

Winnebago County Master Gardeners Newsletter

December 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.

*"I heard a bird sing in the
dark of December
A magical thing
And sweet to remember."
-Oliver Herford*



What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am an extremely hardy, native, ornamental grass which typically grows in narrow clumps in zones 5-9. I grow up to 4-6 feet tall and 24-36 inches wide, performing best in full to part sun, and in average, medium to wet, well-drained soil. My airy plumes of rose colored flowers rise above my olive green leaves which turn a gorgeous gold in fall and usually remain attractive all winter long.

I can be propagated by seed or division in spring. My plant requires little maintenance except for cutting back the old foliage to the ground in late winter or early spring. I can be used in beds and borders, hedges and screens, either individually or in groups. I attract birds and butterflies. I am drought and wet soil tolerant. I have no serious insect or disease problems and am deer resistant as well as salt tolerant.

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. Thank you!

Election Results - Congratulations!

Vice President: Kathy Procknow & Debra Butch

Board Member: Ruth Retzlaff

Letter from your Presidents: Ed Dombrowski & Bob Kneepkens

Horticultural Holiday Cheer

As we approach the coming holidays, we shudder to think of all those poor little buds covered under layers of snow. The different shades of brown we see in our backyards. Temperatures are dropping and white is on the way. Diana Alfuth, Extension Horticulture Educator for Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties has some suggestions on how to keep our backyards "Bright throughout Winter".

Doing most of her garden clean-up for the spring months, she found herself extremely busy during the spring months and found fall clean-up preferable. However, she says "...the rusty brown flat flower heads of sedum look great with snow perched on top..."

Planning for a bright backyard during the winter months may include the bright red berries of the Cranberrybush Viburnum. How about garden art or projects that glisten among the snowy backdrop of your yard? Outdoor landscape lights are great used in moderation. The lights can be used to make your special garden features a focal point during the winter months.

As busy as we all are in the fall, clean up can be tedious and nerve racking. How do we get to the point of not having to clean up and yet make our yards Bright! The following is a brief month-by-month guide for you to consider during the upcoming winter months.

December: a. Protect trunks of trees from animal damage and sensitive evergreens from sun and wind damage, b. Check your yard, garage or tool shed for garden products and equipment that should be stored indoors for the winter, c. Clean garden tools with a wire brush and apply a light coat of oil to protect them from rusting, d. If the ground is finally frozen an inch or so deep, it is now safe to apply winter mulches, e. Check stored vegetables and flowers for mildew and rot. Remove affected items immediately, f. think about what your gardening successes were and how you could improve upon the not so successful ventures.

January: a. Water containers overwintered in an unheated garage, b. Start planning for new additions to your flower beds, c. Inventory leftover seeds, create a list of additional seeds you want to purchase, and place your order early for the greatest selection, d. Avoid rock salt, which is sodium chloride, to melt sidewalk and driveway ice. Products made of calcium chloride or potassium chloride cause less damage to plants. e. Recycle your Christmas tree and greens in your landscape.

What we have tried to share with you may help you get through the boredom of our current health crisis. We may not be able to reach out and touch our fellow Master Gardeners for now; but there are always outside gardening tasks which need attention.

Happy Holiday Cheers,

Bob and Ed

A Tribute - Roy Anne Moulton

Roy Anne Moulton was a passionate gardener and good friend to many in the Winnebago County Master Gardener Association since she joined in 2003. As one friend said after Roy Anne's death on November 21st, "She had a kind and loving heart." Roy Anne was outgoing and generous with her time and knowledge of plants. She always had the time to listen and was quick to help those in need with a home cooked meal (She also loved to cook!) or invite friends to join her and her husband Glenn for a meal. Roy Anne's other great interest was traveling. She and Glenn traveled widely throughout the U.S. and Europe and toured New Zealand twice. She also led many Master Gardener trips including those to see gardens in Pennsylvania, British Columbia and Savannah, Georgia. Most recently, she initiated and coordinated a private trip to the Chelsea Garden Show in London in which a number of Master Gardeners participated.

Additionally, Roy Anne chaired the Winter Escape~Summer Dreams Conference each year. She was already rounding-up speakers for the 2021 event when the Covid-19 pandemic made it necessary to cancel. As a long-time Education Committee Chairperson, Roy Anne served on the WCMGA Board for many years. Her presence in our organization and our lives was a gift that will be deeply missed.



