



President's Corner

As I write this, we are six days into spring and the gardens are still covered with snow. I drive around town and see arborvitae with split tops from the heavy, wet snowfalls (those that survived last summer's drought and are not brown and crispy). At the Wauwatosa library, a lovely small tree lost two major limbs due to the heavy snows and wind, with one branch still hanging by a long strip of bark. I suspect the library will cut down the tree; even if it survives the damage, it would always be lopsided.

I'd like to see the hellebores blooming beside my front porch, but they are buried under layers of snow and ice. If I try to dig them out, I will destroy the plants. Maybe next week, after a few days of high temperatures in the forties, we'll see spots of green again and I will see the hellebores' glossy leaves and nodding flowers.

Warm weather will come. As gardeners, we learn to roll with whatever Mother Nature gives us. The flower buds on my cornelian cherry dogwood are beginning to swell. Soon there will be

daffodils and crocus, tulips and dwarf iris in bloom. We'll be rushing to clean up last year's debris and to dig and divide plants before they get too large. Hopefully, by the time you read this, gardening season will be in full swing.

Road Construction Update

Gardening season and road construction (or destruction) coincide in Wisconsin. This year's work on the Zoo Interchange project will create complications for anyone traveling to the Milwaukee County Cooperative Extension buildings (UWEX,) State Fair Park and the SEWMG Plant Sale, and our approved gardens in Wauwatosa.

Hwy 100: Some traffic lanes are closed and travel is slower than normal along Hwy 100 north from I-94 through the Bluemound Road, Wisconsin Avenue, Potter Drive, and Watertown Plank Road intersections.

Greenfield Avenue: The Greenfield Avenue bridge over I-894 is closed. Use I-894, I-94, Hwy 100, 84th Street south of I-94, Lincoln Avenue, and

National Avenue to get around the closure.

Glenview Avenue / 84th Street: From May through August, 84th Street / Glenview Avenue will be under construction from I-94 north through the Wisconsin Avenue intersection. From I-94 to Bluemound Road, 84th Street will remain open while the road is resurfaced and turn lanes are improved. Glenview Avenue from Bluemound Road to just north of Wisconsin Avenue will be reconstructed, with full closure for two months.

You can get the latest information on these and related road construction projects at

<http://projects.511wi.gov/web/zoo-interchange-project/overview>

Safe travels, and happy gardening!

Kris Jensen



145 - Wisconsin Ave. exit

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Special points of interest:

- Enjoy the new layout
- Schedule for potting dates on page 4
- Tours and trips both near and far
- Many ways to volunteer for the growing season

Happy Spring Everyone! *By MGVs Mary Thiele & Patty Witt, Garden Support Comm. Chairs*

It was an honor to be in the presence of so many garden chairpersons at our March 14th Spring Forum meeting. These dedicated folks lead other MGVs in the gardening efforts that create and maintain our many MGV gardens in both Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. SEWMG gardens not only beautify our communities but also offer garden education as well.

At this forum, the MGVs saw the 2013 new spectacular plant slide show produced by Carolyn Dressler. Judy Williamson delved into the Volunteer and Educational Timesheets. Ann Wied explained the importance of the "Memorandum of Understanding." Kris Jensen detailed information about the new and exciting plant exchange within our own gardens. MGV and horticulturist Sue Donohoe delivered an informative presentation about native plants that was so enjoyable many have asked to have her speak again.

The garden chairs received laminated cards listing the businesses where our tax-exempt number is registered. Because of our organization's non-profit status, purchases are exempt from Wisconsin sales taxes. Several local businesses honor this status. In the past, SEWMG's treasurer has reimbursed individuals for sales tax incurred. In order to reduce unnecessary expenses, this practice will change. If garden chairs buy something from a business that SEWMG is not currently registered at, please provide the tax-exempt information. *The practice of reimbursing MGVs for sales tax will not be continued.*

A week after the forum, the Garden Support Committee met to plan garden visits this summer. Committee members will visit: Franciscan Villa

MGV and horticulturist Sue Donohoe delivered an informative presentation about native plants You'll find her thoughts in this month's featured article on page 5.

