



Our Thanks to Ann Wied

by MGJ Jane Belanger

In gratitude to Ann Wied, retired Outreach Specialist for UW Extension I'd like to acknowledge the impact she had on our journeys as Master Gardeners.

Many of us, if not all, had Ann as an instructor in the Fundamentals in Gardening course. From there her impact took off like a firework. Looking back at emails we received from Ann over the last several years I am amazed at the volume of requests she must have fielded for gardening help at approved sites and private gardens for both paid and unpaid labor. She was the information hub for gardens and master gardening organizations in our counties for events such as plant sales, public markets and more.

She disseminated UW Extension Continuing Education information to the ranks of Master Gardeners which she helped create and organize. And of course there were the presentations she herself delivered.

Many of you worked alongside Ann at the Waukesha Community Rental Gardens and Youth Garden and still do. I have spoken with one of those gardeners and have seen enough pictures to know that those gardens are filled with joy and love.

There are many of us, co-workers and gardeners who will miss the "daily grind" frequency of Ann Wied in our lives but I know we all wish her the best that retirement has to offer.



Mark your Calendars

Sunday, September 15

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Healthy Soil for House Plants and Wool in the Garden

Karen Mayhew and Elaine Becker, creators of WOOLLETS

Boerner Botanical Gardens

9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners

Wednesday, October 2

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m

Beneficial Insects

P. J. Liesch

Zoom Link will be sent via email

Annual Member Meeting

Saturday, November 9th

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Retzer Nature Center

S14 W28167 Madison Street, Waukesha

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 11

6:00 p.m. Cash Bar 7:00 p.m. Dinner

Alioto's Restaurant

3041 N Mayfair Road, Wauwatosa

Volunteer @ Boerner Botanical Gardens

Compiled by MGV Janet Wintersberger

There are three distinct ways to help Milwaukee's botanical garden, which is conveniently located in Hales Corners.

Boerner in-garden volunteering:

Master Gardeners are encouraged and very welcome to help Boerner's horticulture staff with upkeep/weeding/planting under BBG horticulturist supervision - in the Trial Gardens – as well as throughout the Gardens.

Amber Liss, Boerner Horticulture Manager
Contact info: Amber.Liss@milwaukeecountywi.gov 414 758 5457

Volunteering with the Friends of Boerner Botanical Garden (FBBG):

With the year-round non-profit support group, the Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens. It's now in its 40th year.

Judi Dee is FBBG's Education Manager
Contact info: jdee@fbbg.org 414 525 5659

We welcome volunteers to help us in our student planting beds (6 located in the Trial Gardens). We also welcome and encourage volunteer support for our year-round community engagement events/classes, student classes, garden tours, docents for guided tours, and in FBBG gift shop.

Volunteering with SEWMGs Bloom Team

Enjoy the gardens and document when specific plants are blooming. This data is then added to the on-line data base at Milwaukee County government.

Sandy Hanus, Master Gardener and BLOOM team contact
Contact info: felidae@wi.rr.com

State Fair Container Contest

by MGV Mary Wolverton

Congratulations to the winners of the container contest and our thanks to everyone who participated. They make our garden gorgeous and engaging.

First place went to Kirsten Villegas, second was Deb Kopydlowski, and third was Natalie Lester.

Next year's signup will be early May. Watch for it!



First place went to Kirsten Villegas' birdcage. (top photo) Second was Deb Kopydlowski's desk. (far left photo) Third was Natalie Lester's elephant ears. (left photo)

SEWMGs are Out and About

by MGW Mary Wolverton

SEWMGs education activities are a great way to earn hours, share your knowledge, get to know other MGVs, work weekends or evenings and try out an activity without a continuing commitment.

This year has been a busy one for education events. The year started with the **Realtor's Home Show** in March. 57 MGVs volunteered to meet with the public, answer questions and hand out literature at a display devoted to the benefits of native plants. Five MGVs gave presentations at the show stage. Jennifer Lazewski had 200 in the audience for her popular Pollinator Gardening for A Bird Habitat.

The **Speaker's Bureau** was busy throughout the year. To date the bureau has scheduled 15 presentations. If you are interested in making presentations, we have PowerPoints with speaker's notes ready to use. You are welcome to come to watch a speaker before you give a speech yourself.

Natalie Lester started a **Seed Library at the Brookfield Public Library** and gave programs on the seed library, Seed Starting and a demonstration on winter sowing.

Lifelong Gardening has also appeared before a number of groups with their helpful advice on gardening safely as we age.

Our **Community Outreach project** staffed tables at two Dockhounds school day games. Karla Geiger and Jane Browne developed a display on cicadas which was popular with the kids.

We were invited to the **Southside Organizing Center's Bloom & Groom at Walker's Square**. Our display on container gardening was supplemented with relevant brochures in Spanish.

