



President's Letter

by MGV Mary Wolverton

It's that time again. I'm writing this late July, but you will be reading it in early September. Our next meeting will be the annual meeting in November when we elect new officers and directors – assuming we have members who have agreed to fill those positions. You may recall that last year I stepped back onto the board as president to avoid having to shut down the organization for lack of a leader.

Under the Bylaws the past president chairs the leadership committee charged with recruiting board members. Erin's committee is actively recruiting new board members. I suspect that at the time you read this we will still have slots available. If you have ever thought about the possibility of lending a hand with governing this organization, please give me a call. I would like to find a spot where you could help.

You might be thinking "Oh, I've never done anything like that – how would I do it?" Or you might be thinking "I've served on a lot of boards and committees; not sure I want to do that again." Well, we've had both thoughts represented on the Board and can find work palatable to any skill level. Bottom line is that without board members we can't have a master gardener organization and we wouldn't have Home Show, State Fair, Speaker's Bureau, community events, farmer's markets, a picnic or holiday party, trips and tours, members' Continuing Education or any of the things we

hope to have. All this happens because we spread the work around among those who want to have this association with other master gardeners. Yes, it is good to have a Treasurer who understands bookkeeping programs and a secretary who likes to take and write up minutes. The real asset for a Board member is a delight in all things gardening and a desire to keep this organization going.

If you are thinking, well...maybe, call me. The cell is 414-721-6194.

You can reach out directly to Erin Napier, Past President, and Leadership Committee Chair at (414) 294-8910 or erin521@gmail.com.

SEWMG Annual Meeting
Saturday November 11
10:30 am to noon
Retzer Nature Center
Waukesha

Agenda will be sent to the member listserve in mid-October

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My Shift at the State Fair

by MGV Marie McInnis

I have been with the Master Gardeners since 2002 and have enjoyed working with so many like minded people.

I have worked at State Fair every year since. What a fun way to spend the day talking to people from all walks of life who have a question or even just want to chat about who we are and why we are at State Fair.

With all the resources we have at the fair, rarely does a person walk away without an answer or information on where to find it. The children are the best. So curious! Love the smiling faces.

Hope I saw you all at the fair this year!



2023 State Fair Garden

by MGV Mary Wolverton

The 2023 State Fair is over. We hope you enjoyed your volunteer shift. Our thanks to the dedicated crew of workers who have been planning, planting, weeding, feeding, watering, pruning, composting, spreading woodchips, painting concrete blocks, leveling stone, setting out benches, hanging birdhouses and every other task needed.

This year's in-garden team: Belinda Brocker, Dennis Griffin, Fran Airing, Chrystal Dombrowski, Jane Browne, Jim Gill, Ellen Grissom, Ann Loper, Krista Mozina, Sarah Bellehumeur, Susan Schlieve, Claire Bauer, Jane Belanger, and Jim Fratrack.



The votes are in. First place goes to Mark Bahr for his woodland creation. Second place is Deb Kopydlowski for the colorful grill. Third place to Amber Lockett for the dramatic tropical arrangement.

Our thanks to all the contestants for their important contribution to the project. These containers add color to an August garden and give our volunteers an intro to starting a conversation.



2023 State Fair Garden

by MGV Mary Wolverton

Our 2023 State Fair container contestants displayed their imagination in a range of creations that provided our garden visitors with container options for any setting. We had formal to informal, lush to succulent, elegant to whimsical.

Over 3,000 votes were cast. The contest closed at 5 p.m. on the last Saturday to allow the pots to display their ribbons throughout closing day.

Our visitors chose Mark Bahr's woodland garden for first place. A hollowed log contained only 4 plants: coleus, dusty miller, impatiens and a begonia. The plants were in great shape and complemented each other and the log.

Second place went to Deb Kopydlowski's clever grill planter. Her plants – Calibrachoa Double Orange Tastic, Celosia First Flame Yellow, Begonia Funky Orange, Coleus Stained Glassworks Royalty, rosemary and English ivy – set the grill with ketchup and mustard. Red lights came on at dusk to provide the heat.

Amber Lockett's third place container was lush and tropical with mandevilla, sweet potato vine, ipomoea, coleus, cordyline and canna lily. It caught our visitors' attention at the front of the center bed.

The remaining center bed containers were created by Jane Belanger, Sue Bahneman and Mary Lange.

Jane's garden brought whimsy with a cow filled with hens & chicks surrounded by Scarlet Sage salvia, Red Elegant zinnia, Red Horseshoe geranium, Supertunia Mini Vista Scarlet, Nonstop Mocha Cherry begonia, Goldilocks lysimachia and portulaca "Hana Misteria".

