



# Conservancy for Healing and Heritage

interview with Susan Rabe, CEO

Located in Franklin, this 36-acre property was purchased in 2003 from the Polish Heritage Alliance. The vision was born from the Felician Sisters as part of their expansion of the Reiman Cancer Care clinic on S. 74 & W. Rawson Avenue. A grassroots group led the charge to create the We Energies Foundation Healing Garden, Reiman Healing Chapel in the Woods and Nature Trails, confirming the value of nature therapy. The Reiman Healing Chapel and We Energies Foundation healing garden is ADA accessible.

The grounds consist of a rare combination of ecosystems – forestland and a ten-acre glacial lake. Master gardeners volunteer in the healing garden often arriving in pairs. Although there is

not a dedicated workday, in sum, about 15 master gardeners volunteer at the conservancy. The wooded garden consists of challenging glacier soil. The value master gardeners bring is nurturing and tending the perennials and sharing insights with the visitors.

In addition to the healing garden and programs offered at the chapel, visitors can enjoy the nature trail and view the glacial lake. Students from Franklin High School and their science teacher, Mr. Patrick Gain, hold hands-on classes on site, and volunteers from Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin also help maintain the Conservancy's many acres.

Contact [Susan@theConservancy.org](mailto:Susan@theConservancy.org) for information about volunteering.



# Growing Master Gardener Volunteers

by MGV Marlene Jaglinski

For over 60 years the Whitefish Bay Garden Club has been planting seeds to actualize its motto: Growing a Greener Village, One Garden at a Time.

In the late 1990s I was the only Master Gardener Volunteer in the club (now listed in ORS). Over the years we had UW-Extension staff and many MGV speakers on topics from planning a garden to adaptive gardening techniques. Club members were impressed with the knowledge and research-based science presented.

The importance of native plants, the critical plight of monarch butterflies, pollinators, and techniques to collect water where it falls have all become critical considerations for public and private garden spaces. These topics also encouraged Whitefish Bay residents and garden club members to take the Master Gardener training to learn more.

The garden club had five MGVs last year. Now six additional members and the mother of a member have all taken the last training. Now 20% of the club membership as well as other Whitefish Bay residents who are not club members have taken the training!

In the early 1960s the club raised funds to found Riveredge Nature Center in Newburg, WI. Fast forward to 2017 when the club collaborated with the Village of Whitefish Bay to rescue a one-acre park overrun with invasive plants.

The scope and project cost were daunting. Over \$80,000 in

grants was raised from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District, the Fund for Lake Michigan, and other funders. The three-phase project included planning and design, a two-year treatment targeting invasives without using forever chemicals, then educational signage and planting hundreds of native perennials to create a wildlife habitat for pollinators that traverse the Lake Michigan flyway.

Reclaiming a butterfly garden near a playground, creating a pollinator stop for food and shelter, providing residents with pollinator friendly plants, educational outreach, and other activities with impact within Whitefish Bay and beyond are facilitated by MGVs and other club members.

To continue to nurture these environmental initiatives, one of our MGV members is heading up the Whitefish Bay Garden Club Garden Walk Small Spaces, Grand Spaces on Saturday, July 20 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Tickets are \$12 if purchased in advance and \$15 the day of.

Seven special private gardens as well as Silver Spring Park will be open to visit. For more information and to purchase tickets visit [www.whitefishbaygardenclub.com](http://www.whitefishbaygardenclub.com)

## Advocating for Growing Master Gardeners

*The garden club had five MGVs last year. Now six additional members and the mother of a member have all taken the last training!*

# Favorite Garden Tools

by MGV Heidi Hennessy

My favorite garden tool is the Spear Head Spade Shovel.

A number of years ago, a fellow MGV, was placing an order for these shovels. I ordered the long handle style. The first time I used it I knew it was worth every penny. I like using it to pull large weeds, and it makes removing younger buckthorn easy. The shovel is great for cleaning up the edge of a flower bed and transplanting or dividing perennials. It also breaks up compacted soil and of course can be used to plant shrubs or trees. I love this shovel so much that I bought one for each of my three children for Christmas one year! Two years ago, I bought a short handle Spear Head like the one pictured. This one comes with me wherever I am gardening. You can find it on Amazon for \$60.





