

# WIMGA



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.

## We Say Farewell.....

The clock is ticking down on Dr. Susan E. Rice Mahr as the Coordinator of the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program, University of Wisconsin – Extension. Susan was presented with a lovely brass and wood wind chime engraved with a plaque by WIMGA President, Becky Gutzman (standing right in pink sweater) with WIMGA District Directors and Local Representatives looking on. Seated center of photo is Robyn Preston of Adams County. We wish Susan the best moving forward toward new adventures! You will be missed.



I think that life is action and passion,  
It is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time  
at peril of being judged not to have lived.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. 1884 Memorial Day Address



## Share Your Project Success Stories with us!

Your fellow master gardeners would love to hear about the many success stories from the past year. At the WIMGA Board Meeting on Saturday, October 13, 2018, we heard about programs that master gardeners are coordinating in their communities. We are a busy lot and the 2018 Annual Report will be an amazing documentation of how important master gardeners are to our communities and the state of Wisconsin. Many of you are unsung heroes in your communities. It is time we 'toot our own horn' and acknowledge all of you and the projects you coordinate. Please send a brief description of your program and photos to [westcoasternancy@gmail.com](mailto:westcoasternancy@gmail.com) so we can feature your activities in our newsletter.

## Become a WIMGA Board Member

Are you interested in becoming more involved in the MG program beyond your own local association and helping MGVs throughout the state? Elections are held every year to select one Wisconsin MGV to serve a 3 year term as an At-Large Director on the WIMGA Board (3 of the 15 Directors are At-Large; the remaining 12 are selected from the Local Reps in each of the 6 Districts).

The At-Large Directors represent all MGVs in the state (not just those of their own association). They are expected to attend the six Board meetings per year (most are by teleconference) and serve on WIMGA committees. The Board is now soliciting nominations for this position. Only certified MGVs are eligible. Nominees must submit a short bio (by email) to Becky Gutzman at [buckhill@centurylink.net](mailto:buckhill@centurylink.net) by December 1 to be included on the ballot that will be published in the January newsletter.

## Dues Reminder ...

Don't forget that the deadline for submitting WIMGA dues (\$5) to the WIMGA Treasurer is January 15, 2019. If you belong to a local association they should collect and submit your dues as a group. Individual members can send in their own payment if they live in a county without an association.

Association Treasurers:

- **Send an electronic list** with email address, telephone, and mailing address of each dues paying member to **BOTH** the WIMGA treasurer [wimga.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:wimga.treasurer@gmail.com) AND the MG Program Office [wimastergardener@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:wimastergardener@ces.uwex.edu)
- **Mail the check** to: Byron Hacker, WIMGA Treasurer  
N4511 Hwy 57, Chilton WI 53014



Questions? See the WIMGA website <https://www.wimga.org/wimga-dues>



## Conference Results

226 People Attended

17 people - Friday evening only  
35 people - Saturday only

51 people Tour 1 –  
Silver Springs, CSA, Down to Earth

47 people Tour 2 – Fruit Farm and Winery



31 people Tour 3 –Walking Tour  
of Phoenix Park and Mayo Gardens



Hello. I was cutting off the spent flowers on a lilac yesterday. I reached for a branch and I stopped, because it was so creepy looking! I cut it off and put it in water. I remembered that Susan Mahr had an article on this problem many years ago, but I couldn't recall the name of it, besides "Creepy Looking". – Lynn Adams, Wisconsin Master Gardener

My guess is that your lilac has lilac witches broom, which is a phytoplasma disease caused by the same phytoplasma that causes ash yellows (see the attached). Very cool, but not good for your lilac! – Brian Hudelson, Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic



## Ash Yellows

Jim Olis\* and Brian Hudelson, UW-Madison Plant Pathology

**What is Ash Yellows?** Ash Yellows is a chronic, systemic disease that affects Ash trees of all ages. White Ash is particularly susceptible to Ash Yellows. Ash Yellows likely occurs wherever Ash is grown and has been reported widely in the United States and southern Canada. The organism that causes Ash Yellows also causes a disease called lilac witches-broom.

**What does Ash Yellows look like?** Symptoms of Ash yellows usually occur within three years of infection. Infected trees typically grow at a much slower rate than non-infected trees, although this may be difficult to detect in a single tree. The rate of growth of an infected tree may be as little as one half that of a healthy tree. Leaves on infected trees are frequently smaller, thinner and lighter green than usual. Often, but not always, affected trees will produce branches in tufts, a symptom that is called "brooming". Eventually, branches in the crown will die and this die-back can continue until the entire crown is dead.



