



# Winnebago County Master Gardeners

## Newsletter

December 2018

### 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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**“Surround yourself**  
with people who  
allow you to  
*blossom.*”

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### Newly Elected Officers & Board Members:

Vice President: Britton Dake

Secretary: Susan Raasch

Member-at-Large (2-year term):

Ed Dombrowski & Ginny Slattery

Member-at-Large (1-year term): Sandra Golliher

## What am I?

*By Jane Kuhn*

I am a deciduous, multi-stemmed shrub which can add color and interest to your winter garden. I am native to the eastern and central United States and can be found at the edge of the woods or in swamps. My leaves are alternate, simple, sharply toothed, two to three inches long, green above while paler and generally hairy below. Both male and female flowers are stalked and greenish-white with 5-7 petals appearing in spring. My fruits, which are present only on the female plant, are round drupes, ¼ inch in diameter, in clusters of 2 to 4, green during the growing season and ripening in fall to bright red and glossy, and persisting through the winter. My plants are dioecious; a male plant is needed for pollination of female plants. Generally one male will be sufficient for pollinating 9-10 female plants.

I grow best in full sun to partial shade – more sun means more fruit on female plants. I require a neutral to acid soil with adequate moisture and am tolerant of poorly drained soils. I am used in mass plantings, in native plantings, where soils are wet, to attract wildlife, and for fruit display in fall and winter. Propagation is best through early summer cuttings which are easily rooted; seeds possess a dormancy period making germination tricky.

## 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



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: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz

Happy Holidays to All!

Here we are in the midst of the holiday season - bustling about to find that perfect gift for each of our loved ones. Oh! We can think of one great gift for the gardener on your list...a ticket to our seminar February 16, 2019! This seminar is not only interesting - learning new horticulture facts and earning education hours for members, but it is also fun and has great food!

We will not have a board meeting this month, and there will be no member meeting, however, we do have another event that is sure to please - our annual Awards Banquet on Tuesday, December 4. It is being held at LaSure's Banquet Hall again this year. Good food, great door prizes; and a raffle drawing for a free ticket to Winter Escape~Summer Dreams seminar will be featured events. Oh, and yes, we both will be presenting the awards and certificates that our members have worked so hard for. Please consider coming and mingling with your fellow members.

We have secured speakers for our first few business meetings in 2019 - and there will be some of our very own members featured. We are so proud to have our member talents being shared!

Speaking of meetings - We will have our business meeting as scheduled on January 8, 2019, however the board meeting will be Wednesday, January 2. We didn't think that anyone would want to meet on January 1, and besides, the extension would not be opening their doors that day! It will be an exciting first board meeting of the year, meeting our newest board members. Please wish our newest board members well as they begin the new year in a leadership role in the organization. **Britton Dake** is our new Vice President, **Susan Raasch** is our new Secretary and **Ed Dombrowski**, **Ginny Slattery** and **Sandra Gollither** will join the board.

We would like to extend a very big thank you to our outgoing board members **Susan Forbes**, **Jan Wetterau-Houge**, **Lori Berndt**, our Secretary **Ann Abraham** and our VPs, **Eric Kropp** and **Nancy Karuhn** (Nancy will serve on the board for one year of transition per our By-Laws). Each of you have worked very hard, and contributed greatly to the success of group.

As we close another year in our busy lives, please make sure to take the time to relax and enjoy the peace of the season, making wonderful memories with your family and friends. We extend our heartfelt wishes for a great New Year!

Kathy and Linda

# Ask a Plant Health Advisor



*Homeowner is concerned with apple trees at mother's house, running north to south on a hillside. The Wealthy apple tree (12 yrs old) has had issues the past two years and this year has lost 2/3 of its leaves. Honey Gold and Macintosh trees (12 yrs old) had lots of apples last year and little this year.*

*Honeycrisp tree has only 6 apples. Half of a nearby spruce tree has turned brown this past year, not sure if this issue is related to the apple trees. Homeowner has sprayed chemical on apple trees in early spring (unsure on what was used). I suggested pruning the trees but are there other issues they should be concerned about (apple scab)? Are the apples safe to harvest and eat/can? Thank you .*

*Find the answer later in the newsletter.*

## Aphids are a Common Garden Pest

*By Lawanda Jungwirth*

Almost every gardener discovers aphids on their plants at one time or another. Before I get into what they are and how to control them, here is the most interesting thing about them: female aphids are born already pregnant. In fact inside the newly born aphid girls are embryos that have more embryos inside them. So a mother aphid is giving birth to her own great-grand daughters! Each succeeding generation can be born within a week and each female gives birth to 60-100 live nymphs so you can see how the aphid population could explode. Fortunately, natural controls like insect predators and weather prevent aphids from overtaking the world.

