



Update on the Brookfield Public Library's Seed Library

by MGV Natalie Lester

Greetings fellow Master Gardener Volunteers. The BPL Seed Library has been open and running for over six months and our outreach and success has been tremendous. Several hundred seed packets have been "checked out" and gone into the hands of home gardeners. Many have shared pictures of what they have chosen to grow in their homes. We also provide UW-Extension fact sheets as a resource with our seeds. With all of our growth this year, we are looking forward to flourishing in all we have planned for 2025.

I have given two presentations since our opening, the first one was a combination of Introducing the BPL Seed Library and Seed Starting 101. The second presentation was given towards the end of August on Seed Saving. Both were wonderful events and provided the wonderful opportunity to meet many of our fellow Master Gardener volunteers.

With more presentations and events to come, I am looking forward to meeting and connecting with more of you.

Assembling our Seed Team

The task of sorting 40,000+ seeds myself has become too much and I am looking for a few volunteers. Especially as we shift our focus to NATIVE SEEDS for next year's growing season, there will be more seeds to sort. If you are interested in getting involved, this is a great way to earn volunteer hours without physically gardening. Volunteering will consist of sorting seeds from larger packets into smaller envelopes. Paper crafting includes cutting labels and gluing them onto the smaller packets, putting seeds into binders, setting up displays, and updating inventory.

I currently have a list of those interested in being a part of the seed team. If anyone else is interested, feel free to email me at natalielester2@gmail.com

Save the Date: February 8, 2025 first ever Seed Swap at the Brookfield Public Library
Our first ever Seed Swap!! More details to come: watch your emails!



Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardener Website

by MGVS Susan McDonell

We've had 16,903 visitors in 2024 to date and 1,162 in the past 30 days (September 1-October 1). We haven't been able to update all the activities in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. ORS doesn't let us access the information on contacts or locations..

A WIMGA link was added recently on the educational page. There are new videos and document links under State Fair that will remain until next year's Fair when things are updated.

Lifelong Gardening is very good about keeping me informed, and I do check links to be sure they function and haven't changed a couple times a year.

I update/add whatever is asked of me and add to the calendar as events become known.

It would help immensely if members who volunteer at additional approved ORS activities, would tell me about who to contact (email and/or phone number), the project name and location.

Thank you!

sdmcdonell@mac.com

Facebook Facts

by MGVS Margaret Krueger

Are you following us on Facebook and Instagram? If not, please join the 2.7 thousand others who follow us for garden knowledge and inspiration!

You can find us on Facebook here:



Outreach Update

by MGVS Jean Ahkter and Terri Hart-Ellis

Many presentations were given this year. Composting was requested the most and then Seed Starting 101. Other talks were about Container Gardening, Planning and Planting a Vegetable Garden, Proper Pruning for Healthy Trees and Invasive Plants in Wisconsin.

MGVS Jean Ahkter and Ronda Roth created new PowerPoints that went through review process this year. Three MGVS each gave two presentations: Mary Jane Swedburg, Beth Peterson and Kristen Villegas.



2025 SEWMG Membership Dues

by Membership Committee

It's easy to renew your membership in SEWMG. The fee is \$20, which includes membership in both SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners (SEWMG) and the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program (WIMGA). Dues are payable by January 1, 2025.

To renew using the SEWMG website, click the MEMBERS tab at the top of the page, then select Forms from the drop-down menu. You can click to pay using a credit card, debit card or PayPal. It's easy to pay this way, and it also saves time for the folks processing your dues.

If you prefer to mail a check, no worries. The application form is included in this newsletter. Or, click this link to bring up the information on your computer: <https://sewmg.org/forms>.



MEMBERSHIP DUES

Year _____

Name (First, Last): _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please indicate below any skills/special talents
you might be willing to share with the organization:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics/Displays | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> GoDaddy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising | <input type="checkbox"/> MS Excel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Editing | <input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> MS PowerPoint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography/
Videography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Annual dues is \$20.00 and includes membership in both SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners (SEWMG) and Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA). SEWMG will pay your WIMGA dues directly.