The summer concluded with displays for the **Greendale Garden Walk** and **Greenfield Forestry Days**.

We would like to appear at more community events. If you are

aware of one and would like to staff a table display let us know. We will help with display materials and recruit volunteers to work with you.

The **Brookfield and Oconomowoc Farmers' Markets** are ongoing projects. The team has developed good presentations for these booths. If you would like to set up a booth at your local market they will share their expertise.

We have two projects at **Boerner Botanical Gardens**. We set up a **display** in the lower level stairwell several times a year. We take our **garden cart** out into the garden, anytime the garden is open – no set schedule, to provide information and engage with the public.

The summer ends with our biggest educational project – the **State Fair**. Over 100 MGVs staff the garden throughout the fair. It is a popular spot with fairgoers and each shift has a team so there is always someone who can find the answer to our visitor's question.

If you have been thinking it's time to get involved in something other than weeding we have an opportunity for you. Get in touch and we can talk through your options. Contact Mary Wolverton at marycassw@gmail.com.

SEWMGs education activities are a great way to earn hours, share your knowledge, get to know other MGVs, work weekends or evenings and try out an activity without a continuing commitment. Help expand our outreach by letting us know of other community events and farmers' markets. Contact Mary Wolverton at marycassw@gmail.com.



*Realtors Home Show
State Fair
Seed Library
Boerner Botanical Gardens
Community Outreach Project
Farmers' Markets*



2024 Wisconsin State Fair

by MGVal Sangsland, Co-chair Special Events

August means heat, humidity, thunderstorms and the Wisconsin State Fair! Our gardens in Exploratory Park were again putting on a wonderful display as we welcomed 18,457 visitors to our area and shared information ranging from Native Plants, Cactus & Succulent Gardening, and supporting Monarchs and pollinators to plant pests and diseases, container gardening, composting and our focus subject this year: water-wise landscaping.

While the Fair announced record attendance this year at 1,136,805 visitors, an increase of 9% over 2023, we saw a slight decrease in visitors to our area of 4% compared to 2023. The vast majority of the decrease came on the two Saturdays, where attendance dropped dramatically just before the main stage acts began. The remaining nine days showed nice increases over 2023.

Our focus topic of water-wise landscaping was received moderately, likely because we're not experiencing drought in 2024, as we did in previous years. We had a display board with samples of actual drip irrigation components, one basic and one in-depth drip irrigation fact sheet, a hand-out listing selections of Wisconsin drought-tolerant perennials and shrubs, and one listing the basic concept of water-wise landscaping. Our visitors took home a total of 8,593 documents, with the most popular titles: Native Plants for Beginners, Steps for Adding Native Plants to your property, Supporting our Monarchs, Perennials for Your Garden, Milkweed in the Garden, Home Composting: Reap a Heap of Benefits, and the ever-popular Gardening Resource Card. Many shift captains also wrote that there were several visitors who took photos of our information card on the Master Gardener Program. Perhaps some of those individuals will be volunteering with us at the Fair next year!

Our visitors loved the updated Gnome Garden, the daylilies were stunning this year, and the painted alliums had visitors intrigued. Our scavenger hunt once again, gave the smallest visitors something fun to do while Mom and Dad viewed the gardens and spoke to our Master Gardeners. Thank you, Ellen Grissom, for once again creating the kid-friendly Scavenger Hunt! Several SEWMG volunteers took home our Aldo Leopold benches at the end of 2023 and spent the winter repainting them, adding personal touches ranging from flowers and trees to frogs and turtles, and one even boasted upholstery. Our visitors commented on the creativity and some even wanted to purchase them.

The SEWMG volunteers working our 186 shifts had the perfect icebreaker when they asked our visitors to vote in the 2024 container contest. Boy, was it ever a tough decision this year! The SEWMG volunteers who created and tended these beautiful containers all summer really outdid themselves this year. Top honors went to Kirsten Villegas' Bird Cage. This year we also opened up the Lifelong Gardening area to be manned by SEWMG State Fair volunteers who were not part of the Lifelong Gardening Committee. LLG chairwoman Ann Loper recorded a video to show volunteers how to demonstrate the tools that were displayed in their elevated garden and arranged for three hand-outs to be available to support them. Shift captains

mentioned there was a lot of activity at the Lifelong Gardening area, so we'll be sure to make this opportunity available again next year.

Our volunteers also got to interact with special guest visitors to our garden: Smokey the Bear, and the State Fair Cream Puff dropped by for some photos with our Master Gardeners!