# Boosting the Longevity of Trees with Proper Planting

by Melinda Myers

The garden season is underway, and we are busy planting and advising others on the selection, planting, and care of new plant additions to their landscapes. Trees are one of the most expensive and long-term investments we make in our landscapes. As you know, planting techniques have changed over the past few decades and not all the gardeners you advise will be aware of these changes.

As always, selecting the right plant for the growing conditions is very important. It is also important to create a diverse plant palette in our landscapes and communities. Increasing the diversity of plants will help reduce the risk of a single pest devastating all our plantings like we are experiencing with emerald ash borer and have with Dutch elm disease.

Remember to look up and check for overhead utilities. Avoid plants that could eventually grow into wires or structures that may interfere with utilities and power transmission and create a hazard. Contact Diggers Hotline by calling 811 at least three business days before planting to have the location of underground utilities marked.

As you know, tree planting depth is critical to the longevity and health of our trees. It's important to locate the tree's root (trunk) flare, so you can make sure the tree's root flare is at, or slightly above, the soil surface when planting. Proper planting depth encourages root growth where essential moisture and oxygen are present for establishment and growth. Circling roots that eventually become girdling roots are also a concern on container-grown trees. These need to be loosened or gently shaved off the sides and bottom of the root ball to encourage the roots to explore the surrounding soil.

A recent innovation from Legacy-Trees is focused on growing trees in a way that mimics what happens in nature. Their trees are grown at the right depth without circling roots, making it easier to plant correctly and for the tree to establish and grow more quickly.



When preparing the planting hole, it is important to create a shallow hole no deeper than the distance between the root flare and the bottom of the root ball. Digging deeper can result in the soil settling and creating a water-collecting depression around your tree. A wide and shallow saucer-like hole makes it easier for the tree roots to explore the surrounding soil.

Next, set and position the tree in the planting hole. Cut away the wire basket. Then peel back and cut away the burlap wrap. Roughen the sides of the planting hole to avoid glazed soil that can prevent roots from growing into the surrounding soil. Fill the hole with the existing soil and water thoroughly to remove any air pockets. The Legacy-Trees planting method assures their trees are planted correctly.

Continue to thoroughly water the trees when the top 4 to 6" of soil is crumbly and starting to dry. This is especially important throughout the first two years as the trees become established. Mulch the soil with several inches of woodchips or shredded bark and pull it away from the tree trunk to prevent rot and reduce the risk of vole damage. Organic mulches help conserve moisture, suppress weeds, moderate soil temperature, and improve the soil as it decomposes.

Wait to fertilize newly planted trees. Fertilizing at planting promotes top growth at the expense of root development which is extremely important for the tree's establishment and longevity.

Teaching gardeners the correct way to plant and care for trees helps create a healthy urban forest that benefits us all.

For more information about proper tree planting watch the video on the life or death of a tree with Ron Zillmer, founder of Legacy-Trees based out of Trempealeau, WI. Ron is an arborist, educator, and experienced speaker. He is available to speak to your group on a variety of tree topics, including selection, planting, pruning, and care. For more information, visit <https://legacy-trees.com/seminars/> or contact Alli at [alli@legacy-trees.com](mailto:alli@legacy-trees.com)



# President's Letter

by MGV Jane Belanger



Sometimes in our lives we are presented with opportunities that seem to lead us in a specific direction. For me, last year was a very clear indication that life was handing me a challenge. I was involved in my neighborhood gardens which contain an apple orchard and Extension offered a series of webinars on apple growing which I completed. The garden board needed funds raised so I found a class offered by Gale Courses, Milwaukee Federated Library online program called "Growing Plants for Fun and Profit" and completed that. It went on from there, but you get the picture.

This year, as President, I didn't approach the position with specific intentions other than the responsibilities as they were outlined. In case you're wondering those include presiding over four member meetings, attending four board meetings as well as the picnic and holiday party, writing six newsletter articles, and answering website questions from members and the general public. Any other projects that I've taken on were formulated by listening to member comments and concerns.