Gardens, Harvest for the Hungry, Kindred Transitional Care Gardens, Polish Heritage Alliance, Tierra para nuestra Salud, Community Memorial Hospital Healing Garden, Green Power Garden, Old World Wisconsin, Red Brick Museum in Mukwonago, St. James Community Garden, Sussex Outreach Services, and the Ten Chimney Historic Landmark gardens. These visits will take place in July and/or August. The chairpersons will be contacted and a meeting time established. These visits are to be helpful and informative and are regarding signage, educational opportunities and other questions.

The 2013 Garden Walk will be held on September 14th. If you are interested in having your garden included, please contact Mary Johnson.

That's all for now, folks...

Partnering with Victory Garden Initiative Counts

You can be the help needed by novice gardeners who have taken the plunge and purchased a 4' by 8' raised bed from the Victory Garden Initiative. VGI is offering 40 of their new garden bed owners the opportunity to have a personal garden mentor for their first season.

UWEX and VGI are training mentors at 2 sessions on April 10th and 27th. Mentors will be given a manual and a schedule for meeting with their mentee a



Victory Garden plots

minimum of 5 times during the season beginning with a planning session and ending with a final session to "put the garden to bed"-about 10 - 12 hours of service.

Gardens will be located throughout Milwaukee County and assigned for your preference and convenience. Sign-up to be a mentor on-line at:

www.victorygardeninitiative.org/Programs?eventId=615010&EventViewMode=EventDetails. If you enroll, please inform Sharon Morrisey.

You can also volunteer to help with VGI's "Garden Blitz" to create new raised beds. Beginning on Saturday, May 11th through the 25th, VGI needs volunteers to make the beds and fill them with soil mix. For more information and to volunteer go to: www.victorygardeninitiative.org/Blitz

The Pot-A-Thons *by MGV Patty Witt*

We're anxious to get outside and start digging in the dirt. Hopefully, the weather will warm us soon so we can do that. Below is the Pot-A-Thon schedule for this spring. Please come to as many of these events as you are able. We are always looking for helpers. There is no need to register beforehand. Just show up and we'll put you to work. If anyone has a yard with lots of plants to share, please contact Patty Witt pwitt@wi.rr.com 262-797-0719. As you can see from the schedule, we still have some open dates. Check the website (<http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg>) for additions and changes.

Scheduled Pot-A-Thons for 2013

Pot-A-Thon Date	Name	Time	Address
Sat. April 20	Patty Witt Training Session (Lunch provided)	9:00 am	16508 W. Melody Ct. New Berlin, WI 53151
Mon. April 22	Kay Fishburn	9:00 am	2550 S. Sunnyslope Rd. New Berlin, WI 53151
Tues. April 23		9:00 am	
Wed. April 24	Bonnie Paplham	9:00 am	7927 W. Bur Oak Dr. Franklin, WI 53132
Thurs. April 25	Kris Jensen	9:00 am	2609 N. 71 st Street Wauwatosa, WI 53213
Fri. April 26		9:00 am	
Sat. April 27	Bill Shaffer	9:00 am	12224 Elmhurst Pkwy Wauwatosa, WI 53226-2918
Mon. April 29	Janet Gadzalinski	9:00 am	10540 S. Shangrila Ct. Oak Creek, WI 53154
Tues. April 30	Ed Kraus	9:00 am	11625 W. James Ave. Franklin, WI 53132
Wed. May 1		9:00 am	
Thurs. May 2	Colleen Hulen (Lunch provided)	9:00 am	W325 N7110 Clearwater Dr. Hartland, WI 53029-8511
Fri. May 3		9:00 am	
Sat. May 4	Irwin Johnson	9:00 am	13685 Watertown Plank Rd Elm Grove, WI 53122

We still have some open dates, please contact Patty Witt if you can fill one of them

