



The President's Letter

by MGV Jim Fratrack

Hello folks, I am Jim Fratrack. I will be serving you as President of SEWMG this year. I have been an MGV since 2013. I have worked at the plant sales, the home show, and, my favorite activity of all, working State Fair. I really enjoy talking to people about gardening. I was very disappointed, as I know you were, about our inability to engage with the public this past year. Let us hope that we will be able to resume some of our normal activities in 2021.

As Vice President/President elect in 2020 I learned a lot about our organization, but know I still have much to learn. Our accomplishments for 2020 have been summarized very thoroughly in the Nov-Dec Newsletter, so I will not discuss them here. However, I would like to speak about the unprecedented revisions of the 2020 budget. The lack of our biggest fundraiser, the Perennial Plant Sale, required these revisions. Many hours went into completing the budget as well as several ZOOM meetings. I would like to thank the Board Members, Garden Chairs and Committee chairs in completing this effort. What impressed me about this effort and made me proud to be Vice President of SEWMG was the commitment by all to complete the task for the betterment of the organization as the priority, along with everyone's generosity of time.

With 2020 behind us, what can we expect in 2021 for our organization? We will continue to follow the directions from UW Extension on opening gardens, in person meetings and

training. So, for now, it looks like our get togethers will be via ZOOM meetings. When we get further directions from UW Extension, we will pass them on to you.

The Board will continue to work on strategic planning, which will include additional options for fundraising and updating our Bylaws. We need to address revisions in conformance with WIMGA Bylaws and any changes as the result of a new Memorandum of Understanding with UW. And, of course, the Board will need to develop a 2022 budget.

Let us be optimistic that this year will bring a return to "normalcy", with the ability for us to work in our approved gardens and to engage in face-to-face contacts with the public and other MGs.

Wishing all a great New Year and happy gardening in 2021.

"I would like to thank the Board Members, Garden Chairs and Committee chairs in completing this effort. What impressed me about this effort and made me proud to be Vice President of SEWMG was the commitment by all to complete the task for the betterment of the organization as the priority, along with everyone's generosity of time."

New MG E-mail Address for Us

Have you been receiving e-mail from the new Milwaukee/Waukesha County MG e-mail address? All exempt, certified, and trainee MGVs who are up to date with all MG requirements have been added to our e-mail list. If you are not receiving e-mails, there may be a problem with the e-mail address we have on file or with your account.

Contact Ann Wied (ann.wied@wisc.edu) with questions or concerns. The old e-mail listserve is no longer being used.

2021 SEWMG Officers

Compiled by Janet Wintersberger

New officers and board members were elected at the annual meeting on December 8. In this issue, we would like to introduce the new officers, who are responsible for SEWMGs day-to-day activities. Be sure to welcome them.

Jim Fratrack, President

Jim has been an MGV since 2013 and was Vice President/President Elect in 2020. He said, "I learned a lot about our organization, but know I still have much to learn. I have worked at the plant sales and the home show, and my favorite activity is working State Fair."

Jim was "proud to be Vice President of SEWMG by the commitment of everyone [who created the 2021 budget] for the betterment of the organization as the priority, and everyone's generosity of time and effort."

"We will continue to follow the directions from UW Extension on opening gardens, in-person meetings and training." (learn more in the President's letter).



Jim Fratrack



Betsy Vokac

Betsy Vokac, Secretary

Betsy took the Level 1 training in 2012 and was certified in 2013. She says, "My mainstay activities were volunteering at the FOX 6 Demonstration Garden until that project was closed in 2019 and in providing administrative support to the UW Extension office in Milwaukee County. I also have enjoyed popping in for the odd workday at Lynden Sculpture Garden and North Point Lighthouse, and in serving as a garden mentor for the Victory Garden Initiative."

"By volunteering as an MGV, I show what matters to me and what kind of community I want to live in. SEWMG is full of dedicated and enthusiastic members, and I love that the organization's projects allow us to connect in many ways to community needs. I see the officer roles as aiding future success for a well-established organization. It is exciting to be part of that!"