Red Twig Dogwood

By Lawanda Jungwirth

This fall I fell in love with red twig dogwood. It is one of the few native shrubs among an overwhelming multitude of invasive plants and shrubs that edge the trail where I walk every morning. The dogwoods have been particularly beautiful this fall, or perhaps they've always been there, just waiting for me to notice them.

In mid-October, the leaves begin turning a beautiful dark red, and during the time when some have turned and others remain a deep dark green, the plant is reminiscent of a wonderfully sophisticated Christmas decoration. Next, the leaves fade to a lovely peach color. Dogwood isn't one to scream with bright autumn colors. No, it just glows with quiet beauty.

It is in late October and throughout the winter that red twig dogwood really shines. The young stems turn a pure fire engine red that really stands out against the browns of the autumn landscape and the white snows of winter. The cut red twigs are spectacular in holiday displays when coupled with evergreens or dried grasses or even on their own.

[Red twig dogwood](#) – Latin name *Cornus sericea* – is a deciduous shrub that grows 6-12' tall with a loose form. In May or June, flat umbrella-like clusters of small white, fragrant [flowers](#) form. The flowers eventually turn into green, pea-sized [berries](#) that ripen to white by fall. The leaves are an extended oval shape and have prominent veins.

Dogwoods prefer full sun, but do just fine in light shade. They thrive in medium to wet soil, and will survive even boggy conditions.

The red branches lose their bright color and return to gray in spring. Older stems will stop turning red in winter so some gardeners will prune out a few of the older stems at ground level each year in early spring. If the plant gets out of hand and overgrown, an alternative is to cut the entire plant down to about 9" to rejuvenate it.

Red twig dogwood is easily propagated by stem cuttings. You may find some of the

lower stems partially burying themselves in the soil and developing roots along the buried stems. These can be dug up and planted elsewhere.

Being a native plant, dogwood supports many birds and insects, not to mention the photo opportunities presented when birds perch in its red winter branches. It is a larval host for the [spring azure butterfly](#). The flowers attract insects which then attract birds.

Red twig dogwood works as a specimen plant in a landscape as well as part of a shrub border or informal hedge. It is effective combined with evergreens or a yellow-branched dogwood cultivar called 'Flaviramia'. If a large shrub won't fit your landscape, there is a dwarf cultivar called 'Arctic Fire' that grows just 3-5' tall.

There are few problems with dogwood, but it can be susceptible to leaf and twig blights, canker and leaf spots, and occasional scale, leaf miners and bagworms.

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. Common name: Northwind switch grass. In addition to being used as an ornamental grass, I am used for soil conservation, forage production, game cover, fiber, electricity, heat production and phytoremediation projects (mitigating pollutant concentrations in contaminated soils). I was the Perennial Plant Association's 2014 Perennial Plant of the Year. I can be found in the rain garden adjacent to the Coughlin Center.



References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.

Upcoming Events - See Calendar for December Events

Dec. 15: 6:00 PM Zoom Awards Meeting

Use deicing salts with care

November 17, 2020, Julie Weisenhorn, UW Minnesota Extension



Evergreens are particularly susceptible to deicing salt damage especially when planted close to streets.

Winter weather inevitably brings slippery conditions on streets, driveways, sidewalks and parking lots. Deicing salts are used to prevent ice from forming, saving many of us an embarrassing fall (or worse). Icy surfaces can be hazardous and a liability for business owners, homeowners and municipalities.

However, deicing salts can sometimes be applied improperly, and this can lead to less-than-satisfactory results.

Used incorrectly, these salts can pollute groundwater (the source of drinking water), burn plants, and raise salt levels in the soil. They are also toxic to fish and other aquatic animals.

[The effects of deicing salts on our landscapes](#) (←click on for more information) by Extension educator, Julie Weisenhorn, provides information on deicing salt damage and pollution and offers guidance for properly maintaining your driveways, walks and street areas to reduce or even eliminate the need for deicing salts just in time for another winter.

