



# Good Earth News

## President's Letter

by MGV Mary Wolverton

When you read this newsletter we will be about to hold our May 15 Member Meeting and Continuing Education Program. We are meeting in the City of Milwaukee for the first time since I joined SEWMG. The program, "Grow Great Vegetables" with Bevin Cohen will be held at the Town of Lake Water Tower Building at 4001 South 6. Once you are in the neighborhood you can't miss the building – it is a classic 1930s concrete water tower. Bevin, owner of Small House Farm in Michigan, is a food and garden author, herbalist and seed saver. His book, *Grow Great Vegetables Minnesota & Wisconsin* will be available. You are welcome to bring friends, neighbors and fellow gardeners.

It is great we are all back in the garden. I hope you saw the article in *MKE Lifestyle* featuring Molly Llanas and the Green Power garden, one of the many valuable projects our members support with volunteer hours.

If you are looking for a project we have two opportunities that still need help. **The Boerner Garden Cart** is back. This project allows you to come to Boerner whenever the gardens are open, wheel the cart to the spot of your choice and talk to anyone interested in gardens. The cart is stocked with information sheets. There is no time limit on how long you volunteer and you are

welcome to pair up with another member. If this interests you please contact the chair, Melanie Worthy, at [mworthy@me.com](mailto:mworthy@me.com).

We are also looking for members willing to **Staff a booth at Farmer's Markets**. Eileen Quinlan chairs this project and has an article on the details in this newsletter. She can be contacted at [emquinlan@yahoo.com](mailto:emquinlan@yahoo.com).

We are reinventing the **Sunday Socials**. Rather than one Sunday with members rushing from one garden to another we are holding local get togethers. Betsy Vokac, our secretary and membership chair, has an article on that project.

And on the subject of membership, new master gardeners have completed their training and are onboarding now. You may meet one while volunteering. Please make them welcome. Invite them to a meeting or get together. SEWMG membership is no longer automatic through the training program so we need to invite new members and make them feel they are part of a gardening community.

*Learn more about Molly Llanas and Green Power Garden [MKElifestyle.com](http://MKElifestyle.com) (April issue)*

### SEWMG Meeting

May 15 @ 6:30 p.m. **Guests welcome!**

Town of Lake Water Tower Building  
4001 S. Sixth St., Milwaukee



**Bevin Cohen**, an award-winning author, herbalist & owner of Small House Farm  
*Grow Great Vegetables in Minnesota and Wisconsin, 2023*

#### Stay current

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

- Activities
- Education
- Events

It also has easy links to;

- UW-Madison <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/events/>
- <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/resources/>

- WIMGA (Wisconsin Master Gardener Association <https://wimga.org>)

#### Check your e-mail

Activities  
Opportunities!

# From the Board

by MGV Valorie Sangsland, Board Chair



We're finally getting some truly spring-like weather after a very late end to winter. I'm sure all of you are as eager to get into your gardens as I am. I wish you the best with the upcoming gardening season and your volunteer efforts in the gardens throughout our area.

We just concluded the Realtors Home & Garden Show, and that has me thinking ahead. SEWMG used to have a team of volunteers who worked to create and edit our Speaker's Bureau displays and Home Show displays. We need to resurrect that team so we can update our current tabletop displays (used at staffed or unstaffed locations, such as a garden walks, county fairs, or even farmers markets) as well as determine and begin work on next year's Home Show topic. This is a great committee for those of you who cannot volunteer during the typical weekday gardening volunteer opportunities, as much of the work can be done even when it's not warm, dry and sunny outside and meetings can be small and in person, or by Zoom. Work to craft these educational displays counts as volunteer hours towards your annual recertification. Please contact me if

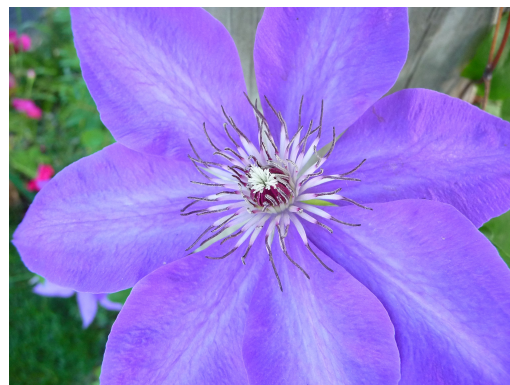
you are interested, and let me know if you have any artistic or graphics talents, or copy-editing aptitudes. I can be reached by email at [vjsland@gmail.com](mailto:vjsland@gmail.com).

Check out the article about this year's Realtors Home & Garden Show to see some of the work done by prior Display Committee team members.

