

Winnebago County Master Gardeners

Newsletter

April 2019

Mission Statement

Our purpose is to provide horticultural education, community service and environmental stewardship for our community in affiliation with the University of Wisconsin Extension Program.

“You know you’re a *gardener* when everything you see becomes a planter.”



What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am a perennial, wetland grass native to North America which grows to a height of three feet and a diameter of two feet in zones 3-7. My plant forms clumps from which in mid-summer seedheads spray out from the center to form an excellent effect resembling a fox's tail. My roots are fibrous and my leaves are simple and alternate while linear in shape. I grow best in part to full sun and in loam, or clay soil that is moist or wet although I tolerate periods of drying.

My plant is open pollinated (by birds, insects, wind). I can be found near water on moist open ground in swamps, prairie swales, lowland forests, wet ditches, ravines and along the edges of marshes, springs, lakes, and ponds. I can be used as an ornamental grass near water gardens, in erosion control and in rain gardens. I attract birds and am deer resistant.

WCMGA Contacts

Check your membership guide for contact information.

Co-Presidents: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz

Vice President: Britton Dake

Secretary: Susan Raasch

Treasurer: Joni Pagel

Advisor: Kimberly Miller

Newsletter Compilation: Anne Murphy



We would love your help! If you are interested in contributing in a future newsletter by writing an article or submitting a photo, please let me know by the 15th of each month by emailing pakster0605@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Letter from your Presidents: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz

"April hath put a spirit of youth in everything" *William Shakespeare*

Ok, Mother Nature, finally! There is green under all that snow! Who knew! And all the water we have had, we know will help the soil - maybe a little too much at times - and we thank you.

We are finally getting our shirt sleeves rolled up for the season at hand, and what a welcome it is! We hope everyone has browsed all their catalogs and have made their planting choices. Some of us were seen outside in March, pruning the trees and shrubs that we could not get to in February - the ones that our little friends have not already pruned! It is a joyous season to watch the resurgence of our beloved perennials.

Our March workshop was a success, with 31 attendees learning all about genetics of potatoes from Max Martin of the Sturgeon Bay Peninsular Research Station - University of Madison. Mark Konlock was also on hand to tell us about the Green Bay Botanical Gardens and the many new plantings. Check out their website to find out about the free admission days coming up! Also please stay tuned to what is going on with upcoming workshops and bus trips.

Projects should be underway by now with their plans for the season - and we hope everyone received some insight into each of the 17 long-term projects at our March business meeting. Thank you all for checking it out, and that you were able to find something of interest to you. If you were not at the meeting, you can find descriptions in our membership booklet of each of the projects, with the name of the lead to contact.

If you missed our seminar, there is still an opportunity to get some education hours - [Outagamie](#) and [Fond du Lac](#) Co MGs hold their seminars in April. You can check out their websites. Also, the Paine has educational opportunities, along with volunteer hours that can be obtained. Check out their website for the classes; and contact Ginny Slattery for your volunteering.

Our April speaker at the business meeting is another of our members, **Eric Kropp**. He will enlighten us and entertain us with the facts and beauty of African Violets.

We know it is a little early in the year, but could you all start thinking and maybe considering a garden walk this summer? We have a couple of ideas, but would really enjoy members sharing their hard earned efforts. Thank you!

And lastly, it's not a hoax! An email from WiscList ListManager is for real, and members should respond "unhold" to continue to receive information from WIMGA.

Now get ready, put on your gloves and start your garden wagons!

KATHY AND LINDA

Hoya Thrives on Neglect

By Lawanda Jungwirth

When the leaves are off the low branch of the oak tree in winter, the view from my recliner lines up perfectly with my neighbors' kitchen window. Even if I were a nosy neighbor, I couldn't see into their kitchen if I wanted to because a houseplant called hoya completely obscures their window.

While my neighbor is an extremely skilled gardener, her green thumb isn't necessary for growing hoya. They are legendary for flourishing on neglect.

[Hoya](#) is also called wax plant because both its leaves and flowers appear to be carved from wax. Some hoyas produce spectacular, sometimes fragrant flowers that range in size from ¼" to a whopping 4". In general, the smaller-flowered varieties have the strongest fragrance.

