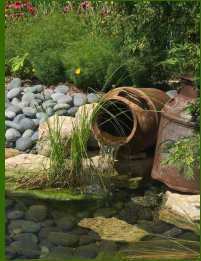


Volume 25, Issue 4

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South East Wisconsin Master Gardeners

# Good Earth News

## SEWMG Picnic Silent Auction Fundraiser by MGV Diane Thieme

The annual SEWMG picnic date is fast approaching in August. As part of the celebration, we hold our fundraising silent auction. The auction items are all donated by members or friends of the association. Laurie Keane and I will gather all the donated items and group them into wonderful baskets and door prizes. Please consider donating something(s), large or small.

Popular items include garden supplies and tools, gift cards, wine or alcohol, yard art, spa items, games or books, cooking items, home décor, holiday items, tools, nice bags or totes, trips or tours, house plants, etc. You can also create and donate an entire basket of your own design.

If you aren't sure if your donation would be appropriate, feel free to contact me at [diane3033@gmail.com](mailto:diane3033@gmail.com). Let me know if you have a donation, and I will arrange to collect it.

Please join long time MG friends and new ones for delicious food, fun and possibly winning a door prize. Plan to join in on the bidding by bidding high and often to support the SEWMG fundraiser.

**The annual SEWMG picnic is August 25.  
Please join long time MG friends and new ones  
for delicious food and fun.**

**As part of the celebration, we hold our  
fundraising silent auction. Popular items are  
garden-related, gift cards, home decor, games  
and books, and much more. Feel free to contact  
me at [diane3033@gmail.com](mailto:diane3033@gmail.com) if you aren't sure  
if your donation would be appropriate. Also I  
will arrange to collect your donation(s) - large  
or small.**



# Speaker's Bureau Update

by MGJ Jean Ahkter Co-Chair

I can't believe how fast this year is racing by. Having completed 18 presentations so far this year, Speaker's Bureau has reached over 400 residents of Metro Milwaukee & surrounding areas. From downtown Milwaukee to Waukesha to Genesee Depot to Janesville, Speaker's Bureau volunteers are connecting with the community.

You can earn Continuing Education credits by attending Speaker's Bureau presentations, as the materials utilize research-based information. Look for these upcoming presentations by Master Gardener Jeanne Ludwig in July and August.

Tuesday, July 22nd, 6:00 pm at the Franklin Public Library  
Integrated Pest Management

Thursday, August 7th, 6:00 pm at the Menomonee Falls Public Library  
Natural Landscaping in an Urban Environment

When in search of a volunteer activity, keep the Speaker's Bureau in mind. There are so many ways to help bring education to the public on behalf of SEWMG. Wishing you a delightful summer.

**Earn Continuing Education credits by attending  
Speaker's Bureau presentations**

**Tuesday, July 22 @ 6:00 pm  
Franklin Public Library  
Integrated Pest Management**

**Thursday, August 7 @ 6:00 pm  
Menomonee Falls Public Library  
Landscaping in an Urban Environment**

## Continuing Education Opportunity



**Prairie Fest**

**Date:** Saturday, July 26th  
**Time:** 9:30am to 2:00pm  
**Location:** Redeemer United Church of Christ  
W220 N4915 Town Line Rd., Menomonee Falls  
1/2 block South of Lisbon Rd. & Town Line Rd.

Explore 4 acres of our beautiful, blooming 20-year-old prairie brimming with over 50 varieties of native plants. A haven for butterflies and birds.

- Educational Tours of the Prairie at 10:00 am, 11:30 am and 1:00 pm
- Short Educational Presentations throughout the day
- Kids Activities including Face Painting, Crafts and a Scavenger Hunt
- Sustainability Displays & Demonstrations
- Picnic Food for Purchase
- Basket Raffle
- Live Music
- Nature Photographer's Paradise

**FREE Entry**

We want to give the community the opportunity to enjoy our prairie on this special day.

For more information call: 262-246-6710  
[www.redeemerucc.org](http://www.redeemerucc.org)

Portion of proceeds benefits

**NAMI** Southeast Wisconsin  
National Alliance on Mental Illness



Earn one hour of Continuing Education by attending a free Educational Prairie Tour at Prairie Fest!

Visit the four-acre prairie and six flower-bed gardens that contain over 50 varieties of native plants and grasses that provide a beautiful display starting in April and lasting into fall.

See flyer to the left or visit <https://www.redeemerucc.org/prairie-fest> for more details.



# Volunteer at the 174th Wisconsin State Fair!

by MGV Valotie Sangland, Co-chair Special Events Committee

Did you know that the Wisconsin State Fair is celebrating its 174th anniversary this year? While it was originally a travelling fair, with the first Fair held in Janesville, the State Fair we all know and love has been at its present location in West Allis since 1892! While the SEWMG garden in Exploratory Park has not been around that long, the huge Cottonwood next to our information shed in the garden has watched over generations of horticulturally-minded Wisconsinites.

