

# Winnebago County Master Gardeners Newsletter

December 2017

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*Picture by Eric Kropp*

## **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.

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**“Gardeners  
know all  
the dirt!”**

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## Letter from Your Presidents

*Kathy Schultz & Linda Loker*

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.....

The cold weather has set in, the gardens are now fast asleep, and the snow is starting to blanket our area. Now it's time to celebrate the holidays with family and friends.

We also celebrate our new MG members! Congratulations to all of you on completing the Basic Training class. And a big thank you to all the project leads who shared their project information to this class. This is so valuable for our new members to get acquainted with members and projects; and hopefully find their niche. Thank you also to our mentoring team for all the time they put into ensuring that our new members have a smooth transition into the organization.

November elections proved to be a very exciting night! Not really....the board members have not changed this year. You all will have to look at the same presidents and treasurer for another two years! We look forward to continue serving you and hope to continue the job you are expecting of us. Thank you , Valerie Stabenow, for your years of dedication and work on the board.

Congratulations to the Morgan House project and the Education Committee for both receiving grants this year. Thank you to both for completing the forms. This is such a great way to obtain money for projects. Consider submitting a grant request for your project next year!

Our Awards Banquet is just around the corner December 5 at La Sure's Banquet Hall. This is always a wonderful time to enjoy each other and to just relax...and maybe win a fabulous door prize! Diana Dougherty is working diligently on these treasures. We hope to win one this year! Hope everyone is considering to attend. We will offer the raffle again so that someone is lucky enough to win a free ticket to the seminar in February.

Winter Escape~Summer Dreams is all set to go for February 17, 2018. The Education Committee has been very busy preparing all the details and it should be a great day! And any MG members will receive 4-5 hours of education for attending. The committee also has irons in the fire for trips and workshops as well. Thank you to this committee for

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always supplying its members, and the community, with our educational needs.

There is no business meeting for December. This is the time of year we look forward to the hustle and bustle of the season, enjoying our family and friends. We hope that you will enjoy this holiday season with peace, joy and safety.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you next year!

*Kathy and Linda*



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## What am I?

*By Jane Kuhn*

I am a deciduous, cold hardy shrub that is native to the Great Lakes region in swamps, bogs and moist thickets and grows three to six feet tall. I am easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soil in full sun or part shade in zones 3 to 8. My fine-toothed leaves are medium green and hairless and turn red in fall. My white spring flowers are pollinated by small bees and are followed by heavy, purplish black fruit in the fall.

Reproduction is by seeds or bareroot seedlings. I am useful in groups or mass in shrub borders, small gardens or open woodland areas. My ability to withstand wet conditions makes me suitable for growing on the margins of ponds or streams. I have no serious insect or disease problems. My plants are browsed by white-tailed deer and rabbits and my fruit is eaten by grouse and prairie chickens.

## WCMGA Contacts

*Check your membership guide for contact information.*

**Co-Presidents:** Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz

**Co-Vice Presidents:** Nancy Karuhn & Eric Kropp

**Secretary:** Ann Abraham

**Treasurer:** Joni Pagel

**Advisor:** Kimberly Miller

**Newsletter Compilation:** Anne Murphy

### **Election Results Are In!**

Your votes were counted and the results are:

President: Kathy Schultz & Linda Loker

Treasurer: Joni Pagel

Thank you ladies for your past and continued service!

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## Compost is the Answer

By Lawanda Jungwirth

I was recently tasked with summarizing the principles of organic gardening on just a half sheet of paper. Given that there have been thousands of books and articles written on the topic, it was a tough assignment. A search of the Winnefox Library system turned up [231 titles!](#)

After some thought, I realized that the basis of organic gardening is feeding the soil and that compost is key in that effort. On a half sheet of paper I couldn't go into much detail so I included a "For More Information" section. I listed a few websites and searched the library catalog for books on composting in order to choose one to recommend. [Sixty-three possibilities on composting alone!](#)

From the first book, I read: "Compost is the solution to virtually every gardening problem."

I don't think that's an exaggeration. Compost improves the structure of both clay and sandy soil, improves drainage in wet soil, helps retain moisture in dry soil, provides nutrition to plants, and helps fend off pest and disease problems. What more do you need?

To get started, save those fallen leaves. Use a leaf shredder, lawn mower or string trimmer to shred them. Spread them on your garden beds over winter or pile them in a bin or other protected area. If you want to wait until spring to get started, store the shredded leaves in garbage bags over winter.