Hoyas are usually climbing or trailing vines, sometimes up to 20' in length, although some varieties grow upright.

Hoyas are pretty much indestructible, but like most plants have preferences that, if met, produce the best growth results. They like the partial sun of an eastern or western exposure. Positioning the plants too close to a true southern exposure may result in sunburn on the leaves. They prefer indoor temperatures above 60° with low humidity.

Soil in the pot should be left to dry almost completely before watering thoroughly. Watering every two weeks is a good place to start and even less frequently in winter. It's a good idea to let the water sit in an open container for 24 hours to come to room temperature before watering the plant to avoid stressing it.

Hoyas can be fertilized very lightly once a month spring through fall, but discontinue fertilizing in winter. Pruning can be done anytime to keep the plant in bounds, usually after flowering. Most hoyas bloom on new growth so hard pruning slows that down a bit. However, some varieties bloom from old flower spurs so you wouldn't want to prune those off. If you don't have information as to how your hoya plant flowers, experiment with pruning and not pruning a little and observe carefully where and when the flowers appear.

Flowering is initiated by factors that vary by variety. Day length, light intensity and night temperatures are triggers. Some respond to short day length, while others to longer days. Some need at least six feet of vining growth before they will flower.

Hoyas like tight containers and should be re-potted only when completely pot-bound. Transplant to a container just one size up from the current pot.

To share your hoya with a friend, take a cutting in early spring that is at least 4" long with 2-6 leaves. Place the cutting in water until it roots or plant it directly into soil, watering well.

When I was searching mail order nurseries for sources of hoya, one company offered 21 varieties! With that many choices, there should be a perfect fit for every gardener.

Unusual Heirloom Vegetables

By Lawanda Jungwirth

I received an heirloom seed catalog in the mail this year that I hadn't seen before. Perusing it was eye-opening!

Heirloom seeds are those that have been saved and passed down through the generations, sometimes for hundreds of years. They are from open-pollinated rather than hybrid plants and come true to their parent plants, something seeds from hybrids do not do.

The catalog had nearly a thousand kinds of seeds, some for plants I had never heard of and others that were just strange. Here is a sampling.

The [Chinese Python Snake Bean](#) grows to 60" long and 1 ½" thick. When harvested under 30" it is used like green beans, and when larger, like a summer squash. It is most often stir-fried, or the flesh of the larger beans is scraped out and used like tomato paste.

Instead of producing a big head of broccoli, [Early Purple Sprouting Broccoli](#) produces many smaller dark purple sprouts. The heads are so dark in color as to look black almost as if they had been hit by frost and turned rotten.

In the same vein is a carrot I am certain I won't be growing. [Black Nebula](#), while high in the same anthocyanins you find in blueberries and grapes, looks just like the carrots I grew last year that rotted in the ground after the heavy fall rains. However, Black Nebula is reputed to be delicious raw or cooked. Unlike many dark-colored vegetables, it retains its dark color when cooked.

[Celtuce](#) was introduced in China in the 1840s and is an unusual lettuce grown not for its leaves but for its giant, crunchy, foot-tall ribbed stems. Very high in Vitamin C, the stems are eaten raw or stir-fried.

[Bitter melon](#) looks like a warty green cucumber and grows on vines just like cucumbers. Various kinds are native to India, China or Japan and maturity dates vary from 65 to 120 days. Bitter melon is rich in iron, beta-carotene, calcium and potassium and is used in stir-fries, soups and herbal teas.

Winning the ugliest pepper award is [Apocalypse Scorpion Hot Pepper](#). Possibly the world's hottest pepper, the fruit looks like a warty red mess.

Another messy looking offering is [Reisetomate](#), which looks like a big bunch of cherry tomatoes all stuck together. "Reise" is German for "travel" or "journey" and it is also called "Travel Tomatoz" because it can be torn apart a piece at a time without need for a knife. The taste has been described as sour, strong and acidic. Maybe taste isn't its best feature, but it's a garden novelty nonetheless.

[Job's Tears](#) might be an herb, a grain, a vegetable or an ornamental plant. The large bead-like seeds of the plant are used to make necklaces and rosary beads. After the seeds' husks have been removed, the grains inside are used in brothy dishes and to make porridge. Some cookbook authors have called Job's Tears "the next cult gluten-free grain" and an "unusual, versatile and beneficial little weirdo."