Have a great Spring, everyone!

***Put your creative side to work. Help craft educational displays for multiple events.***

***Earn volunteer hours in the evening or in the rain. Contact Valorie at [vjsland@gmail.com](mailto:vjsland@gmail.com) to join the Display Team.***



# Speaker's Bureau

by MGV Susan Taylor, Speaker's Bureau Chair

Speaker's Bureau is a volunteer opportunity for Master Gardeners to serve the community by providing educational programs. Organizations such as libraries, community groups, and garden clubs request one or more of our SEWMG PowerPoint presentations for their programming.

The current 11 PowerPoint presentations with speaker's notes cover a variety of topics ranging from houseplants to seed starting, along with planning and maintaining a vegetable garden. They also include landscaping, pruning, container gardening, and composting topics.

Are you passionate about a topic and would like to share it with others? We are always looking for new presentations! Let us know and we will be happy to work with you to develop a presentation. A PowerPoint template is available to make it easier for you to create your presentation and provide consistent SEWMG sponsored presentations.

Do you enjoy sharing your gardening knowledge with the community? Not sure you want to go it alone? No problem! You can buddy-up with another Master Gardener to give the presentation. In addition, there is a training video in the Activities tab on SEWMG's Website. Click on "Outreach" in the dropdown menu. Then scroll down to Public Presentations to view the training video.

If you are aware of organizations looking to include gardening presentations for their programming, please feel free to refer them to SEWMG.

Speaker's Bureau offers several opportunities to share gardening knowledge with others. You can volunteer to create a new presentation, give a presentation to an organization, and refer us to others for their programming needs. We do not charge a fee for presentations, but happily accept honorariums. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you.

# Membership Committee Update

by MGVBetsy Vokac

SEWMG is going strong with 370 active members. Some of us have been Master Gardeners and members for more than three decades, and some of us have just joined after completing Extension's Foundations in Gardening course. Most of us fall into the large category of members with somewhere between three and 20 years of service.

One charge of the Membership Committee is to engage existing members. This year we launched a series of Neighborhood Gatherings to create opportunities for members to connect with each other. Our intention is to create casual, friendly spaces for SEWMGs to meet other members from their own areas. The pandemic certainly interfered with the ability of new members to get to know others in the organization, and we wanted to offer a way past that hurdle. At the same time, we hoped small gatherings would allow long-time members to catch up with one another.

Of course, we recognized there would not be one perfect formula for the neighborhood gatherings. Some members are only available in the evening; others don't like to travel after dark. Some members have plenty of free time on weekends; others are already busy with chores and family events. The answer was to try different things.

The first gathering was held on a Thursday afternoon in February at the Urban Ecology Center on Milwaukee's east side. Next was a gathering on a Saturday morning at the Tippecanoe Library near the airport, and a third gathering was scheduled for another Saturday morning at the Waukesha Public Library. For each event, we drew a circle on a map to include 30-40 SEWMGs. About a dozen people attended each gathering.

So far, we've shared garden catalogs, chatted about favorite places to volunteer and favorite gardens to visit, enjoyed snacks (including some delicious homemade goodies), learned about partner organizations where we can volunteer with other MGs, dreamed about spring blossoms, and had fun. The scheduled times are short – one and a half to two hours. Because there is not a set program, it's been easy for those who don't have a lot of time to drop in when it's convenient.

These events are social in nature and don't count for continuing education or volunteer hours. So far response has been positive, with comments like "let's do more of these", "it was great to hear about places to volunteer near me" and "I can't make it – please schedule another". Look for more of these gatherings throughout the year.

Get in touch if you'd like to host a neighborhood gathering, or if you'd like to join the Membership Committee!

## Neighborhood Gatherings

- Spend 1 ½ - 2 hours together or "drop-in" when convenient
- Make connections with other MGVs who live in their areas
- Create casual, friendly spaces for SEWMGs to meet others
- Talked about favorite places to volunteer and favorite gardens to visit
- Learned about partner organizations where we can volunteer

Get in touch if you'd like to host a neighborhood gathering, or if you'd like to join the Membership Committee!  
betsyandjohn@wi.rr.com

# Share Your Excess Perennials

by MGVBetsy Wintersberger

As you begin gardening this year, you may be dividing perennials. If your garden doesn't have jumping worms, consider sharing them with friends or donating them to the annual Habitat for Humanity Plant Share. For years, SEWMGs plant sale committee gave its unsold perennials to Milwaukee District Garden Club. It, in turn, uses them to beautify a designated low-income area in early June. Garden club members help these residents plan, design and help plant garden beds.