19th Annual Secret Gardens of Wauwatosa Tour

Presented by the Wauwatosa Beautification Committee, Inc. on Saturday, July 13th, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (rain or shine)

Tour seven gardens including two in "Lost 'Tosa", the area just east of 60th Street that was the last part of old Wauwatosa annexed by the city of Milwaukee. Included are the gardens at the Kneeland-Walker house. Ticket holders will have an opportunity to meet Melinda Myers, the "Plant Doctor," sponsored by Kanavas

Landscape Management. She will be happy to answer your gardening questions. Also on hand will be Master Gardeners and plant societies, as well as vendors selling plants and garden items.

Advance tickets are \$10.00 and can be purchased beginning in early June at the following ticket outlets: Alfa Flower Shop, Blue Lapin, The Flower Lady, Fruit of the Bloom,

Locker's Florist, Rose's Flower Shop, Samara Garden and Home, and Wisconsin Garden & Pet. *On tour day, tickets are \$12.00 and will be*

available at the Kneeland-Walker House (7406 Hillcrest Drive, Wauwatosa), the starting point for the tour.



Come see the flowers, or volunteer to answer questions

For more information, check our website www.wbc-wi.org under "Garden Tour"

Natives for the Home Landscape by MGV & Horticulturist Sue Donohoe

First and foremost, what is a native plant? A native is defined as follows: the plants that were common in our area prior to European settlement. We have all seen them on roadsides, in the undeveloped forests and in untouched wetlands. Why not in our yards?

There are many natives that are well suited to our metropolitan yards. They work with the non-natives that we already have growing - in fact they work better. The benefits of natives is that, once established, they need less water, require no fertilizer, and with natural mulch - like shredded leaves - they grow and thrive on their own because they are adapted to our climate and soils. Many are considered "clay busters" **And** all natives attract wildlife. By planting natives you will bring bees, butterflies, pollinators, and other insects into your habitat along with chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, birds, toads/frogs, snakes and many other animals. But remember, as with all natural beauty, you must take the good (butterflies) with the bad (those pesky rabbits!).

When planting natives, here are some tips:

- ☼ Try to mimic nature by mixing grasses and flowering species. Drifts are not always good. Sometimes just 1, 2 or 3 plants of a flowering species mixed with the grasses will be sufficient.

- ☼ Make sure the natives that you choose grew here before settlement.
- ☼ Check for native habitats at www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora
- ☼ Don't amend the soil. Our natives didn't live in rich, loamy, compost-filled soil. They prefer clay, sandy or rocky soils with varying degrees of drainage.
- ☼ If you choose to mulch, use shredded leaves and dried plant material, as nature would have originally provided.

Now that you know what a native is and what benefits it can bring to our landscape, I challenge you to try at least one native or native combination from the lists below. Good sources to purchase natives are Johnson's Nursery www.johnsonsnursery.com which is located in Menomonee Falls if you want to stop by and Prairie Nursery www.prairienursery.com. But do be careful. *Natives can be addictive... Happy Native Gardening!*

Shrubs: *Amelanchier stolonifera* Running Serviceberry; *Aronia melanocarpa* Black Chokeberry; *Ceanothus americanus* New Jersey Tea; *Cornus sericea* Redtwig Dogwood; *Diervilla lonicera* Dwarf Bushhoneysuckle; *Viburnum trilobum* American Cranberrybush Viburnum.
Perennials: *Allium cernuum* Nodding Wild Onion; *Asarum canadense* Wild Ginger; *Asclepias tuberosa* Butterfly Weed; *Aster laevis* Smooth Aster; *Aster macrophyllus* Big Leaf Aster; *Coreopsis*

palmata Stiff Coreopsis; *Echinacea pallida* Pale Purple Coneflower; *Geranium maculatum* Wild Geranium; *Geum triflorum* Prairie Smoke; *Heuchera villosa* Maple Leaved Alumroot; *Liatris spicata* Spike Blazing-star; *Mertensia virginica* Virginia Bluebells; *Phlox divaricata* Wild Blue Phlox; *Phlox pilosa* Prairie Phlox; *Rudbeckia hirta* Black-eyed Susan; *Solidago flexicaulis* ZigZag Goldenrod; *Solidago rigida* Stiff Goldenrod; *Tiarella cordifolia* Foamflower.

