



# Good Earth News

## Seeds and New Beginnings

by MGV Kelly Kramer

Ah winter... when the flurry of seed catalogs arrive. Seeds often symbolize new beginnings, so perhaps it's appropriate that these catalogs arrive in January. I grow vegetables and cut flowers from seed. I find the late winter months to be a good time to inventory seed packets, peruse seed catalogs, and plan seed starting for the year.

Seed packets will list expiration dates, and if you have an expired seed packet don't be tempted to throw it out right away. Sometimes seeds can be viable after the expiration date.

One way to test a seed's viability is to put approximately 10 seeds in a damp paper towel, roll it up and place it in a plastic bag in a warm place for about a week. Check every other day to make sure the paper towel is still damp. At the end of the week, you should see how many seeds have germinated. If it's at least 5 out of 10 seeds then I still use the seeds, I just sow more than I usually would.

Even if I don't have enough seeds for a test, I will sow them indoors just to see what germinates. Last year I had eight bell pepper seeds from a packet that expired several years ago. I sowed the seeds indoors, with a heat mat and grow lights and three germinated. I got three pepper plants (which was all I was looking for anyway) and a good crop of peppers.

For seed storage I use small kraft envelopes found on Amazon (Juvalle 100 Pack Small Seed

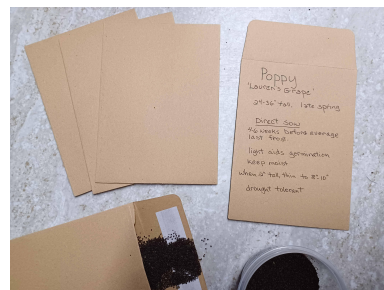
Saving Envelopes 4.5" x 3.25"). These envelopes fit into a seed box that I store in my basement which stays a pretty constant 56 degrees. I also use these envelopes when the original seed packet becomes too worn and taped for use. I write all the seed starting details, as well as the plant information on the front and back of the envelope.

Once I have my seed packets for the year, I'll start a list of when each one gets started. I find it very gratifying to fill up seed trays and plant seeds in late winter.

UW Madison Extension and University of Minnesota have great articles on seed sowing. If you are new to seed starting, I recommend reading these first before you start.

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/seed-starting/>

<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/starting-seeds-indoors>



## SEWMG Event Calendar

by MGV Jackie Kirchen

Remember to check the Calendar on the SEWMG website regularly for a list of upcoming events, including education, volunteer, meetings and more. The calendar will list not only SEWMG events, but also other local Garden events and external Educational Opportunities.

Here are some upcoming notable upcoming events:

Sat Apr 12 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
**Annual Volunteer Information Event**  
Poster presentations, speakers, and garden market.  
Boerner Botanical Gardens, 9400 Boerner Dr, Hales Corners

Sat May 17 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
**SEWMG Member Meeting**  
Presentation: Brookfield Seed Library by Natalie Lester  
Brookfield Public Library, 1900 N Calhoun Rd, Brookfield, WI

Mon Aug 18 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
**SEWMG Members Only Appreciation Picnic**  
Bring a dish to pass.  
Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 3270 Mitchell Park Dr, Brookfield

# President's Letter

by MGV Jackie Kirchen

Hello SEWMG Master Gardeners! Hope you've all enjoyed the tiny taste of spring-like the weather we saw! It definitely got me thinking about gardening. A big thank you to everyone who joined us for the February 1 meeting – what a fantastic time learning about and diving into the world of winter sowing! For those of you inspired to give it a try but haven't yet gotten your hands dirty, don't worry! We've got some winter left, and there's still plenty of time to get started. Get those seeds ready!

On the SEWMG front, our dedicated 2025 board is hard at work, guided by the organization's strategic plan. They've reviewed the outline layed out in the 2023 plan and have some exciting goals lined up for this year. Here's an overview.

## Membership Engagement and Growth

Based on feedback from SEWMG membership, 2025 will focus on supporting more in-person events including:

- **Neighborhood meet-ups:** SEWMG will help organize MGs who are interested in local meet-ups. The groups will be responsible for scheduling locations, topics, etc. based on the interest and goals of the group.