**Where does Ash Yellows come from?** Ash Yellows is caused by the phytoplasma, Candidatus Phytoplasma fraxini. Phytoplasmas are bacteria-like organisms that live and survive in the phloem (i.e., the food-conducting tissue) of infected plants. Leafhoppers are thought to be the primary means by which this pathogen is moved from tree to tree.

**How do I save a tree with Ash Yellows?** There is no known cure for Ash Yellows, but some infected trees may live and grow slowly with the disease for many years. Ash trees suspected of having Ash Yellows should be tested for the disease, and those trees that test positive should be removed immediately to prevent spread of the Ash Yellows phytoplasma to other trees in the area. Wood harvested from infected trees does not serve as a source of the phytoplasma and can be used for woodworking or firewood, or chipped for mulch.

**How do I avoid problems with Ash Yellows in the future?** Avoid growing Ash trees in areas where Ash Yellows is prevalent. When choosing a lilac, select a variety of common lilac as these varieties appear to have tolerance to the Ash Yellows phytoplasma. Avoid using *S. josikaea*, *S. reticulata* and *S. sweginzowii*, or hybrids of these species with either *S. komarowii* or *S. villosa*, as these lilacs appear to be highly susceptible. It is unclear if the use of insecticides (or other means) to control leafhoppers can help control the spread of this pathogen.

\*Completed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a BS in Plant Pathology at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. 2001

# Find a Speaker, Be a Speaker

WIMGA Speakers Bureau is Ready! The website for WIMGA has been launched at [wimga.org](http://wimga.org). We know a number of you have taken a look at the website and its many features. We'd like to highlight a new service for WIMGA and for all of you:



**The Speakers Bureau.** Part of being a Master Gardener Volunteer is providing horticultural education to the public and the other part is that we all need to get at least 10 hours of continuing education each year to further our skills as Master Gardeners. **The Speakers Bureau** is a great tool to advance both of those needs. And it is ready for you to add your talks. Do you enjoy giving horticultural talks?

### **Here's how you can get the word out of your availability:**

1. Go to <https://www.wimga.org/speakers-bureausign-up> and open up the Speakers Bureau form.
2. Fill it in so that everything fits on one page. Please fill in every section and include a title. (Leave the formatting as it is).
3. Please fill in every section of the form and include a title. Look at the samples on the Speakers Bureau page.
4. If you have a photo of yourself and or one that pertains to your talk you can add that to the form.
5. Keep a copy on your computer and then attach it to the email contact form on [wimga.org](http://wimga.org).
6. One of the four people who update the website will upload the form and put it on the Speakers Bureau page for everyone to see.

### **Are you looking for a horticultural speaker?**

For your garden club, master gardener education, a conference or for a community event?

1. Go to <https://www.wimga.org/speakers-bureau>.
2. You can look by category at the talks that are available.
3. Titles are listed. If a title sounds interesting click on it and you'll be able to look at speaker and talk information.
4. You can contact the speaker to make arrangements or get references.
5. We are just getting started so not many are listed.

We are counting on you to help provide many topics and talks

### **Who is eligible to be on the speakers bureau?**

1. Master Gardener Volunteers.
2. Any other individual who has horticultural expertise who enjoys speaking about it. So please share our website link to people you know who are good speakers on horticultural topics.

### **Please Note: Speakers have volunteered to be listed. They have not been screened.**

Their listing on the [wimga.org](http://wimga.org) does not imply or constitute an endorsement by the Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA) or any of its constituent entities. In order to assure the highest quality of your program, you may wish to ask speakers for references before extending an invitation.

If you no longer want to be on the Speakers' Bureau use the contact form to let us know. About once a year we will send an email to speakers' bureau participants seeing if they still want to be included.

# Saint Croix Valley Master Gardener Association Variety Plant Trials

Submitted by Peg Wastell, Variety Plant Trial Coordinator for St. Croix Valley Master Gardener Association

In our last newsletter we provided the history and purpose of the St. Croix Valley Variety Plant Trials. In this issue, we are reporting on the results from 2017.

## Grow, Evaluate, and Report

Why would you want to give precious space in your garden for variety trials? Do you look at plant catalogs and wish you could grow everything? Here is a chance to fulfill at least part of that dream by growing four varieties of a particular variety of plant.

