

## Winnebago County Master Gardeners

### Newsletter

February 2018

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#### 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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“Plant Dreams. Pull Weeds.  
Grow a Happy Life.”

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**February 17, 2018**

[Registration form](#)

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## Letter from Your Presidents

*Kathy Schultz & Linda Loker*

Here we are in our second month of the year already - the Sweetheart Month!

Does anyone else think we have had too many below zero days already this winter?! At least it seemed that the rabbit activity had lessened during those frigid temps. Speaking of rabbits, your co-presidents were sharing wrapping paper this Christmas season that actually - no kidding - had little bunnies nibbling on shrubs in the pretty scene on the paper! Only a gardener would not see the beauty, or the humor in that! (Actually it was surprisingly funny!)

So here we are in the midst of the garden dreaming season ... magazines are starting to pour in. If we are to stay on top of spring tasks, it would be good to get pen and paper in hand, making our lists and our plan of attack for this year's gardens. What better way to begin than to attend one or more of the many garden events offered in our area. We have many to choose from on our website - thank you **Jean Reed!**

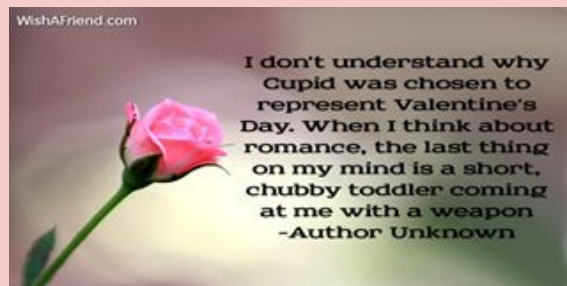
We are hosting a bus trip to Madison to the Alliant Energy Garden Expo on Saturday, February 10. We all should have received an email on the details of the trip. Hopefully you have the opportunity to attend and pick up some education hours ... and have fun with your MG friends. It is always refreshing to wander through the vendor area and take in all the beautiful blooms!

Winter Escape~Summer Dreams seminar is ready to go for Saturday, February 17, at LaSures Banquet Hall. There is still time to sign up for this great seminar. The day is packed with top notch speakers providing us with information on environmental concerns.

Our Vice Presidents, **Eric** and **Nancy**, are in need of project applications now so make sure you get your forms in with funds requests, if needed. Eric and Nancy will also be hosting a meeting for project leads on Tuesday, March 20. More information to come on this meeting. It is an important meeting with project updates, but also a meeting to bring any of your concerns to discuss.

February's business meeting will begin with an education hour featuring Richard Baehnman from the North East Wisconsin Orchid Society. He will be sharing his expertise on orchids, and more specifically the WI native orchids. His pictures will be a breath of spring!

Happy St. Valentine's Day!  
Linda and Kathy



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## What am I?

*By Jane Kuhn*

I am a hardy, herbaceous, bulbous perennial which may be the earliest garden flower to blossom in the late winter or early spring, sometimes emerging when snow is still on the ground. Although native to Europe, I am now found in the United States and can be grown in Zones 3-7. I am a tiny plant (3-6 inches tall) with one small, white flower which hangs down off the stalk prior to opening. My bloom has three outer petals arching over three inner petals. My leaves are shaped like narrow blades about four inches long. I prefer full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil.

Propagation is by bulbs or by seeds sown either when ripe or in the spring. I can be planted under deciduous trees since I bloom and begin storing nutrients before the leaves come out on the trees. My small plants will not have much of an impact individually but planting many bulbs closely together will create a showy spring display. I will also be well suited for rock gardens and woodland gardens.

## 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

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## Allium 'Milenium' selected Perennial Plant of the Year

By *Lawanda Jungwirth*

The Perennial Plant Association has named [Allium 'Milenium'](#) its 2018 Perennial Plant of the Year.

Like most alliums, 'Milenium' grows upright on a stiff stem topped by a perfectly round sphere of tiny flowers called umbels. 'Milenium's' are rose-purple and last for up to four weeks, much longer than many perennial plant flowers. Better yet, they bloom in mid-summer when the first burst of perennial bed colors have faded. They do well in the heat of summer, but some afternoon shade is appreciated. When the blooms fade, they dry to a light tan that holds a blush of rose-purple, still nice looking. After the bloom period, foliage continues to look fresh and green until frost.