If you are interested in participating in a local Neighborhood Meet-up group complete this [interest form](#).

- **Group Outings:** There are a number of educational group outings planned for this year. Please watch for updates soon.

## Operational Excellence

The strategic plan outlines a number of areas of focus for the organization to reduce risk, and improve efficiency and collaboration; for 2025 that includes:

- **Fundraising Committee:** The committee has been established and planning underway.
- **Google Workspace:** Implementation continues, starting with areas of higher risk

- **Organization Insurance:** Finance committee will evaluate plan and needs for best-fit

## Community-Partnership and Enablement

In order to fulfill the SEWMG mission to serve as a resource in the art and science of gardening to cultivate community connections, the goal for outreach includes:

- **Farmers Markets:** Organize Farmers Market volunteers and grow farmers market presence.

If you will be attending a farmers market, or similar event, on behalf of SEWMG please let Eileen Quinlan ([eileen.quinlan@sewmg.org](mailto:eileen.quinlan@sewmg.org)) know; the organization must be aware of all activities conducted on behalf of SEWMG. This does not include activities where you are a MG volunteer for a market or other organization.

## UW-Madison Division of Extension regional Plant Health Advising programs have ended

The UW-Madison Division of Extension regional Plant Health Advising program for Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties has ended. The Waukesha county program had previously ended. Extension volunteers will no longer be in the Horticulture Office at Boerner Botanical Gardens during the growing season. The (608) 298-6945 phone number and the [planthealth.advisors@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:planthealth.advisors@extension.wisc.edu) email are no longer active.

Residents of these counties can ask lawn and gardening questions year-round by using the "Ask your Gardening Question" <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/ask-a-gardening-question/> feature on the Division of Extension Wisconsin Horticulture webpage <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/>.

# Holiday Party 2024

by MGV Diane Thieme

On a cold, blustery December evening fifty-four SEWMG members were greeted by Laurie Keane and Tom Paasch as they gathered at Alioto's restaurant for our annual holiday party. The evening started with cocktails and lots of catching up with long time friends or making new friends with newbies. Following the cocktail hour, everyone dined on a delicious steak, shrimp or eggplant parmesan dinner with all the trimmings. Thank you to SEWMG for covering part of the cost of each dinner.

Guests each received an adorable mini decorated pinecone Christmas tree as a party favor. Thanks to Bernita Hile and Carol Transon for their creativity and help in making sixty different and unique trees.

The member recognition award, which has been part of the party for the last few years, was not given out this year. The

SEWMG board chose not to select an individual, saying they would prefer to recognize the SEWMG organization's accomplishments rather than one person's accomplishments. The evening ended with the drawing for door prizes. Acting as my Vanna White was the lovely and charming Dan Cummings who pulled the names of eight lucky winners. They went home with prizes such as holiday decorations, a St. Nick cookie baking basket, a beautiful plaid wool throw, gardening supplies, games and puzzles, and more.

A delightful evening of good food, laughter and warm friendly connections was had by all, making us forget about the cold and blustery winds outside. Hope to see you for next year's gathering!

# SEWMG Membership

by MGv Betsy Vokac

Master Gardeners are committed to lifelong learning and community service. That's a big umbrella, with room for all sorts of gardeners. You may be passionate about introducing kids to gardening, improving access to healthy food, beautifying the landscape, or creating habitat for native animals and plants. You may be a novice or a seasoned gardener. You may love learning new techniques and sharing that knowledge with others.

SEWMG welcomes Master Gardeners who volunteer in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. As an active member, you can grow your local connections and enjoy the support of a community that values fun, learning, generosity, and inclusion. You can contribute to your local environment and take advantage of opportunities to make a positive impact in the world.

The cost of annual dues is \$20, which includes membership in SEWMG and WIMGA, the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association. If you have not joined for 2025, take a moment to complete the membership form in this newsletter. Even faster, simply click <https://sewmg.org/forms> and you'll be done in a couple of minutes!



