



## Winnebago County Master Gardeners

### Newsletter

December 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.

**“When *snow* falls,  
*nature* listens.”**



*Picture submitted by Kim Willman*

## What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am a hardy, native, ornamental grass which forms a tall, narrow mound of olive green to bluish green leaves, bearing airy heads of tiny green flowers in late summer. In fall my leaves turn to golden then fade to tan, adding winter interest in the garden. My clump forming plant grows from 4-6 feet tall and 2-3 feet wide in zones 5-9. I am easily grown in medium to wet soils in full sun to part shade and can tolerate occasional flooding.

My plant will slowly spread by slightly creeping rhizomes. My clumps should be cut back to the ground in late winter to early spring and can easily be divided in the spring. Plants may self-seed but cultivars may not come true from seed. I tolerate drought, erosion, dry soil, black walnut, and air pollution. I have no serious insect or disease problems and am deer resistant. I can be used as a screen, in perennial gardens, native plant gardens, prairies, meadows, naturalized areas, and rain gardens. I can also provide shelter and food for songbirds.

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

## Election Results - Congratulations!

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

**Treasurer:** Deby Voyles

**Board Members:** Sandy Golliher, Grace Oliver, Petey Clark

## Letter from your Presidents: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz



It is with 'bittersweetness' that we write this last President's letter to you. Thank you for your kind support over the last 4 years. Much has happened in these last 4 years - we have learned so much about our organization and are so proud to be a part of it. **Kimberly**, our advisor, has been with us every step of the way, especially with all the State and WIMGA changes going on. The community knows we are here and it utilizes us to make this county a more sustainable environment to live in. Each of you has shared so much knowledge and experience - this is so evident in our projects - and we hope that you continue to enjoy sharing this with others. We are excited to continue on as members helping make a difference in our community.

Now to pass along exciting news! We welcome 2 new Co-Presidents - **Ed Dombrowski** and **Bob Kneepkens**, new Treasurer, **Deby Voyles**, and 3 newly elected board members at large - **Sandy Gollither**, **Petey Clark** and **Grace Oliver**. Thank you all for stepping forward into leading positions in our organization.

Winter Escape~Summer Dreams is fast approaching - Saturday, February 15. This is our 11th year already that we have been sharing horticulture expertise with our community. Brochures are out and it looks to be a great day. Invite your garden comrades to join us!

As we stated at the November meeting, our By-Laws and SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) have been updated. Both will be presented to the membership in 2020. Typically they will be emailed to the membership for review, then a vote to accept is done at the following business meeting. Thank you, again, to **Susan Forbes**, **Joni Pagel** and **Nancy Karuhn** for their efforts and time spent working on this.

Just want to remind everyone to go on ORS (Online Reporting System) in December, and sign in so that you maintain your member status. This is very important. Please call one of us, or **Kimberly** with any questions you may have.

January business meeting guest speaker will be Julie Peterson. Julie is a private lands biologist working with landowners to achieve their conservation goals.

Finally, we wish a wonderful holiday season to all of you, and we are looking forward to another great gardening year!



*Kathy and Linda*

# Register and Save Your Place for the Annual WCMGA Winter Escape~Summer Dreams Conference

**Date:** Sat., February 15, 2020

**Time:** 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

**Where:** LaSure's Banquet Hall, Oshkosh

**Keynote Speaker:** Ben Futa, Executive Director, Allen Centennial Gardens, Madison

**Also Presenting:** Jim Nienhuis, Professor of Horticulture, UW- Madison and Anita Carpenter, Biologist, Oshkosh

This event is usually filled to capacity, and the brochure/registration form is included in this newsletter. You can also go on the Winnebago County Master Gardeners website, click on the Events page and the [brochure/registration](#) form is under February events. Sign up soon to guarantee yourself a spot, as this event is also open to the public.

## Do you know?

What plant produces vanilla?

- a. Dutch Amaryllis
- b. Oriental Lily
- c. Orchid
- d. Lotus



Find the answer on the last page.

## Mistakes Gardeners Make

By Lawanda Jungwirth

Every gardener makes mistakes, even the most experienced among us. Here are some of the most common missteps.

