



# Winnebago County Master Gardeners

## Newsletter

April 2020

### 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.

*"Tough times don't last. Tough people do. Hang in there."*



## What am I?

*By Jane Kuhn*

I am a native, wetland sedge which grows to a height and width of 2-4 feet in zones 3-7. I grow in mounds of arching foliage which is light green and glossy. My narrow leaves are evergreen through most of the range and grow up to 3 feet long and a little over 1/8 inch wide. In spring many culms rise to a height a little shorter than the foliage, each bearing sturdy pencil shaped green flower spikes with needle-like bracts. Seeds form by late summer and spikes change to a deep brown color. I prefer partial shade to full sun and tolerate fluctuating water levels and periods of drying.

My plant is easy to propagate from seed or by division and gradually forms small clumps from short underground rhizomes. I am valuable for wetland restoration and erosion control. Plants can be used to hold ground on shorelines, in wet meadows, stormwater projects and wildlife gardens. Because I grow in a variety of moist to very wet soils, I am an excellent choice for rain gardens. I attract pollinators and song birds, am deer resistant and tolerate black walnut.

## WCMGA Contacts

*Check your membership guide for contact information.*

**Co-Presidents:** Ed Dombrowski & Bob Kneepkens

**Vice President:** Britton Dake

**Secretary:** Susan Raasch

**Treasurer:** Deby Voyles

**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](mailto:pakster0605@yahoo.com). Thank you!

## Letter from your Presidents: Ed Dombrowski & Bob Kneepkens

We hope everyone is in good health as we all deal with the coronavirus (COVID-19).

A recommendation from the Center Disease Control, to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), is to put distance between yourself and other people. You can maintain social distancing and still earn continuing education credits by visiting the Master Gardener [Plants Plus](#) website for online training. These trainings offer up to 2 hours of continuing education for completing the training modules.

We had a very successful March business meeting starting with a 1.25-hour presentation from Bill Nettelhorst. He discussed principles, techniques, and successes with lasagna gardening. Below are the references Bill referred to during his presentation. The link to his YouTube videos is found at [Winter Gardening with Pam and Billy](#). His Facebook page is "William Nettelhorst". Books referenced by Bill include the following:

Author: Patricia Lanza

Lasagna Gardening

Lasagna Gardening for Small Spaces

*(Editor: These books are available at the library.)*

Author: Eliot Coleman

Four-Season Harvest

The Winter Harvest Handbook

Our project leads hosted a sign-up event during the one-hour business meeting. Attendees had the opportunity to check out each of the projects, ask questions and sign-up to help. Thank you to all the project leads for being a very important resource to the association's projects. For members not at the meeting and wondering about these projects, the membership guide provides descriptions of each project along with the project leads.

The Board implemented a consent agenda for meetings. A consent agenda groups routine, procedural, informational, and self-explanatory non-controversial items together. Board members review these items before the meeting vote in a single motion for an up or down vote. Anyone, however, can request a specific item be moved to the full agenda for individual attention, discussion, or clarification. This approach provides more time for discussion of other complex agenda items.

The membership guide is updated to reflect changes to member contact information. Remember, you can update your personal information in the [Online Reporting System \(ORS\)](#), **but this information is not transferred to the membership guide**. You will need to submit any changes for the membership guide to [Ashley Rolph](#).

## In Memory of Dr. Bill Weber

By Jane Kuhn

We were saddened on March 20, 2020, by the passing of Master Gardener Dr. William (Bill) Weber. As a Master Gardener since 2007, Dr. Bill chaired the Cutting Gardens at Park View, in addition to volunteering there for over 30 years as medical director and in a number of other capacities. He was dedicated to therapeutically enhancing the well-being of the disabled and elderly residents of Park View through communing with nature in the gardens. He enjoyed making beautiful bouquets as well as distributing cherry tomatoes to the



residents while interacting with them, often bringing extras from home to make sure there were enough to go around. He was always proud of the two full beds of zinnias he planted with his brother Tom, as he knew these would make great bouquets. In recent years he built a raised bed rose garden and planted a row of fruit trees in honor of Dr. John Procknow, one of the original creators of the Park View gardens. He also initiated straw bale gardening which fascinated residents as the potatoes were harvested in fall. Dr. Bill also shared his knowledge in a presentation on the history of Park View Health Center. It is well-documented that physical and mental benefits are derived from participation in garden activities or simple exposure to a garden environment. Dr. Bill was a kind, caring, gracious gardener and person which showed through in this endeavor. We will miss you Dr. Bill.