You might wonder where the boys are. They aren't really necessary, and aren't even part of the aphid population until days get shorter and temperatures drop at the end of summer. At that time, some male aphids are born. They mate with females who lay eggs on host plants where they will overwinter.

Aphids are small 1/8-inch pear-shaped, soft-bodied insects that are green, yellow, white, pink, brown, black or mottled. They are wingless until such time that the food supply is getting short or the area becomes overcrowded with aphids. Then some winged females are born. They fly off to another area and begin again laying wingless females.

There are 1,350 different species of aphids in North America and they feed on 25% of all plant species. The plant families most affected are in the rose, aster and conifer families. Many aphid species feed only on one specific plant or plant family, but there are so many species that just about any vegetable, fruit, flower, tree or shrub is susceptible.

You might first notice aphids because a plant is wilting, stunted or yellowing. You go to take a closer look and see tens or hundreds of lice-like insects on the stem or leaves. You might also see a sticky honeydew or a sooty mold on the plant.

An observant gardener will probably discover an aphid infestation before too much damage happens. Depending on the plant, it can take from 25 minutes to 24 hours for an aphid to insert its mouthparts into a plant's stem, leaves or roots and begin sucking the sap. Unfortunately, some aphids transmit plant viruses. Generally, healthy trees and shrubs can withstand an aphid infestation, but large populations on herbaceous plants can cause significant problems.

What should you do if you discover an aphid infestation? Maybe nothing at first. If the plant isn't looking sickly and aphid numbers aren't excessive, natural enemies like lady bird beetles and lacewing larvae might soon get the aphid population under control for you. Otherwise a strong jet of water from the hose will dislodge the aphids. If you aren't squeamish, you can crush them by hand. Insecticidal soaps works, but kills by contact, so good coverage and repeated applications are necessary. Insecticidal soaps will kill some plants so read the label before using.

## Doctrine of Signatures

By Lawanda Jungwirth

*When home gardeners ask a UW-Extension Master Gardener for advice, they are assured that the answers to their questions will be from science-based university research. The following information is for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide any guidance or recommendation.*

Before modern medicine, before paper was made and books were written, before the internet, before any form of written communication, the only way people had to learn the uses of plants was by trial and error and by passing information along orally. Long ago, cultures all over the world independently came to believe that plants were marked with "signs" or "signatures" that indicated how they would be helpful medicinally.

Paracelsus, a Swiss physician, alchemist and astrologer was the first person to formally write that "Nature marks each growth . . . according to its curative benefit" in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Jakob Bohme, a German philosopher, Christian mystic, and Lutheran Protestant theologian was the first to give a name to the Doctrine of Signatures in his 1621 book, *The Signature of All Things*. His thought was that God marked objects with a sign or "signature" for their purpose.

Signatures were not only in the physical characteristics of a plant. Along with color, shape and texture, a plant's scent and even the location where it was growing were also considered indications of its medicinal application.

For example, people thought that the red fluid inside the roots of bloodroot would cure diseases of the blood. And saxifrage, a plant that can grow through and break apart rocks, must be a cure for kidney stones. Toothwort, with its white flowers resembling teeth and its toothed leaf edges, should cure dental ailments.

Sometimes the Doctrine of Signatures actually holds true. The Cherokee Indians thought that stems of the weed purslane looked like worms and that consuming the plant should help expel worms from the body. Turns out that's correct. Another one – the flower eyebright resembles the human eye and was thought to help with afflictions of the eye. Science has determined that eyebright contains tannins which have an anti-inflammatory property. A quick google search turns up a multitude of eyebright eye washes, drops, compresses and capsules purported to soothe the eyes.