Erin Napier, VP/President Elect

"I trained to be an MGV in 2019. I have volunteered at Wil-O-Way and Boerner Botanical Gardens, as well as doing administrative tasks for the Extension office. I am a member of the SEWMG Strategic Planning Committee collaborating with other MVGs."

"My interest in SEWMG was sparked by attending the Annual Plant Sale for the last five years. My friends and family get to the parking lot at 6:00 a.m. to be first line for the sale and tailgate. I was introduced to gardening by a family member and while caring for my terminally ill father. You can say that my passion for gardening bloomed while I was experiencing tremendous loss."

"The proposal of becoming a SEWMG board member was inviting to me as it is an excellent opportunity to positively affect change and support an endeavor that I'm passionate about. I look forward to utilizing a host of professional capabilities cultivated in the Fortune 500, consulting, higher ed, and nonprofit leadership roles. I look forward to working alongside other passionate MGVs in the years to come!"



Erin Napier



Ellen Grissom

Ellen Grissom, Treasurer

Ellen became an MGV in 2017 and has since then been involved with the plant sale, Waukesha's community gardens and at State Fair. Her interest in gardening was fostered by her parents, and from her grandfather, a farmer.

She accepted the role of treasurer because of her love of math. Ellen also wants to meet more MGVs and learn more about SEWMG.

MGVs serving on the Board of Directors are Mary Wolverton, Chairman of the Board, Patrick Smith, two-year director; Val Sangsland, one-year director; and at-large directors, Janet Barthel and Carolyn Colwell. They will be featured in the next newsletter.

Sharing the Bounty: SEWMG Vegetable Gardens

Compiled by MGV Janet Wintersberger

In planning their vegetable gardens, chairs and co-chairs considered the shortened growing season and the amount of attention plants would need. A St. James Garden chair described this year's challenge as "...trying to run a community garden without being communal - social distancing and limiting the number of people in spaces."

Learn how each garden met the challenges during the coronavirus pandemic.

Green Power Garden (Waukesha)

Co-chairs - Karen Perlewitz, Cari Zachow-John, Marcela Mata, and Molly Llanas

3,560 pounds harvested and donated to date.

Produce goes to the Hope Center of Wisconsin, and the Food Pantries of both Waukesha and Pewaukee.

The late start didn't affect us too much as we don't get tilled until mid to late May and the bulk of plant donations come later than that.

We are having a very good year production-wise.

Because the Hope Center still cannot do "sit-down" meals, we were able to share food to more than one location. Everything is grab and go. We are thrilled to be helping so many people in this difficult time.

Waukesha Memorial Hospital (Waukesha)

Co-chairs: Ronda Roth, Bonnie Siegel, Lynn Mahony, Cherryl Lurtsema.

827 pounds of produce went to the Food Pantry of Waukesha County. We closed the garden down October 1, with two more food pantry deliveries pending.

Late start issues: we opted not to try tomatoes, peppers or tomatillos this year because of shortened growing season and limited sun. Our space is closely surrounded on three sides by tall buildings. Instead we did intensive and sequential plantings of shorter season crops. Since onion seed and potato starts had been purchased prior to the shut down, those plants were started at my home garden, tended, and harvested for the food pantry donation as well.

What went well: excellent bean, cucumber, beet, kohlrabi, turnip and chard crops. Good radish production. Carrots were excellent as well, but they were all small- to medium-sized. They would have been larger if we had had the full season.

Summer squash and zucchini were planted in a spot in the garden new to us last year. We had low production and disease issues in this area last year and this year. Soil sample is pending from the state.

Eble Vegetable Garden (Brookfield)

Andrea Hedemann, Chair

598 pounds harvested so far this season with more to come from winter squash, sweet potatoes, potatoes, tomatoes and pears. All produce goes to the Food Pantry of Waukesha.

The season was delayed, but the garden was planted at the end of June. We didn't make any drastic adjustments due to delay. Stretches of hot/humid weather helped things catch up quickly, especially tomatoes, which we feared were going to struggle all summer. They are producing nicely.