I would like to extend a huge thank-you to my co-chair, Dawn Scheer for her tireless work scheduling the many shifts at the 2024 Fair, including last-minute recruiting to fill in shifts which were cancelled on short notice. To those of you who answered her last-minute call for help – thank you so much for your flexibility and generosity with your time. I would also like to give a big shout-out of gratitude to our top volunteers this year: Ellen Grissom, Laura Crespin and Nicki Hanley each volunteered for six shifts, with Ellen graciously serving as Shift Captain on four of her shifts. We always struggle to fill the Shift Captain slots in the schedule, so if you're on the fence about volunteering for that role, please have a chat with Ellen or any of our other 2024 Shift Captains who can address any of your reservations. Additional super-star volunteers were Tom Theys and Kathy Weiss, each volunteering for four shifts. To all our volunteers in 2024: you epitomize the spirit of SEWMG by sharing your knowledge and passion for horticulture with our visitors and once again, you made us proud!



President's Letter

by MGVS Jane Belanger



My guess would be that, like me, joining SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners following completion of the Extension Master Gardeners course was the logical next step. The borders and boundaries between the two organizations were (and for some still are) blurred. And of course, even though the boundaries were blurred, it was a well-run symbiotic partnership. Extension provided education and members listened, learned and shared. Extension approved nonprofit garden sites and we provided the volunteer workforce. Extension provided the system to measure the effectiveness of those programs and that system let us know our annual goals for volunteer and continuing education hours were met and exceeded.

When Extension needed to make changes to their program due to, I suppose, budget cuts, a dedicated group of SEWMG members reconfigured our organization. Bylaws were updated. Strategic Planning and DEAI discussion began (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion). For insurance purposes, gardens had to provide their own volunteer program that master gardeners could join.

Now I don't know about you, but in my life even the simplest projects will need additional tweaking down the line. I believe, based on the feedback I'm hearing, our group is due for some tweaking.

The board will begin discussion on a wide variety of topics which will then be brought to membership for feedback and, hopefully, approval. I know some Master Gardener groups around the state are no longer requiring master gardener status to become a member of their group. At least one group is considering dropping out of WIMGA. For me, if we aren't master gardeners then we are a different type of group. But that is not my decision alone to make. I'd want us to form partnerships with other master gardener groups in the state so that members can participate with multiple groups without having to pay multiple membership fees.

I would like members who have 20 years of consistent membership be dues free as a tangible thank you for years of service and participation.

We need to develop policies so that officers coming in for their one-year term have some structure already in place besides the number of board and member meetings per year. The transition into the board needs more definition, not written, but an actual slot that the officer slides into with specific tasks and goals. Still with room for personal interpretation.

Committee chairs should expect to attend the first board meeting of the year. Yearly goals should be defined, be understandable and achievable.

We need to develop more variety in the activities we organize and promote for our members. And then relax and have fun.

These are just some of the topics we will begin discussing. I'm sure it will be an ongoing process, and your input will be important and necessary. The SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardener organization is not one person's vision or ideas. It's not just this year's board's opinions that will secure our success, but it is the vision and the mission of the entire member body.

The board will soon begin discussion on a wide variety of topics which will then be brought to membership for feedback...SEWMG is not one person's vision or ideas. It's not just this year's board's opinions that will secure our success, but it is the vision and the mission of the entire member body.

Speaker's Bureau Update

by MGVS Jean Akhter and Terri Hart-Ellis

Greetings fellow gardeners. If you would like to learn more about Invasive Plants in Wisconsin, mark your calendars for Monday, September 30th at 7:00 pm. MGVS, Mary Jane Swedberg, will be presenting at the Brookfield Public Library. Hope you can make it to the presentation.

Please consider volunteering for the SEWMG Speaker's Bureau. We are looking for MGVS who are interested in any of the following activities:

- making approved presentations to groups
- developing new presentations
- reviewing presentations that are in development

Please contact Jean Akhter, speakersbureau@sewmvg.org
And CC Terri Hart-Ellis, terrihartellis@gmail.com

Picnic, Silent Auction, and Ann Wied Retirement News

by MGV Diane Thieme

Mother Nature chose that our event would be moved inside this year, due to forecast thunderstorms and humidity. We were glad we did, when it rained while we were in the lovely air-conditioned space at Sharon Wilson Center for the Arts. The over 100 SEWMG members and guests enjoyed appetizers, infused waters, and an amazing potluck dinner, to enhance the hot entrees provided by the picnic committee. If there was ever a doubt that gardeners are generous, you simply needed to visit the dessert table!

A special ceremony to recognize and honor Ann Wied, as she retired, was held with presentation of a lovely plaque by the board and a plant, cake, gem tree and gift card by members that contributed. She was humbled and many tears were shed.

Members enjoyed camaraderie as they determined who won the table centerpieces. Many guests took home gently used gardening books or magazines, gardening items and/or incredible houseplants that were brought from fellow members.