Sue's arrangement of lemon grass, lemon coral, dusty miller, White Madness petunia, snapdragon. Dwarf White hypoestes and white chrysanthemum produced envy in those of us who hope for perfectly clipped but don't achieve it.

Mary Lange created a mini forest floor with succulents, Irish moss, sheet moss, wood viola, fern and creeping jenny, supplemented with paper mache mushrooms and rocks and pebbles.

The north entrance to the garden, a very sunny spot, held Natalie Lester's textured garden in a wooden box. She included ilex crenata "Green Dragon Japanese Holly", sedum caudicola "Steel the Show", sedum spurium "Elizabeth", sedum "Frosted Fire", sedum "Lime Zinger", sempervivum and thuja occidentalis "Jantar".

The south entrance held Kirsten Villegas' Victorian container with pink mandevilla vine, Sunbeckia rudbeckia, Angelface Super Blue Angelonia, Diamond Frost euphorbia, Cherry Red vinca, variegated Swedish ivy, marguerite, sweet potato vine

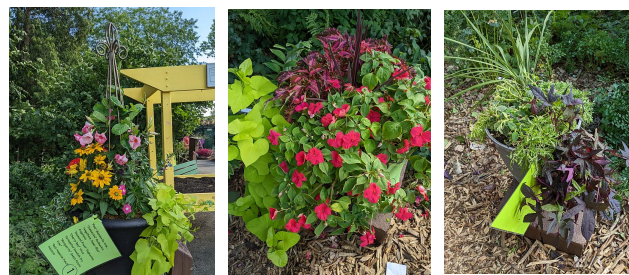
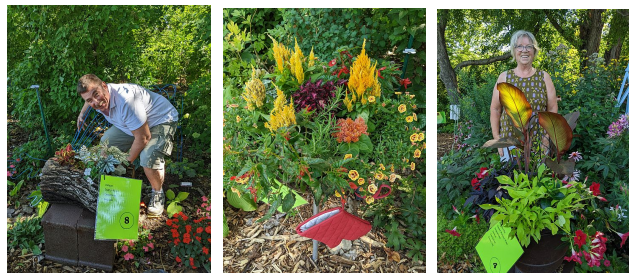
and Red Hawaiian Punch hibiscus.

The south entrance path continued with Lori Vanover's Kong Rose coleus, Beacon impatiens, lime sweet potato vine and Bauer's cordyline. It was in a perfect setting as it complemented the colors of the natives garden behind it.

Ellen Grissom's container of streptocarpella, dracena spike, ipomoea and lobularia maritima anchored the corner and provided a welcome to the new tree exhibit.

The winners do receive gift certificates from Stein's or Fruit of the Bloom but the purpose of the contest is to add color to our August garden, give members an opportunity to earn hours gardening at home and, most important, to show our visitors how to produce a beautiful garden in a very small space.

Consider signing up when next year's invite comes out in early May.



(photos start at top left) Mark Bahr - Woodland Garden, Deb Kopydlowski - Grill Planter, Amber Lockett - Tropical Planter, Jane Beanger - Cow, Sue Bahneman - Lemon and White, Mary Lange - Mini Forest, Natalie Lester - Textured Garden, Kirsten Villegas - Victorian, Lori Vanover - Native garden compliment, Ellen Grissom - Welcome for New Trees.

Wisconsin State Fair 2023

by MGV Valorie Sangsland, Co-Chair Special Events

Another successful Wisconsin State Fair is in the books! We had beautiful weather nearly every day and the gardens looked wonderful. Ninety-nine MGs staffed 165 shifts and were joined by seven shifts of LifeLong Gardening MGs. Over 19,300 visitors joined us in Exploratory Park to enjoy the shade, the beauty of the gardens and interaction with our enthusiastic MGs. As our largest public educational event, our MGs were kept busy answering questions, pointing out areas of interest, and sharing research-based information in the form of fifty-five different fact sheets and brochures. Natives Plants for Beginners, Perennials for your Garden, Milkweed in the Garden and Supporting our Monarchs were the most popular handouts, and needed to be restocked multiple times. In all, over 9500 handouts were selected by our visitors to take home for additional review, including nearly 1300 Gardening Resource Cards.

The container contest added unique and beautiful arrangements of colorful annuals to punctuate the garden. Many thanks to the ten Master Gardeners who took the time to plan, plant and care for these containers all summer and then haul them to the Fair. And kudos to the shift volunteers for keeping them in top shape throughout the run of the Fair.