Eble Vegetable Garden is fortunate to have a great volunteer team that works hard every season. This was not a normal season for anyone. The team adjusted to our delay beautifully and were

aware of the added precautions to garden safely. We battled countless weeds to provide the food pantry with much needed fresh produce. They are grateful for our donations. On one Saturday morning, the only fresh vegetables they received were from our garden.

All things considered; it was a good season. It is a nice feeling knowing we helped fill the food needs in a year like this, where the need was much greater.

Already planning for next season!

Harvest for the Hungry Garden (Wauwatosa)

Tom LeMoine, Chair

523 pounds harvested and delivered this year.

Delivery sites: Tosa Pantry, Milwaukee Christian Center, Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center, Feeding America and Free Food-MKE.

Because of Covid-19 and new no-contact gardening, the garden had a somewhat later start. Vegetables planted included proven seasonal varieties such as, squashes, onions, okra, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and cucumbers.

Observations: Delivery sites, as always, are very appreciative of fresh vegetables. The trick is frequent picking with frequent delivery to smaller pantries in the communities. These pantries appreciate the produce and you leave with the impression that these vegetables will go to needy families.

Sussex Civic Center Garden (Sussex)

Co-chairs Barbara Olson and Pat Serra

Two other dedicated volunteers and three casual volunteers
50 pounds this year.

Food goes to the Sussex food pantry.

Sussex Civic Center Garden is a demonstration garden, and like the Victory garden concept, you can do this at home. Consists of seven 3x3, two 4x3 raised beds, one 4x6 in ground and two 24" diameter pots. The garden also demonstrates small-space gardening vertical planting on trellises and square-foot gardening. The types of plants this year were limited to those that didn't need attention or picking more than once a week. A woodchuck ate many of the cool weather plants. Fences were put up, but too late.

There is a playground at the Civic Center, and we talk to many children as they pass. Many parents take the time to point out certain vegetables.

St. James Community Garden (Menomonee Falls)

Co-chairs - Karen Brey, Gertrude Zoeller and Debra Schneider

About 1,800 pounds donated.

Produce from the community garden weekly goes to the Cooperating Churches of Sussex community food pantry.

About the garden: We provide a venue for the church and wider area community in which to participate and learn about gardening and community gardening through seed starting, planting, care and harvesting. We provide educational material to families to guide them in seed starting and volunteering at the gardens. We work with Boy Scouts, Eagle Scouts and Youth groups who perform service work in the gardens and help maintain them. We also hold community education at the gardens.

Challenges this year: trying to run a community garden without being communal - social distancing and limiting the number of people in spaces.

News from the County Extension Offices

by Ann Wied, UW-Madison Extension Waukesha County Horticulture Educator

Level 2 Training – No News Yet

We hope to hold Level 2 Training again this year. If held, it would take place probably sometime in February through mid-April and be held virtually (think Zoom). No details are available at this time. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. Registration will be required and there will be a fee to attend. As you recall in 2019, the topic for Level 2 was Trees.

Budget Update - Waukesha County UW-Madison Extension

The 2021 county budget tax levy for the UW Extension Department in Waukesha County is \$350,763. This was approved by the Waukesha County Board on a 3 to 0 vote and signed by Paul Farrow, County Executive. The tax levy amount is a \$2,000 increase from the 2020 county budget.

Budget Update - Milwaukee County UW-Madison Extension

The 2021 county budget tax levy for the UW Extension Department in Milwaukee County is \$343,458. This was approved by the Milwaukee County Board on a 14 to 4 vote and signed by David Crowley, County Executive. The tax levy amount is an \$8 increase from the 2020 county budget.

Graduation for fall of 2019 Trainees

I have heard from several of you inquiring as to when they will receive their MG certificate and name badge (i.e., graduation). I am working on the details. Graduation will probably be held during an online ZOOM meeting in the evening in early 2021. Most likely your certificate and name badge will be mailed to you. Watch your e-mail for details.

No Continuing Education (CE) hours were required for those who took Master Gardener Level One training in the fall of 2019. No volunteer hours were required either due to COVID-19. But if you have participated in any CE hours or volunteered any hours at approved sites, please input all of this in the MG online reporting system (ORS) by the 12/31/2020 deadline.

