



Good Earth News

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What's With This Weird Weather? by Sharon Morrissey *Consumer Hort. Agent, MCCE*

As I am writing this in early April, we are currently 4 weeks ahead of the 30-year average of growing degree days (GDD). Spring is on fast forward.

Questions are emerging about the effects of this weather on both long-term growth and development of our plants and on the timing of gardening tasks we typically accomplish in the spring. Pruning and crabgrass preventer applications questions have been the most common so far.

We are aware that the average frost-free date in metro Milwaukee is May 1st, which means there is still a 50% chance of frost at that time. So, most of us are betting that winter weather will return before it is all over.

Phenology

To jog your memory a little about phenology, here's an excerpt from the Wisconsin Garden Facts sheet XHT1085 (available at <http://pddc.wisc.edu/education/>): "Phenology is a branch of science that studies the relationships between periodic biological events—usually the life cycles of plants and animals—and environmental changes. Natural events such as bird migration, ...plant budding, flowering or fruiting, insect activities...are all annual events that can be correlated with seasonal or climatic changes, particularly with weather or temperature, rather than specific calendar dates."

Another factsheet (XHT1086) shows how to calculate the growing degree days (GDD) if you want the challenge. If not, another source of GDD progress is the DATCP Pest Bulletin at <http://pestbulletin.wisconsin.gov>. This weekly newsletter is helpful because it shows last year's amounts as well as the 30-year average.

Where we are in the growing season is shown to us by the timing of some very obvious phenomena such as flowering of common spring flowering shrubs (forsythia, saucer magnolia, lilacs). That's why our control measures should be timed to them, not to the calendar.

Pruning

The best time to prune trees and shrubs in general

is before budbreak at the end of the dormant season. According to UW nursery specialist, Dr. Laura Jull, pruning after leaves have started to expand can stunt some plants. She says that pruning a little after budbreak probably won't hurt trees and shrubs but we should have put off any extreme pruning until next year. Rejuvenation or cutting all branches of a multistemmed, suckering shrub down to the ground could seriously setback a shrub if it is done once leaves have unfurled. By now, it is too late for any of this early season pruning anyway. However, spring flowering plants which can be pruned immediately after flowering can still be pruned at the proper stage of development, just a little earlier than usual.

Lawn care

This brings us to timing of application of crabgrass preventer. The standard recommended timing for application of pre-emergent weed killers in the spring is when the forsythias are reaching full bloom which is usually around mid-April or later. This year many people applied this herbicide too late and will get little seedling suppression as a result.

So, if the season is early, shouldn't fertilizer be applied early, too? Yes, but only a couple of weeks early and only this year and only the Memorial Day application.

What if winter returns?

New leafy growth, flower buds and flowers are very tender. Freezing temperatures can certainly damage them. I have seen years where late frosts have killed all of the new leaves on trees and shrubs. Fortunately, woody plants and herbaceous perennials have a lot of stored carbohydrates that they can use to push open secondary buds into leaves so they do not stay naked all season. The degree of damage depends on how mature the leaves are, how cold it really gets and the species. Flower buds and flowers are much less hardy and will not be regenerated. Late freezes are especially damaging to fruit crops such as strawberries, apples and the stone fruits and is affected by the dew point

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as well as the temperature.

A spring snowstorm can be a real game changer, especially if it is wet and heavy. The leaf damage and flower damage may not be as severe due to the insulating properties of the snow. However, a snow load on trees that are fully leafed out can be devastating with whole trees being snapped off by the weight.

General effects

We cannot necessarily assume that the mild winter will mean more "bugs." The only ones that are really affected by it are those that overwinter on the stems of woody plants. This includes plant bugs that pester ash and honeylocust as well as spruce gall adelgids, etc. Those that overwinter in leaf litter or underground have adapted to the cold and are either protected by the plant debris and/or the snow cover or burrow into the soil as deeply as necessary to escape freezing.

UW Entomologist Phil Pelletteri says that, since many insects became active earlier, eggs have hatched and larvae are out and may die if it gets down to around 25 degrees or it is cold and rainy. It also means that control measures timed by the calendar instead of the GDD are too late for most things. The upcoming insects like Japanese beetles and squash vine borers may arrive a week or so earlier but not 4 weeks earlier regardless of GDD. He also mentioned that deer ticks that may carry Lyme disease are prevalent in the Milwaukee metro area now and are out and active whenever there is no snow on the ground. So, take precautions. In general, the tick population is probably unaffected by the mild winter, however.

This early spring does not mean that our plants will poop out earlier. Plants do not have a built-in growing period. Their lifespan is influenced by temperature and day length. We should just be able to enjoy them for more weeks this year than most. That will be true if summer and fall are close to normal and not as record breaking as this spring has been.

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News from the Extension Offices by Sharon Morrissey & Ann Weid

Thanks for Successful Realtors' Home Show

There are so many of you who contributed to the success of this year's booth for the Home & Garden Show at the end of March. This year's committee consisted of Dian Decker, Janet Wintersberger, Jean Toutenhoofd, Barbara Andrekopoulos, Kandy Stamborski, and Connie Reeves. Those last three provided the graphic design talent behind the display panels and brochure on lawn care (see next section). Set-up and take-down assistance came from Ed Kraus, Bill Shaffer, Larry Lossman, David Heeren, Rosie Petrol, Sue Bohon, Mary Ann Zauner, Barb Jurkiewicz, Janet Wintersberger, Mary Norman, Dave Wolken, Willie Tyler and Faouzi Kablaoui.