Some plants were given their names as a way to remember how they were used medicinally. At your first encounter with the eyebright flower, you might not immediately think "human eye" but after you know what the flower is used for and someone tells you it resembles an eye, it becomes obvious and memorable. So for cultures without the written word, the Doctrine of Signatures would be a vital tool in medicine.

There are hundreds, even thousands, more examples of the Doctrine that have been proven both true and false.

Many books have been written about the Doctrine of Signature over the centuries. Believers are still writing convincing books on the Doctrine today and making a very good case for its legitimacy.

## Cold snap highlights risks to agriculture of extreme weather

### Cornell providing farmers with tools to manage risk

By Ben Rand <https://cals.cornell.edu/news/cold-snap-highlights-risks-agriculture-extreme-weather/>



New technology developed at Cornell CALS is giving farmers new capabilities to respond to climate risks. Winter has started with the heart of a lion, marked by an extended period of frigid temperatures and a recent storm that produced dangerously low wind chills, high winds and blizzard conditions. The blast of Arctic air elevates the risk of damage to certain crops, even if those crops are planted in areas where they are already adapted to the local climate. At the same time, recent fluctuations in temperatures highlight

the ever-growing importance of precise data for better decision-support on the farm. If farmers have more accurate advance notice of the risk of freeze relevant to their particular crop's hardiness, they can take preventative actions to prevent losses. New technology in the age of big data is providing these new capabilities.

The **Cornell Climate Smart Farming Program** has developed a website and suite of climate-based agricultural decision support tools aimed at helping farmers make more informed decisions in the face of increasing climate change and uncertainty. Specific tools were developed based on the major climate impacts to northeastern U.S. agriculture, through a collaborative development process with stakeholders, researchers, and faculty from the **Northeast Regional Climate Center** at Cornell University.

These free tools provide data covering conditions affecting farms in the northeastern United States. Farmers enter their exact farm location into the map interface, along with crop specific information. The models then will provide relevant information to improve decision-making. Two tools were specifically developed to help farmers manage the risk of freeze damage to crops, especially after warmer periods of weather: the CSF Apple Freeze Damage Probability tool, and the Grape Hardiness and Freeze Risk tool.

The apple freeze tool, for example, allows producers to chart observed and forecasted daily minimum temperatures as compared to apple hardiness thresholds to order to assess potential risk for freeze damage.

## CSF Apple Stage / Freeze Damage Probability



The application also produces a graph of the conditions over the entire season, as well as a 6-day forecast. Daily temperatures are calculated using 2.5 x 2.5-mile gridded data using a variety of National Weather Service observations and model data, allowing for temperature estimates at locations without a nearby on-farm weather station. In terms of current conditions, air

temperatures are a long way from posing the risk of widespread damage to fruits grown above ground, said Mario Miranda Sazo of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Lake Ontario Tree Fruit Program.

Apple flower buds will typically die off at temperatures between minus-25 to minus-32 degrees Fahrenheit, Sazo said. "The forecasted cold temperatures will probably not have a negative effect on mature apple trees but may affect some young or weak apple trees," he said.

At the same time, a current snow cover of 2-3 inches in depth is enough to protect root systems from winter damage. However, he said "It would be wise to delay the pruning of apple trees until more normal winter temperatures are experienced in our region." Lower thresholds exist for other fruits: peach flower buds are at risk at minus-12 to -20 degrees; plums at minus-2 to minus-25 degrees, with Japanese plums more sensitive. "There will likely be some flower bud damage to a small proportion of peach, plum, and cherries," Sazo said.

In addition to tools for freeze damage probability, the Climate Smart Farming program offers applications that monitor drought conditions, provide growing degree day accumulation forecasts, assist in cover crop selection, and other decision supports relevant to farming success in a changing climate.

The Cornell Climate Smart Farming program is a voluntary initiative that helps farmers in New York and the Northeastern U.S. increase farm resilience to extreme weather and climate variability; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and increase agricultural productivity and farming incomes sustainably. A team of Climate Smart Farming Extension specialists can help farmers with questions related to best management practices to address extreme cold, precipitation, drought, or other climate impacts.



## Member Business Meeting Minutes - November 13, 2018

Meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Co-Pres. **Kathy Schultz**.