Need Education Hours?

Upcoming Paine Art Center and Gardens Educational Presentations of interest for MGs for educational hours, all held at 1:00 PM in the Conservatory:

April 1: WORMS!, Bernie Williams (DNR)

June 24: Annual Garden Tour, Sheila Glaske

Ask a Plant Health Advisor _____

Submitted by Mary Shepard

The Plant Health Team will begin to respond to horticultural inquiries in April and continues through October. Last year the group responded to 93 questions regarding a wide range of plant, disease, insect, and “critter” problems submitted via phone, email, and walk-in visits from community members. The category with the most questions was trees– 25% of the total. One topic of interest was how to care for fruit trees. **Kimberly Miller** wrote an article for an office newsletter last year about pruning apple trees and it follows here. If pruning multiple trees or removing disease tissue from trees, remember to disinfect tools between trees or cuts.

“Time to Prune Apple Trees

Even though snow is still covering the ground and temperatures are for the most part below freezing, now is an excellent time to prune your apple trees. This timing is late enough to prevent cold injury to the wood and yet early enough to still be dormant. Pruning opens up the dense canopy that allows better air movement, light penetration, reduces pest and disease pressure, and enhances better fruit quality. Height of the tree can also be reduced for easy access during harvest period and for better spray coverage. The cutoff date to prune fruit trees is before the bud break. Following a few key tips will result in healthier and more productive trees for years to come. Please refer to the [UW-Extension publication A1959](#) on “Training and Pruning Apple Trees” for more detailed information.”

While checking out this publication you will find several others on selecting and caring for apple and other fruit trees.

WCMGA Leaf Casting Program & Iris Garden Tour - Saturday, June 8, 2019

A limited number of places are available for a leaf casting class and tour/visit of iris and daylily gardens at Willow Creek Farm and Gardens, 7 miles east of Wautoma on Highway 21. Willow Creek now grows the irises that were once part of Argyle Acres.

This program is for WC Master Gardeners only at this time. If there are open spots remaining on May 24, I will open it to non-Master Gardeners.

Feel free to car-pool or ride share (no transportation provided) to the Gardens on Saturday, June 8, 2019. **Please be advised that THERE ARE NO RESTROOMS AT THE FARM/GARDENS**, though there is a wayside about ¼ mile down the road, or stop in Red Granite before you arrive. Allow 45 minutes to an hour to drive, depending on where you are coming from.

The day's program:

8:45 – 9:00 AM arrival at Willow Creek, **please be prompt!**

9:00 to 9:15 AM introduction to Willow Creek

9:15 to @ 10:15 AM leaf casting, Leaves provided, or you may bring your own leaf

10:15 on, Master Gardeners can cut a bouquet to take home and place Iris/Lily orders to be picked up in late August/early September.

<http://www.shop.argyleacres.com/main.sc>

The day's program is limited to the first 20 **paid** respondents. The cost is \$20 by check, payable to WCMGA and mailed to: **Valerie Stabenow, 6400 Paulson Rd. Winneconne 54986** There are **no refunds**, but you may send someone in your place.

Detach and Mail:



Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Amt. Enclosed _____ Check # _____

Member Business Meeting Minutes - March 12, 2019

Kathy Schultz, co-president, called the meeting to order.

Speaker: Susan Forbes presented a PowerPoint “Native landscaping it’s for the birds”. Susan touched on what birds need: food, plants, cover, space and water. Most beneficial for the birds are native plants and trees. When preparing your native landscape, analyze your site, start small, need water, check weed laws and necessary permits, use native plants, various species.

Treasurer’s Report: In Joni Pagel’s absence, **Kathy Schultz** reviewed the Cash reconciliation report for the period of February 2019. The annual budget was approved at the March Board meeting.

Secretary’s report: The February Membership meeting was canceled due to inclement weather, no minutes. The February Board meeting minutes are posted on the website.

Project Update: Britton Dake invited any members who want information about what Project Leads do, to attend the Project Leads meeting March 19th at 6:00 P.M.
UW Extension update: **Kimberly Miller** gave out her new email address: kimberly.miller@wisc.edu. Her county and extension emails will be replaced with this new email address. Kimberly asked for input on the Master Gardener/Extension logo. Members should email her with their suggestions. There is a June timeframe for rolling out the new hours reporting system. Mike Maddox has an article on the new online reporting system in the Volunteer Vibe. Keep track of hours on paper until then. Ashley is a county employee; her email address will remain the same.