Compost making instructions always mention "greens" and "browns." Greens are kitchen scraps – vegetables, fruits, coffee grounds, tea bags, eggshells. No meat, bones, fat or oils. Greens are also deadheaded flower tops, pulled weeds, the tops of cut-back perennials and grass clippings. Browns are dried materials like fallen leaves, dried weeds and spent garden plants.

The most successful compost piles have approximately four parts browns to one part greens by volume. Those bags of saved leaves will come in handy for mixing into the pile in summer when the garden and kitchen are producing prodigious amounts of greens.

You can buy a manufactured compost bin, build one from wood or cement blocks, or just pile everything in a back corner of your yard if your neighbors won't object. You can even do without an actual pile by digging holes in your garden, throwing in your browns and greens and covering them with soil.

If you elect the pile method, you can just add the ingredients and wait for them to decompose, or speed up the process tremendously by turning the pile occasionally. The compost is finished when it is black, crumbly and sweet smelling.

Spread compost on your garden beds or lawn, or use it in potted plants indoors or out. For container use, screen the compost first to remove any chunks of uncomposted material.

Turns out it's as difficult to condense everything I wanted to say about compost in 500 words here as it is to summarize organic gardening on a half sheet of paper. Look to Google or the library to learn more!

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## Injury Causes Changes to Gardening Experience

*By Lawanda Jungwirth*

I hate to admit this even to myself, much less make it public, but this year I had physical limitations that changed the way I garden. I slipped on the ice last winter and unknowingly broke my back. It took many months for the pain to present itself, but when it did, oh boy! Gardening demands a lot from a body – digging, hoeing, lifting, turning compost, raking, bending, squatting, hauling hoses or sprinkling cans, pulling and tugging weeds. It all used to be so easy, but not this year. The pain made me very aware that not everyone may be able to follow all of the gardening advice I give as a Master Gardener.

I had to let some gardening activities go. I love to weed, but this year I'd look down at a weed and think how much pain I'd feel if I were to squat down, pull the weed, and get back up. Harvesting low-growing vegetables was difficult too and many strawberries, green beans and tomatoes were left to wither. Plants weren't watered as often as I'd have liked them to be. At the end of the season, I wasn't able to dig trenches in the garden and bury all the spent vegetable plants and flower stems to decompose underground as I normally do. This year I just spread the plants atop the soil and covered them with leaves to overwinter.

There are many tools and techniques that make it easier for people with various disabilities to continue gardening. Raised beds and container gardening allow you to avoid bending and kneeling. Soaker hoses that stay in place all season intertwined among garden plants eliminate the need to carry sprinkling cans or move heavy hoses.

Rolling stools, kneelers with sturdy handles, and foam knee pads ease the strain on knees and backs. Several companies make tools with extended handles so that cultivating, weeding and raking can be done even from a wheelchair.

Tools made from lighter weight materials, with softer grips, or smarter designs can help those with arthritis. Covering tool handles with the foam that is sold for insulating hot water pipes and wrapping them with hockey tape makes gripping them easier.

Carrying tools around the yard in a lightweight wagon or hooking them onto the top of a 5-gallon bucket not only makes finding them easier, but lets you avoid bending down to the ground to grab them.

Changing the landscape to include mostly perennial plants helps avoid the up and down bending, squatting, kneeling and digging necessary to plant annuals year after year.

While my yard and garden this year weren't as nicely kept as I'd have liked them to be, no neighbors complained and my freezer is full. So I'd mark the year as a success. And I learned the most difficult but important lesson of all: to ask for help with tasks that I no longer can or should do.

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## Ask a Plant Health Advisor



***“What is wrong with my poinsettia and what should I do?”*** Find the answer later in the newsletter.

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### Garden Trivia

What flower is the state flower of Oklahoma? It is a semi-parasitic plant (derives some of its nutritional requirements from another living plant); its fruit is poisonous; scientific name is *Phoradendron* which means “thief of the tree”; grows in deciduous trees in New Jersey and southern Indiana southward to Florida and Texas; manufactures its own food but must rely on host plant for water and minerals. It’s found in the wild and sold during the holiday season.