The first order of business was to address the loss of Extension's Waukesha Outreach Specialist, Ann Wied, and Listserv. Because SEWMG lost access to UW's Listserv, I wanted to make sure we connected with new master gardeners and in turn offered them the option to learn about volunteer opportunities as many of us have in the past. With Jane Browne's help in securing Boerner's multimedia room, a support team of members and a varied group of garden and project representatives, we brought back the Volunteer Information Morning. With six weeks of planning and preparation the group of representatives was solid, and the event was sparsely attended.

What I observed was a successful event. Members were happy to see each other again. And they had a chance to vent about what they valued in their master gardening experience that is now gone and missed.

This led to the idea of Coffee Connections. I wanted to provide more members with the chance to voice their concerns, ideas and questions. Jackie Kirchen, our Vice President, and I set up a series of dates and coffee shop locations and sent out the member invite.

Twenty-five SEWMG members responded, happy to have the opportunity to gather. Eleven members attended and one person sent feedback via email. Seven more members want to participate when we can schedule a convenient time.

We had questions about specific gardening locations and organizational queries. There was concern about the drop in membership numbers since 2020 versus a still large member group making it difficult to connect with others. A suggestion was made to have quarterly gatherings; annual picnic, holiday party, and two others. Smaller, regularly scheduled area/neighborhood gatherings with a variety of event types were suggested. One member talked about his role in the "Plant Hope" program at Boerner Botanical Gardens and the sense of fulfillment it brought him. Some members want trips and tours redeveloped. There was encouragement to continue with this format, "Coffee Connections" on a regular basis.

I find joy in the fact that one group now intends to meet monthly for coffee. And by the member who wants to organize a book club.

I've learned from feedback at this point that it will take more voices to create the outlets that members may still be missing. It will take more of us willing to step up and say "I can do that" when we break it down to smaller tasks. It will take variety and a sense of fun and adventure to build vibrancy and interest into our group. We are already a really special group of gardeners. Let's showcase that and make it sparkle.

Side notes:

Jean Akhter is now a member of the board as a first-year director.

At the last member meeting, a Bylaw change (6.6) was voted on by 134 members with 125 affirmative votes. A board committee can have a chair who is not a member of the board but may have a board liaison instead.

Just a reminder that Ann Wied will be honored at the member picnic on July 29th.

## Speaker's Bureau Update

by MGVs Jean Akhter and Terri Hartellis

Spring was a busy time for the Speaker's Bureau. We are proud of the dedicated speakers who represent SEWMG. This is what two libraries had to say about their experience this spring:

"The presentation was great and one of the largest turnouts we've had in the past few years."

"The composting program went really well. The speaker did a great job presenting the material and connecting with the audience."

Although we do not have public presentations slated for July and August, we are working on our fall lineup.

With this year of transition and Ann Wied's retirement, we are taking steps to get the word out about presentations available through SEWMG's Speakers Bureau. Going forward, when organizations contact the UW Extension asking for speakers, they will be directed to contact SEWMG Speaker's Bureau.

We are also in the process of launching a Speaker's Bureau Facebook page to get the word out to organizations about SEWMG's presentation opportunities and topics.



# Picnic, Silent Auction, and Ann Wied Retirement News

by MGV Diane Thieme

The annual SEWMG picnic is to be held on July 29, at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center. This year's picnic will serve three different functions. The original picnic was hosted by SEWMG officers as a "thank you" event for the many hours of service provided by our members. The event is now planned and organized by a committee of members, but the reason for our picnic remains to be a celebration of members' hard work and a chance to connect with old and new friends.

Entrées and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided by the association. The rest of the meal is potluck. We do have many fabulous cooks who contribute to the tasty feast. Attendees will also be entered into drawings for several very nice door prizes.