New E-mail Listserve address for Milwaukee/Waukesha MGVs

For years we used the same e-mail listserv address to communicate with each of you. On November 9th, a new e-mail address was initiated using the Online Reporting System (ORS) as our guide. If an MGV was in the ORS, connected to our Milwaukee/Waukesha County MG group, and up to date in all of their MG requirements, they were added to our new e-mail group. MGVs who are no longer active and no longer complete the requirements to be master gardener, will not be able to send or receive e-mails.

Use this new e-mail address like you have used the old e-mail address to communicate with each other. If you want to "opt out" of being in this new e-mail group, please contact me directly. I will remove you from the list and then you will no longer receive e-mails.

There were a few glitches in moving everyone to this new e-mail google group. Several people have reached out to me and I have worked with them to get them added to the new e-mail google group. **With that in mind, please consider reaching out to your MGV buddies. Not everyone is reading their e-mails. Ask if they are getting e-mails from the new address. If someone is not receiving e-mails, they should contact me.** Do not forward their e-mails to me. Please have them work directly with me. I appreciate everyone's patience. Thanks.

Signatures/Contracts

If you are involved with a MG project - think home show, plant sale, educational speaker presentation, garden - that may involve you as a chair or co-chair signing an application or contract please contact me. Now that we are connected with UW-Madison, Master Gardener Volunteers are no longer allowed to sign contracts. Please direct any contracts, applications (anytime a signature is involved) or questions to me.

Volunteer Recognition

Each year at the annual holiday gathering we held a short volunteer recognition program for volunteers. Since the holiday party was cancelled due to COVID-19, that did not happen. At this time I am not sure if or when it will be rescheduled. We may just wait and do it in late 2021 or in 2022. Watch your e-mail for updates.

Volunteer Opportunity Fair

Each year we have held an MG Volunteer Opportunity Fair (VOF) at the end of January or early February. Due to COVID-19, we have no plans to hold a VOF in January or February. We may consider holding it virtually in late March or April. Watch your e-mail for updates.

No Plans to Fill Caitlin's Position

I continue to get questions as to when Caitlin's position will be filled. As you recall, Caitlin was the MG Program Coordinator for Milwaukee County. Due to COVID-19, there is a hiring freeze for UW-Madison. I have no information as to when the freeze will end.

My Garden Experiences

by MGV Brad Terp

Brad is a new MGV, having graduated in 2019. Before becoming an MGV, he had an interest in gardening but did not have a place to garden. His first home had too much shade and the soil wasn't particularly good, so he rented his first garden space at Firefly Ridge Community Garden in 2018. The plots are 20ft x 20ft.

2018 Year One I was excited to grow as many different tomato varieties as I could and experiment with different support systems. I planted nearly 20 different tomato varieties, from black to pink, heirloom to hybrids, beefsteak to cherry sizes. I also had some squash, beans (bush and climbers), and flowers. Every week I would find a couple new plants at various garden centers and locate an empty spot in which to plant them. The garden was packed and difficult to move around in by mid-summer. I learned my lesson about spreading plants out and having a plan. I also learned that cages work best in a rental spot, especially if you have limited time to train and prune growing plants.

2019 Year Two I focused on Roma plum tomatoes for sauce. I planted some other slicers and such, but I had 15 Romas along with the usual beans, squash, and some flowers/herbs. In early July, I learned there was an extra space available so I decided to take on a second plot, as I had some special purple sweet corn seeds that I wanted to grow and hoped they would produce before the end of the season. Of course, I decided I needed more tomato plants because can you ever have enough? I also tried different mulching methods to keep the weeds down. Firefly Ridge does offer free wood chips when they have them available, but it is a lot of work to haul them to your spot. I spent many weeks procuring free coffee bean bags and using them as a first layer with wood chips on top. I additionally tried the wet newspaper method with wood chips on top. In my original garden, plot 1, I tried using hay/straw, but the straw seeds germinated creating more weeds to pull. Clearly I bought the wrong product and am not sure what I would buy in the future if I used this as mulch.