**MISTLETOE!**

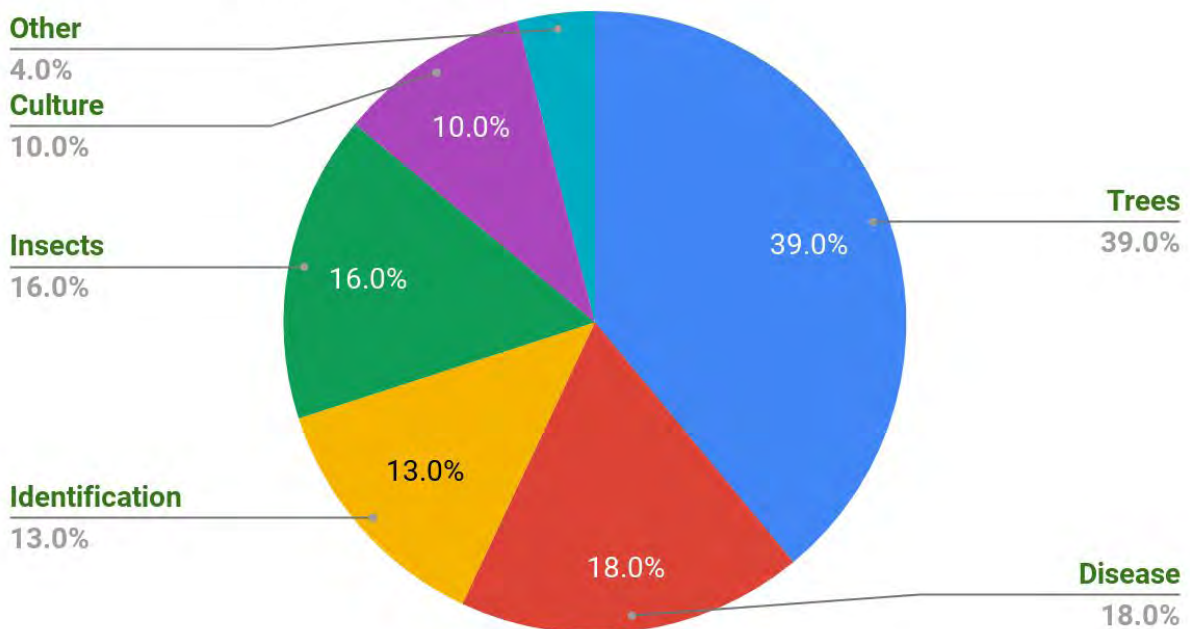


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## Your Plant Health Advisors Were Busy This Year!

**245** inquiries regarding horticulture issues came to the Winnebago County Plant Health hotlines during the 2017 growing season. **11** of your Master Gardener cohorts assisted the horticulturist in researching and answering questions. **42%** of the inquiries came in via phone.

### What were the inquiries about?



If you'd like to help with the Plant Health Advisors, please contact Mary Shepard or Patty Schmitz.



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## Answer to Ask a Plant Health Advisor: Root Rots on Houseplants



**What is root rot?** Root rot is a general term that describes any disease where the pathogen (causal organism) causes the deterioration of a plant's root system. Most plants are susceptible to root rots, including both woody and herbaceous ornamentals. Root rots can be chronic diseases or, more commonly, are acute and can lead to the death of the plant.

**How do you know if your plant has a root rot?** Homeowners often become aware of root rots when they note that a plant is wilted, even though the soil is wet. Plants with root rots are also often stunted, and may have leaves with a yellow or red color, symptoms that suggest a nutrient deficiency. Careful examination of the root systems of these plants reveals roots that are soft and brown. These roots may have a bad odor.

**Where does root rot come from?** A large number of soil-borne fungi cause root rots. *Pythium* spp., *Phytophthora* spp., *Rhizoctonia solani*, and *Fusarium* spp. are the most common root rot fungi. These fungi have wide host ranges, and thus can cause root rots on a wide variety of plants. Most root rot fungi prefer wet soil conditions and some, such as *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* produce spores that can survive for long periods in soil or plant debris.

**How do I save a plant with root rot?** Often the best and most cost effective way of dealing with a plant with root rot is to throw it out. If you decide to keep a plant with root rot, **REDUCE SOIL MOISTURE!** Provide enough water to fulfill the plant's growth needs and prevent drought stress, but **DO NOT** overwater. We **DO NOT** recommend use of chemical fungicides for control of root rots on houseplants because of the limited availability of products for use by homeowners, and because those products that are available tend to be expensive.