Member Business Meeting Minutes - Nov. 10, 2020

Education Presentation: Anne Pearce "WFDN Invasive plants" (1 Hour continuing education)

Standard Agenda

- Treasurer's Report: **Deby Voyles** reported that the balance ending October 31, 2020 in the checking account was \$1721.41. This balance includes \$900.00 (membership dues), \$351.59 (donations), and \$10.00 overpayment).
- Secretary's report: Minutes from the October business meeting were in the Newsletter and the Board minutes are on the website.
- Project update: **Britton Dake** notified members that Project lead **Petey Clark** has turned back the Algoma Town Hall project to the partner. The partner has hired a buildings and grounds employee. **Ginny Slattery**, project lead for the Paine Gardens, needs a co-lead. **Britton** thanked everyone for all the assistance and cooperation that she was given during her tenure as Vice-President.
- Extension update: **Kimberly** reported that she remains in a holding pattern as the COVID infection continues to climb. She reminded the members to enter their continuing education hours and volunteer hours in ORS. If any member is having issues entering hours contact **Kimberly** or **Valerie Stabenow** for assistance.
- Education Committee update: **Linda Werner** reported the Education Committee is not planning any activities at this time. There are virtual education opportunities posted on MG Facebook, the website and in the newsletter. Education opportunities need to be research based and appropriate.
- State Representative report: **Bob Kneepkens** reported that he checked the WIMGA website. WIMGA is proposing to become a non-profit, non-stock legal entity to align with UW- Madison. The website had news about an Honor/Exempt membership status statement. This status is not finalized yet. WIMGA will be offering SOP revisions help along with a SOP template coming in 2021.
- Strategic Planning Committee: **Ginny** reported that the committee is meeting Friday November 13, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

- WCMGA Elections – **Ed** reported that the voting results will be presented at the next membership meeting. Members are able to write in nominations using the chat box sent to the host (for write-in vote privacy). Members not attending the Business meeting will be provided an opportunity to vote via SurveyMonkey. Members that do not have internet access will be sent a hard copy ballot.
- Tentative Results: Vice Presidents: **Deb Butch/Kathy Procknow** Secretary: No candidates Board position: **Ruth Retzlaff** (Remaining term due to Petey Clark resignation)
- Board report – **Ed** gave a brief update of the October Board meeting: Approval of the treasurer, secretary, education, strategic planning, extension reports. 2021 budget, Emeritus status—2 members requested and were approved for emeritus status. Elections for Vice President, Secretary, 1 at-large Board opening were discussed. Dr. Weber's plaque was obtained by **Linda Loker**. The board thanked **Britton Dake**, **Susan Raasch** and **Petey Clark** for their service in their respective board positions. There will be an additional December Board meeting.
- Budget: **Deby** explained the difference in the 2020 proposed and actual budget lines and clarified the difference between the proposed income/expenditures (too high) with the actual income/expenses. The end result is an available balance of \$1721.41. The Board approved the 2021 budget which is underfunded. This means the budgeted income will not cover the budgeted expenses. This might result in a money transfer from the reserves. There will be a \$2000.00 withdrawal from the reserves when necessary to cover expenses.

- Golden Trowel Award: **Bob** reported that members will be emailed a nomination form in pdf format. Nominations will be sent to the Golden Trowel Award nomination committee.
- Other announcements – This meeting contained 1 HR Continuing Education and 1 HR Volunteer
- Next meeting: December 15, 2020 at 6:00 P.M.



Continuing Education Opportunities

Melinda Myers has a new virtual gardening series starting Nov. 11. All sessions are free, but require registration at www.melindamyers.com. Like all of her other sessions, they will be archived for later viewing.

*Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Improve Your Indoor Environment With Houseplants
 Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Grow Flavorful and Nutritious Herbs Indoors
 Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Growing Nutritious and Flavorful Edibles Indoors
 Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Low Maintenance Gardening for Beauty and Health Benefits*

Citizen Lake Monitoring Network Catch the WAVE Webinar Series. Only the programs listed below are eligible for MG continuing education hours. All begin at noon.

*December 16, 2020: An Overview of Wisconsin's Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring program
https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMIlf-Cvrj0qHNXnX4FyrMUw53whkYicq_hK*

*January 6, 2021: Nitrate in Groundwater and Streams
<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEtdumspzopH9LHXUJa8HZATDkkwpLMh4U6>*

*March 3, 2021: Water Action Volunteers Data: Where it's Stored and How it's Used
<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwtd-igqTMqH9CN88MSUhbvpzvLtck5QhQJ>*


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	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	Donna Kudlas/Jane Kuhn
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	Mary Shepard
Shattuck Park, Neenah	Diane Iott
Sullivan's Woods	Linda Loker

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

December 2020

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 ZOOM Awards Meeting 6:00	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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