'Milenium' produces clumps of deep glossy green grass-like leaves 10-15 inches tall. In mid-summer, the flowers rise above the foliage. Picture a slightly oversized clump of chives in full bloom except with round flowers instead of domed. Unlike some other ornamental alliums which produce seeds and spread prodigiously, the seeds of 'Milenium' are sterile so uninvited seedlings won't overrun your flowerbed. The clumps can be divided in either spring or fall by digging up the clump and separating it into two or more smaller clumps. Foliage should be cut back in fall.

Deer and rabbits avoid 'Milenium' and it attracts no serious insect pests or diseases. Pollinators like bees and butterflies love allium flowers!

'Milenium' grows best in well-drained soil and once established, is drought resistant.

The Perennial Plant Association suggests backing 'Milenium' with silver-leaved Russian sage or downy skullcap, which has spikes of blue flowers above trim green foliage. Or just let it shine on its own!

The genus allium to which 'Milenium' belongs is the same as that of onion, garlic, leeks, shallots, scallions, and chives. All plants in the genus have a slight oniony scent and this one is no exception. Don't let that stop you from planting it in your flower bed though. It's surprising how the onion scent fits right in among sweeter scented blossoms.

Note that 'Milenium' is spelled with just one "n." This is how the plant was registered by the developer, Mark McDonough, a horticulture researcher from Massachusetts. Whether a spelling mistake or intentional, one "n" is correct when shopping for this plant.

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

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

It looks as though the PPA members have chosen another winner this year!

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Find the answer later in the newsletter.



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**ANNUAL PROJECT LEAD TRAINING - Save the date**

This training will be on March 20 from 5:30 to 8:00 and includes dinner. All current project leads are encouraged to attend. The training is also open to any Master Gardener that may be interested in becoming a project lead. More information coming.

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It's cold outside and the ground is covered with snow. This may seem like the perfect time to relax by a roaring fire, but it's also a great time to perform an important gardening chore: pruning. Why is pruning so important? Pruning can help control the size of a plant, direct growth, influence flowering or fruiting, rejuvenate old, overgrown plants, or maintain plant health and appearance. For shrubs, pruning also encourages growth below the pruning cut. For trees, pruning can also help prevent safety problems from broken, diseased, dead, or dying branches.

This is a good time to prune most deciduous trees because at this time of year you can see the overall branch structure easily, and insects and disease-causing organisms are not active. This is especially important for oak trees to help prevent spread of the fungus that causes oak wilt. Elms should not be pruned in summer either as the elm bark beetle is attracted to fresh cut wounds and can transfer Dutch elm disease. But don't wait too long; in late winter, some trees may bleed or ooze sap excessively in the early spring. Although the bleeding may be unsightly, it is perfectly natural and is a sign that the sap is "flowing" in late winter/early spring before budbreak, but it does not harm the tree. Some trees that bleed excessively are maple, willow, birch, walnut, beech, hornbeam, elm, and yellowwood. Newly planted trees should not be pruned unless a branch is broken, diseased or dead. Young trees (established for 2-5 years) can be pruned to encourage a well-branched canopy, but be careful not to remove more than 1/3 of the total crown at one time. Older trees should not require pruning if properly trained when young, other than to remove damaged branches. If older, large trees need pruning, it is best to hire an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist to prune large trees. A list of certified arborists for hire is available at the [Wisconsin Arborist Association \(WAA\) website](#).

Summer-flowering shrubs should also be pruned when they are dormant or in early spring before budbreak. These shrubs produce flower buds on new growth in the spring, so if you postpone pruning until late spring or early summer, you will remove many

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flower buds. Some summer-flowering shrubs include hydrangeas, roses, Japanese spirea, rose-of-Sharon, potentilla, and smokebush.

Spring-flowering shrubs produce flower buds on one-year-old wood (wood produced the preceding summer), so it is often recommended to wait until they have flowered in spring, but before the next year's flower buds are set, but it won't harm the plant if done prior to flowering. For plants that need only moderate pruning, they can wait until after flowering.

For those that are very overgrown it is better to prune in late winter/early spring. Some flower buds will be removed, but this really is the best time to prune plants. Spring-flowering shrubs include lilacs, forsythia, viburnums, honeysuckle, chokeberry, mockorange, and weigela.