## 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 MGv's who volunteer in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

# Lifelong Gardening Project AKA: "Gardening for Life"

by MGV Ann Loper

The Lifelong Gardening Project started in 2010 when a SEWMG volunteer requested and received adaptive tools from a horticultural center that was being phased out. Unfortunately that SEWMG volunteer is no longer with us, but the concept of Lifelong Gardening continues. Our mission is to educate the public how to modify the garden through accessibility and plant selection or modify the gardener with techniques and tools so a person can continue gardening throughout their life.

The group has had its ups and downs. In the beginning, we gave about 14-15 presentations a year and mostly all of them came about through "word of mouth" directly to me versus through the Outreach team.. This is still how most of our presentation requests come about. During and right after COVID, we gave presentations online from two separate households (that was tricky)!

We are slowly coming back to "normal". In 2024, we gave 10 presentations. One for the Racine/Kenosha MGV group which we presented to about 6 years ago. It was nice to know our contact information was held onto!! We also have a great connection with Mark Dwyer and have a yearly presence at the Edgerton Hospital Horticulture event he hosts.

The majority of our audiences consist of senior citizens, garden clubs and master gardeners. The positive comments and interaction we receive after a presentation encourages us to continue giving presentations.

All of the information we present is in our "Toolbox" on our website which was created after we won 1st place in the Special Needs Category in the 2017 Search for Excellence Award. This includes our literature, Power Point presentation, videos, flip chart information, a "recommended garden tools based on budget" wishlist and tool inventory; everything you need to know to start your own Lifelong Gardening Project or just curious about our group. The information is there for everyone to access.

Visit website: [sewmg.org](http://sewmg.org)

On Menu bar choose: Activities

Then Lifelong Gardening

Lifelong Gardening Toolbox includes Tool Book (last item)



This planting tool is homemade from a PVC pipe attached to a long dowel which extends past the piping by 1". You dig a hole in the soil with the dowel, move the pipe over the hole and drop a large seed (pumpkin, sunflower, bean) through the pipe, cover with soil using the dowel or your foot. The seed had been planted without you bending!



Elevated gardens (belly button gardening) are great so you don't have to get down on your hands and knees to garden. There are many variations of this elevated garden.



This woman is using a PETA Easi Grip tool that gives her support with the cuff around her forearm which allows her to use her larger muscles. PETA Easi Grip is an United Kingdom company but has a website from where you can order these tools. The cuffs are interchangeable among their other tools.

# The Brookfield Public Library Seed Team

by **MGV Natalie Lester**

On a cold, blustery January evening, twenty master gardener volunteers gathered together at the Brookfield Public Library (BPL) for our first seed sorting meeting. With much enthusiasm, together we sorted seeds into just under 1,000 envelopes to be distributed at our Seed Library program. I am extremely grateful for this wonderful group of dedicated individuals. Our program is growing quickly and with our fantastic team, we will continue to flourish and reach further into our community.

## **Our first Seed Swap**

On February 8, the Brookfield Public Library hosted its first Seed Swap. The goal of this event was to connect with other gardeners and seed savers and trade with each other. We wanted this event to be engaging for anyone interested in gardening, so every community member who attended received free seeds and extension gardening pamphlets. Master Gardeners from our Seed Team were on hand to answer gardening questions.

## **Key points for successful seed starting**

- Dependable seed source
  - Look for high quality, disease resistant varieties.
  - Heirloom and non GMO
- Starting at the correct time
  - Read the instructions on your packets

I mean it, each variety is different and it is important to pay attention to our average last frost date and base our start times from there.

- Many native seeds require cold stratification
- The right materials
  - Trays, plugs, soil blocking, pots with drainage, plastic coverings for germination
  - All used containers and tools should be cleaned with a 10% bleach solution.
- Rotating fan
  - Air movement strengthens seedlings and prepares them for the wind outside
  - Use a grow bulb and follow the instructions for how far to keep away from seedlings and for how long to keep the grow lights on each day.