Grasses: *Carex pensylvanica* Pennsylvania Sedge; *Deschampsia caespitosa* Tufted Hair Grass; *Panicum virgatum* Switchgrass; *Schizachyrium scoparium* Little Bluestem; *Sporobolus heterolepis* Prairie Dropseed.



Heuchera villosa and *Carex pensylvanica* Shade tolerant



Echinacea pallida and *Sporobolus heterolepis*

Other Combinations *Non-native plant species

Allium cernuum and *Buxus**; *Phlox divaricata* and *Tiarella cordifolia*; *Deschampsia caespitosa* and *Astilbe**; *Sporobolus heterolepis* and *Sedum**; *Aster laevis* and *Solidago rigida*; and *Coreopsis palmate* and *Stachys 'Hummelo'**.



Rudbeckia hirta and *Schizachyrium scoparium*

Got Perennials? by Sharon Morrisey Consumer Hort. Agent, MCCE

You should! They are so much more than just pretty “flowers.” They are pretty leaves of all shapes, sizes and colors. They are pretty forms like mounds and spikes and arches. They are pretty seedpods and berries and grasses.

Perennials are pretty in all seasons but each has its own best time of year. In spring there are flowering bulbs, ephemeral wildflowers, irises and peonies. Summer brings lilies, daisies, black-eyed susans, daylilies, hostas and ferns. Fall is brightened by asters and mums, toadlilies and turtleheads. Some are even pretty in winter for you and the birds to enjoy.

They will give you years of pleasure, dying down to the ground each fall and re-emerging every spring. The ones with stems that look tired and worn when they dieback in the fall can be cut down and cleaned up for the winter. The ones that have shape and form and character through the winter can be left standing until spring.

Perennials are generally purchased as potted plants ready to be transplanted to a spot in your yard that gives them the kind of light and moisture and drainage and soil they need. Start with sun or shade, understanding that there are different degrees of both. There's full sun, partial sun, partial shade, bright shade, dry shade and deep shade.

Perennials can be planted almost anytime the ground can be worked. Dig a large hole, mix the soil with peat or coir or leaf mold or compost to improve it if it's not already a good loam. Never, ever add sand to garden soil. It does not improve drainage and sand is more likely to make concrete in clay soils.

Keep the plant at the same height it was growing in the pot. If the roots filled the pot and made a tight ball, slice the ball top to bottom in 2 or 3

places around the outside. This stimulates roots to grow beyond their familiar environs in the rootball. Fill the hole and tamp it gently. Use water to settle the soil and remove air pockets.

A layer of mulch 2 - 3 inches deep over the entire planting area makes life a lot easier for you and your plants.

Mulch reduces weed growth, keeps the soil moist longer, keeps roots cooler in summer and moderates the freezing and thawing in winter that can “heave” a

root system right out of the ground.

Shredded hardwood bark is often used for its appearance. Other good choices include compost, leaf mold and a mix of cocoa bean shells and rice hulls. Avoid woodchips, bark nuggets, and straight peat moss. Never, ever put a layer of stones on a planting bed of any kind. Rocks get hot; they are heavy and nearly impossible to remove.

Perennials can be low-maintenance but none are no-maintenance. Cutting back dead stems once a year is required for all perennials. Most benefit from cutting off the dead flowers which is endearingly called “deadheading.” Forego this chore for those that form desirable seedheads, pods, or fruits after flowering. Some need extra support to keep clumps from flopping open or flower stalks from falling over.

Perennials also form clumps which usually enlarge each year. This is both a pleasure and a pain.