This year master gardener volunteers are growing about three feet of each variety of Summer Crisp/Batavia lettuce; twelve feet in total. Growers are connected to others, sharing problems and results via monthly emails. Discovering how truthful the catalog descriptions are and comparing observations and results. The veracity of the results is enhanced because of having only master gardeners as growers, evaluators, and reporters. These plant trials are another way to spread our knowledge about gardening among those interested in growing their own local foods.

## Interpreting Results

Here is a sample of the 2017 rankings and a summary from Diana Alfuth, Horticulture Educator. Full results and compiled data charts are available at <https://scvmga.weebly.com/garden-groups-of-scvmga.html>.

### Yellow Bush Beans: #1 Goldmine, #2 Carson, #3 Rocdor, #4 Cherokee Wax

While all four varieties were acceptable to most growers, Goldmine came out on top. Every grower said they would grow this variety again. It was described as having clean, sweet, crisp flavor, and good quality when frozen or canned. It was a wet, rainy growing season resulting in some growers having problems with mildew, but that disease was similar among all varieties, as was the incidence of bean beetles.



### Mini Cabbage: #1 Tiara, #2 Caraflex, #3 Alcosa, #4 Omera



Cute and adorable, these attractive little cabbage plants were also very tasty! Caraflex and Tiara were pretty much tied and got top marks for flavor both raw and cooked, from all evaluators. Tiara was reported to have fast growth, and Caraflex resprouted more heads after initial cutting. These mini cabbages are a great option for smaller gardens or when the yield of a large cabbage is too much.

Photos from Johnny's Selected Seeds

### Mini Pumpkin: #1 Jack Be Little, #2 Baby Boo, #3 Sweet Lightening, #4 Wee Be little

Mini pumpkins were grown mostly for their ornamental purposes, though some of the evaluators cooked them as well. While Jack Be Little came out on top, Baby Boo was close behind. Baby Boo yielded sooner than Jack Be Little. Flavor was acceptable for all varieties with no real standout. There were no diseases reported on any of the varieties with just a couple of insect issues, but nothing significant.

Photo from Burpee Seed Catalogue



**Roma/Plum/Paste Tomatoes:** #1 Plum Regale, #2 Amish Paste, #3 San Marzano, #4 Opalka  
 Tomatoes are always popular, but there is also a lot of variability and growers have different preferences in taste. In this trial, Plum Regale came out on top with almost all gardeners indicating they would grow it again. The flavor was good raw and cooked, with high quality when preserved. Unfortunately, it was a bad year for Late Blight, and very few gardeners escaped. While all varieties reportedly got this disease, Plum Regale appeared to show the most resistance.

**Turnips:** #1 Tokyo Cross, #2 Purple Top white globe, Gold Ball, Round Red



Several of the growers were first-time turnip growers. They considered them easy to grow. Tokyo Cross ranked first, while Round Red was last. None of the growers would grow Round Red again, as the flavor was ranked lowest. Tokyo Cross was largest with robust greens. All varieties experienced similar germination rates and disease levels, which was likely worse this year because of high rainfall amounts and wet soils. A few insects were present, but nothing heavy.

Photo of lovely white Turnip, Tokyo Cross Hybrid-From Burpee Seed Catalogue

**Flavored Basil:** #1 Cinnamon, #2 Lemon, #3Lime, #4 Licorice  
 There are a wide variety of basil available, and individual preferences drive the variety results. In this trial, growers preferred the Cinnamon, with Lemon a very close second. Licorice was last, which may not be surprising to many of us! Overall the growth was similar, though the Lime basil had a lower germination rate. All growers felt the smell matched the named flavor.

Lemony aroma and flavor - Photo from the Burpee Seed Catalogue



**12-18" Mixed Zinnia:** #1 Magellan, #2 Persian Carpet, #3 Profusion, #4 Zahara

The beauty of flowers is often in the eye of the beholder, but those trialing Zinnias beheld Magellan to be the best! Germination was similar among all varieties, with Magellan having the largest flowers and longest lasting bloom time. Zahara edged the others as being the best cut flower, and most performed acceptably for rebounding after cutting or deadheading. Pollinators were attracted to all equally, and there were very few reports of any disease or insect problems.



Zinnias have long been relied on as easy, productive and beautiful annual flowers to brighten the growing season, and all of these varieties continued that tradition.

Magellan Mix Zinnia Seeds - Blooms reach 5 inches wide on plants just a foot tall!

Photo from Park Seeds



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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. The newsletter is published in the Horticulture Department at the UW-Madison.

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/>**