Make your check payable to **SEWMG** and mail to:

SEWMG Membership
P.O. Box 26453
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

We welcome all certified MGVs who volunteer in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

Special Events Committee

by MGVal Sangsland, Co-chair Special Events

The programs may be the same but everything we present changes every year, and the work is spread over many months.

Realtors Home & Garden Show - March

We had our first meeting in October of 2023 to begin work on the new Native plants display. We split the topic into multiple sub-topics and agreed on research, and we met up to report back to create a cohesive “whole”.

Thanks to:

Jennifer Lazewski who provided a huge amount of research and photos that we ultimately used in the creation of the display.
Kathy Intravaia who provided research and collaboration.
Kristie Kroening who provided research and collaboration.
Susan McDonnell who combined research from multiple sources into print-ready documents and charts for the display.
Along with chairing meetings I interfaced with the display printer and designed the display.

Set Up and Tear Down

Then in early March, I recruited volunteers to help with Home Show Set Up and Tear Down. We coordinated supplies based on how we needed to load items into the Home Show, as only one vehicle could drive on the floor of the Expo Center at a time, unload at our booth, and then go outside to park and come back inside for set-up.

Load in and set up team included:

Robert Yoblin (my brother) & Jeff Sangsland (my husband) – helped transport items and set up the cabana bar, Jean Georgson (MG), Terry Fabian (MG), Judy McCormick (MG), Dawn Scherr (MG), Kristie Kroening (MG) (and significant other Alan Nichols): they are the pop-up display setup experts, and Virginia Geraghty (MG) came to help “decorate” the booth as well.

Schedule Speakers

I also worked with Speakers Bureau (Jean Akhter & Terri Hart-Ellis) to schedule speakers for the Home Show “Solutions Stage” - a total of four MGs did five presentations during the Home Show: Mary Jane Swedberg, Jennifer Lazewski, Pat Roberts, Kirsten Villegas.

Tear down team:

Dawn Scherr & I worked the final shift, and began tear-down. Kristie & Alan came to tear down the pop-up. My brother (Robert Yoblin) and nephew (Kevin Yoblin) brought their vehicles to help transport to the storage locker. My husband, Jeff Sangsland to help to take apart the cabana bar and ready it for transportation.

Thanks to everyone for all their work. We put on an amazing show.

State Fair - August

The initial contract with the Fair was signed in early April. Mary Wolverton and Jim Fratrack, co-chairs of the State Fair Garden began in the garden in April.

I started on the State Fair project immediately after the Home Show. Dawn Scherr (my co-chair) had been working since January to solicit seed packet donations from multiple sources, and enlisting shift volunteers.

The focus this year was water-wise gardening, and we created a sign for the topic. I created the Waterwise Gardening handout, as well as a “Drip Irrigation Basics” document. I found a great (six page) document from Colorado State University to round out the educational material. I also created a large visual aid to use on the A-Frame.

As with the Home & Garden Show, over a period of a couple weeks I moved the necessary items from storage to my home. I recruited volunteers to help count and package new literature in lots of 50. Heide Burns and Cathy Delfosse both helped with that project. I loaded the literature into the bins for transport and created the corresponding Master Binder and a supplemental “Reference Binder” for use at the fair.

Transport, Setup & Tear Down

Heide Burns and her husband, Cathy Delfosse, my husband Jeff and I worked on set up. We had everything at the State Fair shed the Saturday before the fair. Jim Gill filmed the orientation video that was posted on the SEWMG.org website.

Everything was removed, sorted and cleaned ready for next year.

We appreciate all the work done by SEWMG volunteers, family and friends, the 10 days at the fair introduce Master Gardeners to thousands of fairgoers.



President's Letter

by MGJV Jane Belanger



Our Annual Meeting is on November 9th at Retzer Nature Center. When you consider attending think about how valuable your advice, ideas, and opinions are. This organization that was pushed into reimagining itself for all the reasons that we talk about is still in the beginning stages of forming its personality.