Faouzi also coordinated scheduling, ticketing, and troubleshooting of the 80 some volunteers. He ordered the electric service, checked on the booth several times during the 8 days and resupplied handouts as needed (see Faouzi's detailed report in this issue). Thanks to you all. (If I've left anyone out, my apologies.)

Imitation is flattery

Maybe it's more like demand is flattery. This is the third year that we have had the talents of three professional graphic designers, MGVs Barb Andrekopoulos, Kandy Stamborski and Connie Reeves, to create a display and brochure on a "hot" topic for our use at the Realtors' Home & Garden Show and beyond. The 3 topics have been "Small Space, Small Budget Vegetable Gardening" and "Trouble-free Tomatoes" along with this year's new topic "Your lawn. Your choice."

The brochures are distributed at many events and programs. The displays are used in the stairway to the lower level of the Education & Visitor Center at Boerner Botanical Gardens, in the Milwaukee County Extension lobby displays and at the County Fairs. The Powerpoint presentations are being used by MGv speakers.

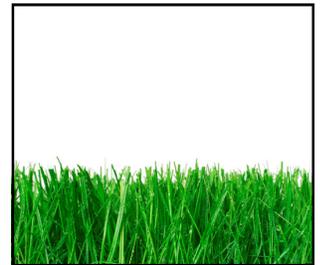
Now these items are going beyond the programs in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. Not only are the tomato and lawn brochures being used by Extension staff around the state but they are also now being translated into Spanish through a grant provided by Extension to Ann Wied and Kristin Krokowski. The lawn care display panels are being copied and used for events and lobby displays in other counties. This demand shows the value of this work we are doing together, thanks to the SEWMGs talent and support.

Plant Diagnostics Programs

Several activities are scheduled to continue training to MGVs so they can provide quality plant diagnostics to the general public. These programs are all considered continuing education except where noted.

Plant Health Advisor (PHA) on-line training is now open for enrollment. You may start anytime but must have everything completed by June 15th. This training is required to assist with diagnostics at the UWEX Hort Center at Boerner BG and recommended for all MGVs. For registration and assistance with computer compatibility, go to <http://wimastergardener.org/?q=PHATraining>.

"Responding to Hort Inquiries" is open to all current



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PHAs and anyone wishing to assist Extension with diagnostics. It is on May 1st from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the MultiMedia Room on the lower level of the Education and Visitors Center at Boerner Botanical Gardens.

Speakers include Extension Plant Pathologist Brian Hudelson and Entomologist Phil Pelletteri. It is free but pre-registration is required by e-mailing

Sharon.morrissey@ces.uwex.edu.

Plant Health Update sessions (PHUs) are being held on Wednesday afternoons at the Milwaukee County Extension office from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. Sessions are scheduled for: May 9th & 23rd, June 6th & 20th, July 11th & 25th, Aug. 8th & 22nd, Sept. 5th & 19th. All PHAs and any MGVs who are answering plant questions for the public are invited to attend and bring samples for discussion. No pre-registration is required; just come when you can.

Walk-in Wednesdays will be held every Wednesday (except July 4th) beginning June 6th through August from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Milwaukee County Extension office. These plant clinics are for the general public conducted by Suzy Orth, Extension horticulturist and PHA volunteers. Plan to stay after the PHU sessions and assist with clients. This should be recorded as volunteer service.

Extension Hort Center at Boerner

MGV Ilze Balodis-Larson will be coordinating and overseeing the Center this year with assistance from many MGVs. The Center will be open and PHAs are scheduled for Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. beginning May 1st. The Bloom Team has expanded and is being coordinated by MGV Riana Sweet. We will schedule MGVs to take the Garden Cart of resources out into the gardens on Thursday evenings during weekly concerts and for other special occasions. MGVs will continue to assist with care of the Plant Sales

Yard just west of the old stone Garden House. To volunteer to help with any of these, contact Ilze at ilze.balodislarson@att.net.

UWEX will be hiring someone for approximately 8 hours a week to take care of administrative tasks such as computer updating, record keeping and reporting, supplies purchasing, display changing, etc. Watch for this job to be posted to the MGV list serve. Sharon Morrissey will be the supervising agent.

Level 1 General MGV Training

Two sections of this training for beginning Master Gardeners are scheduled. New trainees will enroll for either Mondays from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Waukesha County Courthouse or Thursdays from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the MultiMedia Room on the lower level of the Education and Visitors Center at Boerner Botanical Gardens. Thursday sessions begin on September 7th and Monday ones on September 10th. They run for 13 sessions until early to mid-December. Registration will be posted on-line and sent to the list serve and the mailing list in mid-July.

MGV Conferences

Start planning now for the 3 conferences being held in 2012. Websites are listed at <http://wimastergardener.org/>. The educational portions of these qualify for continuing education.

Midwest Regional Conference from July 19th – 21st at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chanhassen, MN.

Wi MGV Assoc. Annual Conference from September 14th – 15th in Ashland, WI.

International MG Conference is an Alaskan Cruise from September 7th – 14th.

Start planning now for the 3 conferences being held in 2012.

2012 Realtors' Home & Garden Show by MGV Faouzi Kabloui

Many master gardener volunteers were involved with this year's show at State Fair Park. MGV Faouzi Kabloui coordinates the show and finds volunteers to staff the multi-day schedule. This year's display was developed by Sharon Morrissey with the help of a small group of graphic artists who spent many hours creating the display panels and creating a brochure for distribution. And then, of course, there were the MGVs behind the scenes who loaded, hauled, assembled and set the stage – and reversed the process when the show ended.

Thanks to all MGVs who helped in setup, take down and to all others who made this event successful.