## Plants Use Chemical Warfare to Compete

By Lawanda Jungwirth

Competition in the plant world is fierce as the various species battle it out for sunlight, water, nutrients and space. Plants use a variety of ways to get the upper hand, some actually resorting to chemical warfare to crush the competition. This process is called allelopathy.

Besides the lovely way the word “allelopathy” rolls off the tongue - uh·lee´·luh·pa·thee – it’s an interesting process.

Allelopathy is the chemical inhibition of one plant species by another. The “inhibitory” chemical is released into the environment where it affects the development and growth of neighboring plants. It does this by affecting respiration, cell division, photosynthesis and water and nutrient uptake.

Allelopathic effects include leaf wilting and yellowing, stunted growth, or death of part or all of a plant. Allelopathic chemicals can be present in any part of a plant including foliage, flowers, seeds, fruits, pollen, stems, bark and roots.

The most well-known example of allelopathy is the black walnut tree. Gardeners and landscapers often struggle to find plants that will survive under or near black walnuts. The trees produce a chemical called juglone that can damage plants growing near them. Juglone is released through roots, leaves that drop to the ground, husks of nuts, and even from rain drops that drip through the tree.

You can find extensive lists of plants both susceptible to and resistant to juglone on the internet. There has been very little scientific study into plant sensitivity to juglone so the lists are mostly based on observation and should be considered guidelines, not guarantees.

Many factors affect juglone sensitivity, including level of contact, health of the plant, soil environment, and the overall site conditions. In general, allelopathic effects can be somewhat reduced by cleaning up fallen leaves and fruit, and maintaining high organic matter in the soil so that healthy soil microbial populations metabolize the juglone.

Along with black walnut, there are other plants that produce juglone including butternut, English walnut, shagbark hickory, sugar maple, tree-of-heaven, hackberry, American sycamore, cottonwood, black cherry, red oak, black locust and American elm.

Juglone isn’t the only allelopathic chemical, just the most well-known. Many other plants produce chemicals that inhibit competitors. You may have noticed that grass or other plants do not grow well under your bird feeder after the birds have dropped sunflower seed hulls. The hulls are allelopathic. Some invasive plants, including garlic mustard, emit chemicals into the soil from their roots that makes the growing environment inhospitable to other plants that would be more beneficial to the ecosystem.

But allelopathy isn’t all bad. In agriculture, growing a selectively allelopathic plant as a companion plant to a valued unsusceptible crop can suppress certain weeds while not disturbing the growth of the main crop, a great alternative to using toxic herbicides for weed control. In the home landscape, a mulch of shredded black walnut leaves, hulls or bark chips could provide weed control in an area of non-susceptible plants.

## 'Sun King' chosen Perennial Plant of the Year

By Lawanda Jungwirth

The Perennial Plant Association has announced [\*Aralia cordata\* 'Sun King'](#) as its choice for 2020 Perennial Plant of the Year.

'Sun King' is a high-impact plant that will provide a large, bright pop of color to shade or part-shade gardens. In appearance, it is like a very large spirea, although the stems are not woody. It dies back each fall, but by mid-summer grows 4-6 feet tall and nearly as wide.

Vivid yellow shoots emerge in spring followed by bright gold compound leaves held on reddish-brown stems that can be up to three feet long. Later in summer the foliage color depends upon how much sun the plant gets. In part shade, leaves remain golden. In heavy shade, leaves turn a beautiful lime green.

In late July through September small white flowers cover the plant, attracting many pollinators. The flowers eventually develop into tiny, inedible dark purple berries.

You might be concerned that something so large and fast growing will spread and take over your garden, but that isn't the case. 'Sun King' does very little reseeding or suckering.

It benefits from a slight pinching or cutting back in May which will encourage branching. During periods of drought or if you find you've planted it in a too-sunny spot, it will need supplemental water. It will thank you for placing it in a well-drained soil and for the occasional addition of compost. 'Sun King' has no serious insect or disease problems and deer will leave it alone.

Obviously because of its size, 'Sun King' belongs in the back of the garden bed. It pairs well with hostas, ferns, and shade-loving maroon-leafed plants. It will also do well in a large container.