I will be at the Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners Information Event on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Boerner Botanical Gardens. I will have a poster presentation on behalf of volunteering at the Brookfield Public Library and our Seed Team. Bring any questions you have about our Seed Library program or if you are interested in joining our Seed Team.

I will also be giving a presentation about our Seed Library at the upcoming Member Meeting on May 17, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Brookfield Public Library. My presentation will be brief at the end of the meeting where I will be discussing our program at the Brookfield Public Library and answering any questions.

## **Our goal this year is Native Seeds**

Seed savers, we are in need of donations of native seeds

## **How to donate seeds to the BPL Seed Library.**

Bag your seeds and bring them to our donation box which is located at the Seed Library near the Adult Services Reference Desk at the Brookfield Public Library. There are donation slips that can be filled out along with your donation. If your donation is too big to fit into the donation box, it can be given to a reference librarian behind the Adult Services or Main Circulation Desk.

Although our goal is native seeds, we accept donations of all heirloom, open-pollinated, non-GMO, non-patented seeds that are less than 3 years old.



# Welcome March - In-House Education

by MGJV Jane Browne

As we become informed and involved about trustworthy research-based horticultural, here are a few reminders about our 2025 continuing education hours from January 1 to December 31. Continuing education should be related to the growing, maintenance, education of ornamental and edible plants, and connecting with communities, habitats, and people. As Master Gardeners, we learn to evaluate the quality of information to inform others.

Here are three questions that will help us to evaluate:

1. Who is behind the information?
  - It is our goal to decide if we can trust the source that provides the information on the topic. Are they reliable and trustworthy?
2. What is the evidence in the topic?
  - Again, it is our job to investigate the evidence and determine if there is sufficient proof to believe it.
3. What do other sources say about the topic?
  - Are these trustworthy sources? We should verify additional information across multiple trustworthy sources.

For additional information on how to evaluate quality information refer to:

- Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Onboarding 2025
- Canvas Classroom Module 4

## Continuing Education Requirements and How to Count Them.

Thanks to the 86 SEWMG members joining Lisa Johnson, Dane County Extension Horticulture Educator, on January 15th. This was our first In-House Educational event. Her presentation was on pruning.

Following the February 1, 2025 member meeting Karla Geiger, the Greendale High School Garden Coordinator and fellow SEWMG member provided us with a short training on winter

sowing. Tables with containers, tools, dirt, seeds, and markers were arranged in the hallway.

Vegetables and flower seeds were planted using this simple and economical way. Members took a winter sown container home and the rest were placed in a sunny area in the Greendale School Garden. This event counts for one hour of education and community outreach. Enter: Greendale School District – Greendale School Garden for the organization and Karla Geiger for the contact person.

“Welcome March!” Spring is in the air and warmer days are coming! Join us on Thursday, March 13th for a free behind the scene tour at Ebert’s Greenhouse Village. W1795 Fox Road in Ixonia. Our private tour will meet at 2 p.m. in the Gift shop area.

On Tuesday, March 18th tune in to a virtual presentation about Monk Botanical Gardens in Wausau Wisconsin. Inside the 29 acres of Monk Gardens, there is a meditation garden, shade and hosta gardens, and an outdoor kitchen potager.

The In-House Education Committee is getting ready for the SEWMG Annual Volunteer Information Event on Saturday, April 12 at 9 a.m. The event will be at the Boerner Education Building in the lower level. Volunteers are asked to bring a poster board and information about the gardens or events in which you volunteer. There will also be a small Garden Market, where vendors will be selling their products. They will accept cash or check only. (There is no ATM at Boerner.) Also, volunteers are needed to help setup tables to assist presenters and vendors, and to greet. Please e-mail us if you would like a table and can help with setting up.

Jane Browne – [janeebrowne@icloud.com](mailto:janeebrowne@icloud.com)  
Karla - [karla.geiger@greendaleschools.org](mailto:karla.geiger@greendaleschools.org)  
Ellen Grissom – [ellengrissom4@gmail.com](mailto:ellengrissom4@gmail.com)

# Speakers Bureau Volunteer Opportunities

by MGJV Jean Akhter, Co-chair

If you are interested in embracing SEWMG’s goal of public education on approved gardening topics, we would love to hear from you. Feel free to contact us via email so we can add your name to our list of volunteers who are willing to make presentations. For those of you already making presentations, please reach out to us with any community requests you receive for presentations or support you need from us to facilitate your speaking needs.