Volunteers - Most of the volunteers who were scheduled but could not attend the show were replaced by names on the backup list. Fourteen MGVs attended

the show's orientation this year; last year 20 attended.

Visitors - The total number of visitors to our booth was about 8088 visitors; last year we had 9955. These numbers were based on 5 minute- counts every hour.

Brochures - The total number of brochures distributed during the show was 4462; last year the number was 5160.

The most requested brochures were "Gardening Resources," "Creeping Charlie," and "Trouble-free Tomatoes."

Other points of interest - Lawn Care, Weeds, Creeping Charlie, Soil Tests, pruning bushes and creating rain gardens. Many people asked for soil test analysis kits.

General comments - The booth was well organized; the display and colors were attractive.



Introducing the Board of Directors

SEWMG's Board of Directors consists of five master gardener volunteers. There are two members-at-large positions and three members with designated terms (first year, second year and third year). Each board member (and officers) may serve SEWMG up to three consecutive years. He/she may decide to serve again after at least a one-year break. The structure of the board gives board members a chance to become more familiar with the organization and their responsibilities increase.

Third year - Chairman

Sandy Manning joined Master Gardeners when her son was 5 years old. Sandy has a degree in Horticulture and works full-time at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center. Sandy's has been SEWMG's president, served on the finance committee, been active in several committees and is in her third year on the board of directors. Sandy is the editor of our bi-monthly newsletter.

Second year

Fred Redlinger completed his master gardener training four years ago and joined the board two years ago. Next year, he will be Chairman of the Board. Fred favors hostas for his own shady yard and invites birds and other wildlife to his yard. Fred attends nearly all our business meetings, has helped on the long-term planning committee and is active in the plant sale.

First year

Kathie Foti is new to master gardeners, having finished training in 2011. Kathie's main focus for taking the training was "to learn how to be more successful in growing flowers, plants and vegetables (as I seemed to have a purple thumb rather than a green one)." She continues, "I have acquired a real interest in growing vegetables and will hopefully achieve a goal of opening my own business. Having spent so much time in

healthcare I was ready for a change, so I decided to find something that would be enjoyable yet challenging. I look forward to serving on the board which will expand my knowledge base in more facets of the Master Gardening Program."

At large

Betty Polcyn became a Master Gardener volunteer in 2007 because she says, "It was something I was always interested in and had time to do the training that year. I've been growing plants and trying new ones since I was about 6 years old. I always wanted to learn more and SEWMG is a great way to keep doing that. I enjoy the process and love to get my hands in the dirt." Betty also coordinates The Healing Garden at Community Memorial Hospital now and says, "I see the cycle of life in those plants and that place. I also can observe how being in the garden helps those of us who volunteer and the people it serves. Life keeps happening there, death happens and begins again. I was a nurse manager, now retired since 2009, I still volunteer in the Community Outreach Health Clinic that serves the under insured or uninsured so still serve people and plants at Community Memorial Hospital and the Menomonee Falls Community."

At large

Carla Magnus has been a MGV for 5 years and has enjoyed gardening for many years. She describes her first gardening experience was "with plain green leafed hostas in my parent's yard which I have brought to my yard now. Over the years that love of hostas has grown and now I hybridize hostas and have many of my own seedlings. Now that I am retired, I spend my winters planning new garden beds and the summer weeding them." Carla is a co-chair of the Plant Sale Committee and specializes in communication and labeling.



Sandy Manning



Fred Redlinger



Kathie Fortie



Betty Polcyn

Stay Informed and Connected

Can't get to a business meeting? Did you know that the business meeting minutes are on our web site? Check out this link: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/minutes/> Make sure your project or activity gets listed on the MGV calendar. Staying in the know just got easier.





Pot-A-Thon Schedule for 2012 by Plant Sale Committee

Pot-A-Thon Date	Name	Time	Address
Tues. April 17	Colleen Hulen	9:00 am	W325 N7110 Clearwater Dr Hartland, WI 53029
Wed. April 18	Kris Jensen	9:00 am	1609 N. 71 st Street Wauwatosa, WI 53213
Thurs. April 19	Karen Brey	9:00 am	W204 N5420 Lannon Rd.
Sat. April 21	Eble Park	9:00 am	19400 W. Bluemound Road
Mon. April 23	Patty Witt	9:00 am	16508 W. Melody Ct. New Berlin, WI 53151
Tues. April 24	Bonnie Paplham	9:00 am	7927 W. Bur Oak Dr. Franklin, WI 53132
Wed. April 25	Judy Schmidt	9:00 am	7541 Mission Hills Ct. Franklin, WI 53132
Thurs. April 26	Bill Shaffer	9:00 am	12224 Elmhurst Pkwy Wauwatosa, WI 53226
Fri. April 27	Cindy Lindstedt (Lunch provided) (Car pool if possible)	9:00 am	N3293 Rome-Oak Hill Rd Sullivan, WI 53178
Sat. April 28	Irwin Johnson	9:00 am	13685 Watertown Plank Rd Elm Grove, WI 53122
Mon. April 30	Connie Nemetz	9:00 am	W225 N8360 Longview Dr. Sussex, WI 53089
Tues. May 1	Community Memorial Hospital (take plants to K. Brey's home)	9:00 am	W180 N8085 Town Line Rd. Menomonee Falls, WI
Wed. May 2	Mary Sacks	9:00 am	14425 Westover Rd Elm Grove, WI 53122
Thurs. May 3		9:00 am	
Fri. May 4		9:00 am	
Sat. May 5		9:00 am	

Volunteer & Education Report by Nancy Lehrer MG Volunteer Coordinator, MCCE

Hello Master Gardener Volunteers!

