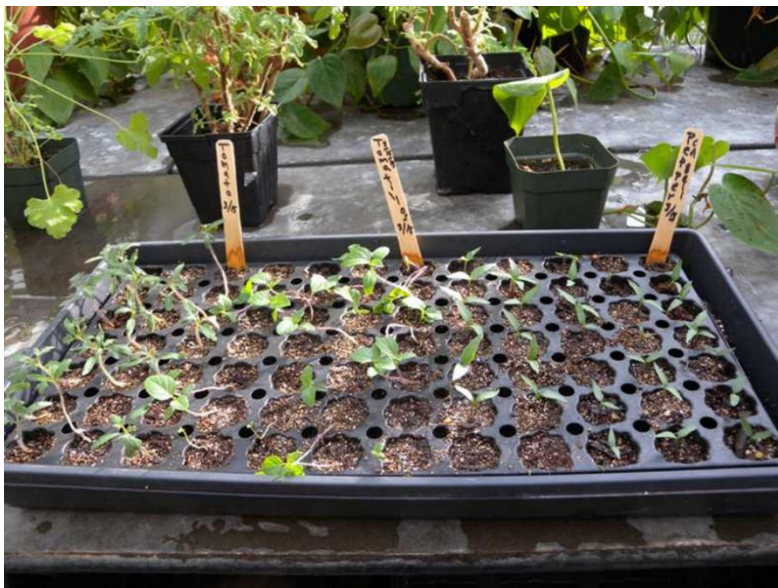
Cover the seeds with more seed starter mix or horticultural vermiculite. Since the mix is pre-moistened, no additional water should be necessary. If you did not pre-moisten the mix, soak the flat in a large dishpan or tray of water until water has wicked up to the top

of the soil. This can take several minutes. Then, remove the seed tray from the water and let drain.

Plant seeds with similar germination time together

Rarely does a home gardener need a whole tray of one variety, so seeds can be combined if well labeled. It is advisable to plant seeds that require about the same number of days to germinate in the same tray so they all germinate at the same time. Alternatively, the tray could be cut in sections and each section removed as the seeds germinate.

Cover your flat with a plastic cover or clear plastic to prevent drying out during germination. Place in a warm location about 75 degrees F, out of direct sunlight. In this example, peppers took about 7 to 10 days to germinate. Move to bright light when germination takes place. As soon as plants emerge, remove the plastic cover and move to a cooler location about 65-70 degrees in strong light. A South window sill is a good place but under grow lights is best. If using fluorescent lights, place plants 6-10 inches away from the bulb. Leave the light on for 12 to 18 hours and fertilize weekly. Water sparingly to keep plants from wilting. Do not overwater.



Staggered germination

These seeds germinated at different lengths of time: tomatoes (left and center), 3-4 days and peppers (right) 7-10 days. Cutting the seed tray apart and removing the tomatoes as soon as they germinated could have prevented the tomatoes from becoming leggy before the peppers germinated.

When the second set of leaves appear, the seedlings can be thinned to one plant per cell if needed. Depending upon the size of your tray, some plants can be kept this way until they are transplanted into the garden. As these plants were started in a plug tray, which holds only a small amount of soil, they will need to be repotted into larger pots to give roots room to expand. Seeds started directly in peat pots or cell packs may not need to be transplanted if they hold sufficient mix.



Harden plants before planting outdoors

Always harden off the plants by slowly exposing them to outside temperatures, wind, and light a few hours more each day before moving them to the garden. This usually requires a week to 10 days.

Reference sources:

Missouri Botanical Garden

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/>

University of Minnesota extension

mnext@umn.edu

Events, Conferences & Seminars

March 7, 2020

Spring Begins! 3001 U.S. Highway 12 East, Menomonie, Wisconsin-Dunn County
Diana Alfuth, UW-Extension Horticulture Outreach Specialist will present “Using Native Plants in the Landscape” and “Small Space Gardening” including Lasagna Gardening, Straw Bale Gardens, Pallet Gardens and Container Gardens.

March 14, 2020

WCMGVA Spring Garden Seminar,
UWSP at Marshfield Campus - Room 131
Keynote Presentation: Soil Health - It's More Than Just Dirt, Jamie Patton, Senior Outreach Specialist, Northeast Wisconsin Nutrient and Pest Management Program – Learn about the importance of soil organisms, ways to improve our soil habitats, and how healthy soils can promote plant, human and environmental health.



March 21, 2020

2020 Spring Garden Conference, UW-Green Bay Marinette Campus,
750 West Bayshore Street, Marinette, Wisconsin

Join us as we celebrate 25 years of the Northern Lights Master Gardeners Association and Extension Marinette County Annual Garden Conference. The Keynote Speaker is Janet Macunovich. Janet is an author and educator who as a professional gardener has been designing, planting and maintaining gardens and landscapes for almost 40 years. Her presentation will be on “Renovating Gardens and Landscapes.”

Garden U-Wildflowers, Hostas and Bees

Hudson House Grand Hotel, 1600 Crest View Drive, Hudson, WI

An annual public educational conference on horticultural topics sponsored by the St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners Association.

Ready, Set, Grow Spring Conference

VESPERMAN FARMS, 8149 Stage Road, Lancaster, Wisconsin

<https://www.vespermanfarms.com>

Grant County 5th Annual Spring Conference with speakers covering gardening topics for beginners and beyond. Educational displays, door prizes, and light refreshments. Find more information on our [website](#).