Door prizes were distributed and Silent auction items were awarded to lucky bidders. Another exceptional fundraiser, celebration of our members and benefit to membership.

Diane Thieme added, "We auctioned off 26 baskets and raised \$1,390 which includes \$60 from t-shirt and sled sales. We had 37 generous donors who donated items for the basket creations and door prizes."

If you missed it, please consider joining us next year. If you love throwing parties and making it special for the guests, please reach out to karla.geiger@greendaleschools.org and be welcomed to this selfless committee.

We will likely host the picnic again late in July 2025, once the committee has had the opportunity to recap and debrief. The date will be released when it and a venue are set, so you can plan to attend this amazing event.

Enjoy the remainder of your Summer!

Many thanks to master gardeners who volunteered for the picnic.



Karla Geiger added, "A special ceremony to recognize and honor Ann Wied, as she retired, was held with presentation of a lovely plaque by the board and a plant, cake, gem tree and gift card by members that contributed. She was humbled and many tears were shed."

"Bee" Line Across America

by MGv Cheryl Lausten

Honeybees tend to travel in a straight line when returning to their hive, but now many are on much longer journeys. Most of us only think of honey when discussing beekeepers and honeybees, but their job as pollinators has grown into big business. 75% of crops and one-third of the global food supply rely on pollinators such as honeybees. Farmers must now rely on commercially managed honeybees, trucked in from other states, because there are not enough wild bees to do the job. Migratory beekeepers, as they are called, charge rental rates around \$200 per hive, and thousands of hives are shipped yearly.

Beekeepers load their hives or "bee boxes" onto flat beds and semi-trucks for their long journeys. Nearly 2 million bee colonies are needed each year. Each semi can typically carry 408 hives. The hives need to be loaded at night because the bees are less active when it is dark and cooler. Straps and netting are used to secure the hives. The truck drivers must be very mindful of their live cargo. The bees are very temperature sensitive and cannot tolerate long stops in warm temperatures. The bees need the air movement of the trucks to keep cool, and to keep the bees from escaping the netting around the hives. Trips of thousands of miles must be timed to arrive after dark for unloading.

The beekeepers also track the weather and crop bloom times. If the bees arrive too early, chilly weather may cause them to freeze, or there may be no blooms for food. If they arrive to the fields too late, they could miss bloom and nectar flow. It is important that the bees be in the right place at the right time.

"Pollination migration" usually starts in February with a trip to California's central valley to pollinate almonds, apples, plums, and cherries. As the weather across the U.S. warms, and these

bees have done their jobs in California, the hives are loaded up again and moved to North and South Dakota for the alfalfa, clover, and sunflower fields. This is where most of the honey production takes place. Other hives are shipped to blueberry fields in Michigan, cranberry bogs in Wisconsin, and others to Texas for watermelon, cucumbers, and cantaloupes. Beekeepers also have hives traveling up and down the east coast year-round for apples, cherries, and pumpkins. The average honeybee colony travels about 1153 miles per year!

After the bee's trip across the country, they are returned home to Idaho in October. There, the bee boxes are moved to cold storage for a winter rest. Idaho has now become home to the nation's largest winter bee population, utilizing the many massive potato warehouses, low energy costs and its central location in the U.S.

The colonies are kept in the dark at 40-45 degrees for about 3 months. Newly formed queens are then ready to requeen existing colonies and to establish new ones. The bee boxes are loaded up with their renewed hives and the cycle begins again.

Keep on the look out for any "buzzing" semi-trucks on your next trip!



Garden Notes

MGV Sandy Manning

How was your summer? The question we all ask as fall approaches. Keeping a garden journal from year to year helps us look back to see trends and prepare for the next growing season. A note on when tomatoes went in and start of harvest, will help with next summer's plans. Maybe planting earlier or providing protection to warm the area around those new plants. Warmer winters may not effect our woody plants for several years. Having notes on previous years and seasons improve our understanding of the problems or successes we have with our landscape plants.

We had a cool wet start which to many of us meant our tomatoes and peppers sat in the garden and did not put on the growth we expected. Things have picked up but for many harvests will be lighter.

The cool wet was a perfect environment for powdery mildew and other fungal issues, at work, at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center,

the Cedar Apple Rust, and Cedar Hawthorne Rust was amazing. The junipers were decorated with tell tale gelatinous fingers. The prairies are all extra tall and extremely green.

This is the third warm winter in a row, many gardeners report earlier flowers on perennials. The warm winter was good for rabbits and other small mammals, it also meant that ticks were active for much of the year. Winter mowing of woody invasives has not been possible in the last two winters, this means more manpower in spring, summer and fall to make up for the lack of winter control.

I am trying to keep better notes year to year as change seems to come with every season and long term memory isn't always enough. Let's see what we can record for our next seasons in the garden.



Find us on Facebook or Instagram



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."