**How do I avoid problems with root rots?** First, buy plants from a reputable source and make sure they are root rot-free prior to purchase. Second, replant your houseplants properly. Use a pot with drainage holes, but **DO NOT** put rocks or gravel at the bottom of the pot. The presence of rocks or gravel can actually inhibit drainage. Use a pasteurized commercial potting mix, **NOT** soil from your garden. Garden soils often contain root rot fungi. Add organic material (e.g., peat moss) to heavy potting mixes to increase drainage. Third, minimize potential contamination of your plants with root rot fungi. **DO NOT** reuse potting mix from your houseplants, or water that has drained from your plants, as both potentially can contain root rot fungi. After working with plants with root rot problems, disinfect tools, working surfaces and clay pots with a 10% bleach or detergent solution, or alcohol. **DO NOT** reuse plastic pots as they are often difficult to

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disinfect adequately. Finally and most importantly, moderate plant moisture. Provide enough water to fulfill your plant's' needs for growth and prevent drought stress, but **DO NOT** overwater. In particular, **DO NOT** allow plants to sit in drainage water. REMEMBER, root rot fungi grow and reproduce best in wet soils.

Reference: Brian Hudelson, UW-Madison Plant Pathology and Laura Jull, UW-Horticulture: Item number: XHT1071

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## Caring for Your Cut Christmas Tree

Department of Horticulture, Penn State, Rick Bates

Reference: <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/christmas-trees/cultural-information/caring-for-your-cut-christmas-tree>



The key to maintaining your live Christmas tree throughout the holiday season is to give it the proper care from the time it is purchased until the tree is removed from your home. Maintaining a high moisture level in the tree is the single most important factor in reducing needle loss and keeping the tree fresh. This is accomplished primarily through the use of water-holding stands and maintaining the water level in the stand above the base of the tree. Every year there are many articles written concerning the handling and care of Christmas trees. Unfortunately, they often contain erroneous information.

The following research-based guidelines will help you to maintain the freshness and aroma of your live Christmas tree this holiday season.


- Use a tree stand with an adequate water-holding capacity. A tree stand should have a water basin that provides 1 quart of water per inch of stem diameter. For most Christmas trees, the stand should hold at least 1 gallon of water. A cut tree will absorb a surprising amount of water, particularly during the first week, so replenish the water daily.
- The tree stand should fit your tree. Some stands have circular rings at the top, so the ring must be large enough for the trunk to go through the hole. Avoid whittling down the sides of the trunk to fit a stand. The outer layers of wood are the most efficient in taking up water and should not be removed.
- If the tree is to be stored more than a couple days before display, it is advisable to place its trunk in water and store it in a cool, shaded and protected area such as an unheated garage.

- If the tree has been cut within the past 12 hours, it will not be necessary to recut the trunk prior to display indoors. If it has been longer than 12 hours since harvest, the trunk should be recut to improve water uptake.
- Cutting off a disk of wood about ¼" thick from the base of the trunk is all that is necessary before putting the tree in the stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the stem axis. Don't cut the trunk at an angle, or into a v-shape, which makes it far more difficult to hold the tree in the stand and also reduces the amount of water available to the tree.
- Keep displayed trees away from sources of heat (fireplaces, heaters, heat vents, direct sunlight). Lowering the room temperature will slow the drying process, resulting in less water consumption each day.
- The temperature of the water used to fill the stand is not important and does not affect water uptake.
- Check the stand daily to make sure that the level of water does not go below the base of the tree. With many stands, there can still be water in the stand even though the base of the tree is no longer submerged in water.
- Drilling a hole in the base of the trunk does not improve water uptake.
- The use of "I-V" type devices to supply water directly to holes drilled into the sides of the tree trunk is not as effective as displaying the tree in a more traditional, water-holding tree stands.
- Applying anti-transpirants to the tree does not have a significant effect on the rate of moisture loss. These products are marketed as a way to block evaporation from the foliage surface, but in reality they have little effect on a cut tree displayed indoors.
- Adding water-holding gels to the stand is not beneficial and they can reduce the amount of water in the stand that is available to the tree.
- Do not use additives in the water, including floral preservatives, commercial tree preservatives, molasses, sugar, bleach, soft drinks, aspirin, honey, and other concoctions. Clean water is all that is needed to maintain freshness.
- Displaying trees in water with proper care is much more effective in reducing fire hazards than spraying trees with flame retardants. Some flame retardants can damage needles and actually increase the rate of moisture loss from trees.
- Monitor your tree for dryness. Run your fingers across the needles to determine if they are dry and brittle. If the needles break easily or fall off in your hand, the tree is dry and should be removed from the house. A well-cared-for tree should normally remain fresh at least three to four weeks before drying to an unacceptable level.