Have you started your gardens early? I myself have gotten some of the early vegetable crops in and so far so good. The chilly nights have not done any damage so I am hopeful that I will have an early harvest of peas and greens. Good luck to you all!

The recent Volunteer Fair held on March 27th was well attended. I hope you were able to check out the Extension display. For those of you that could not attend, here is information on volunteer opportunities for UWExtension:

Copy & Collating

In the office I often need assistance with copying handouts. The biggest need comes before the Home Show and State Fair. Level 1 Training (formally MG General Training) is also a large copy and collating project. Example: To complete the preparation for the Gardening Resources card, we need to copy, cut and then count the handouts. Cutting and counting can be a take-home project.

Mailings

Most MGs receive updates or other notification via e-mails however approximately 65 people need to get posted mailings. Mailings include newsletters, event notification and MG training/registration.

Horticulture Help Line & Plant Health Advisors

Suzy Orth is always glad to see MG volunteers. To assist on the Horticulture Help Line, no training is needed. The UWEX Hort Center at Boerner Botanical Gardens requires that you complete PHA training before you can volunteer.

For Milwaukee County call Suzy Orth 414 256-4664

For Waukesha County call Kristin Krokowski 262 548-7779

Staff

Ann Wied, Sharon Morrissey and Kristin Krokowski e-mail regularly with requests for assistance with events.

Urban Agriculture

All horticulture staff projects or events are considered approved volunteer hours.

Linda Reynolds: Bee yard beautification at Firefly Ridge, Underwood Parkway, Wauwatosa- assist with flower garden near bee yard. General gardening and wood chip spreading.

Jan Alba: Wil-O-Way Underwood- general gardening and Garden Chair position available.

Mary: general assistance with programming to include therapeutic horticulture at Mitchell Manor and greenhouse work at Wil-O-Way Grant Park

Dennis: Assist with projects;-Team project on Lincoln Ave. weeding and watering street plantings from 4th Street to 20th every 3 weeks, and Vineyard development assistance

If you are interested in more information on any of these volunteer opportunities please e-mail or call me.

Happy Gardening!

Nancy Lehrer nancy.lehrer@ces.uwex.edu
414 256-4661

Remember there is a list serve binder in the Master Gardener workroom which contains copies of all emails that I receive.

2012 Plant Sale News by MGV Carla Magnus for the Plant Sale Committee

As this newsletter goes to print, MGVs will be busy dividing, potting and labeling donated plants for our 17th Annual Perennial Plant Sale. This event is our major fund raiser and supports all SEWMG activities including our garden projects, MG-in-Training Scholarships and donations to the Boerner Botanical Gardens.

We cannot accomplish this without the help of our members!! We still need help with completing the remaining Pot-A-Thons and preparing State Fair Park area for the sale on May 19th. Pre-sale week schedule is below and on the website. Directions to each event are included. E-mails go out to keep everyone updated with reminders and changes. If you have any questions, please e-mail or call a committee member. If you need to request labels, contact Carla Magnus at cmagnus5@wi.rr.com.

Saturday, May 12th - Work Day at State Fair Park **starting at 9:00 a.m.** We will be cleaning the general area and putting down wood chips on the pathways.

Monday, May 14th through Thursday, May 17th, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. - Pre-sale week. Plants are transported from each Pot A-Thon

to the State Fair for set up. Help is needed each day, tidying, pricing and moving plants to their spots for the sale. -

Friday, May 18th 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – General clean-up and getting ready for the sale. All photos are put up and pricing is done. **The Master Gardeners presale and silent auction begins at 3:00 p.m. and runs to 7:00 p.m.**

Saturday, May 19th - The sale begins at 8:00 a.m. **MGVs should arrive by 7:00 a.m.** For anyone who has not been at the plant sale before, it's quite an experience. The time goes by very quickly and you will not be bored. **The sale ends at 1:30 p.m.** *If you arrive before 6:00 a.m., you won't pay to park.*

Monday, May 21st, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Chairs or designated persons for all approved garden projects can pick up plants that are left over. **Noon to 4:00 p.m.** - We will be open for anyone that was unable to attend on Saturday and would like to purchase plants. Habitat for Humanity will pick up remaining plants.

Help is needed every day. No sign-up is needed; just bring your gloves and tools.

Trips & Tours by MGVS Doris Fons



Wednesday, May 30th - annual education program at Jerry Nelson's house on Wednesday, May 30th, 2012. The program will start at 9 a.m. to about noon. Jerry Nelson is a Racine County Master Gardener and owner of Classic Gardens. Every year he has a program for us along with a tour of his wonderful trees, shrubs and plants in his yard. This year we will be focusing on "garden maintenance."

There is a limit of 40 participants along with a fee of \$7 which we use as a "thank you" to Jerry to add some new specimen to his collection. Jerry also has refreshments available for us along with other surprises.

As a bonus, we hold a small plant exchange at the end of the morning. So, bring something special you can share from your yard. Not a requirement, but fun to share some plants from other MGVS' gardens. All information will be listed in the letter you will receive.

Sign-up for this event will begin at the SEWMG business meeting on Wednesday, May 9th.

Friday, July 20th - Trip to Allen Centennial Gardens, Rotary Gardens and a shopping stop at Klehm's Song Sparrow. It will be a fun day of beautiful gardens and great shopping. Cost will be around \$40 depending on the lunch menu and will be listed in the information letter sent if you are on the bus. The bus will leave from State Fair Park & Ride at 7:30 a.m. with a stop at Hwy 83 Park & Ride at 8 a.m.