Education Committee Update: Roy Anne Moulton updated the members on: Trip to WPT had 49 attendees. The Winter Escape~Summer Dreams Conference had 161 attendees. Thank you to all who donated the raffle baskets. The March 9th speakers at Coughlin Center had 31 attendees. The Philadelphia trip has 25 people signed up. The group dinner, before the trip, will be cut to make up the money shortage of 5 people. Roy Anne will confirm flight reservation on 3/13/ 2019. Cement leaf workshop is scheduled in June. New Paine exhibition “The Mystical Arts of Tibet” will feature Tibetan monks creating a sacred Mandala with millions of grain of colorful sand. **Valerie Stabenow** showed tools available on the A.M. Leonard website. 1. Root assassin: 48” \$51.99, 32” \$39.99; 2. Cobra: 62” overall/54” handle \$62.39, the 13”\$ 24.99. Group price, shipping cost savings

available.

State Representatives Report: Deby Voyles reports that there will be a 2020 Annual Conference. A host stepped forward. Details will be forthcoming. Milkweed trials for the Monarch butterfly venture are available.

New Business: Worm Casting packaging April 1st needs 9 volunteers, signup sheet on the refreshment table. Book Club is scheduled for March 25 at 1 PM at the Neenah Library. Book being discussed is "The Secret life of trees". Next book to be read and reviewed is "Lab girl". Wild Ones plant sale more information on website: foxvalleyarea.wildones.org. Rock the Block wants MG volunteers to advise on yard improvement projects. Paine MG volunteers are invited to attend meetings at the Paine on the 1st Monday of the month. These meetings meet Education hour requirements. Golden trowel Selection Criteria Committee being formed. **Sandra Gollhofer** and **Stan Meyer** volunteered to be on the committee, need a few more members to round out the committee. Members interested in the Golden Trowel Committee please contact Kathy or Linda.

Door prizes winners: **Marge Menacher, Sandra Gollhofer, Lisa Dahlke, Petey Clark, Matt Miller, Susan Forbes, and Deby Voyles.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by **Stan Meyer**; second by **Diana Dougherty**.

Upcoming Events - See Calendar for April Events

May 5-10: Philadelphia Trip

May 21: Education Committee, Benvenuto's 5:30 PM

June 8: Willow Creek Iris trip - leaf casting class

June 17-21, 2019: International Master Gardener Conference, Valley Forge, PA

June 24: Paine Art Center Presentation, 1 PM

Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn



I am fox sedge. Order: Cyperales. Family: Cyperaceae – Sedge family. Genus: Carex L. – sedge. Species: Carex vulpinoidea Michx. – fox sedge. Other names: American fox sedge and Brown fox sedge. Fox sedge spreads rapidly and may be weedy or invasive in some regions or habitats if not properly managed. This plant grows in a wide variety of moist to very wet soils, making it an excellent choice for rain gardens. It can be seen in the rain garden located at the entrance to the Coughlin Center.

References: *USDA Plants Database and associated links.*

2019 Roadside Invasive Vegetation Workshops

By University of Wisconsin-Extension and 4-Control

Attendees will learn how to

- Identify common roadside invasive plants
- Properly apply management methods to optimize control and minimize cost
- Map invasive plants within your municipality
- Synergize efforts with pollinator habitat

Tours of plots that demonstrate

- Broadcast and spot herbicide applications
- Mowing timing and frequency
- Use of plant growth regulators to reduce mowing frequency

Dates/Location: July 2019

in Brown, Chippewa, Iowa, Kenosha, and Portage Counties

Cost: Free

Includes BBQ lunch, coach bus tour, identification guides






Info/Register:

visit go.wisc.edu/26tw7x
or email Leo Roth at NLROTH2@wisc.edu



Easy on YOU! Ergonomic Tools for Gardening at Any Age

One of our speaker sessions at this year's Winter Escapes introduced some tools that can make our gardening lives easier. The WCMGA Education Committee researched a few of these tools and located them, all available on Amazon.com. The tools include the Root Assassin, similar to a Parsnip Predator, but with added side serrations for improved cutting; the short and long-handled Cobras; and the Easi-Grip series, consisting of an arm cuff, with the set of add-on tools, that work with the cuff. WCMGA is not endorsing any of these tools, only presenting them for your consideration, as members expressed interest in the ones shown here. Use your own Amazon account to order one or all of them.