'Sun King' is native to Japan where the young shoots are blanched or pickled and considered a culinary delicacy. The flavor is described as "asparagus-like" or "lemony." The roots are also eaten and are prepared like parsnips.

Are you wondering how a plant comes to be chosen Perennial Plant of the Year? Perennial Plant Association members vote each summer on the following year's plant. At that time, each member is allowed to nominate two plants for future consideration. A committee reviews the nominated plants, which may number 400, and narrows the field to three or four to be placed on the ballot.

Plant nominees need to satisfy the following criteria: suitable for a wide range of climates, low-maintenance, relatively pest-free and disease resistant, multiple seasons of ornamental interest, and be readily available at garden centers the year it is elected.

You might call 'Sun King' the Susan Lucci of the plant world. It has been nominated over and over for Perennial Plant of the Year and this year finally took the prize. That doesn't in any way lessen the honor though. It's just that there are so many deserving perennials that competition for the top spot is fierce.

**Emerald Ash Borer: Beautiful, but Dangerous**



The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a beautiful, small, metallic green beetle; that is deadly ... if you are an Ash tree! It is an invasive wood-boring beetle that attacks all species of ash trees (except the Mountain Ash) in Wisconsin. An EAB beetle will devour the tissue under the bark. This green menace has wreaked havoc on millions of ash trees in the Midwest and if not controlled it could wipe out the ash tree species in North America. The larvae feed on the cambium layer which is the crucial layer between the bark and wood of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Woodpeckers like EAB larvae; creating heavy woodpecker damage to the trees.

A good source for photos and descriptions of EAB infestation and damage is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources [Emerald Ash Borer Detection Field Guide](https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/UrbanForests/documents/EABToolBox/EAB-fieldGuide.pdf)  
<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/UrbanForests/documents/EABToolBox/EAB-fieldGuide.pdf> .

EAB was first introduced into the United States on shipping crates from China, where it is native. Since its first detection in 2002, it has spread to most states east of the Mississippi and a number of states west of the Mississippi and was first found in Wisconsin in 2008. EAB can move to new areas when humans carry it there, usually on firewood. The entire state of Wisconsin is under a quarantine. So what does that mean? Do not haul firewood around the state; you could be carrying EAB to a new area, and you could be carrying other pests and diseases as well.

If you have a high value ash tree, you should consider treating it for EAB. EAB treatments are suggested only for high value trees located within Wisconsin. Due to the expense of insecticide treatments for EAB, consider the value of a particular ash tree in relation to insecticide treatment costs. Proper use of EAB insecticides can help maintain the health of high value ash trees over time.

Ash trees can be a valuable part of the landscape. A properly cared for ash tree can increase property value, provide environmental benefits and erosion mitigation, and reduce electricity costs by shading a home. Qualities to consider when assessing value include the tree's overall health, shape, location with respect to landscape design, and appearance throughout the seasons. A healthy ash that is properly located in the landscape, has a nice shape and good fall color, and provides shade, has value.

Applying protective insecticide treatments to a healthy ash tree to prevent an EAB infestation is the best way to manage EAB. Most insecticides registered for EAB management require yearly applications to effectively protect a tree. Some are labelled for two years of protection and other products are trunk-injected insecticides intended for use by professional insecticide applicators (e.g., certified arborists). These can effectively protect an ash tree if applied every other year.

Lower value ash trees are not ideal candidates for EAB insecticide treatments and you should probably consider removal. An ash tree that is not healthy due to disease or insects, has poor shape or structural damage, is otherwise unattractive, or is in a bad location, is of lower value. Research suggests that insecticide treatments are significantly more effective on EAB-infested ash trees with less than 50% canopy thinning. Insecticide treatments are not recommended for trees with greater than 50% canopy thinning. These trees should be removed as they will ultimately die and will then need to be removed. There are a great variety of trees that can be planted to replace your ash tree.

If a tree becomes infested and the infestation is detected early, you may be able to treat your ash tree to prevent further damage, and help the tree recover. If you decide to treat your tree on your own, be sure to read and follow all label instructions of the insecticide that you select to ensure that you use the product in the safest and most effective manner possible. The University of Wisconsin ("[Homeowner Guide to Emerald Ash Borer Insecticide Treatments](#)") provides a list of products currently available for homeowner use.