With all that history and beauty, isn't it time you did yourself a favor and volunteered to work a shift or two (or more!) during the eleven-day run of the Wisconsin State Fair? Those who have worked in our area can share with you that it's a great opportunity to share your gardening knowledge with eager members of the public thirsting for that kernel of gardening truth that's been eluding them and which will be the key to their future success!

You get to experience the best of Wisconsin August weather, the comradery of four other Master Gardener Volunteers on your shift, the opportunity to peruse the many features of our area: Sun, Shade, Native, Pollinator and Cactus gardens, a functioning three-bin compost system, plus a crowd-favorite Gnome Garden! All that, PLUS you get a free admission ticket to the Fair so you can stroll the grounds before or after your shift. We have lots of hand-outs and reference books available to aid you in answering gardening questions.

The Wisconsin State Fair runs Thursday, July 31st through Sunday, August 10th. We run three shifts each day:

Morning: 9:00AM - 1:30PM

Mid-Day: 1:00PM - 5:30PM

Evening: 5:00PM - 9:00PM

We are again offering two orientation sessions (Tuesday, July 29th at 6:30 p.m. or Wednesday, July 30th at 10:00 a.m.) All volunteers are encouraged to attend orientation, and shift captains are required to attend. Time spent at orientation and time spent volunteering in the garden count as volunteer hours and can be posted on the ORS as volunteering for SEWMG. Travel time to and from the Fair does not count towards volunteer hours.

Registration opened on Sunday, June 1st. Look for the registration emails from Heide Burns sent to the SEWMG Google Group mailing list and be sure to fill out the included On-Line registration questionnaire.

I hope to see you there!

## Attend an Orientation

- Tuesday, July 29 @ 6:30 pm or
- Wednesday, July 30 @ 10:00 am

Report your hours at Orientation or  
volunteering in the garden in ORS

Travel time does not count

See you there!



# Meet MGV Heidi Burns

by MGV Heidi Burns, Co-chair Special Events Committee

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I've recently joined Valorie Sangsland as co-chair of the Special Events Committee as the scheduler of volunteer shifts for the Realtor Home Show and the upcoming 2025 State Fair. When I heard about the opening for a scheduler for the Special Events committee, it piqued my interest. My first part-time job in high school was as a scheduler for Sears, Roebuck & Co. My subsequent career was spent in the accounting field, first as an accountant in the real estate industry and then at a scientific lab. Skills such as attention to detail and organization, vital in the accounting field, should serve me well as I'm scheduling Master Gardener volunteers for the State Fair.

Summer is right around the corner and one big highlight of summer is the State Fair. If you've volunteered in the SEWMG Garden at Exploratory Park in the past, you already know what a fun, rewarding and engaging experience it is. If you haven't already volunteered, why not make this the year that you do! I'd be happy to schedule your shift!

## State Fair FAQs

### What are the dates of the 2025 Wisconsin State Fair?

The 2025 State Fair runs for a total of 11 days opening on Thursday, July 31st and ending on Sunday, August 10th.

### How many shifts are there per day and what are the shift times?

Volunteers staff the SEWMG garden for 3 shifts per day. A total of 5 volunteers are needed per shift with 1 Shift Captain heading up a group of 4 volunteers. The shift times are: 9:00am to 1:30pm,

1:00pm to 5:30pm and 5:00pm to 9:00pm

### How many volunteer hours can I earn by working shifts at the State Fair?

You can choose to volunteer for up to a total of 4 shifts and can earn up to 18 volunteer hours just by volunteering at the State Fair SEWMG Garden.

### When is orientation for SEWMG Garden volunteers?

Orientation sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, July 29th at 6:30pm and on Wednesday, July 30th at 10:00am. Orientation is mandatory for Shift Captains, but all volunteers are invited to attend.

### What information does Orientation cover?

Orientation goes over all of the details relating to the garden, the variety of informational handouts available to visitors, how to best engage with visitors, where supplies are kept and the best gates in which to enter the park for varying shifts.

### How many hours does it take to complete the scheduling for the State Fair?

It takes approximately 40 hours to complete the scheduling process for the State Fair. Volunteer shifts are scheduled for preferred dates and times, an email is sent to each volunteer confirming their shifts, volunteer questions are responded to and as State Fair approaches tickets and volunteer information packets are assembled and mailed.

# President's Letter

by MGV Jackie Kirchen

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Hello Fellow Gardeners,

Summer is officially here, and with it comes the exciting rhythm of our gardens bursting to life! JulOAs we eagerly dive into the weeding, watering, and wonderful growth this season brings, let's also remember the importance of nurturing ourselves. Gardening is incredibly rewarding work, but it's essential to find that balance between tending our plants and tending to our own well-being.

## Tips for Nurturing the Gardener

Just as we provide our plants with the right conditions to thrive, consider these simple self-care practices to keep yourself vibrant throughout the busy season:

- **Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate!** It sounds simple, but a cold glass of water (or lemonade!) is your best friend on a warm day in the garden. Keep a water bottle handy and sip often.
- **Take Mindful Breaks:** Instead of powering through, pause. Sit on a bench, watch a butterfly, listen to the birds. These short moments of stillness can re-energize you.
- **Stretch it Out:** Before and after a good session of digging or kneeling, take a few minutes to stretch your muscles. Your back and knees will thank you!