Most perennials will need to be dug up, the clumps divided into smaller sections and replanted at times. The upside of that is that you then have

clumps to add to other parts of your garden or to share with a friend. The drawback is that it does mean more work. How often varies. Some perennials gradually fill-in as much space as allowed becoming more and more beautiful over time. Those can be left alone for many years. Others start to lose vigor, flower less or even die-out in the center after just a couple of years. These may require attention every 3 - 5 years. While still others, deemed “very vigorous,” virtually overpower everything in their path. If you have a large area to fill, these are great. If not, you may need to beat these back every year or just give up and remove them. Some actually warrant euthanasia.

When to “dig and divide” is determined, as a rule of thumb, by the time of the season it flowers. Spring flowering perennials should be divided in fall; fall flowering ones, in spring. Mid-season flowering varieties can be done either time. Spring is easier with no live stems to work around. In the fall, so many perennials are still performing and to dig and divide them means cutting down their stems before the show is over.

This is all basic maintenance. The next level of proficiency with perennials involves the skilled use of pruning. Selective deadheading can prolong bloom or stimulate re-blooming. Shearing off the dead blooms of an entire clump of some perennials will either cause a second bloom or just allow new foliage to grow and cover the old. Pinching out the tips of the stems that grow tall but leggy can make them branch and become fuller with more stems to form flowers on. Those that flower late in the season benefit from cutting back the entire clump by half around the end of June.

One thing is for sure; perennial gardening is never boring. That is, unless almost infinite variety and beauty doesn't do anything for you.



Purple Coneflower—*Echinacea purpurea*



Bearded Iris—*Iris germanica*

Green Thumb Garden On-the-Air *by Sharon Morrisey Consumer Hort. Agent, MCCE*

For the 14th year, Fox6 TV “Wake-Up News” is featuring the UW-Extension’s home demonstration garden in live segments four times each Monday morning throughout the growing season. The segments air every half hour beginning around 7:15 a.m. until 8:45 a.m. with Sharon Morrisey and Fox6 reporter Laura Langemo showing techniques and tips for growing vegetables, fruits and flowers in the home garden. Go to the Milwaukee County Extension’s Horticulture page (<http://milwaukee.uwex.edu/horticulture/>) to link to videos of the segments and to download literature on each week’s topics.

If you would like to help at the garden, contact Sharon or just come to a weekly workday on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. The garden is located

north of the Fox 6 TV studio just west of Green Bay Avenue, north of Brown Deer Road. With more help at the garden, we can have even more to show thousands of viewers so they can enjoy their gardens even more.

The Green Thumb Garden starts its 14th season this year. Come join the fun.

Diagnosics Peak Season Starts

by Sharon Morrisey Consumer Hort. Agent, MCCE & Ann Wied Consumer Hort. Educator, WCCE

The UWEX Hort Center at Boerner opens on May 1st. Hours will be 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. MGVs will also be scheduled for the Thursday concert series at the Gardens and other special events. A training session for all Plant Health Advisors (PHAs) working at the Hort Center is scheduled for Friday, April 26th from 10:00 a.m. - noon (not required). If you have completed the UWEX On-line Plant Health Advisor training and are interested in serving at the Hort Center, please contact MGV Ilze Balodis-Larson at (414)782-4907.

The Horticulture Help Line at Milwaukee County Extension needs volunteers to assist the staff Monday - Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. until noon and during the Walk-In Wednesday sessions held from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. beginning June 5th. Completion of the On-line PHA training is not required to volunteer. If interested, call Suzy Orth at (414)256-4665.

The Horticulture Help Line at Waukesha County Extension needs volunteers. Hours are 9:00 a.m. -

noon. Be trained on the job. Call or e-mail Kristin Krokowski at (262) 548-7768 or kkrokowski@waukeshacounty.gov.

“Responding to Hort Inquires,” an annual educational program of UWEX designed for volunteers and seasonal staff doing diagnostics in southeastern WI, is being held on May 8th from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Town of Norway in Wind Lake in Racine County. MGVs volunteering to do plant diagnostics are welcome to attend including those volunteering at area farmers’ markets and other public venues where you answer hort-related questions. To register, contact Sharon Morrisey by e-mail or phone by May 1st.