In many situations, hiring a certified arborist to treat your ash tree is recommended. Professionals have access to specialized application equipment and additional insecticides not available to homeowners. They are also trained to measure trees accurately, and assess the overall health of trees. Our Extension Plant Health Advisors can provide a list of certified arborists serving the Fox Valley. <https://winnebago.extension.wisc.edu/files/2020/01/Why-hire-an-arborist-websiteNEW.pdf>

If you do remove an infested ash tree, check with your municipality to see if a wood disposal or utilization program is in place. If you have a tree removed by a tree care service, the service may be able to handle the disposal of wood from the infested tree. If you decide to use wood from an ash tree for firewood or other purposes, use it locally. Transporting infested wood risks spreading EAB elsewhere in the state, and may be in violation of Wisconsin's quarantine laws.

Resources: Wisconsin Horticulture Division of Extension, <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/>  
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) <http://datcpservices.wisconsin.gov/eab/>  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/UrbanForests/documents/EABToolBox/EAB-fieldGuide.pdf>



## 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: brown fox sedge, common fox sedge, American fox sedge. The genus name from Latin means cutter in reference to the sharp leaves and stem edges. The seedheads which spray out attractively from the center of the clump, resemble a fox's tail, hence the common name. Carex is a large genus with over 600 species in North America. Like most sedges it actively grows during the spring and fall when soil temperatures are cool. Plants are competitive and in an ideal growing situation may become aggressive or invasive. I can be found in the rain garden adjacent to the Coughlin Center.



*References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.*

## Submit an Article!



Now is a perfect time to put an article together for your newsletter. Send it to [pakster0605@yahoo.com](mailto:pakster0605@yahoo.com) by April 15 to be included in the May edition. Questions? Let me know. Thank you!

Anne

## Member Business Meeting Minutes - March 10, 2020

**Treasurer Report:** **Deby Voyles** gave the cash reconciliation report for the period of February 2020.

**Secretary Report:** Board minutes are on the website. The membership minutes are in the newsletter. Correction to the February Membership meeting minutes. **Stan Meyer** clarified that in the Education report "Youth Brigade" should be "Boys and Girls 10th Grade Brigade".

**Project Updates:** **Britton** reported that the Lead Meeting went well. **Grace Oliver** will be a Co-Lead on the Sullivan's Woods Project.

**Extension Report:** **Kimberly Miller** reported that the volunteer position descriptions are mailed alphabetically on a county by county basis, as a result Winnebago County is taking longer to receive the descriptions. If any member needs help with reporting their hours, **Valerie Stabenow** will help them at the Coughlin Center.

**Education Committee Report:** **Linda Werner** reported that Winter Escapes/Summer Dreams (WE/SD) was successful. There were 140 attendees and post seminar evaluations were very positive. Both Douglas Tallamy books and all the worm castings were sold. There are 2 speakers lined up for 2021: one speaker is Ray Diblick "Know maintenance gardens" and the documentary "Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf" will be presented. There are tentative bus trips scheduled to the Green Bay Botanical garden in July and a Late May/Early June trip to the Boerner Gardens and/or Milwaukee Domes.

**State Representatives Report:** **Becky Schoborg** reported that the WIMGA Annual State meeting will be held on September 11-12, 2020. See the website for other events happening around the state.

### NEW BUSINESS

**Survey Results:** **Bob Kneepkens** reported the results of the last membership meeting survey. The agenda will continue to be a paper copy and door prizes will continue.

**Business meeting volunteer hours:** **Bob Kneepkens** said the hours should reflect what we are doing in 15-minute increments. Reporting time in the Online Reporting System (ORS) is in decimals and should be rounded to the nearest quarter hour. With the streamlined meetings, the correct amount of time recorded by members in the ORS will be announced. For example, the March 10, 2020 business meeting includes 1.25-hour of continuing education Hours and 1.0-hour business meeting.

**Project review and sign up:** **Briton Dake** invited members to take 15-minutes to talk with the Project Leads at their project tables and sign up to work on any of the projects.

**Board report:** **Ed Dombrowski** gave a synopsis of the board's agenda and meeting. Board minutes are also available on the website.

**Membership comments:** **Sandy Gollither** asked members to "Save the date" for the June 9th picnic. There will be a sign-up sheet for the picnic at the April and May meetings.