This project will also accept your no longer needed garden tools, pots and containers. Make sure the perennials and other donations are from your personal garden. The projects or gardens where we volunteer are sponsored by another organization – and plants and garden tools are no longer SEWMG property.



For further details, please contact Connie Sandell before May 30 (csandell49@icloud.com).

# Farmers Markets are Scheduled to Open Soon!

by MGV Eileen Quinlan



Are you ready?

Waukesha and Milwaukee counties have many markets where our Master Gardeners participate in providing education to those visiting the farmers' markets. Our volunteers provide information, education and share resources related to plants, gardening and – of course – becoming a member of SEWMG. Our volunteer time is a **few hours** at a local market to focus on educational opportunities – sharing our knowledge, answering gardening related questions and suggesting useful garden resources for all. You can volunteer one time or several times during the summer season, the choice is yours!

If you are looking for volunteer hours where you can partner with other SEWMG members and interact with happy people who attend a farmers market, come and join the team!! Working a farmers market together provides a great opportunity to share knowledge with each other, provides a chance to meet other SEWMG volunteers and provides the time to shop the farmers market too.

Help us reach more people by volunteering at a local Farmers' market, contact Eileen at [emquinlan@yahoo.com](mailto:emquinlan@yahoo.com) and join other SEWMG members for a fun opportunity!

## Realtors Home and Garden Show 2023

by MGV Valorie Sangsland

March saw the return of SEWMG volunteers to a booth at the Realtors Home & Garden Show. This was the first time SEWMG interacted directly with the Realtors Association, as this is now wholly an SEWMG-sponsored project. The Realtors Association provided our double booth at no charge to SEWMG in exchange for two speakers for their Solutions Stage. MGV Mary Jane Swedberg presented "Square Foot Gardening" on Friday March 24th and MGV Jennifer Lazewski presented "Home Habitat for Birds" on Wednesday March 29th. Thank you so much, ladies! SEWMG was lucky to get booth 1506/1508 this year, just inside the main West door and directly across from the beautiful Aquatica Ponds display. This generated so much more foot traffic than we saw in the past at our old location on the North wall of the Expo Center. Our topic was Small Space/Small Budget Vegetable Gardening. In addition to our usual weed and insect pest brochures, we had a curated collection of topical handouts ranging from Square Foot Gardening, Straw Bale Gardening, Raised Bed Gardening and Vegetable Container Gardening. The handouts, combined with a lovely hand-painted graphic of a raised bed created by form MGV Kandy Stamborski many years ago generated some lively conversation with our visitors, who said they were extremely glad to be see us back after our three-year absence.

In spite of a major snowstorm and a severe weather outbreak with tornado warnings, we still had over 2000 visitors stop at our booth during the show, and they picked up over 6300 separate educational documents with them. What an engaged group of visitors! We also spoke to several individuals interested in taking the Master Gardener training from Extension this fall. We hope to welcome them back to SEWMG after they pass their tests!

Here are a few facts about what went into this event: A team of 11 volunteers (9 MGVs & 2 significant others) brought four truckloads of material to the booth on Set-up Day, Wednesday March 22. Many thanks to Cathy DeVries, Jean Georgson, Jim Fratricks, Judy McCormick, Kelly Kramer, Kristie Kroenig & Alan Nichols, Nora Lewis, Terry Fabian, Valorie & Jeff Sangsland for the hard work, creativity and know-how that went into transporting and staging the booth in an engaging manner. We couldn't have done it without you! Thursday saw twenty MGVs attend orientation, the better to share information with their shift-mates once the show started. After the show began on Friday March 24th, 52 MGVs staffed a total of 70 shifts, greeting, interacting with and educating our visitors. We even had a celebrity visit when former UW-Milwaukee Extension Educator, and Gardening Expert Melinda Myers stopped at our booth for a photo op! Comments from our visitors was overwhelmingly positive, and our MG volunteers shared that they really enjoyed the experience and hope to do it again at State Fair and at next year's Home & Garden Show. Sunday night we concluded the show, and everything was taken down and transported back to storage for another year. What a wonderful start to the year this was for SEWMG!

Hope to see YOU volunteering at the booth next year!





SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners, Inc.

<https://SEWMG.org>

Text material excerpted from a Wisconsin Hort resource which was shared with to visitors at the SEWMG booth.2023 Realtors Home & Garden Show.