When you check out the websites of other Master Gardener Associations, each has a distinctive character. I'm sure in-person experiences detail even more about their character. Obviously, we all have gardening, education and community in common; it's in our mission and vision statements, and goals. It's in the differences where some shine or, I imagine, still have work to do.

We will all thrive when individual visions are put aside and every member's voice is welcomed and heard. I saw a Facebook post recently that said "sisters are different flowers from the same garden". This same analogy applies to our organization. Imagine the scope and joy we can create in this organization when we expand events, learning opportunities and communities we impact when we all "step in" and take an active role or make sure our individual voice is heard.

In checking out other Master Gardener's websites I've found similarities and differences. Looking at Madison, North Central, Ozaukee and Racine Kenosha Master Gardener organizations all have plant sales benefitting a specific group, or a variety of groups and scholarship programs. Most organize or man tables representing their group at conferences or fairs.

Madison's newsletter features lots of gardening information and lists upcoming events and presentations including a variety of gardening topics such as conifers, bonsai, an event selling compost bins and rain barrels, and more. They hold a monthly lunch event, "Green Thumb Tuesday" at an area restaurant, have a Mandala Art Project scheduled and have an annual "signature" garden project. They even hold an in-person session at a local library for reporting ORS hours.

The **North Central Master Gardener Association** has a wide and varied schedule of gardening experiences for children.

Ozaukee's Master Gardener group projects span a variety of generations and locations: museums, community gardens, shelters, senior living and a middle school.

The **Racine/Kenosha Master Gardeners'** website is basically Extension's Racine/Kenosha office website. Their Facebook page is referenced which lists gardening resources such as the DNR, Melinda Myers and The Butterfly Lady. They do mention they meet monthly with a short business meeting and horticultural presentations as well as hosting field trips.

Now, this is just what I've found with a bit of time online. I'm sure, as I stated earlier, that there is more to these groups in-person or even more information available as members of the group. My hope is that this information sparks your interest in the potential for our Master Gardener organization.

Your suggestion or comment may build to something extraordinary when shared with others. And if you think you've shared your idea before, or spoken up before, please don't stop there.

Come to the Annual Member meeting and meet the board members. Share your thoughts, ask your questions and if you have time, step in.

Don't forget to check our website <https://sewmvg.org> and our Facebook page. Side note: SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners is our Facebook page. Southeastern Wisconsin Gardeners Group is a separate page that welcomes posts from anyone and is not affiliated to us.

Annual Member Meeting

Saturday November 9th

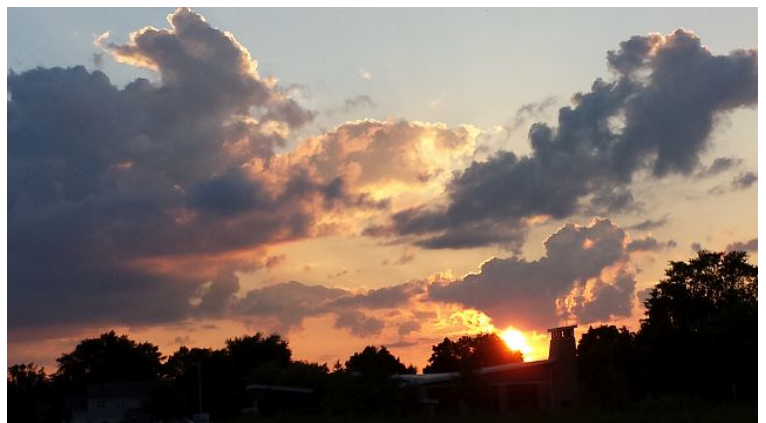
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Retzer Nature Center

514 W28167 Madison Street, Waukesha

Mission

To serve as a resource in the art and science of gardening to cultivate community connections.



Bugs Matter - Don't Squash Them!