- **Dress for Success (and Comfort):** Wide-brimmed hats, light clothing, sunscreen, and proper gloves can make a world of difference in your comfort and protection.
- **Celebrate Small Victories:** Did a seed sprout? Did you successfully prune a bush? Acknowledge your accomplishments, no matter how small. This builds positive momentum.
- **Embrace the Learning:** Not every plant will thrive, and that's okay. See challenges as opportunities to learn something new about your garden, your plants, or even yourself.

Gardening isn't just about the end product; it's about the journey. It's about the feel of the soil, the scent of damp earth after a rain, the satisfaction of watching a tiny seedling become something magnificent. As you're working, remember to grow and remember to enjoy. Allow yourself to be fully present in the moment, to learn from every interaction with your plants, and to appreciate the unique beauty of each day in the garden.

Here's to a summer filled with healthy gardens and even healthier gardeners!

Happy Planting!



# Myrmecochory: Seed Dispersal by Ants

by MGV Cheryl Lausten

Myrmecochory, is a term derived from the Greek words "myrmex" (ant) and "chore" (dispersal) and refers to the dispersal of seeds by ants. It is a mutually beneficial interaction where ants provide seed dispersal for plants in exchange for a nutritious food reward. This process is particularly important for many spring ephemerals such as trilliums, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, trout lily, wild ginger, and various species of violets.

These plants produce seeds with nutritious appendages called elaiosomes. "Elaiosome" comes from the Greek words "elion" (oil) and "soma" (body), meaning "oil body". Elaiosomes are fleshy, often oily, nutrient-rich appendages attached to the seeds of many plant species. They are typically rich in lipids or fats, but they can also contain proteins, amino acids, sugars, and sometimes even vitamins. The specific composition varies among plant species. Elaiosomes can come in various shapes, sizes, and colors, sometimes appearing as a small knob or a fleshy outgrowth, or even a more substantial structure attached to the seed.

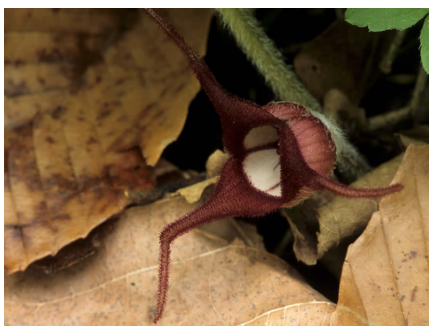
Once in the nest, the ants typically detach the elaiosome and feed it to their larvae. After consuming the nutritious seed or fruit, such as the seed coat (testa), the funiculus (the stalk attaching the ovule to the ovary), or other elaiosome, the ants discard the unharmed seed in their waste disposal areas or in underground tunnels within the nest. These areas can be nutrient-rich from ant waste and protected from some predators and environmental stresses. Elaiosomes can develop from various parts of the maternal tissues. Despite their diverse origins, they serve the same primary function: attracting ants to facilitate myrmecochory.

The volatile chemical compounds, particularly the fatty acids in elaiosomes, act as strong attractants for foraging ants. These chemicals may even mimic the scent of insect prey to further enhance the ants' attraction. Worker ants find the seeds with elaiosomes and, recognizing a valuable food source, pick them up. The elaiosome then provides a convenient point for the ant to grab the seed. The ant carries the seed back to the nest, and this journey disperses the seed away from the parent plant.

Dispersal away from the parent plant reduces competition for resources among seedlings and the parent. It may also bury the seeds, which can protect them from fire, desiccation, and some seed predators, and can also aid in germination. Elaiosomes are specialized, nutrient-rich structures that plants have evolved to "pay" ants for the service of seed dispersal. It is a remarkable example of a mutualistic relationship in nature.

While ants are the primary agents of myrmecochory, other insects also utilize elaiosomes, including beetles, crickets, and some wasps and hornets. However, it's important to note that while other insects might interact with these seeds, the term myrmecochory specifically refers to seed dispersal by ants. This interaction ensures that seeds are scattered far and wide, contributing to the biodiversity and resilience of various ecosystems.

This intricate relationship serves as a wonderful reminder of how interconnected nature truly is.





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## Master Gardener - Information/Contact Information

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### *For more information:*

#### *Good Earth News Editors:*

Sandy Manning

[sandymanning@gmail.com](mailto:sandymanning@gmail.com)

Janet Wintersberger

[jhw53045@gmail.com](mailto:jhw53045@gmail.com)

Laurie Baker, Seasonal Photography

On the Web

[sewmg.org](http://sewmg.org)

#### *State:*

Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Program Office - University of Wisconsin-Madison email:

[wimastergardener@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:wimastergardener@extension.wisc.edu)

#### *Our Mission Statement*

*"We are Master Gardeners who serve as a resource in the art and science of gardening to cultivate community connections."*