The entire Association owes a tremendous thank you to the talented team of MGs who design, document and care for the beautiful gardens in our area. A huge amount of work was done this year on the north end of the garden, eliminating a large area of dead trees, buckthorn and other invasives, and replanting with two new trees donated by Johnson Nursery as well as a selection of understory trees and shrubs. This allowed access to previously-unused areas of our garden, and gave our volunteers additional talking points regarding tree recommendations for Wisconsin yards. Ellen Grissom took over the design and care of the Gnome Garden and developed this year's Scavenger Hunt. Belinda Brocker continued her work on the Cactus and Succulent Garden and created a new Cactus and Succulent handout. These two specific areas received many positive comments from our visitors, as noted in our Shift Captain summary reports, and kids really seemed to like the scavenger hunt.

It takes a special talent to get the gardens to peak readiness just in time for the fair, and I want to congratulate co-chairs Mary Wolverton, Jim Fratrack and their entire team for their hard work and vision. The prep work they do weekly from May until August give all the volunteers working shifts many beautiful and educational talking points to use while engaging our visitors at one of the most beautiful places on the Fair Grounds.

Jim Gill again filmed videos by Mary Wolverton and myself to augment information shared at our Orientation sessions. These were edited and posted on SEWMG.org by Susan McDonell. Take a moment to check them out if you're considering volunteering next year and want to see a bit of what you might have missed this year.

Finally, I want to recognize the incredible amount of work done by my co-chair Dawn Scherr who spearheaded the communication with our ListServ, organized the schedule and mailed tickets and information to all the volunteers working shifts. She handled dozens of cancellations and reschedule requests efficiently and tirelessly.

By now you have probably started to realize the scope of volunteer opportunities the Wisconsin State Fair offers to SEWMG volunteers. I hope you will consider joining us next year, either in the Garden, at the Fair or helping with the background support work. We'd love to have you join us!



From the Board

by MGV Valorie Sangsland, Board Chair



As we move through the final half of the year, your SEWMG board will be working to create a 2024 Budget proposal meant to fund our activities throughout the upcoming year. You, our members, will vote on our proposal at the Annual Meeting at Retzer Nature Center in November. The Board will perform this task with an eye to expanding our current educational outreach activities without seriously impacting our financial reserves. To this end, it was decided at the last board meeting that SEWMG would not be including funding for any non-SEWMG gardens or programs in our 2024 Budget recommendation. While I realize this decision will be disappointing to some of our members, it is entirely possible the decision will be temporary. The board is tasked with having fiscal responsibility for the cash reserves of the organization in order to ensure its continued existence. Once we establish multiple fund-raising activities that bring in more cash than we spend to support our current administration and outreach activities, the SEWMG Board can again consider offering financial support to non-SEWMG projects and gardens.

To that end, I invite any and all of you to consider forming a new Fund-Raising committee in the very near future. If you would like to start work this year, please contact me directly, at 414-791-2082.

In the meantime, Annual Reports and Budget Requests for all SEWMG-sponsored gardens, projects, and administration activities are due no later than September 10. Necessary forms can be found on www.SEWMG.org by scrolling to the bottom of the landing page and clicking on FORMS. Please complete and send to me, Valorie Sangsland, at the email address shown on each form so I can compile and share with the Finance Committee in order to begin our work on the budget.

Thank you for all you do for SEWMG, the gardens you support and your community!

- **Annual Reports and Budget Requests for all SEWMG-sponsored gardens, projects, and administration activities are due no later than September 10.**
- **Vote on our 2024 Budget proposal at the Annual Meeting at Retzer Nature Center in November.**
- **Join the Fund-Raising committee to enable SEWMG to consider offering financial support to non-SEWMG projects and gardens. If you would like to start work this year, please contact Val directly, at 414-791-2082.**

Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA)

by MGV Janet Wintersberger

Meet Ellen Grissom, our association's representative to the Board of Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association. WIMGA works closely with the University of Wisconsin Extension's MG program. The state and we (SEWMG) have experienced great changes over the last few years due to the University's decision to withdraw its support of the local extensions' MGVs horticulture program, statewide.

Despite the struggles to reorganize, WIMGA continues to publish their newsletter, which provides a wealth of information about upcoming educational opportunities all over the state. The most recent newsletter featured a two-page article and photos of the State Fair Garden <https://WIMGA.org/newsletter/July2023>. There was also a nice article about the winner of this year's Search for Excellence Award. A new venture for WIMGA was the workshop on Landscape Design. Reasonably priced at \$30 for 6 hours of continuing education, it proved to be a success. Look for more of these types of workshops in the future.