Plant Health Update sessions (PHUs) for SEWMG PHAs and those volunteering to answer hort-related questions for the public will begin May 1st. Sessions will be held at the

Milwaukee Extension office on Wednesdays from 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. every other week through September 18th. Current pest and weather related problems will be discussed. Bring samples for discussion and display. No registration is required. Contact Sharon with questions.

Wisconsin Hort Updates (WHUs), the weekly, statewide audio conferences will begin on April 19th. Sessions are held by phone from 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. every Friday through September

13th. Contact Sharon Morrisey if you would like to listen-in. Sessions are also available as podcasts and written transcripts. To download go to: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/wihortupdate/>.



What is wrong with my plant?

Trips and Tours *by MGV Doris Fons Chair Trips & Tours committee*

Our summer trip is on Friday, July 19th this year. We will be going to Christopher Farm & Gardens and Bookworm Gardens in Sheboygan with a stop for lunch at the Highland House.

Registration will begin on May 22nd by phone 414-425-6072, Doris Fons, or e-mail at dorisann@wi.rr.com. Cost will be \$34 for SEWMG members and \$39 for non-members. We will be leaving

at 7:30 a.m. from the State Fair Park & Ride on 76th and Main St. with a pick-up stop at the Brown Deer Park & Ride on the West side of I-43 at 8 a.m. We will be returning around 5 p.m.

There will only be one bus of 55. You will get a confirmation

and a letter if you are on the bus. We will be taking a waiting list.

Summer trip Friday, July 19th to Christopher Farm & Gardens & Bookworm Gardens.

We are hoping for a beautiful, sunny July day to enjoy these two wonderful gardens. You can Google both gardens if you want more information on them.

Earn Volunteer Hours *by MGV and Editor Janet Wintersberger*

There are many different types of volunteer activities that can be done to satisfy the requirements for certification. *Writing an article for your Good Earth newsletter is one of them.* So, if there's a topic you're interested in, a book you would like to review, a garden you visited, grow

yourself or progress on improving a garden, just let us know. We're flexible as far as length and depth. Of course, the time you spend researching and writing the article can be counted as volunteer hours. We want your stories. E-mail

jwintersberger@wi.rr.com



Help us fill the pages and earn volunteer hours.

Realtors' Home & Garden Show 2013 *by MGV Faouzi Kabloui*

Thanks to all MGVs who helped in setup, take down and to all others who made this event successful. This year's booth featured T.L.C. for Trees and most visitors found the subject of trees and shrubs very interesting. Volunteers noted that the booth was well organized and the colors of the display were attractive. Visitors sought lots of information. The display location was good.

Volunteers: Only three volunteers did not actually fulfill their commitment to staffing the booth. Seventeen MGVs

attended the orientation; last year 14 attended. Last year, we had a total of 80 shifts during the show's run; this year, we had only 66 shifts due to show hours being shortened.

Visitors: The total number of visitors to our booth was estimated to be 6,696 visitors; last year, we had 8,088 visitors based on a 5-minute count every hour. The smaller number could be due to fewer show

hours. In both years, we counted about 101 visitors per shift.

Brochures: 3,935 brochures were distributed during this year's show; last year, the number was 4,462. The most distributed brochures included "Gardening Resources," "Trees T.L.C.," and Your Lawn.

Points of interest: Pruning trees, Black knot and other sample pieces on the table drew the attention of most visitors.



TLC for Trees was the focus for this year's Home Show.



South East Wisconsin Master Gardeners

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Grow with us

Check out our website

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg>

Contact Information

For more information:

Calendar Hotline (MGV Hotline)	414-256-4666
On the Web	http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/
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Our Mission Statement

To support and assist UW-Extension in community horticulture programs through volunteerism, education and environmental stewardship.