- Planting in the wrong spot. Plants have definite preferences for light, soil and moisture conditions. Take the time to research the conditions each plant favors before adding it to your landscape or you'll be set for failure.
- Underestimating how big a plant will get. Perennial nursery plants usually come with information about how big a plant will become. Often there is a range, say "2-3 feet tall and 4-5 feet wide." In that case, plan for three feet tall and five feet wide. If that leaves a gap in your landscape, fill in with annual plants until the perennial reaches its mature size. The same is true for annual plants. Trust the tag stuck in the nursery pot that tells you how large the plant will get and how far apart to plant. Otherwise faster growing plants will overtake the garden before the slow growers get a chance to shine.
- Failing to look up, down and sideways. Don't plant a tree under powerlines. It will eventually grow into the line and the utility company will come and prune it in a way that usually isn't pretty. Don't plant trees or shrubs too close to your foundation. Roots can damage even concrete foundations. Don't plant over a septic drain field. Roots can play expensive havoc with what's going on underground. Don't plant over buried electric wires, gas lines or cable wires. Call Diggers Hotline at 800-242-8511 or visit [www.diggershotline.com](http://www.diggershotline.com) to request them to come and mark where underground utilities are located. They will do so free of charge within three business days. They do not mark private lines like propane lines, sewer and water laterals, and lines between buildings and yard lights. Private companies will do this for you and an extensive list of them can be found on the Diggers Hotline website.
- Overestimating how much time and space you have to devote to gardening. Unless you take a good hard look at your space and your schedule, you can get carried away and come home from the nursery with way too many plants, or till up a vegetable garden three times the size of what you can actually maintain. You can always go back to the nursery if you underbuy and you can always add to the size of your vegetable garden the following year.
- Planting in small containers. A container plant's survival is totally dependent on what is inside the pot. It cannot spread its roots any further than the pot's walls for water, soil and fertilizer. You as the gardener have to provide those things, sometimes daily. A larger pot will make for less work and happier plants.
- Taking failures personally. You can't expect success every time. Sometimes the seeds just don't germinate or a plant just won't thrive even though you've done everything right. Just try again!

## Rain Gardens Protect Our Lakes and Rivers

By Lawanda Jungwirth

When I first heard the term “rain garden” I thought it sounded so exotic, like something that would be located in the rainforest of the Amazon or perhaps the Pacific Northwest. I soon learned that rain gardens can be installed anywhere it rains. They are a way that all of us can improve the water quality of Wisconsin’s lakes, streams and groundwater by soaking up rain water from roofs, driveways and lawns.

Rain gardens increase the amount of water filtering into the ground rather than running off, which recharges groundwater and reduces the amount of pollutants washing into lakes and streams. The EPA estimates that 35% of surface water pollution comes from runoff from homeowners’ yard care and chemical pollution from household activities. A rain garden soaks up 30% more water than a lawn area of the same size and filters out pollutants in the process.

Rain gardens are usually placed next to hard surfaces like sidewalks and driveways or at the end of downspouts. They are designed as shallow depressions three to eight inches deep with flat bottoms so that the water spreads out. After an average rainfall, the garden will be wet for about 24 hours and then the water will soak in and the area will be dry. Sometimes an outlet furrow is added so that excess water from major downpours drains away.

After installation, a rain garden isn’t any more work than a regular garden and to the average onlooker, doesn’t appear any different. Typically plants native to our area are used. They need no pesticides or fertilizers and can tolerate alternating very wet and very dry conditions. These native plants provide homes for birds, pollinators and other beneficial insects to a much higher degree than non-natives.

Choosing plants for a rain garden is like designing any other garden. Some people plant one or more shrubs in the middle surrounded by wildflowers. To keep the garden looking neat, edges can be kept tidy with rocks, bricks or other edging. Tall plants and grasses tend to flop over, so for a neat silhouette, stick with short species.

Some weeding and watering may be necessary the first couple of years until plants become established. Like any garden, plants can be moved, divided, or thinned depending on the whim of the gardener.

The typical home rain garden is 100-300 square feet. There are formulas for determining the proper size of a rain garden for the amount of runoff in a particular area, but a rain garden of any size does a lot of good.

The rain garden should be at least ten feet from a home’s foundation so water doesn’t seep into the basement, and eight feet from a well, five feet from a septic system and one foot above bedrock or the high groundwater level.

The DNR has an excellent publication that will help you plan the best size, location and plants for a rain garden:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Stormwater/documents/RainGardenManual.pdf>.

## Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am Northwind switch grass. Order: Cyperales. Family: Poaceae / Gramineae – Grass family. Genus: Panicum L. - panicgrass. Species: Panicum virgatum L. – switchgrass. Specific name: Northwind Switchgrass. Genus name comes from an old Latin word for millet. This plant was the 2014 Perennial of the Year as chosen by The Perennial Plant Association. I can be seen in the rain garden located at the entrance to the Coughlin Center.



References: *USDA Plants Database and associated links.*



Monarch trying to emerge in early October.

*Pictures submitted by Kim Willman.*

# Preserving Winter Squash and Pumpkins

*Carol Ann Burtness, former Extension educator and Suzanne Driessen, Extension educator, University of Minnesota Extension*



Pumpkins and squash can be preserved for later use by freezing, canning or drying. They should have a hard rind and stringless mature pulp. Small size pumpkins (sugar or pie varieties) make better products.

## Freezing

Freezing is the only safe method for preserving pumpkin purees, butters and preserves.

Select full-colored, mature pumpkins with fine texture.

- Wash, cut into cooking-size sections and remove seeds.
- Cook until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker or in an oven.
- When soft, remove pulp from rind and mash.
- To cool, place pan containing pumpkin in cold water and stir occasionally.
- Pack into rigid containers leaving ½-inch headspace and freeze.

Freeze these items for up to 1 year. Frozen pumpkin or squash is great to use in pies, desserts and as a vegetable. Thaw pumpkin and squash in the refrigerator - not on the counter - before using.

## Canning

The only safe instructions for canning pumpkin and winter squash are for cubed flesh in a pressure canner.

**Caution:** DO NOT mash or puree! The density of this product prevents adequate heat transfer to the center of the jar may allow harmful bacteria to survive.

To can pumpkin or squash:

- Cut the flesh into 1-inch cubes.
- Boil the cubes in water for 2 minutes.
- Fill the jars with cubes and cooking liquid, leaving 1-inch of headspace.



- Pumpkin and squash are low-acid vegetables and must be pressure canned. Process the vegetables at:
  - 11 pounds pressure in a dial gauge pressure canner.
  - Or 15 pounds pressure in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.



For either method, process pints for 55 minutes and quarts for 90 minutes.

To use canned pumpkin or squash, drain the jars, mash the cubes and re-heat.

### **Drying**

- Wash, peel and remove fibers and seeds from pumpkin or squash flesh.
- Cut into small, thin strips, no more than 1 inch by 1/8 inch.
- Blanch strips over steam for 3 minutes. Drain and pat dry.
- Dry the strips in a dehydrator until brittle.
- To reconstitute, use 1 cup of dried food to 2 cups of water.
- Pre-soak for 1 hour and then boil until tender.

1 cup of dried pumpkin or squash is enough for one pie.

### **Pickling**

Use pumpkin or squash in pickled products such as salsas, chutneys and relishes, but treat these products as fresh foods and refrigerate them. They cannot be safely canned by either the boiling water or pressure canning methods.

### **Butters and preserves**

Refrigerate or freeze pumpkin butters and gelled preserves to ensure they will be safe to eat. Pumpkin butters and gelled preserves **cannot be safely canned** for room temperature storage.

Pumpkin and squash are low-acid foods and require special attention to preparation and processing. Currently, the USDA does not have any tested recipes for safely canning pumpkin preserves (jams, jellies, conserves or pumpkin butter).

## Member Business Meeting Minutes - Nov. 12, 2019

Co-President **Kathy Schultz** called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM

**Treasurer Report:** **Joni** gave the cash reconciliation report for the period of October 2019.

**Secretary Report:** WCMGA Board minutes for October will be on the website after the minutes are approved in January 2020. Member meeting minutes are in the Newsletter. No corrections to the minutes as written. The minutes were unanimously approved by the membership.

**Project Updates:** **Britton** reported that Projects needing co-leads are: Omro Library, Farmers Market, and the Rain Garden. Miravida and Parkview Cutting gardens received grants. Miravida's grant was \$400. Parkview Cutting garden's grant was \$250. Paper work is due from project leads on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Education Committee Report:** **Linda Werner** reported that WE~SD will be Saturday, Feb. 15, 2020. WE~SD speakers are: Ben Futa, Centennial Garden Director, on principles of gardening and Anita Carpenter on sustainability. Jim Nienhaus, UW-Madison vegetable geneticist on vegetables hardy in Central America. WE~SD is 4.5 education hours. This summer plan for 1 day trip and 1 overnight trip. Madison Expo will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of February.