## 2017 New Master Gardeners - WELCOME!



Going left to right (no rows): Susan Raasch, Melissa Weyland, Lisa Dahlke, Pamela DeGroot, Kay Senderhauf, Bernard Phillips, Britton Dake-Miller, John Seifert, Karen Seifert, Vicki Sever, Jenny Rogers, Debra Butch, Debbie Warga, Michelle Matsche, Kathy Procknow, Mary Moosemiller, Christine Matsche, Ruth Eberwine, Nancy Casey, Matt Demers, Shirley Klevgard, Angie Demers, Sheri Knepel.



	<p><b>Shirley Klevgard</b> It's a joy to work with growing things!</p>		<p><b>Angie Demers</b> I can't wait to get my hands dirty and get involved with MG!</p>
	<p><b>Matt Demers</b> Looking forward to propagating good gardening practices.</p>		<p><b>Kathy Procknow</b> I am looking forward to "digging in" to Master Gardener Volunteering.</p>
	<p><b>Vicki Sever</b> Roses are my passion.</p>		<p><b>Ruth Eberwine</b> So many plants so little time!</p>

	<p><b>Debbie Warga</b> Continuous growing and learning. I'm so excited to be a Master Gardener.</p>		<p><b>Susan Raasch</b> I came, I saw, I learned something new.</p>
	<p><b>Jenny Rogers</b> I love helping and teaching others.</p>		<p><b>Kay Senderhauf</b> Fascinated by hostas!</p>
	<p><b>Britton Dake-Miller</b> I'm happy to learn, serve and help others.</p>		<p><b>Bernard Phillips</b> I love Tuesday's classes. It fills me with knowledge.</p>



	<p><b>Sheri Knepel</b> A blossom a day keeps this girl smiling.</p>		<p><b>Deb Butch</b> Looking forward to learning and volunteering with MG in retirement!</p>
	<p><b>Chris Matsche</b> Maples are my first love.</p>		<p><b>John Seifert</b> Inexperienced but eager.</p>
	<p><b>Karen Seifert</b> "Budding Gardener"</p>		<p><b>Lisa Dahlke</b> Let it Grow!</p>



	<p><b>Pam DeGroot</b> Trying to find my roots.</p>		<p><b>Mary Moosemiller</b> Fighting the good fight against all the weeds in the neglected gardens I inherited.</p>
	<p><b>Nancy Casey</b> As a nurse, I love teaching . I'm looking forward to helping people with their gardens.</p>		<p><b>Melissa Weyland</b> I am an organic dairy farmer at heart. I can't wait to share my love of working with soils and nature with others (especially youth!) as a Master Gardener.</p>
	<p><b>Michelle Matsche</b> Flowers are happy things.</p>	<p><b>WELCOME</b> new Master Gardeners! If you have questions please don't hesitate to ask another MG for help! Here's to environmental stewardship at its finest!</p>	

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## Member Meeting Minutes - Nov. 14, 2017

**Treasurer Report All in balance:** \$27,310.50

**Secretary Report:** Board minutes are posted on the website, and Business meeting minutes are in the Newsletter.

**Project updates:** Your project wrap up summaries need to be in now.

**Education Committee Report:** Winter Escapes brochure is ready to go out. We have a few for people to post around the area.

**New business:** December 5th Awards banquet to be \$15.00 per person. No December meetings. Morgan house received \$250 in grant money, the Education committee received \$100. 3 new tripods will be purchased to be used to display materials. They are light-weight and easy to carry.

Anyone wanting to sign up for making a basket for the winter escape summer dreams can do so.

**Elections:** Taking any nominations before the vote. Ballots handed out, votes tallied by Ann Abraham and Nancy Karuhn. Results were 50 votes for Kathy Schultz and Linda Loker co-presidents. 1 abstention vote left blank. 50 votes for Joni Pagel for Treasurer. 1 vote abstention vote left blank.