Unfortunately, this trip is limited to 55 people since we are not able to get another bus that day and we are limited to one bus at Song Sparrow. *Registration will begin Tuesday, June 5th by e-mail to Doris Fons at dorisann@wi.rr.com (reference subject Trip) or phone 414-425-6072. There will be no early registrations.* There will be a waiting list included.

Early registrations cannot be taken to be fair to all. Thank you.

Doris Fons, Trip Program Chair



Volunteer in SEWMG Approved Gardens by MGVS Kris Jensen

Whether you need a few hours to round out your 2012 Volunteer Service requirement or want to commit more of your time and energy to a project that makes a difference, there are many opportunities in our SEWMG approved gardens.

Green Power Garden on the outskirts of Waukesha grows vegetables for the Hope Center, which distributes fresh produce and uses the produce to make healthy meals for the homeless and others who are impoverished. Their harvest total for the past two years is more than 4,400 pounds of fresh vegetables. On land provided by Ken and Bobby Miller and Larry Spleas, community volunteers from local businesses, schools, and churches work under Master Gardener supervision to plant, weed, and harvest vegetables and fruits.

There are many volunteer opportunities at Green Power Garden, from clearing rocks from beds to growing seedlings in donated greenhouse space, composting, weeding, harvesting, teaching gardening and supervising youth groups and other volunteers, and fundraising. Whether you have a few spare hours or want to make a season-long commitment, Garden Chair Sandra Roback can match you with a task that fits your skills, interests, and available time. You can

contact her at sroback@wi.rr.com, or call her at 262-385-8009.

Lincoln Learning Garden at Lincoln Elementary School in Wauwatosa is working with the school's Beautification Committee to install a compost bin and add container gardens so that each class can grow some vegetables and herbs. They also plan to plant perennials throughout the school grounds, and are looking for donations of peonies, cranesbill geraniums, irises, hostas, vinca, coral bells, mums, ferns, sedums, perennial grasses, ground covers, perennial vegetables, monarda, coneflowers, black-eyed susans, and other perennials you may have to share.

Master Gardeners are needed to supervise neighborhood volunteers and help with pruning, spreading mulch, turning compost, weeding, planting, collecting plant donations, and watering. There are also opportunities to teach children and inexperienced gardeners about gardening, or to work on special projects such as helping Boy Scouts build mason bee nests. Garden Chair Heather Zydek can be reached at heatherzydek@gmail.com. Talk with her about the great opportunities available at Lincoln Learning Garden.

Whether you need a few hours to round out your 2012 Volunteer Service requirement or want to commit more of your time and energy to a project that makes a difference, there are many opportunities in our SEWMG approved gardens.

President's Corner *by MGV President Dan Cummings*

Our winter was exceptional with fewer snowstorms and above average temperature and it also appears that our spring will be far better than last year. The winter months were busy for many of us and no one can say that there was nothing to do. At our February Celebration Party, we welcomed 81 new Master Gardeners to our ranks; a number of education programs were presented; we had a tour of the Domes; a bus trip to the Chicago Flower Show and a very successful Volunteer Fair. Our SEWMG calendar continues to have new activities listed for the coming months and we ask you to check our web site (<http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg>) frequently.

Recent high temperatures have made us all eager to get out and start gardening but, being seasoned Wisconsin gardeners, we know that the weather can quickly change. Remember our May snowstorm a few years ago? Patience is our watchword for the coming weeks.

During those next few weeks, you will be able to attend some of the Pot-A-Thons that have been scheduled. The Plant Sale Committee has listed the dates, times and locations of our digs for April and May which can be found on the web site. If you are one of the new Master Gardeners or have not experienced a Pot-A-Thon, we invite you to attend some and meet your fellow gardeners. The basic Pot-A-Thon is quite an event being very simple yet highly organized and a lot of fun. When you arrive around

9:00 a.m., you will notice our white trailer filled with potting material, numerous tables set up and a group of people eager to starting potting plants. A few members dig plants from the nearby flower beds, identify the plants, place them on sleds and bring them to the tables.

The plants are then separated into container-sized clumps by pulling, cutting, sawing or using other creative means. On the tables you will notice large tubs of our potting mix called Fafard and numerous black pots. Once potted in this mixture, they are placed in carrying trays ready for the printed labels that identify the plant and list some general care information. They are then moved to a holding area until the week of our plant sale. The tables and other material are then placed back in the white trailer and the area is left clean. All of this activity is accomplished in approximately 3-4 hours and most wonder where did the time go?

Volunteers will pick up the potted plants the week of the sale and transport them to the Milwaukee Fair Grounds for the sale. Volunteers are also needed at this time for staging the filled sleds in their proper locations. The SEWMG plant sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 19th from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Master Gardeners have the opportunity to attend a pre sale on Friday, May 18th from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

So, if you are interested in meeting new gardeners, fulfilling some of your required hours, and contributing to our main revenue -producing event, then join us at a Pot-A-Thon.

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2012 Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference

July 19-21 at the UMN Landscape Arboretum in Chanhausen, MN

Every two years, the Upper Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference is hosted by WI, IL, IA, or MN. In 2012, it's our turn here in Minnesota, and we are excited and proud to be hosting the conference at the world-renowned Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

The conference will also feature a vendor fair, a silent auction, book signings, Minnesota Wine Opening Reception, and a Minnesota Buffet Banquet featuring speaker Dr. Ed Schneider, Arboretum director.