Ellen shared her thoughts with me about being a WIMGA representative. She noted "I have enjoyed being a representative for SEWMG this year. I knew we gave \$5 of our dues to the state association, and that was about all I knew. I have learned quite a lot about the internal working of WIMGA. I was aware that Master Gardener Volunteers

Associations exist in every state in the USA and at the same time didn't think about it any further than Wisconsin. I read about the yearly national convention in the latest newsletter, imagine a chance to travel out of state! In Board meetings I have listened to other ideas and strategies other state associations have used. This can be helpful in our (WI) struggle to adapt to the new reality."

Ellen also reminds everyone, "You too, as a MGV, can be a part of WIMGA. I am the current Local Representative for SEWMG, chosen by the membership. There is the Director At Large position, which is voted on by the statewide membership, our own member Diane Theme currently holds this position. The District Directors are chosen from the MGVs in that district, two from each district. Currently there are six districts in Wisconsin."

In addition to having representatives who serve three-year terms, WIMGA has several committees. MGVs across the state can share their ideas, talents, and skills by working on committees such as Partnership, Executive, Continuing Education, Communication, Finance, and Strategic Planning.

Commitments are attending quarterly Board meetings and Committee meetings! Thinking about it? Feel free to ask me for more information ekgrissom@yahoo.com

Wildscape by Nancy Lawson

by MGV Cheryl Lausten

Nancy Lawson's book: *Wildscape, Trilling Chipmunks, Beckoning Blooms, Salty Butterflies, and other Sensory Wonders of Nature* talks about the detrimental effects of human activity and human waste on wildlife. The word "pollution" is often used but let us dive in a little deeper.

Pollution is defined as the presence in or introduction into the environment of a substance or thing that has harmful or poisonous effects.

Wildlife suffers birth defects, diseases, and lower reproductive rates, all attributed to human pollution. While air pollution gets the most attention, there is some form of pollution affecting each of our senses. Not only human traits, but animals and other living organisms use their own set of senses to see, feel, hear, taste, smell, react and interpret the external stimuli around them. The combination of all forms of pollution is called sensory pollution and can have severe impacts on wildlife and biodiversity.

Out of all the various pollutants humans create, light pollution gets the least attention. Wherever human light spills into the natural world, aspects of life for animals—migration, reproduction, hunting and feeding - are affected. Light pollution can affect bird, bat, and insect migratory and flight patterns. Birds that navigate by moonlight and starlight can wander off course because of artificial light. Many die by colliding with illuminated buildings.

We usually do not think of plants having senses, but plants sense the world around them in unique ways that are often invisible to us. They can sense light, touch, chemicals, microbes, temperature and even the presence of animals. Plants can sense weather and temperature changes. They have specific

regulators, hormones and charged ions that signal cells, and are important in environmental sensing. Plants depend on the natural cycle of day and night. Artificial light at night throws off a plant's response to the change of seasons. Prolonged exposure to artificial light prevents trees from adjusting to seasonal variations. It also interferes with plants' normal rhythms and photosynthesis.

Light pollution also has an impact on sea turtles. Hatchlings rely on moonlight to guide them from their nest site to the ocean. Man's light confuses them and directs them away from the water where they die.

Odor is a form of air pollution that can arise from industrial and commercial activities including smells from landfills, sewage, and sprays. Many creatures use the sense of smell in their daily lives, but our human odors are covering everything up. Excess odors in the air prevent birds and insects from smelling the flowers. Animals cannot smell their enemies.

Noise is often thought of as a problem for humans but can greatly affect the functioning of other species. Human produced sound interferes with animal communication, mating behavior, foraging, and spatial orientation. Mating problems specifically have led to decreased species diversity in wildlife communities.

To combat the effects of light, noise, and chemical pollution, we must first understand how wildlife is impacted and then make changes to the way we treat the environment.

Get a more thorough picture of these environmental issues and practical solutions by checking out Ms. Lawson's book.

Green Power Garden Challenges

by MGV Molly Llanas

The Green Power Garden has been truly fortunate again this season, first starting with all the challenging work a volunteer puts in during the late winter and early spring to start plants that she shares with us. We also received plants from plant sales, greenhouses, and garden centers as they shut down their vegetable/fruit sales for the season. We give the plants a good home, but they are not nurtured and watered as often as they had been. They have some adjusting to do.