I learned a few things this year. Planting tomatoes three feet apart is good, but four feet is even better. Planting a determinate tomato like Roma means a huge crop all at once, and then the plant dies. This creates a lot of work processing a large crop of tomatoes all at once, which overwhelmed me. Then, I had half a garden of empty space in August, and what can you plant with only a few months left in the season before you must vacate? I also learned that you must place cages on tomato plants soon after you plant them because if you wait, a moment arrives that it is too late. The problem is I was trying to be economical and buy used cages on Craigslist and other venues. Now I have a good supply of cages and found the source to buy the best quality product.

The year ended well. I harvested 30 ears of purple sweet corn that were only good for grinding to make purple corn bread, but what fun! My extra freezer was loaded with frozen tomatoes, sauce and soup.

I decided that one plot is plenty, and having a good plan is both smart and efficient.

2020 Year Three I grew Burpee Super Sauce tomato plants from seed. They have enormous plum tomatoes on indeterminate plants. I also planted ten additional different tomato varieties, like white, striped, pink, orange and other typical hybrids to ensure I had a good variety. I used landscape fabric this year to keep down the weeds, as I knew I would not have much time to weed and maintain a garden due to other responsibilities in life. It is so easy to become a slave to your garden, in that you are present every night and all weekend, along with traveling to and from your garden. I planted a few new things, like beets (which I still don't like), Swiss chard, leeks, shallots and luffa gourds, in addition to the other beans/squash etc. I still had to add wood chips on top of the landscape fabric. Using landscape fabric is not good for the environment, but I was curious to see how it would work. Honestly, it created the most weed-free garden space with the least amount of weeding. (I will not do that again, however. I will stick to the wet newspaper approach, as that worked well.)

2021 Year Four I will have a permanent spot. I got it in 2020, but did not have the time to get it in shape. I recently started applying cardboard and various organic mulches to see if I can eliminate the weeds and provide organic matter for the soil. I will continue to add cardboard before the end of the year to be able to till in the spring. My plan is to build raised beds so that I can keep the soil loose. 2021 will all depend on what I get done, so it may be a work in progress. The plot is a bit bigger and is fenced in. My plan at this point is to focus on a variety of vegetables and flowers. I like to grow new plants and hope to try many from Baker Seeds. I plan to focus on both cutting flowers, like zinnias, dahlias and lisianthus (will grow from seed this winter) as well as more greens, some tomatoes, and more permanent plants like herbs and the like. I hope to have a space for perennials to grow out and a healing-in area for plants I hope to purchase at next year's plant sale.

I have many plans and hope I have enough time and space to realize most of them.

"Gardening for me is less about sustenance and more about experimentation and growing new things in different ways to constantly learn and challenge myself and be able to share my knowledge with others."

Planning for Colorful Containers

by MGV Kelly Kramer

Are you looking for an idea for your annual containers next year? How about picking a color theme?

I love using annuals in containers because it's a great way to experiment and have fun with color. In spring, the array of colorful annuals in the garden centers always is a welcome sight. It may sound strange, but I start planning my containers in winter.

Several years ago, I decided to choose a color theme for my annual plants. I change it every year. Having one or two colors to focus on makes plant shopping a bit easier. A planned-out color scheme also can help unify containers.

The easiest color theme to choose is a monotone one. Multiple shades of one color in different sizes and leaf shapes can be very effective. Plants in white, silver or green can either stand on their own or act as neutrals and give a monotone look some depth.

One year I had a moon garden theme for my annuals. All my containers held plants in shades of white or silver. In addition to unifying the containers, my patio had a nice glow in the late afternoon/evening hours.

Next year I'm researching a "wine and chocolate" theme - think burgundy blooms and dark leaf plants, with a dash of white or green. Already on the list is a Coleus called "Chocolate Mint", which has dark leaves edged in lime green.

A plethora of information is out there on choosing color combinations for containers. Try not to feel overwhelmed by this. A great deal can be learned from trying out different color combos, shades and textures. Annuals are not a lifetime investment. They are easy to change up and choose a different color next year. Pick a color or two and have fun researching plants in these colors that will work for your light and water requirements. In the end, the only opinion that matters is yours. Colors, like your garden, are very personal. It's your garden so have fun with it!