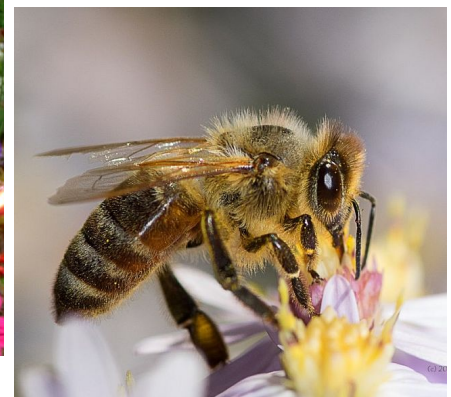
by MGv Cheryl Lausten

Many of us are conditioned to fear and hate bugs. They are considered creepy and crawly, unimportant and squash worthy! Yes, some insects may cause problems, but the good done by beneficial insects far outweighs any bad caused by a few pest species. The vast majority of bugs are utterly harmless, and they are all a valuable part of nature and our lives. We need to overcome our aversion or indifference to creepy crawlies and change our attitudes to respect and appreciation.

Lately there is a lot of “buzz” about the importance of pollinators, but insects perform many more duties that are particularly important to the wellbeing of our ecosystem. Insects are extremely important as primary or secondary decomposers. Beetles and worms are great recyclers, turning waste and carrion into fertilizer. They also help increase oxygen in the soil. There are beneficial insects that help control pest species and could reduce our need for pesticides if we let them.

All insects are a rich source of protein, vitamins, and minerals. Though small in size, they are a crucial component of the world's food web. They are the sole food source for many amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. In some cultures, insects are even harvested and eaten by people. Bugs sit at the most important portion of the food web, the bottom. If they disappear, so will the species higher up the web, including those at the top - humans.

There currently is a dangerous decline in the insect population. 40% of insect species are at risk of extinction and 33% more are endangered. Their numbers are affected by things like extreme temperature shifts, and pollution, including light and noise pollution. Humans' increased use of chemical-based agriculture, EMF plastics, and forever chemicals are also forcing many species into extinction.



We would not last long without insects. Our flowering plants would die off. All the species that dine on insects would be lost, followed by the next ones up the food chain. Dead animals would pile up undigested, along with manure and leaf litter. Trees and plants would cease growing in the compacted, airless soil. Not a pretty picture!

So, what are we to do?

“Rewilding” and “Rebugging” are updated terms conservationists and ecologists are using relating to conservation that attempts to recreate the earth's natural ecological systems. By decreasing the use of chemical controls over nature and letting more natural controls reestablish, we can try to return to more natural ecosystems that are more sustainable.

One easy suggestion to start the “rebugging” process is to not be too neat. Be messy in your outside spaces, letting your gardens approach the wild side. Being messy leads to diversity, and greater diversity leads to longevity. Give that beetle a home in the leaf litter, the ant access to a rotten log, and release the spider found in the house instead of squashing it. Our planet will thank you.

Two great books on the subject are: *Rebugging the Planet* by Vicki Hird, and *The Insect Crisis* by Oliver Milman.

- [An online review](#) of *Rebugging the Planet* states, “Insects and invertebrates pollinate plants, feed birds, support and defend our food crops, and clean our water systems. They are also beautiful, inventive, and economically invaluable—bees, for example, contribute an estimated \$235 to \$577 billion to the US economy annually, according to Forbes.”
- [An online review](#) of *The Insect Crisis* states. “Part warning, part celebration of the incredible variety of insects, *The Insect Crisis* is a wake-up call for us all.”

Never a Dull Moment When You Grow Food!

by MGV Molly Llanas

The Green Power Garden team and community volunteers have harvested 5,727 pounds of fruits and veggies through September 27, 2024 with 100% of the produce going to the meal program and clients of the Hope Center in Waukesha.

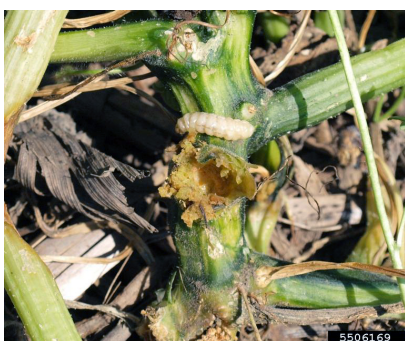
Cucumbers were winning that race before the big push from the tomatoes in August. But it's not really fair as the tomatoes have about 1/3 of the acre and cucumbers only about 1/12 of an acre. To date cucumbers harvested were 1,454 and tomatoes were 2,187.