Rotary Botanical Gardens Spring Symposium

Rotary Botanical Gardens, 1455 Palmer Drive, Janesville, Wisconsin

Featured speakers include: Mark Dwyer “Cool Plants to Know and Grow;”

Bobbie Schwartz “Garden Renovation: Transform Your Yard into the Garden of Your Dreams;” and Michael Jesiolowski “Have Plants, Will Travel.”

April 4, 2020

A Day in the Garden, UW Fond du Lac, Administration/ Extension Building

400 University Drive, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

Featuring Lisa Johnson, Dane County, Horticulture Educator Watch

Outagamie County Master Gardener Garden Conference

Liberty Hall, 800 Eisenhower Dr, Kimberly, Wisconsin

A day full of learning, fun and friends! The annual gardening conference, hosted by Outagamie County Master Gardeners, will prove to once again be a great event.

Invasive Species Citizen Science Workshop

April 24, 2020 Langlade County Resource Center, 837 Clermont St, Antigo, Wisconsin

April 25, 2020 Navarino Nature Center, W5646 Lindsten Rd, Shiocton, WI

April 30, 2020 Spooner Agricultural Research Station, W6646 St Hwy 70, Spooner, WI

May 1, 2020 Willow River State Park Nature Center, 1034 Co Hwy A, Hudson, WI

Attendees will learn how to identify common and priority invasive plants in the region and how to map the plants to contribute to local monitoring and management efforts. Representatives from nearby Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas will highlight opportunities to participate in new and ongoing invasive species monitoring projects.

WIMGA Educational Grants – Awarded 2019

The WIMGA Finance Committee awarded 27 grants in the Fall of 2019. Only \$8,100 was awarded. Every association that applied timely for a grant received their request.

Bluff Country	\$100	4-H Education Supplies – Flowers, Vegetables
	\$250	Plant maps & lists; tools for gardens
	\$400	Educational Signage for Native Garden
Calumet Co.	\$100	Laminator & Supplies – Labeling Plant Displays
	\$250	Electronic digital scale; New Sign
	\$400	Educational Program Speakers
Fond du Lac Co.	\$400	Sensory Garden at new Charter School
Grant Co.	\$100	MS Publisher Software
	\$400	Ready, Set, Grow Garden Conference Expenses
Marquette Co.	\$250	Information Kiosk at Interactive Nature Trail
	\$400	Interactive Nature Trail Supplies, Equipment, Signage
MGs of the North	\$250	Crescent School Garden supplies & greenhouse
	\$400	Rain water capture system
North Central MG	\$400	Garden Visions 2020 Conference
North Country MG	\$400	Kids in the Garden Educational Program Supplies
Ozaukee Co.	\$250	Gift Bags & Contents for 2020 Garden Symposium
	\$400	Speaker Expenses for 2020 Symposium
Washington Co.	\$100	Informational Brochures
	\$250	Renovation of beds at Fairgrounds
	\$400	Educational Speakers for 2020
Waupaca Co.	\$100	Float about MGs for parades
	\$250	Banners for events during the year
	\$400	Educational Speakers for 2020
Winnebago Co.	\$250	Plants for Park View Health Care Center
	\$400	Butterfly Garden at Miravida Living in Oshkosh
Wolf River MG	\$400	Community Education Programs
Wood Co.	\$400	Trifold Display; Laminating Sheets for display

Educational Grants in the amount of \$8,850 is budgeted for 2020. The Criteria and Grant Application Forms can be found on the WIMGA website. Grant applications are due by October 1.

NJ'S BITS AND BOBS: A PUZZLE FOR YOU TO SOLVE!

There are certain terms that embed themselves into your consciousness like a woodpecker's beak in particle board. **"Birb"** is one of them. For those not terminally online, birb is affectionate internet-speak for birds. Not all birds are 'birbs'. Which ones are??? For hints you may visit Audubon's website.



Articles and ideas for the Newsletter may be submitted to our editors, Nancy Jahnell-Barnes at westcoasternancy@gmail.com or Hali Dessecker at halirenee@yahoo.com.

Association News

Saturday, April 18 at the Hancock Ag Research Station will be the **Spring Face-to-Face Meeting** of WIMGA Local Representatives, Board members and the MG Program Office. The meeting will begin promptly at 10 am, Byron and Leonard will be preparing lunch, and we'll conclude by 3 pm.

This day will be our long-range planning meeting, and we'll be taking a close look at what's happening in the program, and where WIMGA needs to put its efforts in the future. There will be an opportunity to share how your associations are handling some of the changes that have occurred in Extension and how we can help each other.

The Board appreciates the time that Local Reps contribute to these meetings! If you have suggestions, please send them to Becky Gutzman at buckhill@centurylink.net. An agenda will be sent directly to Local Reps with a RSVP for lunch count.

Please Note: Membership Dues from several Associations have not yet been received. A reminder that your Membership Dues fund the Educational Grants and a \$5,000 contribution to Wisconsin Public Radio every year to underwrite the Garden Talk Show with Larry Meiller, among other things. If you have any questions or concerns about dues please contact the WIMGA Treasurer.

March 2020 Newsletter

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The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association Newsletter is published 6 times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November) dedicated to providing horticulture education and information about the Master Gardener Program to state association members.

Articles, artwork and ideas are welcome, but final selection and editing are the responsibility of the editorial staff.

Visit the WIMGA Website at
<http://www.wimga.org/>

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