The silent auction will be held during the conference with proceeds benefiting the Extension Junior Master Gardener program in Minnesota. Bid on plants, books and other great items for gardeners from our U of Minnesota professors as well as items contributed by the local and state Master Gardener programs, vendors

and garden societies. Come by the Tea Room to find something you would like. Bidding will open Wednesday evening during early registration and end at 1 p.m. on Friday.

The class sessions are diverse and exciting and focused around research in the Midwest! Educators from the University of Minnesota and elsewhere will lead sessions ranging from growing vegetables to garden writing to monitoring monarchs. Some are classroom-based, some hands-on, some a little of both. We hope you'll join us!

For details about the conference, check the website at: <http://hennepinmastergardeners.org/events/upper-midwest-master-gardener-conference/>

Courtesy of Hennepin Master Gardeners

Inspiration
FROM THE **GROUND up**
Upper Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference 2012

How I Spent SEWMG's 2011 Donation

by Ann Wied, Consumer Horticulture Educator, Waukesha County UW Cooperative Extension

For many years our organization has donated funds to various UW extension programs, including the Horticulture programs in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties, Urban Agriculture, the Horticulture Center at Boerner Botanical Gardens, the Milwaukee County Extension offices, Plant Health Advisors and to support other extension activities. Here is Ann Wied's report on the funds she received for the Consumer Horticulture Program in Waukesha County.

In 2011, I used SEWMG's donation to fund:

- ☉ **Two large 60 cup coffee makers.** The coffee pots I used for a number of years for Master Gardener General Training (Level 1) stopped working and needed to be replaced. These two new coffee pots are working great.
- ☉ **New pruning tools** for use at the pruning workshop. The tools that I have used for the last 10 plus years for the pruning workshop were my own and were in sad shape. Using the money SEWMG gave me, I purchased a 7" pruning saw, a large by-pass lopper, and a new pair of gardening gloves. The new tools are wonderful!
- ☉ **Plant material for two garden programs.** Two of my garden and nutrition programs had either no budget for plant material or only a small budget. I

purchased pepper plants, onion sets, and straw for mulch. The two garden programs were the LaTEENo Garden and Nutrition Program (4-H Club Hispanic youth). The other program was the "Forever Young" Senior Hispanic Garden and Nutrition Program (20 Hispanic seniors).

- ☉ **Tickets and parking passes for the Waukesha County Fair.** This was a new project in 2011. We shared a 10' by 10' tent with the Waukesha County 4-H Club. We had a horticultural educational exhibit that was staffed by master gardeners. Money was used to purchase the admittance tickets and parking passes for the MGVs. Nineteen MGVs staffed the educational exhibit and handed out UWEX literature. A big thank you goes out to these MGVs who braved the high heat and humidity.

I did not spend all the money and have carried over leftover funds to 2012. I view each gift of money from the SEWMGs as a one-time gift. I do not assume I will get anything the following year. With that in mind, I never feel the need to spend it. With budgets being so tight, it is nice to have this money to turn to for unexpected expenses as well as for purchases that will benefit my consumer horticulture programming efforts. Again, many, many thanks for your support!



Garden Support Committee Busy this Spring

by MGVs Mary Thiele & Ruth Marshall

Two successful events were held and a third being planned.

On March 15th the **Spring Garden Chair Forum** was held. We learned more about the Memorandum of Understanding, the tool inventory, and signs and stakes. Garden chairs enjoyed a slide show of outstanding 2012 plants and shared information about favored plants and other information.

Some approved gardens need to replace existing plants due to too much shade, or to divide their perennials, so MGv Kris Jensen has put together a program for sharing plants with other gardens. Please contact Kris (414-774-4806 or krisjensen@earthlink.net) if you have plants to share or if your garden needs various plants.

The **Volunteer Opportunity Fair** on March 27th, drew 113 master gardener volunteers to learn more about ways they can meet their volunteer hours. Many gardens and projects were featured. Everyone was able to learn more about the vast diversity of opportunities in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. The featured In-House education committee speaker was Heidi Horning from Shady Lane Nursery.

Some of our **Very Special Gardens** will be featured in free garden walks in late June (tentatively, Monday, June 25th from 4 to 8 p.m.) The gardens will be open to the public – and to MGVs. If you'd like to help plan and promote the event, please contact Janet Wintersberger (262-879-0391 or jwintersberger@wi.rr.com).

Some of our **Very Special Gardens** will be featured in free garden walks in late June (tentatively, Monday, June 25th from 4 to 8 p.m.) Help is needed in planning and promoting the event. Contact MGv Janet Wintersberger (262-879-0391)

Waukesha Counties Green Team by MGVs Debra Schneider & Dave Wolken

During the last few months SEWMG members have received announcements about educational programs offered by Waukesha County's "Green Team" Permaculture and Gardening Group. The varied programs have been approved for educational credit. This feature tells more about the Permaculture and Gardening Group, including the history and background of this grass-roots organization.

Permaculture and Gardening Group

The Permaculture and Gardening Group is a work-group of the Waukesha County Green Team. Co-leaders are Master Gardener Volunteers Debra Schneider and Dave Wolken.

The group came about after the Green Team held a visioning session and surveyed members to determine areas of interest. Several meetings occurred as the group focused on the goals of the 'Food Group' and determined that Permaculture and Gardening were the main areas of interest. Initial discussions with community members focused on community gardens, healthy food for food pantries and food recovery.

About the same time as this occurred, Debra and Dave were attending 2011 MGv training. Both had been involved in establishing community gardens. After discussions with Ann Weid and Sharon Morrissey, it was decided that Debra and Dave would create a *Building Community through Community Gardening* Power Point presentation for use by MGVs.