This season is pretty like most we have had in our 14 years doing this project. We have had a few years though, where we had so much rain that the plants were drowning and struggled to grow and produce anything. And we had a few years where we had no water and asked volunteers to bring water from their homes in large containers so we could give the most desperate plants something just to tie us over until the next rain.

When we first started the garden, we had six acres (farmed 2 to 4 depending on the year) and an old school building with one downspout and one rain barrel. Then they had to tear the building down. The Hope Center got us a shed and we put on gutters and set a couple rain barrels up. After that Larry (the landowner) brought us a trailer with one IBC tote full of water plus our rain barrels connected and trash cans and square kitty litter buckets to catch every bit of rain we could. We walked the field and watered by hand, mostly where the plants were desperate.

Welcome to the 2023 Green Power Garden! We are using one acre and are planting as much as we were using 2+ acres at the old location. The current landowner, Mary, put new gutters on her pole barn, and we have a chain of seven rain barrels and trash cans on one side and four on the other. But we were still carrying the water to the plants a couple of gallons at a time and trying to keep them alive. We even asked in our weekly message for prayers, rain dances, and were considering asking for donations of water like we had in the past.

In early July we received a donation of six food grade IBC totes, and a donation of a Milwaukee Tool battery operated pump. Mary, the landowner, has a submersible pump as well. As we received the donations late in the season, we are just filling them and moving water into areas of the garden, so we don't have to carry buckets throughout the entire property anymore. We pump water from the rain barrels into an immediate IBC tote so more can be collected especially if the rain is predicted. Then we move the water into IBC totes in the field so we can use it closer to the plants and nobody is dying from hauling water around the field in buckets. We also fill buckets staged in each quarter acre for closer watering and for weight to hold weed barriers in place. By next season, we will have everything set in place to collect and move water with the most efficiency. And some day we may have an irrigation system to move our rainwater around the fields. With water running off the roof of a 50-foot pole barn, we have more water this year than we ever had. Harvesting is just starting to take off.

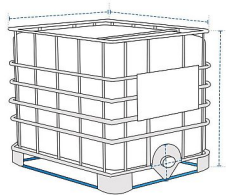
The tomato plants are full of fat green tomatoes, and the eggplant and peppers are also doing well. Summer squash is putting up good harvest numbers already and beans and cucumbers are just starting to get rolling. We had a small batch of cauliflower, but it was bitter from the heat. We have a few rows of broccoli that are beautiful but have done nothing. The cabbage heads at the bottom of the hill grow better than those small ones at the top of the hill (rainwater runs downhill). Brussel sprouts are just starting to sprout. We had aphids and squash bugs, but our ladybug transplants are doing their jobs. We have had extremely helpful productive groups of volunteers so far, some have come out twice already, and more are just signing up.

So, other than us being a little more sweaty than usual, I would say that we have nothing to complain about at the Green Power Garden and we feel blessed to be able to share our bounty with those less fortunate than ourselves.

A donation of six food grade IBC totes, and a Milwaukee Tool battery-operated pump has made it easier. Now we pump water from the rain barrels into an immediate IBC tote. IBC totes hold 275 gallons of liquid and are food grade safe. Buckets are staged in each quarter acre for closer watering and for weight to hold weed barriers in place.

Tomatoes are flourishing, Eggplant, peppers and summer squash are doing well. Beans and cucumbers are starting to roll in. Brussel sprouts are beginning to sprout. Broccoli is beautiful but hasn't performed. Cabbage heads at the bottom of a hill are doing well. Those at the top of a hill are not.

Ladybug transplants, all 1500 purchased, are doing their jobs with aphids and squash bugs.



Create a Private Garden Space

by Melinda Myers

With everyone spending more time at home it is not surprising that individuals want to create peaceful oases to relax, meditate or entertain. They are using a combination of plants, decorative fences and screens or container plantings to provide the desired privacy.

Arborvitae have traditionally been used to create a wall of year-round greenery. What often happens is one or two plants die in the middle of the planting once they reach a substantial size. The fix is to leave the space empty, plant a much smaller plant that looks out of place or try squeezing in a larger transplant and risk damaging its neighbors.

Help them avoid this problem by including a variety of unrelated plants. If a pest attacks, it is less likely to kill all the plants. And it will be easier to add new replacement plants to the mature planting. Plus, with a mix of plants you can add seasonal flowers, fall color, texture, and more diverse beauty.

Narrow upright plants provide screening with a relatively small footprint. Trautman juniper is suited to hot dry locations and grows 12' tall by 4' wide. It is resistant to cedar apple rust and deer.