**Other announcements:** **Bob Kneepkens** said that any member who did not get a year 2020 sticker for their name badge should let **Ed, Bob** or **Kimberly** know. **Kimberly Miller** will place an order to obtain more stickers.

This time of year, members interested in sponsoring a walk through their garden(s) should contact **Ed** or **Bob**. Members should be aware that liability for garden walks falls to the property owner's insurance.

**Ed** handed out a sheet "Dr. Oz's Coronavirus survival kit protocol"  
**Deby Voyles** read a poem.

Adjourn 8:12 PM

## Upcoming Events - See Calendar for April Events

July 13: Flower Arranging, Park View Great Room

Oct. 19: Flower Arranging, Park View Great Room

## Big Ideas for Small Spaces: Rotation!

Natalie Hoidal, UMN Extension Educator, Horticulture - Food System Agriculture

March 03, 2020



Multiple small raised beds are often better than one large planting area.

*Photo: Gail Hudson, UMN Extension*

Rotating crops is important for gardeners, but it can be tricky in a small space. Here are a few tips and tricks for optimizing rotations in your small garden.

### **Why rotate?**

Rotation is critical in vegetable gardens. Rotating helps to reduce disease pressure, and also helps to balance nutrients.

Tomatoes have one set of pathogens and uptake specific nutrients; cucumbers have a different set of diseases, and they take up nutrients in different ratios. Rotating your veggies helps to balance your garden system.

### **Rotating in a small space**

If you have a very small garden, simply moving plants down a few feet is a good start, but it might not give you the full benefits of rotation. There are a few simple ways to create distinct planting spaces to allow rotation in a small space:

#### **Raised beds**

By making raised beds, you create a physical exclusion between your different garden areas. Rather than making one large bed, consider making a few small ones. Plant your solanaceous crops in one, cucurbits in another, brassicas in another, etc., and then rotate your planting order in the years to come.

An ideal rotation is 3-4 years, so if you make 3-4 raised beds, you can complete a full rotation of plant families.

#### **Use pots for disease-prone plants**

If you have a variety you love to grow but you anticipate significant disease pressure (such as heirloom tomatoes), consider planting in a separate pot to keep the residues outside of your main planting area.

This is also a great solution if you only have one main garden bed - by growing things in pots you give yourself extra space for rotation.

#### **Coordinating with neighbors and friends**

Do you have a friend, neighbor, or family member who loves growing and eating fresh food as much as you do? Consider coordinating your garden space!

There are a few reasons to do this. One is to reduce disease pressure, but another is to have fun experimenting with more varieties.

I am really excited about trying different heirloom beans this year, but if I plant too many beans, I won't have space for other things like tomatoes and peppers. By coordinating with my neighbors, I can grow as many fun beans as I want, and then trade them for tomatoes with my neighbor who loves to try new tomato varieties.

**More disease prevention tips**

Beyond rotation, there are a few simple practices that can help to prevent disease spread in your garden:

As the weather starts to warm, now is a great time to clean and sterilize equipment such as hoops, stakes, and pruning shears (pruning shears should be cleaned regularly throughout the season).

When you're choosing seeds, look for varieties that have resistance to plant diseases you've seen in your garden in years past.

As the season progresses, keep an eye out for diseases, use the [U of M's tools like What's Wrong with My Plant](#) for identification, and remove diseased plants or leaves from your garden.

## 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	Linda Petek
Octagon House, Neenah	Jerry Robak
Invasive Species	Sue Egner/Valerie Stabenow/Audrey Ruedinger
Morgan House	Kathy Schultz/Jo Helf
Neenah Public Library	Susan Forbes/Bette Hoytink
Oshkosh Area Humane Society	Julie Miller/Matt Miller
Paine Gardens & Arboretum	Virginia Slattery
Park View Cutting Garden	TBD
Park View Prairie Garden	Eric Kropp
Park View Flower Arranging	Lil Hansche
Park View Vegetable Garden	Tom Weber
Farmer's Market	Synda Jones/Patty Schmitz
Plant Health Advisors	Patty Schmitz/Mary Shepard
Shattuck Park, Neenah	Diane Iott/Renee Donner
Sullivan's Woods	Linda Loker/Grace Oliver

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

April 2020						
Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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