Evergreen trees such as pine, spruce, fir, Douglas-fir, and hemlock generally require little pruning, but if necessary this should be done later in the spring or summer.

The method you use to prune your plant depends on what type of plant it is and what you wish to achieve. For specific techniques, consult the references listed below.

- Thinning preserves overall plant shape by selectively removing interior branches, down to the base of shrubs and back to larger branches on trees. This is the most commonly used technique.
- Heading back reduces the height of a shrub by removing each branch back to a larger branch or bud. Crown reduction accomplishes the same thing in trees, and is much preferred over topping or tipping.
- Crown raising removes branches from the bottom of a tree to provide clearance below the branches.
- Rejuvenation restores overgrown or leggy shrubs by cutting the entire plant back to a height of 4 – 10 inches from the ground. Only certain shrubs can tolerate this, such as potentilla and spirea.

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- Shearing removes new shoots to eliminate the shrub's natural form and create a specific shape for formal hedges. This is only effective on certain plants, such as yews and boxwood.
  - Pinching removes shoot tips to encourage additional side branching to increase bushiness of shrubs.
  - Deadheading removes spent flowers by hand to encourage a second flush of flowers or remove unwanted future seedheads.

As with any other task, using the right tools produces superior results (not to mention less frustration). What implements should you be using for pruning? The choice of tool to use depends on the size of the branches and the amount of pruning to be done.



- Hand pruners are used to remove branches less than an inch in diameter. Many different kinds are available. To avoid tearing or crushing of tissues it is best to use a by-pass style pruner rather than an anvil-style pruner. By-pass pruners use a curved cutting blade that slides past a broader lower blade, much like a scissors.



- Lopping shears should be used for branches up to 2½ inches in diameter. They are similar to hand pruners, but have larger cutting surfaces and greater leverage.



- Pruning saws must be used to cut branches too large to handle with lopping shears. They differ greatly in handle styles, shape of the blade and type of teeth. Unlike most other saws, these are designed to cut on the "pull-stroke."



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- Pole pruners are used to cut branches beyond reach. They are basically lopping shears on a long handle. Once again, the by-pass style is preferred. They should not be used near utility lines, except by qualified personnel, because of the risk of electrocution. For branches larger than 4 inches in diameter, chain saws are preferred, but they should only be used by qualified individuals.

All pruning implements should be kept clean and sharp to make pruning more efficient and easier.

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### **Answer to Ask a Plant Health Advisor:**

The needle drop could in part be due to transplant shock, but one of the things that I'd look for if a sample like this came into the clinic would be [Setomelanomma holmii](#), the fungus associated with spruce needle drop. This fungus has never been formally shown to be a pathogen, but it is found associated with needle drop on spruce trees that are under stress. There's not much to do if you find it other than to prune out the denuded branches and reduce any stresses to the plant.

*~Dr. Brian Hudelson, Director of Diagnostic Services, UW Madison*

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## Member Meeting Minutes - January 9, 2018

**Treasurers' Report:** all in Budget \$26,117.84.

**Secretaries Report:** Minutes have been approved and sent in.

**Project updates:** Wrap up reports for the 2017 year need to come in. The project and budget requests for 2018 year need to be sent in also. Individuals will be contacted if any reports are needed. Project leads meeting will be on Tuesday March 20<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

**Extension Updates:** There is a moratorium placed on any new long term projects for now. We will take a look at requests that come in. Small group and short term will continue as usual.

Susan Maher will be retiring in the fall.

UWO Extension and UW Madison will be merging into one. More to come in July just watch for the changes.

**Education Committee Updates:** Silent auction items need to be in by Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Neenah Public Library workshops coming up-starting at 6:30 pm. On March 12: Fertilizers, what they are, etc. April 9: Basic yard and garden care.

**New Business:** Scholarship committee has come up with an application to be sent out to 17 schools for graduating seniors. It will be a one-time scholarship for \$1000.00 for any graduating senior planning on going into a horticulture related field.

Awards banquet had a good turnout, but we would like to send out a survey as to what people liked and didn't like about the program.

Update on the bylaws still need to be gone over by the board. It's a work in progress.

Hour sheets hours end on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Any September hours need to go on the next year hours.

Wild ones 22<sup>nd</sup> annual seminar is on January 27<sup>th</sup> @ the Oshkosh Convention center. The program is on native landscapes @ 8am. This does count as education hours.