To make presentations on behalf of SEWMG keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. You must be a member of SEWMG.
2. Begin by watching the Speakers Bureau training video on making presentations on behalf of SEWMG for important details. Follow the steps below.
  - Go to [sewmg.org](http://sewmg.org)
  - Click on the ACTIVITIES drop down menu
  - Select OUTREACH
  - Scroll down to Public Presentations click here tab
  - Login to your account (OR) create an account for new users

- Scroll down to Public Presentations
  - Press red start button to begin the training video
3. **Use only presentations that are on the SEWMG approved list.**
  4. Present research-based information about gardening and yard care.

Sharing your gardening knowledge with community organizations is a rewarding way to meet others and spread the love of gardening. We hope to hear from you soon.

Please email both Beth Peterson and Jean Akhter when corresponding with the Speakers Bureau. Beth coordinates scheduling with volunteers and community organizations. Jean works on program support and development and sending presentations to speakers.

Jean Akhter, Speaker’s Bureau Co-Chair  
[speakersbureau@sewmg.org](mailto:speakersbureau@sewmg.org)  
Beth Peterson, Speaker’s Bureau Co-Chair  
[beth.peterson@sewmg.org](mailto:beth.peterson@sewmg.org)

# Strategies for Managing Invasive Plants in Wisconsin

by Melinda Myers

Managing invasive plants can be overwhelming whether doing it yourself or encouraging others to do the same. Like any big project dividing it into smaller more achievable steps can help prevent you from giving up while still making progress to the desirable outcome.

Start by doing some research to avoid adding invasive and potentially invasive plants to your landscape. Check the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website](#) and encourage those you counsel to do the same. You'll find a list of restricted and prohibited plants in Wisconsin and detailed information on the identification, environmental impact, and control of these problem plants. I consult this site regularly to make sure I provide the best and most accurate information available.

This resource is especially helpful when ordering plants online. Although regulations for the sale, purchase, and possession of invasive species are in place, some online sellers are not aware, up-to-date, or concerned with following existing state and federal regulations. Just because you can purchase a plant does not mean it is allowed in Wisconsin.

The same goes for DIY or purchased door swags, wreaths, and arrangements containing teasel, bittersweet, phragmites, and other invasive plants. Their seeds are released from the decorations into nearby soil where they can grow and eventually spread into natural spaces.

Next, survey your landscape looking for and making note of any invasive plants present. Check out these videos "[Identifying Eight Aquatic Invasive Species in Wisconsin](#)" and "[Identifying Terrestrial Invasive Plants](#)" for help identifying some of the more common invasive plants. Eradication may not be possible, but you can help contain and reduce the spread of Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*), woodland forget-me-nots (*Myosotis sylvatica*), and a few others in the meantime by cutting them back and disposing of the trimmings before they go to seed.

Then step up your efforts and begin tackling problem plants with the goal of eliminating as many as possible. Start in areas with the lowest density of invasive plants and work your way to the area with the greatest density of invasive plants. The goal is to contain the spread as you work to eliminate the problem.

Control options include manual, mechanical, biological, and cultural. Understanding how the invasive plant grows and spreads will help you select the best control for the problem plant and your situation.

Digging and pulling works best for small plants, especially those growing in sandy or loose and damp soils. Weed wrench-type tools with long handles allow you to lever somewhat larger woody plants like buckthorn (*Rhamnus*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera*) out of the ground.

Covering plants like bishop's goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*) and crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*) with carpets, tarps or other impenetrable material can kill any of the plants, desired or invasive, in the covered area. If possible, mow or cut back the

plants first and leave the cover in place for at least one growing season.

Properly timed mowing can also help manage crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*) and slow the spread of bishop's goutweed. Mowing the plants back once or twice a season at the right time and for several subsequent years can help.