New hours sheets are available.

A motion was made and passed to adjourn the meeting.

## Events

**Dec. 5: Awards Banquet, LaSure's**

**Jan. 16: Education Committee, 5:30 PM, Benvenuto's**

**Feb. 3: 4-H collaboration**

**Feb. 10: Madison Expo Trip**

**Feb. 12: Park View Flower Arranging, 1:30 PM**

**Feb. 17: Winter Escape~Summer Dreams**

**Feb. 20: Education Committee, 5:30 PM, Benvenuto's**

**Flower Arranging - Park View - 1:30 PM**

Monday May 14

Monday July 23

Monday September 10

Monday November 12

**Feb. 2018: Winter Escape~Summer Dreams** silent auction - think of something you'd like to donate or create a basket with some other members!



## Answer to What am I?

*By Jane Kuhn*

I am black chokeberry. Order: Rosales. Family: Rosaceae – Rose family. Genus: Aronia Medik. Species: Aronia melanocarpa (Michx.) Elliott – black chokeberry. The common name of chokeberry is in reference to the tart and bitter taste of the fruits which are technically edible but so astringent as to cause choking in most of those who try them. Juice of the berries can be used for making jelly as well as healthful fruit drinks. The juice contains high levels of anthocyanins (source of red color) which is used in the food industry.



*References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.*

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## Timesheet Helpful Hints

The Timesheet is broken into the following parts:

**Projects Long Term** - 12 hours minimum - These are the Master Gardener core areas and you need to get a minimum of 12 hours from these projects out of the required 24 minimum hours. Each project is broken down into 3 sub areas that include: Support (I helped with...), Community Ed (I taught something...) and Youth (I worked with kids...). You can get your Community Ed and/or Youth Education minimum 5 hours from these projects as well.

- Algoma Town Hall
- Butterfly Gardens Lutheran Homes
- Coughlin Rain Gardens
- County Fair
- Invasive Species, Education and Control
- Neenah Library
- Octagon House
- Omro Library
- Oshkosh Farmers Market (OFM)
- Oshkosh Historical Society, Morgan House
- Oshkosh Humane Society
- Paine Gardens
- Park View Cutting Gardens
- Park View Flower Arranging
- Park View Prairie Garden
- Plant Health Advisors
- Shattuck park
- Sullivan's Woods
- Other

**WCMGA Support** - These hours can be used toward the minimum 24 hours and some have Community Ed and Youth hours too.

- Board Member Activities
- Education Committee Activities
- Historian
- Website Committee
- Newsletter Committee
- June Picnic
- Refreshment Committee
- Sunshine Committee
- Timekeeper
- Membership Committee
- New Member Liaison
- Worm Castings
- WIMGA State Representative
- Business Meeting
- Other

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**Projects Small Group** - You can get some hours from these projects to make up the required minimum 24 hours.

- Growing Oshkosh
- Omro Veteran Memorial
- St. Raphael Church
- Other

**Projects Short Term Opportunities** - If you do these projects, hours go toward your minimum 5 hours of Community Education and/or Youth Education.

- Adult Education/Presentation
- Youth Education/Presentation
- Approved Activity (other)

**UWEX Support** - You can use these hours to go toward the minimum 24 hours.

**Continuing Education** - 10 hours minimum - List your continuing education here. If you attend a business meeting with a guest speaker, on the agenda will be listed how much time you can list here for education hours. If you attend a conference, find out how many hours can be listed and add it here.

Using the electronic file is much easier for you as it adds all your hours and time for you and when you submit the electronic file it saves hours on the timekeeper's end as well.

If you have questions about how to fill out the timesheet, please ask.

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## WIMGA Educational Grant Winners - 2 from Winnebago County!



Congratulations to our grant winners for the Morgan House for \$250 and the Education Committee for \$100. The Morgan House will use the money for educational signage and material for plant identification. The Education Committee will use the money to help pay for speakers at Winter Escapes~Summer Dreams. Keep thinking of ways to use this grant money and apply next year!