	CobraHead Long Handle Weeder & Cultivator Garden Tool - Forged Steel Blade - Natural 60-Inch Hardwood Handle - Ergonomically Designed for Digging, Edging & Planting - Perfect for Big Gardening Jobs In Stock Shipped from: CobraHead LLC Gift options not available. Learn more Delete Save for later Compare with similar items	\$56.95
	CobraHead Original Weeder & Cultivator Garden Hand Tool - Forged Steel Blade - Recycled Plastic Handle - Ergonomically Designed for Digging, Edging & Planting - Gardeners Love Our Most Versatile Tool In stock on March 24, 2019 Eligible for FREE Shipping <input type="checkbox"/> This is a gift Learn more Delete Save for later Compare with similar items	\$25.95
	Easi Grip Garden Tools Set of 3 Only 16 left in stock - order soon. Shipped from: The Wright Stuff, Inc. Gift options not available. Learn more Delete Save for later	\$39.95
	Easi Grip Arm Support Cuff Only 9 left in stock - order soon. Shipped from: The Wright Stuff, Inc. Gift options not available. Learn more Delete Save for later	\$9.95
	ROOT ASSASSIN 48" Garden Shovel/Saw - THE ORIGINAL & BEST Award Winning Combo Gardening Spade Tool, Yard, Root, Stump, Tree Removal, Landscaping, Trimming Specialized Digging (48" Shovel/Saw)	\$46.99



Invasive Species Drive Extinctions Globally

A recent study used the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species database to compare extinctions driven by native vs. invasive (alien) species. The database lists 12 categories of extinction drivers, including alien species, native species, hunting and harvesting, biological resource use, and agriculture. The study looked at 935 plant and animal species that have gone extinct since the year 1500 and have one or more extinction drivers listed in the database. They found that alien species were drivers in 33.4% of animal extinctions and 25.5% of plant extinctions, compared to native species being listed in 2.7% of animal and 4.6% of plant extinctions. The authors conclude, based on this analysis of the IUCN database, that the biogeographic origin of a species is indeed relevant to its potential ecological impact. You can read more about the study [here](#).

The study also touches on the discussion of whether invasive species act as passengers of ecological change (they are a consequence of other environmental changes) or whether they drive changes. The results of the study point to invasive species driving change. If you want to learn more about this discussion, you can view the video (~10 min) below from our 2017 webinar series.

WCMGA Projects

Check your Member Guide for contact information.

Project	Project Lead(s)
Algoma Town Hall	Petey Clark
Butterfly Garden Miravida Living Oshkosh	Jane Kuhn
Carter Memorial Library, Omro	Pat Behm/Linda Petek
Octagon House, Neenah	Jerry Robak
Invasive Species	Sue Egner/Valerie Stabenow/Audrey Ruedinger
Morgan House	Kathy Schultz
Neenah Public Library	Tamara Erickson
Oshkosh Area Humane Society	Julie Miller/Matt Miller
Paine Gardens & Arboretum	Virginia Slattery
Park View Cutting Garden	Bill Weber
Park View Prairie Garden	Eric Kropp
Park View Flower Arranging	Lil Hansche
Park View Vegetable Garden	Tom Weber
Farmer's Market	Dorothy Gayhart-Kunz/Janet Priebe/ Synda Jones/Patty Schmitz
Plant Health Advisors	Patty Schmitz/Mary Shepard
Shattuck Park, Neenah	Diane Iott
Sullivan's Woods	Linda Loker

Project Leads: If you'd like your meetings listed on the calendar, please email information to Anne Murphy pakster0605@yahoo.com.

April 2019

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
	1 Paine Art Center presentation 1:00 PM	2 Board Mtg. 6PM	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Business Mtg. 6PM	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Education Committee mtg.5:30 PM Benvenuto's	17	18	19	20
21 	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

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