Although many of us are trying to eliminate the use of pesticides, properly applied herbicides may be the best option for some plants and some situations. The invasive plant, its stage of growth, and the presence of nearby desirable plants will help determine the best product and means of application. Herbicides are applied to the basal bark, cut stump, or foliage based on those factors. As always, read and follow label directions for the safest and most effective control.

Once the invasive plants are removed, dispose of them properly. You would hate to go to all that effort only to leave seeds, roots or rhizomes behind to repopulate the area. Many municipalities allow you to bag, label them as "Invasive Plants" and dispose of them in the garbage. Contact your municipality for disposal options in your area.

Continue to monitor your landscape for invasive plants. Look for sprouts from seeds that remain viable in the soil for years or blow in from surrounding properties. Pull or dig them as soon as they appear.

If you missed my **free webinar Strategies for Managing Invasive Plants on February 19** you can access and watch the recording at Milwaukee Public Library's YouTube channel listed under Adult programs. The event is sponsored by the WI DNR and WI Aquatic Invasive Species-UW Madison Extension and hosted by the Milwaukee Public Library. Working together, we can make a difference.

*Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including [Midwest Gardener's Handbook, Revised Edition](#), and [Small Space Gardening](#). She hosts The Great Courses "[How to Grow Anything](#)" [instant video and DVD series](#) and the nationally syndicated [Melinda's Garden Moment radio program](#). Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was the *Plant Doctor* on WTMJ radio in Milwaukee for over 20 years. Myers' website is [www.MelindaMyers.com](http://www.MelindaMyers.com).*



# A Seed is Just a Seed --- Right?

by MGV Cheryl Lausten

As you are planning this year's gardens, give some thought to the type of seeds you will plant. I am not referring to the variety of flowers or vegetables, but the actual type of seeds. Seed labels distinguish four main groups – heirloom, hybrid, GMO, and organic. What is the difference, and which will you choose?

**Heirloom seeds** represent a connection to the past. These open-pollinated varieties have been passed down through generations, often for 50 years or more, cherished for their unique flavors, characteristics, and historical significance. Because they are open-pollinated, heirloom seeds "come true," meaning saved seeds will produce plants with the same traits as the parent plant. This allows gardeners to save seeds year after year, preserving valuable genetic diversity and developing varieties specifically adapted to their local growing conditions. While heirlooms may not always be as high-yielding or disease-resistant as hybrids, they offer a unique taste of history and contribute to the preservation of our agricultural heritage.

**Hybrid seeds**, often labeled F1, are the result of cross-pollinating two distinct parent plants with desirable traits. This intentional crossing creates offspring that often exhibit enhanced vigor, disease resistance, and yield. Think of it as combining the best qualities of two different varieties. However, the catch with hybrids is that their seeds will not "come true" if saved. The next generation will likely display unpredictable characteristics, making it necessary to purchase new hybrid seeds each season. While hybrids offer increased performance and consistency, they may lack the unique flavor profiles of heirloom varieties.

**Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) seeds** are engineered in a lab using advanced techniques to alter their genetic makeup.

This process differs significantly from traditional cross-breeding. GMOs are often designed for specific traits, such as herbicide tolerance or insect resistance. While proponents argue that GMOs can increase yields, the lack of comprehensive long-term studies on GMO safety raise concerns regarding their potential environmental impact and long-term health effects. Furthermore, many GMO seeds are patented, restricting seed saving. Currently, most GMO seeds are for commercial use, but some varieties of seeds and seedlings are available for the home gardener.

**Organic seeds** prioritize ecological health. Grown without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, or GMOs, organic seeds must be certified by a recognized organization. This certification ensures adherence to strict standards, guaranteeing a product free from harmful chemicals and promoting biodiversity. While organic seeds are always non-GMO, it is important to note that they can be either open-pollinated or hybrid. Choosing organic supports environmentally sound agriculture and may offer benefits in terms of flavor and nutritional content.