**Extension Updates:** **Kimberly Miller** reported that 10 of the 12 interns have become newly certified Master Gardeners. Thank you to the Co-Presidents: **Kathy Schultz** and **Linda Loker**, Treasurer: **Joni Pagel** and Board member: **Diane Iott** and **Nancy Karuhn** for all of their work while office holders and board members. Thank you to all for using ORS, this has helped greatly. It has saved time. It is a quicker system to output reports. Extension needs to know who is volunteering. After Thanksgiving, Members need to login to ORS and acknowledge volunteer position description (generic) and the volunteer agreement. This needs to be done by Feb 1, 2020.

**State Representatives Report:** **Deby Voyles** was not able to go to the WIMGA meeting, no report.

### New Business

**Election results:** Secretary announced the new officers starting January 2020 are Co-Presidents: **Ed Dombrowski** and **Bob Kneepkens**; Treasurer: **Deby Voyles**; Board Members: **Sandy Gollhofer**, **Grace Oliver** and **Petey Clark**.

**Goals/Reserve Committee:** 7 person committee: Members at large: **Anne Murphy**, **Mary Shepard**, **Allen Stabenow**, and **Patty Schmitz**; Board members: **Ginny Slattery** and **Sandy Gollhofer**; Education Committee member: **Bob Kosanke**. This committee will draft

guidelines for the goals and reserves of the WCMGA.

**Membership Committee position open:** **Linda Baeten** is stepping down from this position, looking for a member to fill this vacancy. Duties: collecting annual dues and entering data in a spreadsheet.

**Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> Award Dinner:** La Sure's buffet and prizes.

**Golden Trowel Award 2019:** **Stan Meyer** issued last call for Golden Trowel nominations. Golden Trowel Committee is meeting after the adjournment of the membership meeting.

**FYI By Law/SOP review:** **Susan Forbes** presented the suggested revisions to the board at the November Board meeting. These changes will be brought to a membership meeting in 2020. The changes will be emailed to the membership 30 days before the meeting, at which time the membership will vote on the revisions.

**5 minute book/media highlight:** **Barb Harrison** continued on her talk regarding bringing nature home, landscaping with native plants, and the five letter word "Vital".

**Other New business:** none

Drawing for door prizes

**Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn by **Diana Dougherty**, second by **Mary Shepard**.



## Upcoming Events - See Calendar for December Events

Jan. 21: Education Committee, Benvenuto's, 5:30 PM  
Jan. 24-25: Garden Visions, Wausau - see our website for link  
Jan. 25: Wild Ones in Harmony with Nature, Oshkosh - see our website for link

Feb. 7-9: WPT Garden Expo, Madison - see our website for link  
Feb. 8: WCMGA bus trip to WPT Garden Expo - more info to come!  
Feb. 15: Winter Escape~Summer Dreams  
Feb. 18: Education Committee, Benvenuto's, 5:30 PM

Mar. 17: Education Committee, Benvenuto's, 5:30 PM  
April 21: Education Committee, Benvenuto's, 5:30 PM  
May 19: Education Committee, Benvenuto's, 5:30 PM



*Picture by Kim Willman.*



**11th Annual**  
**Winter Escape ~ Summer Dreams**

**Sat., Feb. 15, 2020 \* 8 AM - 3:30 PM**

**La Sure's Banquet Hall Oshkosh, WI**

- Cost: \$45 through February 11
- \$50 after Feb. 11
- Breakfast and lunch included
- Gluten-Free options available
- ATM available on site
- FREE onsite parking
- Confirmation will be sent via email or US mail
- Proceeds from this event support the Winnebago County Master Gardener Association's community projects and scholarships



<b>Registration Form</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Amount Enclosed</b>	
<p><b>Make check payable to WCMGA and mail to:</b></p> <p><b>WCMGA</b></p> <p><b>1112 Merritt Ave.</b></p> <p><b>Oshkosh, WI 54901</b></p>	

## 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 lott
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](mailto:pakster0605@yahoo.com).

## December 2019



Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
1	2	3 Awards Banquet LaSure's	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	31				

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

**Answer to Do you Know?: C: Orchid**