A second purpose of the picnic has evolved because of the demise of the plant sale fund raiser. The silent auction which was part of the plant sale is now a part of the picnic. It is currently the only SEWMG fund raiser. Members are asked to donate new or "like new" items which we will auction off at the picnic. If you have something you can contribute, please contact me at [diane3033@gmail.com](mailto:diane3033@gmail.com) or Laurie Keane at [laur21419@aol.com](mailto:laur21419@aol.com). We will arrange to get the items from you by drop off or pick up. Popular items are gift cards, wine, garden art or tools, cooking items, spa items, or crafts. Please, no rummage sale types of things. We already have some wonderful things collected but would like to have more.

The last important purpose of the picnic for this year is to acknowledge Ann Wied's years of service to the Extension and our MGV program. Many of us had the privilege and good fortune of being in a real classroom with Ann as our instructor for our training. She was an active supporter of SEWMG and a positive presence through all of the recent transitioning of the MG program with the Extension. We wish her the best in her retirement adventures. She will be truly missed. At the picnic, Ann will be honored with a cake and plaque from the SEWMG Board and with a gift provided by individual member donations. If you would like to donate toward Ann's gift, please mail a check made out to me, Diane Thieme, to 3033 N. Newhall St., Milwaukee, WI, 53211. I will buy her gift, based on what our collection totals.

Please join us in the festivities and celebrations of the evening. You needn't worry if you didn't RSVP to an earlier email. It was simply to give us a sense of food amounts. Everyone is always welcome. Specific picnic details were sent out by Karla Geiger. Check your in box if you missed them.



# Green Power Garden Nerds!

by MGV Molly Llanas

We, at the Green Power Garden, are starting on our third season in our new smaller field. The old field where we spent many years had 4 farmable acres but a creek in the middle during wet years so sometimes, we could only work 2 acres. We would spread everything out but were 100% dependent on rainwater as it fell capturing only a small bit of it in rain barrels off a shed roof. Definitely hard to keep it watered and the pests/weeds at bay. Last year, we planted everything we were gifted, crammed everything in one acre again, AND received some IBC totes and battery operated in-and-out pumps to help hold and move additional water that we are capturing in linked rain barrels off a pole barn. We have NEVER had so much stored/usable water. We moved some of the totes out into the field to get the water closer to the plants. Watered still with buckets and jugs, but sometimes with the hose too. Still all by hand, but we believe that this additional water definitely gave the plants a bigger boost in production during the heat and drier portion of the 2023 season.

Largest when planting 4 acres - 6810 pounds (tomatoes ruled at 2479) 2012

Largest when planting 2 acres - 4731 pounds (tomatoes ruled again at 3364) 2015

Largest when planting 1 acre - 4310 pounds (tomatoes again! 2342.25) 2023

We have kept the records of all the years we have been doing this though and the ones where we had “too much” rain, are the ones where the food counts barely hit 1000 pounds. Overwatering is a faster plant killer/stifler than underwatering. But the size of the garden doesn't really prove that bigger is better. I can see where being able to care for the plants better

## Be Water-wise

by MGV Mary Wolverton

The State Fair team is hard at work implementing this year's theme – Be Water-Wise.

With the help of Dehling Voigt's donation of roofing materials the shed will have a new roof with a gutter and downspout that finally allow our rain barrel to function as intended.

We are installing a drip irrigation system to make watering the center bed more efficient. The stone border has been replaced with practical edging.

We are working on renovating the rain garden near the Fair museum. An old MMSD sign referenced a rain garden that didn't exist. New natives friendly to rain gardens are being added.

Even the gnome garden will highlight the water theme.

Once again Geri Nolan has helped out with a donation of gorgeous coleus to give the center bed some August color in the shady spots.



in a smaller situation also gives you opportunity to manage the pests and weeds, and keep a better harvesting and watering eye on them.

We also did our best to cover every bit of open soil with used pool covers, cardboard, landscape fabric, woodchips, old tarps, weird plastic pieces and burlap, as no invitation to work in a garden starts out with “Hey, wanna come over and weed???” because nobody would ever show up.