Understanding the differences between these seed types can help you make informed decisions. Whether you prioritize organic practices, high yields, unique flavors, or preserving agricultural history, there's a seed type to match your needs. Resources like the Non-GMO Project, Seed Savers Exchange, and the USDA National Organic Program offer valuable information to further your seed education.

## Spring Logowear Sale

by MGV Karla Geiger

Coming soon to your email will be the link to our upcoming Spring SEWMG logowear online sale. We are working with the current apparel vendor to have some cash and carry items at the April volunteer opportunities event, as well as new swag to promote our organization and encourage new membership.

There will be plenty of functional items for all members. Logowear makes a lovely gift for Mother's Day, Father's Day and Just Because You are an Amazing Gardener.



# Realtors Home & Garden Show 2025

by MGVs Valorie Sangland and Heide Burns, Special Events Co-Chairs

SEWMG will again have a booth at the Realtors Home & Garden Show in March. A group of our Special Events volunteers is working to refresh our Successful Container Gardening booth, last presented in 2015. Registration opened February 3rd for the seventy shifts working at our booth #1234 which is situated adjacent to the lovely landscaping & garden displays in the Garden Promenade. I would like you to help SEWMG educate the public regarding all aspects of Container Gardening. Volunteering perks include a free pass to the Home & Garden Show (which you can enjoy at your leisure before or after your scheduled shift) as well as quality volunteer hours. We'll also have nice giveaways for the public again this year, so encourage family and friends to stop by our booth anytime during the show. If you do, snap some photos of the volunteers interacting with the public and send them to me at: [VJSLAND@GMAIL.com](mailto:VJSLAND@GMAIL.com).



**The 2025 Show Dates & Hours are:**

- Friday, March 21: 10 am - 7 pm
- Saturday, March 22: 10 am - 7 pm
- Sunday, March 23: 10 am - 5 pm
- Monday, March 24: CLOSED
- Tuesday, March 25: CLOSED
- Wednesday, March 26: 4 pm - 8 pm
- Thursday, March 27: 4 pm - 8 pm
- Friday, March 28: 10 am - 7 pm
- Saturday, March 29: 10 am - 7 pm
- Sunday, March 30: 10 am - 5 pm

Five members of our Speaker’s Bureau will be making presentations at the Solutions Stage this year. What a wonderful opportunity for the public to learn from our talented Master Gardeners! Please stop by and show your support if you’re at the show one of these days.

I need to take this opportunity to let you all know that Dawn Scheer decided to retire from the co-chair role for Special Events to spend more time traveling and has passed the scheduling duties on to Heide Burns. Dawn is mentoring Heide through the transition, so all the scheduling communications you are used to seeing from Dawn will now be coming from Heide. Heide has also agreed to become the new co-chair for Special Events. My thanks to Dawn for all her diligence, dedication and organization helping with scheduling, set-up, tear-down, soliciting seed donations and decision-making (major and minor) over the past few years. Dawn, your counsel has been wise, and you are an amazing asset to SEWMG!

Date	Speaker	Presentation
Fri, March 21 4:30pm	Mary Jane Swedberg	Invasives
Sat, March 22 4:30pm	Diane Roznowski	Raised Beds
Sun, Mar 23 3:00pm	Kirsten Villegas	Seed Starting 101
Fri, Mar 28 4:30pm	Jim Gill	Container Gardening
Sun, Mar 30 3:00pm	Kirsten Villegas	Composting Short Course





*Find us on Facebook or Instagram*



*Instagram*



*Facebook*

## Master Gardener - Information/Contact Information

---

### *For more information:*

#### *Good Earth News Editors:*

Sandy Manning

[sandymanning@gmail.com](mailto:sandymanning@gmail.com)

Janet Wintersberger

[jhw53045@gmail.com](mailto:jhw53045@gmail.com)

Laurie Baker, Seasonal Photography

On the Web

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

#### *State:*

Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Program Office - University of Wisconsin-Madison email:

[wimastergardener@extension.wisc.edu](mailto:wimastergardener@extension.wisc.edu)

#### *Our Mission Statement*

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