**Treasurer Report:** **Joni Pagel** reported balance of checkbook at the end of Oct. is \$28,245.46; total of all accounts on 10/31/18 is \$33,484.22.

**Secretary Report:** Given by Co-Pres. **Kathy Schultz** (**Ann Abraham** absent). Minutes will be online.

**Project Updates:** Co-VP **Eric Kropp** reported we are still in need of a project lead for the Park View Prairie Garden.

**Speaker:** Lindsey Bender, chief Mycologist & Research Director for Field & Forest Products in Peshtigo, WI. [www.fieldforest.net](http://www.fieldforest.net). At the end of her presentation she gave 2 mushroom kits as gifts. The **winners: Nancy Karuhn & Patti Schmitz**.

**Extension Update:** Advisor **Kimberly Miller** reported there are only 40 spots available for the Level 3 Placemaking class which runs from Jan – Mar 2019. Level 3 classes will require more online participation and assignments than in the past. Members can take Level 2 or 3 classes out of sequence; it isn't required to do Level 1 or 2 first before a Level 3 class.

**Education Committee Update:** **Linda Werner** reported the Dec. Awards Banquet, 12/4/18, invitation forms are available at the meeting.

Madison Expo, 2/9/18, email info will be sent out when more info is sent to us.

WESD '19 save-the-date: 2/16/19. At our Dec Awards Banquet there will be a raffle for a free entry to WESD.

**Roy Anne Moulton & Marge Menacher** reported on The Great Gardens of Philadelphia Trip on May 6 – 10, 2019. Cost, without the airfare, based on double occupancy is \$588.00. The airfare will be announced at a later date. Details of trip are still being finalized, but the same hotel & transportation company will be used as the former trip to this area. Some of the places to be visited are: Philadelphia City Center, Longwood Gardens, & Chanticleer Gardens. Trip is limited to 30 people.

**New Business:** Members will be asked to evaluate the speakers we have; watch for speaker evaluation forms in the near future. This helps to monitor the degree our members like/dislike the meeting speakers.

**Golden Trowel Committee:** Stan Meyer, Bob Potter, Bob & Arlene Kosanke are nearing the finalization of this year's winner (s).

**Outgoing officers and board members:** Nancy Karuhn (Co-VP), Eric Kropp (Co-VP) Ann Abraham (Secretary), Sue Forbes (Bd), Jan Wetterau -Houge (bd), and Lori Berndt (bd) were commended for their service and willingness to support WCMGA.

Announcement by Co-Pres. **Kathy Schultz** for nominations from the floor. None came from the floor. The November vote proceeded and the results are: Vice President: **Britton Dake**, Secretary: **Susan Raasch**, Board: **Sandra Gollither**, 1-yr. Term, **Ed Dombrowski**, 2-yr. Term, **Ginny Slattery**, 2-yr. term

**Book Club Update:** Book chosen: The Savage Garden by Mark Mills. **Britton Dake** suggestions for two books: The Plant-Lore and Garden Craft of Shakespeare. [www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/28407](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/28407). Rev. Henry Ellacombe. Botanical Shakespeare, Geri Quealy & SumieHaseqawa-Collins.

**Kimberly Miller** spoke to the membership regarding identifying mushrooms. **MGV are NEVER allowed to give any info to ID mushrooms.** There are more poisonous mushrooms than edible ones & some are deadly. **Mary Shepard** spoke to reinforce Kimberly's points on the subject.

**Diana Dougherty** made a motion to adjourn meeting. **Roy Anne Moulton** second the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted, **Joni Pagel**, Treas.

## Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am winterberry holly. Family: Aquifoliaceae (holly family). Genus: Ilex. Species: Ilex verticillata. Other common names are common winterberry, black alder, coralberry and Michigan holly. Excellent year round interest, highlighted by the showy display of red berries against white snow in winter. Warning: all illex species may be somewhat toxic if ingested.



Resources: USDA Plants Database and associated links.

## Answer to Ask a Plant Health Advisor

Dr. Brian Hudelson  
Director of Diagnostic Services

For the 'Wealthy' apple, given the amount of branch dieback across the entire tree, I wonder about water stress issues on the tree. If it's been dry there, drought stress could be an



issue. Also, there's a lot of grass that's around the trees competing for water. That should be removed out to the dripline and the area mulched with a high quality mulch (about 2 inches would be appropriate). Finally, if you had periods with no snow this winter when it was really cold, there could be cold injury to the roots in play.