## WCMGA Projects

*Check your Member Guide for contact information.*

Project	Project Lead	Next Meeting
Butterfly Garden Lutheran Homes	Jane Kuhn/Diana Dougherty	
Carter Memorial Library, Omro	Pat Behm/Linda Petek	March 2018
County Fair	Sue Bohn	Aug. 1-5, 2018
Octagon House, Neenah	Jerry Robak	
Invasive Species	Lawanda Jungwirth/Sue Egner/Valerie Stabenow	
Neenah Public Library	Tamara Erickson	
Oshkosh Area Humane Society	Julie Miller/Matt Miller	
Paine Gardens & Arboretum	Viginia Slattery	
Park View Cutting Garden	Bill Weber	
Park View Prairie Garden	Sally Lindo	
Park View Flower Arranging	Lil Hansche	Feb. 12, 1:30 PM
Park View Vegetable Garden	Tom Weber	
Farmer's Market	Dorothy Gayhart-Kunz/Janet Priebe/Synda Jones/Patty Schmitz	June 2018
Photography	Maria Talin	
Plant Health Advisors	Patty Schmitz/Mary Shepard	
Shattuck Park, Neenah	Julie Gutmiedl	
Sullivan's Woods	Linda Loker	

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## Winter Mulch Is A Protective Blanket For Landscape Plants: *Shielding Gardens From Soil's Freeze And Thaw Cycles*



When the temperature dips well below freezing, many landscape plants need an extra layer of protection, especially if there's no snow cover. [Mulching](#) provides one of the best blanket covers to protect strawberries, certain perennials and various other plants from cold conditions.

Winter mulch is used to prevent soil from alternating between freezing and thawing conditions, contrary to a common belief that it protects the ground from freezing and offers warmth to plants. Repeated freezing and

thawing occurs when there is insufficient or a complete absence of snow cover during periods of low temperatures. These changes force stems, roots, bulbs/tubers to heave out of the ground, and can severely damage or kill plants.

Straw is one common winter mulch. It [provides](#) good insulation, allows sufficient air movement, lacks in weed seeds (if it is a clean straw) and does not smother the plant like a mat. A bale of straw can easily cover 100 square feet to a depth of at least 3 inches. Other winter mulches that can be used are bark chips, hay (which may contain weed seeds), chopped corn stalks, pine needles and shredded leaves. Whole leaves, sawdust or grass clippings should not be used, though, as they can form a thick mat.

For perennials that lack aesthetic appeal in winter, their shoots should be pruned to about 2-3 inches above ground, and the crown should be mulched with straw or chopped leaves to a depth of about 6-8 inches. Ornamental grasses, black eyed susan, and autumn joy sedums can be left alone given their winter interest in the landscape. Mums planted in the ground can be left



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unpruned, but need to be mulched around the crown.

Strawberries [are not super hardy](#) in Wisconsin's winter conditions, and their crowns can be easily killed if left unprotected when the temperature drops to 18°F or below. To mulch strawberries, the plants should be covered with straw, marsh hay or sudan grass to a depth of about 2-4 inches. It is important avoid tightly packing the crown when mulching strawberry plants.

Wood chip mulch should be applied to the root zone areas of trees and shrubs that are marginally winter hardy or planted within the last five years, to a depth of at least 6 inches. Chicken wire should be installed prior to mulching around tree bark for protection from rodents. In mid-late spring, the mulch can be reduced to 2-3 inches deep, and the wire should be kept around 6 inches away from the tree trunk. If there are any cracks near the root zone area, they should be filled in with soil.

While hardy shrub roses don't need any [winter protection](#), it is best to mulch the bases of those that are newly planted or marginally hardy. The rose crown can be mulched using straw, hay, leaves or evergreen boughs to a depth of 8-10 inches, and the now-mulched plant can be wrapped with a hardware cloth to protect from rodents and wind.

Hybrid tea roses need a double layer of [winter protection](#). When the temperature drops below 20°F for at least couple of nights, the canes should be mounded with potting soil to a height of 8-10 inches. Tall canes should be cut to 30-36 inches above ground, and the cane tips should be tied together using soft twine. When the mounded soil has frozen, a 10-12 inch layer of leaf or straw mulch can be added on top of the mound and the shrub should be wrapped with hardware cloth to protect from rabbits and voles. Rose cones should be used with caution, as they tend to build heat inside during sunny winter days.

*Reference: Vijai Pandian, UW-Extension; <https://www.wiscontext.org/winter-mulch-protective-blanket-landscape-plants>*

## December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5 Awards Banquet	6	7	8	9
10	11 Park View Flower Arranging 1:30	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 	26	27	28	29	30
31	<i>Happy New Year</i> ❄️					

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