Year-round greenery is welcome but help boost the beauty and enjoyment of your landscape with plants that support pollinators, attract birds, and provide several seasons of beauty.

The four-season Obelisk serviceberry grows 12-15' tall and 3-4' wide. Its white spring flowers are followed by purple fruit in June that you and the birds can eat. It ends the season in a blaze of color and once the leaves drop exposes smooth gray bark.

A close relative, the chokeberries (Aronia) are also known for their multiple seasons of beauty. Lowscape Hedger® is upright three to five feet tall and just two to three feet wide. Like the others, it has white flowers in spring and great fall color. This adaptable plant grows in sun or part shade and tolerates wet or dry soil.

Laced UP® elderberry has the foliage of black lace but is upright and narrow, growing six to eight feet tall and three to four feet wide. Its lacy purplish-black foliage makes a nice backdrop for the pink summer flowers, adding to its ornamental appeal.

The narrow columnar apples make a good option for those interested in growing edible plants. Urban®, North Pole™ and Golden Sentinel™ apples are a few narrow upright varieties to consider. Plant two different varieties for fruit to form.

A vine-covered trellis is an excellent screening option for narrow spaces. Consider growing two different vines like climbing roses or Major Wheeler honeysuckle with clematis to double the floral impact or extend the bloom time. Use an annual vine like hyacinth bean, Malabar spinach, scarlet runner bean or Solar Tower sweet potato vine the first year or two. They will provide quick cover while the perennials become established and cover the trellis.

Dress up fences with plants. Shrubs, ornamental grasses, flowering perennials can soften the structure and add texture and color. Include pots of tropical plants to create a tropical paradise and annuals for added color.

Espalier fruit and ornamental trees are a great way to add the fruiting or beauty of larger trees into a smaller space. These are options only for those willing and able to regularly prune to maintain the desired size and shape.

Green wall planters mounted on the fence can add edibility or color at eye level. These typically have a small volume of planting mix and require frequent watering. Irrigation systems that provide water from top to bottom greatly reduce maintenance and increase success.

Make sure the plants selected thrive in the growing conditions and will fit the available space when mature. Less grooming, pest management and care will be needed to grow them into healthy and attractive specimens.

Before placing any plant or structure in the ground, call 811 or file online at diggershotline.com at least three business days in advance. Diggers Hotline will contact all the appropriate companies who will mark the location of their underground utilities in the designated work area. This eliminates the danger and inconvenience of accidentally knocking out power, cable or other utilities while creating a beautiful landscape.

Please remind others to do the same. It serves as a reminder to always contact Diggers Hotline whenever undertaking any landscape project, large or small.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *The Midwest Gardener's Handbook* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series* and the nationally-syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program*. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Her web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Garden Renovation @ Kneeland Walker House

by MGV Kelly Kramer

A large garden renovation project was recently completed at the Kneeland Walker house of the Wauwatosa Historical Society (WHS). The work was done by Master Gardeners and WHS members.

The Kneeland Walker House is a Queen Anne Victorian built in 1890. The buildings and grounds are used for community events and rentals.



The project space was an old garden bed that bordered the original corral behind the carriage house. The space was overgrown and included a compost pile lined by old shrubs. We started clearing the space in Fall of 2022 and finished in Spring 2023. The compost pile was relocated. The bed was outlined with yews which will be pruned to form a hedge. We planted a lilac tree and perennials that correspond with plantings in nearby beds. One of the plants, a white fragrant peony called 'Dutchess de Nemours', was popular in the late 1800's. If you are in the area please stop by and look at our work!



A Weed in Time Saves Nine...Million!

by MGV Jean Akhter

Black medic stems weave their way through the grass, entangling each other to form entire colonies that can span several feet. As I tease the stems up and out of the grass, gather them in a bunch, and pull the taproot out of rain soaked soil, I begin to muse: If I had my own personal robot, I would make sure it could weed the lawn and destroy black medic and dandelions. I am not sure when AI (Artificial Intelligence) will make it to landscape gardening, but I am ready to embrace it when it comes.

These are my musings as I weed for hours on end. Many readers might be thinking, "Why wait for AI to come to the rescue? Apply a broadleaf herbicide and watch your problem shrivel away." It is because I let black medic conquer my lawn in the first place that I face the challenge ahead of me.

It all started several years ago. When I saw its trifoliate leaves in the grass, I mistook it for a type of clover I wanted to encourage. I do not mind clovers in my yard because they are great for bees and other pollinators. As my soil is compacted and low in nitrogen, it was a cinch for this tenacious non-native annual to colonize my lawn. The fact that I limited watering during dry spells was an added boon to this colonizer.