The photo with the yellow leaves I assume is the 'Honeycrisp'. This looks fertility related, although 'Honeycrisp' has genetic anomaly where the leaves can get blotchy light and dark. That's typical of this variety and you just kind of live with that.

The “spots on apples” photo looks like some insect damage.

The “spots on leaves, healthy apples” photo looks like cedar-apple rust. See [https://pddc.wisc.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/39/files/Fact\\_Sheets/FC\\_PDF/Cedar\\_Apple\\_Rust\\_Apple.pdf](https://pddc.wisc.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/39/files/Fact_Sheets/FC_PDF/Cedar_Apple_Rust_Apple.pdf) for details.

I don't see any indications of apple scab.

Finally, the dead/dying spruce, I can't tell much about. It might be winter injury as well. It was a tough winter on evergreens last year.

Hope this is useful. Brian (:))

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## Upcoming Events - See Calendar for December Events

**Feb. 8-10: Garden Expo, Madison**

**Feb. 16: Winter Escape~Summer Dreams, LaSures, Oshkosh**

**March 9: Potato & Holistic Landscape Design Workshop, Coughlin Center**

**June 8: Willow Creek Iris trip - leaf casting class**

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



### **Garden Trivia**

**Poinsettias, natives of Mexico, were brought to the United States in 1825 by the first U.S. minister to Mexico, Joel Poinsett, for whom the plant is named.**

## **SAVE THE DATE: March 9, 2019 - Learning Event at Coughlin Center**

### **Potatoes: From the USDA Potato Genebank to the Dinner Table**

Do you ever wonder when you plant a new tomato variety and the label says it has blight resistance, or a new lilac and it has powdery mildew resistance, or a new mum variety and it has frost tolerance to 25 degrees Fahrenheit, or a watermelon that doesn't have seeds? Where does the genetic material come from that allows us to improve the plants all around us? Improvements in crops relies heavily on the USDA Germplasm System, of which the USDA Potato Genebank is part of. Come and learn how a very small part of your federal tax dollar is spent making a difference in our everyday lives.

**Presenter:** Max Martin, Program Manager of the USDA Potato Genebank, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Max grew up on a small dairy farm in central Wisconsin, where his parents raised a litter of children, 11 to be exact, along with Brown Swiss cows, pigs, chickens, a large garden, and lots of potatoes, and tapped 300 maple trees. All this just to try to keep the kids out of trouble, it worked for the most part.

Max got a Bachelor's degree in Agronomy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a graduate degree from the University of Minnesota-Saint Paul in Plant Breeding and Genetics. He is a UW- Madison Department of Horticulture faculty member and has been at the Genebank for 29 years. Max and his wife Deanna pass the time when not working keeping bees, tapping maple trees, woodworking, gardening, skiing, snowshoeing, camping hiking, hunting and playing with their three wonderful grandchildren!

### **Holistic Landscape Design: Considering Nature When Choosing Plants**

In recent years, the Green Bay Botanical Garden has emphasized diversity in its gardens and increased the use of native plants. A lot of this change is based on the work of Douglas W. Tollamy, author of the book "Bringing Nature Home" which encourages gardeners to increase native landscaping to reduce the acceleration of habitat loss that is decimating native bird, insect, animal and plant populations. He urges homeowners to design gardens that enhance rather than degrade the ecosystem. Mark Konlock will explain what the Green Bay Botanical Garden has done to implement this philosophy and how it can be adapted to your home landscape.

**Presenter:** Mark Konlock has been the Director of Horticulture at the Green Bay Botanical Garden since 2005. He has a Bachelor's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Bachelor's degree in Horticulture of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Mark has overseen the construction of five acres of new gardens at GBBG and the addition of 38,500 permanent plants.

## WCMGA Projects

*Check your Member Guide for contact information.*

Project	Project Lead(s)
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
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	Sally Lindo - <b>looking for new lead</b>
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	Julie Gutsmedl - <b>looking for new lead</b>
Sullivan's Woods	Linda Loker

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

## December 2018

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
						1
2	3	4 Awards Banquet LaSures Oshkosh	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	31					

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