Challenges

- We had a nasty spell of Squash Vine Borers (sometimes 4 or 5 on a plant) so our x-acto knife plant rescue system only worked on a few. The rest were goners so we replanted. Those second-rounders are producing nicely right now.

Successes

- We were blessed to be able to collect, store and use over 1500 gallons of water helped us to keep going and growing once the weekly rains stopped this season.



Squash Vine Borer



5599171

- We have covered all walkways and paths this season with FREE cardboard and FREE woodchips to keep weeds at bay. This will help us get started early next year as we won't have to wait for help with tilling.
- We will turn over the one foot wide planting strips in the Spring with a walk behind tiller.
- We are also "cooking up" our own fish emulsion which will be added to the soil later this year when the ground starts to freeze in order to keep it from smelling too much as we do have neighbors.

Next Year

- We are shooting for an outdoor lettuce hydroponics system next season and are planning to plant a few fruit trees that were donated by the Daisy Scouts.

Extending the season

- We planted some cold weather crops to extend our season and have to put our garlic and shallots back in yet this Fall. Never a dull moment when you grow food!



Volunteer Reflections

by MGV Janet Wintersberger

Interviews with MGVs who helped at the Realtors' Show

A speaker

Pat Roberts was a featured speaker at the 2024 show. She joined SEWMG in 2005 and has given hundreds of presentations through the years. Pat has been involved with extension since she was 5 years old! A career as a teacher makes her a natural speaker.

Pat enjoys giving presentations. Today, speakers are given a USB with a polished presentation and brochures. QR codes enable attendees to find more educational resources. Laptops and projectors are available on site. (Previously, speakers had to create their own materials, "check out" laptops and projectors.)

A "load in" driver

Terry Fabian helped "truck" materials to the show. This was a carefully organized time-sensitive activity. Only one vehicle could be inside Expo at a time. Terry credits Val Sangsland and Dawn Scherr for their efficient set up / take down. Terry has held many volunteer roles for the shows.

A display decorator

Virginia Geharty helped make the display even more inviting. She joined master gardeners in 2019 and has been gardening since she was a child. This year people enjoyed the seed packet giveaway. There were lots of handouts for children and adults to choose plants and get kids involved. Virginia herself benefits with at least "one takeaway" when she volunteers.

It seems as if we were just gathered for our delightful SEWMG picnic. Yet, it's already time to think about the upcoming holiday season. We have another chance to gather and celebrate with our gardening friends. Get out your best party clothes and join everyone for the Annual Holiday Party on Thursday, December 11 at Alioto's Restaurant on Mayfair Road. You (and a guest) may choose from three delicious meal options, all of which include a salad, Italian bread, a beverage, and sherbet. Everyone leaves with a party favor and has a chance to win one of several terrific door prizes. See the reservation form below for all the details and to make your dinner choice(s) and reservation. Send your check to Diane Thieme by November 30, 2024. Let's finish the year with an evening of good cheer.



Annual Holiday Party

Join fellow SEWMGVs to celebrate the season

Thursday, December 11, 2024

Alioto's Restaurant

3041 North Mayfair Rd.

Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

6:00 Cash Bar

7:00 Dinner - \$28 per dinner

Name (please print) _____

Guest Name (limit 1 guest) _____

Dinner Choices: All dinners include Salad, Italian Bread, Coffee, Tea, or Milk & Sherbet

Self Guest

Petit Filet, au jus, Button Mushrooms, & Potatoes

Grilled Seasoned Shrimp, Vegetables, Potatoes, Cocktail Sauce

Eggplant Parmesan served over Pasta (Vegetarian option)

Make checks payable to: SEWMG Holiday Party Reservation (\$28 per dinner)

Mail to: Diane Thieme

3033 N. Newhall St.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211 **RSVP by November 30, 2024**



Find us on Facebook or Instagram



Instagram



Facebook

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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."