- ⊗ The Group's goal are to encourage organic growing practices and healthy eating of locally grown food and to support for local producers. Education, discussion and networking are a large part of achieving these goals.
- ⊗ As the Permaculture and Gardening group continued to meet, it was decided that there would be a **series of home garden tours** featuring members' homes.
- ⊗ The group also decided it would present a series of **monthly programs** open to the general public beginning in December, 2011. Programs are generally held the third or fourth Wednesdays or Thursdays of the month at UW-Waukesha.

Programs included; *Bee-ginning Beekeeping* presented by Doug and Tracy Marconnet, UW-Extension Certified Bee Keepers, *Building Community through Community Gardening* by Debra and Dave, and *Soils and Succession Planting* presented by Brian Gifford, former

Michael Fields Agriculture Institute staff member, and NuGenesis Farm Manager, *Planning a Sustainable, Healthy Organic Garden* by Allison Pratt-Szeliga of Michael Fields, *Gardening with Herbs* by Marcia Carmichael, Historical Gardener at Old World Wisconsin and in May the presentation will be on Food Preservation.

This summer includes garden tours with a resumption of monthly programs in September or October.

The Green Team Permaculture and Gardening Group has accomplished many things since it began in early 2011. With NuGenesis Farm (new MGv site), it co-sponsored a permaculture presentation and two-day workshop at NuGenesis Farm in Pewaukee; sponsored a Growing Power group tour; hosted tables with information on community gardening and permaculture at Carroll University, at Urban Ecology Center's Interfaith Earth Network Fair and the Greener Oconomowoc Fair.

We have developed presentation materials and held tours on Building Community through Community Gardening and have established a relationship with the Waukesha County Food Recovery program and the Waukesha Food Pantry. Team members donated over 250 bags of spinach for Waukesha County's Food Recovery program and other local food pantries.

Last fall we sponsored four home garden/permaculture tours at member homes.

The team now has a core Permaculture and Gardening Group of 8-10 members. We have developed a Learn and Share program for 2012 designed to share local wisdom and bring together members of the community on issues related to permaculture, gardening and sustainability.

The Green Team's Basis & History

The Waukesha County Green Team first came together in 2009. The common denominator was an interest in the environment and sustainability in Waukesha County. We recognized that making an impact in an area the size and diversity of Waukesha County would be a challenge. At that first meeting we walked away with the name "Waukesha County Green Team" and the intention of "Promoting Sustainability in Waukesha County – One Community at a time."

Early on in 2009 the team began an internal

education process on The Natural Step [TNS] – a framework for sustainable community practices which originated in Sweden. In 2010 we redeveloped the course materials to focus on specific Waukesha environmental issues. Last year we teamed up with WCTC's Learning in Retirement program. This year we will be leading our first TNS "brown bag" program for employees at a local business.

In 2010 we developed the foundation for our mission statement. Individual groups within the Green Team began to focus on issue areas and the team's mission emerged:

The Waukesha County Green Team is to advance environmental sustainability within Waukesha County by...

- ⊗ Encouraging collaboration between stakeholder organizations and environmental initiatives
- ⊗ Engaging the community at the individual, municipal, and county levels
- ⊗ Promoting connections between individuals around shared interests related to environmental sustainability
- ⊗ Raising awareness of environmental concerns
- ⊗ Providing education using The Natural Step Framework as a foundation
- ⊗ Promoting favorable policies at all levels of government

Networking with other Waukesha County environmentally concerned organizations and making continued efforts to bring these organizations together is a key element of the Green Team mission. In fall of 2011, the Green Team held its first ECO~NECT, where a variety of people from Waukesha County environmental related organizations came together at Lapham Peak in Delafield to introduce themselves and share their mission. The next ECO~NECT will take place on June 23rd, 2012, at the UW-Waukesha Field Station [see www.waukeshacountygreenteam.org for information].

The Green Team is a distributor of the 2012 Farm Fresh Atlas of Southeastern Wisconsin in Waukesha County. If you would like a supply of Atlases to help distribute, please contact us at

info@waukeshacountygreenteam.org.

Stay alert for other Green Team and Permaculture & Gardening events and activities. Sign up for its newsletter at www.waukeshacountygreenteam.org.

A Garden of Delights by MGVA Ann Weronke

Gardeners frequently have a secret passion for one plant or another. In recent editions of the newsletter, some SEWMGs have shared their special plants. Diane Thieme confessed her love of roses. Patty Witt combined her love of butterflies with the butterfly plant so necessary in the life cycle of those insects. We are sure there are many other SEWMGs who have strong feelings about special plants. We'll feature your garden or favorite plant in an upcoming newsletter.

Ed Kraus is one such master gardener. Ed's passion is the daylily, a plant that fills his yard and one he is even working at hybridizing. The American Hemerocallis Society (AHS) organization has recognized his efforts and has designated his yard as one of eleven Wisconsin display gardens.

Ed Kraus first became involved with SEWMG in 2003 when he took the training class. That was only the beginning for Ed who has become a very active member of our organization. He can be seen at many of the events, most notably the Plant Sale activities. In fact, he has been a chairman or co-chairman of the Plant Sale for the past seven years. At the sale planning meetings, he does much of the organizational work, constructing computer displays of the planned activities. He is at the Pot-A-Thons, often driving supplies and delivering potted plants to locations where they will be tended. Ed has served in other positions including President and Vice President. He has been on the Finance committee, the Audit committee and was the chair of the By Laws committee. It may amaze us to think that Ed would have any time at all to devote to his own yard. However, Ed Kraus has a half-acre yard filled with perennials, most notably many, many daylilies, a passion that began with an order of daylilies from Wilds of Missouri.