This season we will perfect our water collection and distribution system. Laying out the field to plant only in rows so that as we go forward, less (if any) tilling would be required, possibility of soaker hoses, and fall clean up time would be cut in half. And an experimental run at outdoor hydroponic Romaine Lettuce – we will let you know how that goes. Lettuce has been requested by the Hope Center, but as we are only in the field regularly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, they wouldn't get enough water if planted in the ground. And there's not an area with a bit of shade. But buckets may be our lettuce salvation. Can't wait to see what happens to all of it!



A few new perennials have been added where needed. The old fencing has been removed as it was in dire need of repair and painting. Removal has improved our garden team's access to the gardens and gives visitors a better view.

The container contest is back to show our visitors what can be accomplished with a simple container.

Last year's new additions of shrubs and trees near the compost bins survived the winter and are thriving.

And, this year SEWMG will finally be on the stage in Grand Champions Hall. Our Lifelong Gardening team will do two presentations the evening of Monday August 5.

**Put the dates – August 1 through 11 – on your calendar and plan to volunteer to show off our garden.**



# Actively Preparing Your Garden for Climate Change

by MGV Cheryl Lausten

There is some debate as to whether climate change due to global warming is real, but data does show a change in our climate. As greenhouse gas emissions blanket the earth, they trap the sun's heat, leading to global warming and climate change. The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history. Warmer temperatures over time are changing weather patterns and disrupting the usual balance of nature. In addition to increased temperatures, we are seeing periods of drought expanding, and we are experiencing more severe weather events than ever before. Average minimum temperature in the Great Lakes region has warmed 5 to 10° just in the last 30 years. The USDA revised its plant hardiness zone map for the first time in 11 years to take increases like this into account. The last frost in spring comes earlier than it did 3 decades ago and the first frost in fall comes later. These seem like insignificant changes, but they have a profound effect on all plant life and their ecosystems.

Plants are important to the ecosystem because they supply oxygen through photosynthesis, aid in the recovery from natural disasters by protecting soil from erosion and serve as the foundation of the food chain. They intercept pollution by trapping airborne pollutants, purify drinking water and wetland plants help remove heavy metals.

Plants have adapted over millennia to the conditions in which they grow. The increased stressors they now face are many. Increasing temperatures cause earlier bloom times creating a potential for timing mismatch with pollinators. Plant pathogens and pests are also more active in warmer temperatures. Excessive heat may deplete soil nutrients and restrict nutrient uptake. Longer and more frequent periods of drought result in inconsistent water patterns and increased wildfires. On the other side of the spectrum heavy rains and intense storms cause problems either through flooding, bruising or over saturated and washed-out topsoil. Longer frost-free seasons have given an edge to diseases and insect pests. Native plants which are best able to survive these changes are being taken over by invasive plant species.

These changes affect farmers in addition to home gardeners. Climate change could reduce farming yields by up to 30% by 2050. Warming patterns have forced the location of cool crops further north. Corn, wheat, rice, and soybean crops all shifted northward escaping the most damaging effects of climate warming. Most of the oats Americans consume today are grown in Canada.

Will these effects lead to a change in the way we garden?

Biodiversity is our strongest natural defense against climate change. The earth's land and ocean serve as natural carbon sinks, absorbing substantial amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. Conserving and restoring natural spaces and the biodiversity they contain is essential for limiting emissions and adapting to climate impacts. Plant and design with the environment in mind. Plant more trees, trees help remove carbon from the atmosphere and a well-placed tree can reduce the need for air conditioning. Conserve water by choosing drought tolerant plants. Shift your planting times to better match the changing seasons. You might even need to mix it up and change the variety of your plants. Do research and learn how to create resilient landscapes that are adapted to our changing climate.

As individuals the greatest effect we can have is by using climate resilient gardening.

Books for further information:

- The Climate Change Garden by Sally Morgan and Kim Stodart
- The Climate Change Resilient Vegetable Garden by Kim Stodart
- Resilient Garden by Tom Hassey
- Climate-Wise Landscaping by Sue Reed and Ginny Stibolt (Forward by Doug Tallamy)
- The Climate Conscious Gardener by Janet Marinelli





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#### *Our Mission Statement*

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