Maria Talin has stepped down as the photographer, so if anyone is interested let anyone know on the board.

A plant has been sent out in memory of Lori Berndt's daughter. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Diane Dougherty. Second the motion by Cindy Meszaros.

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## Events

**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**

**March 10: Manitowoc County MGV Garden  
Talk, contact: [llgratz47@gmail.com](mailto:llgratz47@gmail.com)**

**March 20: Project Lead Training at the  
Coughlin Center - Evening**

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

**March 24: Outagamie County MG Conference,  
contact: [friendsgardenparty@gmail.com](mailto:friendsgardenparty@gmail.com)**

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

Monday May 14

Monday July 23

Monday September 10

Monday November 12

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

**Silent auction donations:** If you have your silent auction contribution ready, please bring it to the February business meeting. If you're not ready and need some advice/help, feel free to contact Diana Dougherty at 420-0431(text or call) or email....[dldoug5@charter.net](mailto:dldoug5@charter.net).

You may also contact Diana to arrange a time to drop-off your contribution.



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## Answer to What am I?

*By Jane Kuhn*

I am snowdrop. Order: Liliales. Family: Liliaceae – Lily family. Genus: Galanthus L. – snowdrop. Other early, common names include Candlemas bells, Fair maids of February and White ladies. The genus name refers to the white color of the flowers (“gala” is Greek for milk) while “Anthos” is Greek for flower. Snowdrops contain an active substance called galantamine which can be helpful in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease, though it is not a cure. This plant also contains the alkaloid lycorine which can cause poisoning if the bulbs are ingested in large amounts.

References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.



## WCMGA Scholarship

*By Jane Kuhn*

The WCMGA is offering a \$1000 scholarship to a current high school senior who resides in Winnebago County. The applicant must be planning to attend a post-secondary educational institution to pursue a program related to the following areas of study: Horticulture, Landscaping, Agriculture, Forestry, Agronomy, Arborist, Conservation, Natural Resources, or other areas approved by the Scholarship Committee and the Board. The scholarship recipient will be based on a completed application including a typed essay and letters of recommendation.

Applications are available from counselors at high schools where Winnebago County students attend and from members of the Scholarship Committee (Vicki Daniels, Donna Kudlas, Jane Kuhn). The deadline for applying is March 1, 2018. The scholarship will be awarded to the recipient at the May membership meeting of WCMGA.

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## 2500 Hour Mark

**Jane Kuhn** reached 2500 volunteer hours last year; two thousand five hundred hours. That's quite the accomplishment! In case you're wondering how she got there, look at what she has been involved in since 2008:

### Former:

On Board – 5 years  
Co-Vice-president – 4 years  
School Projects (Washington and Webster Stanley Schools)  
Parkview flower arranging  
FoodWise (Food Bank Container Gardening Project)  
Container Gardening presentations  
Main Street Garden Project  
SOP and By-Law Committee

### Current - Ongoing:

Butterfly Garden at Miravida Living/LHO (Chairperson)  
Education Committee  
Parkview Vegetable Garden  
Parkview Flower Garden  
Paine Gardens  
Coughlin Rain Garden Project  
Scholarship Committee (Co-chair)  
Worm castings  
June picnic

Some of Jane's thoughts she shared:

"I strongly believe that an education component is important in our projects and that recipients of this learning include Master Gardeners, project beneficiaries, project guests and the public. Being a Master Gardener has provided opportunities for me to work with and learn from others who are very knowledgeable as well as passionate about gardening and are so willing to share with others."

We are fortunate to have Jane and her giving so much to Winnebago County Master Gardener projects. Thank you for your service Jane!

## WCMGA Projects

*Check your Member Guide for contact information.*

Project	Project Lead	Next Meeting
Butterfly Garden Lutheran Homes	Jane Kuhn	
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	Sue Egner/Valerie Stabenow	
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	
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		
Plant Health Advisors	Patty Schmitz/Mary Shepard	
Shattuck Park, Neenah	Julie Gutsmedl	
Sullivan's Woods	Linda Loker	

February 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Board Meeting 6:00	7	8	9	10 Madison Garden Expo Bus Trip
11	12	13 Business Meeting 6:00	14 	15	16	17 Winter Escape~ Summer Dreams
18	19	20 Education Committee 5:30 PM Benvenuto's	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

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