Since that initial purchase, Ed's

gardens have grown by leaps and bounds. His 15 beds flourish with about 350 cultivars surrounded by other plants. These beds encircle his home coloring the environs with a focus on purples and lavenders daylilies. Ed has several beds "devoted to a relatively new small hybridizing program with nearly 1,000 seedlings in place." Most of his chosen cultivars are considered "modern" daylilies or ones registered in the 1990s and 2000s. Ed's plants are the creations of many hybridizers including Hanson, Lambertson, Moldovan, Brooker, Rice, Stamile, Bachman, Reed, Kraus (the 1950s hybridizer), Roberts, Abajian, Schaben, Bremer, Gossard, and Owen. At present, Ed himself is attempting to hybridize tetraploid (artificially doubled chromosomes) purple and lavender open form daylilies with complex eyezones. As one can see, his passion grows and expands.

Ed has become involved with the AHS along with his involvement with SEWMG. He is a member of all three Wisconsin daylily societies (Madison, Green Bay and South East Wisconsin) and has served as an officer of the local club. He also serves as AHS Region 2 Treasurer and as the AHS Portal Store Manager.

The AHS has recognized Ed's efforts and named his gardens as a Wisconsin AHS Display Garden in 2011. This Display Garden recognition identifies a planting space that contains the very best daylily cultivars for the public to tour and enjoy. To attain this honor, the plots must have varied, labeled daylilies well tended by a member of the AHS. The beds must have both diploid (single complement of chromosomes) and tetraploid cultivars in plots that are watered, fertilized and mulched to ensure that the daylilies show their full potential. Ed's many gardens reach their full bloom stage in July, a time at which SEWMGs will be invited to view his efforts. So, look for an invitation from Ed at that time.



The Bloom Team at Boerner Botanical Gardens by MGV Janet Wintersberger

About five years ago, a group of MGVs began tracking and recording the bloom times of perennials at the Boerner Botanical Garden. The project was spearheaded by Patti Peltier of the UW-Extension Hort Center at BBG. MGV Darlene Lochbihler joined the bloom team then – and continues to serve on it. “At that time, the group checked blooms only in the perennial gardens.” The effort began by determining “how easily we kept the information.” Darlene credits the late MGV Charmaine Cochran as being instrumental in developing the original data base and data entry. “As Bloom Team coordinator, Charmaine designed the original database and updated it every year through the 2011 season. She laboriously provided her data entry skills every year while she was on the team; checked early spring blooms before the teams started reporting; and initiated data information for the crabapple collection. Her organizational skills and passion for the bloom team project defined the data reports we have been using since the team began in 2007. We are very grateful for Charmaine’s guidance and diligence for designing this very important reference for southeast Wisconsin.”

The team grew over the years, and until now about 15 MGVs have been on the bloom team. Breaking into pairs or trios, MGVs work together from April through frost, rain or shine. The MGVs observe the plants, their development and record the bloom time for individual species. They also record growing patterns, such as ‘volunteers,’ and changes in growing conditions, such as shade from trees.

This information is compiled on an Excel spread sheet which is posted on the Friends of Boerner Botanical Website <http://www.boernerbotanicalgarden.org>. “Because it details perennial cultivars that are hardy and grow well in our area, it becomes an important reference guide that is very helpful to landscapers, educators, garden centers and others who like to garden in our area and in the Midwest, Darlene says. This information is not available anywhere else. Darlene explains that “gardens can be designed for spring, summer or fall, or designed by specific color.”

She also adds that bloom times also help foretell insects and diseases through phenology.

The Bloom Team also records similar information for the trial gardens that evaluate new varieties

What’s changing in 2012? This year, the number of garden beds increased to include the Harvest Rain and Rose Gardens. The number of volunteers has also increased to ensure that each area has a team of 2 to 3 people. Additionally, a MGV has volunteered to be a “floater” and fill in as needed. The current Bloom Team is made up of 31 Bloomers plus a Coordinator. As a team, Bloom Team members will be working more closely with the Horticulturist in charge of the assigned area. Riana Sweet and Ilze Balodis-Larson envision frequent communication via e-mail and phone with the Horticulturists. Bloomers can relay information of what they see going on in their beds directly to the Horticulturist and the Horticulturist can provide direction to the Bloomer.

What’s more, MGVs on the bloom team (with the permission of the Horticulturists) will be able to pluck weeds from the garden beds they monitor.

Most of the gardens (except for the iris, peony and daylily beds) require a season-long weekly commitment by MGVs who want to learn more about the mainstays of many of our gardens. Because the teams have increased in size and with the new floater, arrangements for substitutes to cover vacations and other absences can easily be made without interruption to the weekly observance schedule.

MGV Joe Dembosky summarizes his experiences with the bloom team. He is in his third year on the team and as a master gardener volunteer. Joe visits his bed “at least once a week all season, and sees the progression during the year.” He enjoys the learning aspects of his role, (becoming more at ease with botanical names, identifying ‘mystery’ plants), sharing a common interest with visitors to the gardens and team mates, and representing the master gardener organization. Joe has also been surprised that some plants commonly seen in other gardens are actually “herbs.”

You may see bloom team members in action when you visit Boerner Botanical Gardens; watch for that MGV with a clipboard studying the beds.



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CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE

[HTTP://FYI.UWEX.EDU/SEWMG/](http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/)



Mailed with this issue:

- May/June Events



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.