In the article on Black medic, *Medicago lupulina*, at hort.extension.wisc.edu, I learned that "In lawns, black medic can be managed through good turf management practices that

encourage a dense stand of turf." These practices include soil aeration, fertilization, high mowing, and watering. My journey toward a healthier lawn, by putting these practices into play, begins this year.

To brace myself for the challenge ahead, I have been pulling whatever I can get my hands on—the taproot when I can get it, flowers, and seedheads. I also applied my first application of a broadleaf herbicide, which is showing results. The problem with using an herbicide after flowering has begun is that all the resulting dead plants contain what feels like zillions of tiny black seeds. Each delicate yellow flower cluster produces 10-50 flowers. Pollinated flowers yield tiny black seeds that can survive in the soil for years. So, without removing as many of those seed clusters as possible, I will be creating even more problems for myself next year.

At this point my strategy is as follows:

- Continue to hand weed as much as possible this season.
- Create a healthy lawn by aerating, fertilizing, watering, and mowing high.
- Apply an herbicide as needed in the spring before black medic begins to flower.

If you do not want to find yourself in my garden clogs, remember that A Weed in Time Saves Nine Million!

What about those Marigolds

by MGV Katherine Amann

We all love to see the bright golden yellows, oranges, and bi-colored blossoms of marigolds (*Tagetes* spp.). They brighten up many gardens and planters and the eye-catching colors of these delightful annuals charm us throughout the summer months. There is so much more to these flowering plants than their sunny dispositions. Research continues to show they can also be used as a control for nematodes.

Nematodes, also referred to as roundworms, are among the most abundant animals on earth. It is difficult to distinguish one type from another as they are usually microscopic in size. They live in terrestrial and aquatic organisms as free-living organisms, or in plants and animals as parasites. These creatures can be further broken down by kingdom, phylum, clade, order, and class. For the purposes of this article, we are going to keep it simple and focus our interests on the parasitic variety.

Plant parasitic and root-knot nematodes feed on the roots of the plants in our gardens. They are not fussy and are happy to infect vegetables, fruits, flowers, ornamental crops, etc. There are nematicides, chemical controls and cover crops that can help to lessen their effects. Resistant crop varieties have also been developed.

So how do marigolds fit into the picture? They can be used as a cover crop for starters. Continued research has shown that marigolds fight back against certain types of nematodes and can act as a trap crop.

When the nematode enters the roots to feed, they are unable to develop through their life cycle. Marigolds secrete alpha-terthienyl from the roots which, as a chemical, inhibits development of nematode eggs. Thus, they are killed by the

plant. This is called allelopathy – the ability to produce chemicals toxic to other organisms. These plants can suppress the numbers in your garden but will not fully eradicate their existence. It can also help with controlling fungi, bacteria, insects, and some viruses.

French marigolds (*T. patula*) are the best for this use. Varieties that are referenced are Tangerine, Petite Harmony, or Petite Gold. You should plant marigolds well in advance of your crops to prevent nematodes from building up in the soil. This is not a final solution, but a great start for some control.

The following are some references that give more in-depth information on this topic:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/NG045>

<https://extension.msstate.edu/publications/nematode-control-the-home-garden>

<https://extension.psu.edu/plant-parasitic-nematodes-explained>

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/foiar-nematodes/>

Remember, when looking for information, make sure you include site:.edu at the end of your desired topic (example: marigolds site:.edu). This will give you research-based, trustworthy, and educational information.

Marigolds brighten up many gardens and planters and the eye-catching colors of these delightful annuals charm us throughout the summer months. But they also fight back against certain types of nematodes and can act as a trap crop. When a nematode enters the roots of marigolds to feed, the nematode is unable to develop through its life cycle.

Garden District Butterfly Garden

by MGV Jane Belanger

The Garden District Neighborhood gardens officially have a planted Butterfly Garden as of this past June. Thanks to their board president, Terry Witkowski, securing grant funding, 160 Monarch butterfly collection plants were purchased and picked up from MMSD on June 10th. The plants include Blazing Star, Butterfly Weed, Clover, Aster, Goldenrod and Milkweed. The actual planting was delayed two weeks due to our dry conditions. Water sources at the Gardens are limited to tanks to haul from and a fire hydrant with several hoses. It was much easier to water them for the first weeks at my home. In hindsight I wish I had transplanted into larger pots after pickup to encourage further root development,

We had a group of eight volunteers with another six people who arrived when we were almost finished. Our group included neighborhood volunteers (Diana Rivera, Mike Albers, Jill Lafrenz, Joe Djuric, Julia Rose, and Raven Blackwood), our student volunteer (Nadia Kuczynski), Master Gardener (Marty McGuinnis) and SEWMG Master Gardeners (Geri Kramer, Stacy Van Alstyne, and me). We planted using a container planting hack from a Facebook post. A post that described a gardener who used the pots from the plants going into the container,

places them upside down (minus the plants) and adds soil around the pots creating holes for the plants when pots are removed.