What is a Community Garden?

by MGV Victoria Robison

What is a community garden? Before we ask this question, we should ask: What is a community? I had no answer for this until five years ago when my mother and I began renting plots at Alice's Garden, part of the Lindsey Heights neighborhood in Milwaukee.

Alice's Garden represents an intersection. Not only is it physically at the center of Milwaukee, broaching diverse and segregated neighborhoods, it is a social intersection, where many different people enjoy a shared appreciation of life, food and plants in a welcoming space.

Alice's comprises more than two acres of a city block that originally was the center of a thriving neighborhood before being razed in the 1950s to make way for the ParkEast freeway project, which ultimately was never built. The empty city block became a UW-County Extension community garden in 1972 and was named Alice's Garden following the passing of longtime urban community program advocate and Milwaukee County Extension Executive Director Alice Meade-Taylor. In 2014, Venice Williams became Executive Director of Alice's Garden. Much of what goes on at Alice's Garden stems from the drive and passion of Venice, who, along with her husband, Demetrius Williams, builds on a legacy of community outreach and ministry.

Most Alice's gardeners rent one or two plots to grow some produce and flowers for themselves. Others grow for markets, such as Ning who is a regular at the West Allis Farmers Market. My mom and I are often referred to as the "farmers" because of our many vegetable, herb and flower plots.

Gardening is not new to many of Alice's gardeners, nor the neighborhood residents. Many bring gardening and cooking expertise from a home that is not Milwaukee, whether it is from the American South or a different country. Passersby of our fence-side plots offer stories of their home gardens or plants they grew in their youth. We have exchanged many plants with other gardeners. We don't always share the same language, but we communicate through frantic gesturing at plants and smiles.

Alice's Garden is much more than rented garden plots. It is a meeting space for numerous groups and events. The Labyrinth, for example, invites visitors to walk a spiral path invoking solace and mental clarity. The Herbal Apprenticeship Program and youth entrepreneurship groups bring Milwaukeeans together to learn about agriculture, plant applications, team-building and networking. At the height of summer, events happen at Alice's Garden practically every day (and often all day). These events range from book clubs to cooking demos, markets, potlucks, workshops, community discussions on topics such as racial healing, musical performances, yoga and more.





Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners **2021 MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Name (First, Last): _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please indicate below any skills/special talents
you might be willing to share with the organization:

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics/Displays | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> MS Access |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Filing/Photocopying | <input type="checkbox"/> MS Excel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Editing | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Management | <input type="checkbox"/> MS Publisher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Reception/Front Office | <input type="checkbox"/> WordPress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Annual dues is \$20.00 and includes membership in SEWMG and WIMGA.

Please make check payable to **SEWMG** and mail to:

Patty Witt
16508 West Melody Court
New Berlin, WI 53151-9243

DUES ARE PAYABLE ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 2020



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

UW-Madison Extension Milwaukee County

6737 W. Washington St. Suite 2202

West Allis, WI 53214

SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners

Editors:

Sandy Manning | sandymanning@gmail.com

Janet Wintersberger | jwintersberger@wi.rr.com

Deborah Black | debsjardin51@gmail.com

Kathy Heinrichs | athyk61@hotmail.com

Victoria Robison | verobison@gmail.com

Laurie Baker | Seasonal Photography

Grow with us

Check out our website

<http://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/sewmg>

Contact Information

For more information:

Calendar Hotline (MGV Hotline)

On the Web

<http://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/sewmg/>

Ann Wied (Consumer Hort. Educator, Waukesha)

Susan Taylor (Diagnostic Services Coordinator)

UW-Madison Extension Milwaukee County

UW-Madison Extension Waukesha

262-548-7788; ann.wied@wisc.edu

414-615-0516; susan.taylor@wisc.edu

6737 W. Washington St. Suite 2202, West Allis, WI 53214

Waukesha County Administration Center,

515 W. Moreland Road, Room AC-G22, Waukesha, WI 53188

Our Mission Statement

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