### Container size and light requirements for individual crops

CROP	HANGING BASKET	TUB OR 2- to 5-GAL CONTAINER	LARGE CONTAINER (8"-12" pot)	SMALL CONTAINER (4"-6" pot)	FULL SUN	PARTIAL SHADE	FULL SHADE
<b>VEGETABLES</b>	<i>Most vegetables grow best in full sun; a few can tolerate light shade, but yields will decrease.</i>						
Bean		♦	♦		♦		
Beet			♦		♦		
Broccoli		♦			♦		
Brussels sprouts		♦			♦		
Cabbage		♦			♦		
Carrot			♦		♦		
Cauliflower		♦			♦		
Cucumber	♦	♦			♦		
Eggplant		♦	♦		♦		
Lettuce (leaf)			♦	♦	♦	♦	
Onion			♦		♦		
Onion (sets)			♦	♦	♦		

### Container size and light requirements for individual crops (continued)

CROP	HANGING BASKET	TUB OR 2- to 5-GAL CONTAINER	LARGE CONTAINER (8"-12" pot)	SMALL CONTAINER (4"-6" pot)	FULL SUN	PARTIAL SHADE	FULL SHADE
Pea	♦		♦	♦	♦		
Pepper		♦	♦		♦		
Radish			♦	♦	♦	♦	
Spinach			♦	♦	♦	♦	
Squash		♦			♦		
Tomato		♦			♦		
Tomato (cherry)	♦	♦	♦		♦		

Source: UWExtension publication #A3882, Container Gardening. Find full information regarding containers, soil, watering, and fertilization at:

<https://barron.extension.wisc.edu/files/2021/09/Container-Gardens-Publication-A3382.pdf>

# Volunteering - Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

by MGV Katherine Amann

Gardening season will soon be upon us. Many of us are looking at the various groups and organizations where we can put in our volunteer hours in 2023.

Perhaps you would find interest in a volunteer effort that supports our Veterans. There is currently an approved group that fulfills that interest. The Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) unit has a garden group on the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center Campus. The campus is located at 5000 W National Avenue in Milwaukee.

Outpatient veterans gather every other week for 1 hour from May through October. They participate in the planning, planting, and tending of raised bed and bunker herb and vegetable gardens on the SCI terrace. During the growing season as produce begins to develop, it is harvested and divided among the participants. Any excess is used in the VA kitchens for daily meals.

We, as Master Gardener Volunteers, help in the garden planning, aid in maintenance of the gardens (mulching, weeding, harvesting, etc) during the season, and offer brief educational presentations on different topics of interest from our SEWMG Speaker Bureau presentations.

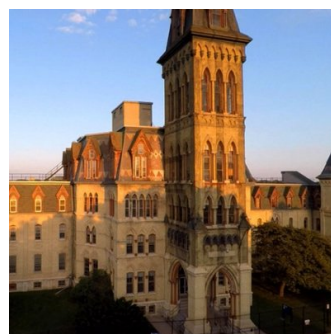
On alternate weeks, in-patient veterans are offered the option to participate in the garden projects. If desired, MGVs can also work with this component of the veteran population. Garden maintenance is ongoing and MGVs can come to the complex on other non-meeting days to help with additional garden upkeep as their schedules permit.

Why do I personally enjoy this volunteer time? " I can be a part of the planning and coordination of the seasonal gardens. I can challenge my knowledge in designing the best scenario for the growing season. I am able to work with a GREAT group of dedicated VA medical personnel. I also am able to hone my skills in bringing subject appropriate information and research-based educational materials to the participants in workshop

presentations. Another very important reason, I have an opportunity to say "thank you" to the men and women who decided to volunteer for the military to protect and defend our country. The gardens provide a scenario to spend quality time with them in the gardens. Finally, my dad was a veteran of WWII. It allows me to honor his memory and the dedication, time, and effort he gave in volunteering with various Veteran organizations."

Does this sound like something that would interest you as a Master Gardener Volunteer? **Join us on May 11 to start the garden year. Contact the VA Voluntary Services unit to begin the process.**

Here's to a great gardening season for all.



## Support Our Veterans

**Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center Campus  
5000 W National Avenue**

**To volunteer:**

**Contact VA Voluntary Services Unit  
414-384-2000, Extension 41803 or  
Stop by their offices in Room 70C16**

# Garden Maintenance Solutions - Downsizing

by MGV Kelly Kramer

One gardening issue that many people struggle with is the time to manage their gardens. Myself included. If your gardens are requiring more work than you can give them, then consider making some changes. You've heard of downsizing in the home? Well, there is also downsizing in the garden. Starting with reducing the size or number of garden beds. I know, I know I can hear the gasps from here but hear me out.

If you have a large garden bed that's far from the house or in the center of the lawn, consider reducing the size or removing altogether. If you do want to keep it then make it full of very tough plants that can handle extreme weather and don't require lots of pruning and maintenance.