Our garden mound had mulch and a tarp over it for approximately two months. Mike Albers used his drill with auger attachment to "dig" plant holes. We sank tubes (thanks to Mike again) made from sheets of lithograph material into the holes. Mulch was added around the tubes and soil went into tubes. The tubes were then pulled out to add the plants and additional soil. A small group had an hour set up time and the larger group finished the planting process in two hours.

Student volunteer, Nadia, and I pulled two trash bags full of mostly bindweed from the mound this past weekend (end of July). We are battling years of weed growth in these gardens one area at a time,

The Butterfly Garden grant funds will additionally be used for two metal butterfly sculptures, painted sidewalk butterflies and a display of the children's book "Senorita Mariposa", which explains the Monarch's migration from Mexico to North America, in English and Spanish.

News from the County Extension Office

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

Pollinator Week Webinar Recordings Available

Did you miss the 2023 Wisconsin Celebrates Pollinators held in June? All webinars were recorded and can be found at: <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/pollinator-week/>

There were some amazing presentations on a variety of topics. I think you will find something that interests you. Topics included: Bee Lawns: Using Your Lawn to Provide Food for Pollinators, Gardening to Protect Pollinators, What Would We Eat Without Bees?, The Hidden World of Bees – Unveiling a New Discovery, Making Space for Pollinators, A Mutual Attraction: Trees and Shrubs for Pollinators, and Butterfly Garden Design.

New Series of Mini Webinars to Begin August 30

Three new online mini webinars will be held in late August and early September. All are free but registration is required. Some of the information may be a review for you as master gardeners but it will still count for approved CE (continuing education). Please share with family and friends. These are open to the public.

Growing Garlic in Wisconsin Whether you are a garden enthusiast, a foodie, or both, garlic is well known around the world! Join us to learn techniques for growing garlic from planting to storage August 30 at Noon. Presented by: Darrin Kimbler, former Agriculture Educator for UW-Madison Extension Iron County and Garlic Farmer, Michigan

From Scraps to Soil: Composting Basics. Have you ever wondered about making your compost? In this overview of composting basics, find out the do's, the don'ts, and what happens to compost over winter so you can successfully recycle your lawn, garden and food waste. September 6th at Noon. Presented by: Julie Hill, Horticulture Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Extension Walworth, Rock and Jefferson Counties

Soil Testing – Why, When, and How. Don't guess about adding fertilizer or lime to your lawn or garden. Test your soil! Join us to learn when and how to test your soil, where to send it for testing, and what a soil test will tell you. September 13th at Noon. Presented by: Kristin Krokowski, Commercial Horticulture Educator, UW-Madison Extension Waukesha County

Register for all at: <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/mini-webinars-for-gardeners/>

Brian Hudelson Offers Free Online Programs

Looking for continuing education hours? Brian Hudelson, State Specialist with the UW-Madison Plant Disease Diagnostic clinic is offering two upcoming programs. Both are free but registration is required. Both will count for approved CE (continuing education).

“The Bad and the Ugly: Ten Plant Disease Not to compost”, Wednesday, September 27th at 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Certain plant diseases are so horrible or so deadly that composting is not an appropriate way to get rid of affected plants. Learn about some of these diseases and their proper management.

“Diseases of Houseplants”, Wednesday, October 25th at 6:30 -8:30 p.m. As gardening moves indoors for the winter, growing houseplants can prove challenging. Learn about common houseplant diseases that adversely affect your indoor gardening efforts. This presentation will include information on how to identify these diseases, as well as information on how to manage them.

To register, go to: <https://pddc.wisc.edu/2023-pddc-plant-disease-talks>

Continuing Education

- *Pollinator Week Webinar Recordings Available*
- *New Series of Mini Webinars to Begin August 30*
 - *Growing Garlic in Wisconsin*
 - *From Scraps to Soil: Composting Basics*
 - *Soil Testing – Why, When, and How*
- *Brian Hudelson Offers Free Online Programs*





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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."