Consider keeping planting beds around the foundation and patio areas only. Garden beds that are close to the house are often easier to water and maintain.

Add shrubs to fill up large spaces in garden beds rather than perennials and annuals. Focus on types of shrubs that do not need a lot of pruning or watering.

So whether it's due to increasing time demands or physical limitations, garden downsizing is one way to reduce garden maintenance. If you do want to go this route then make the changes gradually and find the balance that works for you.

# News from the County Extension Office

by Ann Wied, UW-Madison Waukesha County Extension Outreach Specialist

## Pollinator – Cool Video

In the last newsletter I mentioned about “Extension Celebrates Pollinator Week” that is scheduled for June 19-25. If you missed my column in the last newsletter, be sure to check out the Pollinator Week website (<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/pollinator-week/>). There are free webinars each week.

I am part of the Extension Horticulture Team planning the events and activities and exploring new resources for Pollinator Week. I recently became aware of this amazing video recorded by University of Illinois Extension. It was recorded on March 9, 2023. It answers several questions regarding pollinators. The presentation is about 45 minutes long with about 10 questions. It is easy to watch and very interesting. I have included the timestamps so you can go directly to the section that interests you if you do not want to watch the whole thing.

I like the questions it addresses in the video. Questions that particularly jumped out at me and piqued my interest were: Does it help pollinators to not mow my lawn? Does rearing monarchs help their populations? And can I help pollinators if I can't garden or don't have land? See below for details about the video

## Tricky Pollinator Questions and Answers: Everyday Environment Webinar Series

By University of Illinois- Extension. Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gkea-evq6Vc>

This presentation explores pollinator questions that have nuanced, uncertain, or controversial answers. Tune in to learn what the latest science says on some of your most challenging questions.

### Timestamps:

0:00 Introduction

3:11 Q1: Does it help pollinators to not mow my lawn?

11:35 Q2: Are cultivars of native plants pollinator friendly?

15:57 Q3: Are monarch butterflies an endangered species now?

22:29 Q4: Does rearing monarchs help their population?

31:17 Q5: Are my annual plants "junk food" for pollinators?

41:04 Q6: Can I help pollinators if I can't garden or don't own land?

46:12 Other Q&A

## New MG Name Badges

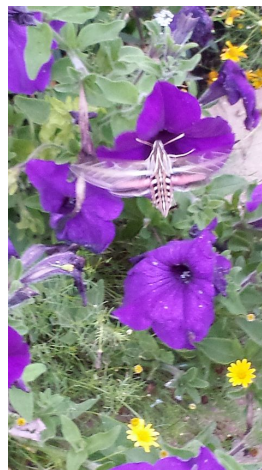
New name badges will be issued to all current MGs in the program in 2023 **if you follow the following steps before May 15th:**

1. Accept Terms and Conditions in the Online Reporting System (ORS) **on or before May 15, 2023**. If you complete this step after May 15th, you will not receive a new name badge in the 2023 calendar year. *If you have a few minutes, do it today so you will not forget!*

2. Verify your contact information in the ORS. The name badge will be associated with the address on file in the ORS.

3. Enter Your Preferred or Chosen Name that you would like to have on the name badge. Last names will not be used in order to protect your privacy and safety. For example, if your name is Katherine Smith but you prefer to be called Kate, enter Kate as your preferred name. The name on your name badge will be: Kate.

You are expected to discontinue use of all old name badges when conducting volunteer activities or obtaining continuing education related to your participation in the Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Program once you receive this new name badge.



### Pollinator Week

- **Wisconsin Celebrates Pollinator Week will be held June 19-25, 2023. Extension will be offering daily free webinars on Pollinator topics. In addition, there will be a few webinars leading up to Pollinator week that will be held in May and June. These webinars will count for CE.**
- **Be sure to occasionally check for updates and registration information on the website found at: Pollinator Week – Wisconsin Horticulture**

### Continuing Education

- **The MG Program asks that you do your best in vetting any presentation.**
- **Does the program focus on items that are related to the growing and maintenance of terrestrial plants (i.e. ornamentals and edibles plants).**
  - **Does the presenter have reputable qualifications (educational background and/or job title) to give the presentation?**
- **Are they directing you to a science-based or research-based website (i.e., university, botanical garden, DNR, or USDA.)**
- **Are they an established industry professional providing information in an unbiased way?**
- **Are they recommending science-based gardening practices for Wisconsin or the upper Midwest?**



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Instagram



Facebook

## Master Gardener - Information/Contact Information

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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."*