

Winnebago County Master Gardeners

Newsletter

June 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.

“Spring: A wonderful reminder of how beautiful change can be.”



Working the Festival of Spring were Ginny Slattery, Linda Loker, Sue Egner and Valerie Stabenow

What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am an herbaceous, native, perennial, wildflower which blooms from May-June in zones 3-9. I grow in clumps to a height and width of 2½ feet, and prefer full sun to part shade in moist to wet soil. In spring my leafless flower stalks bear 3-5 blue-purple or violet flowers with dark purple veins and a 3-4 inch width. My narrow, pointed leaves overlap at the base and fold around the adjacent leaf to form a flat fan-like arrangement.

Propagation is by self-seeding or by division of the rhizomes after blooming. I am an excellent accent for water gardens or storm water detention basins, cottage gardens, perennial borders, rain gardens, wetlands and wildlife gardens. I will naturalize to form colonies in the wild. I attract hummingbirds and butterflies but am deer resistant. I am susceptible to some diseases such as rhizome rot and crown rot.

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. Thank you!



Ginny Slattery receives 2019 Volunteer of the Year for the Paine Art Center and Gardens - [Congratulations](#) Ginny!

Letter from your Presidents: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz

Happy Spring!

"In June, as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day. No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them."

- Aldo Leopold

City yards and countrysides with beauty abound! So nice to see greenery and splashes of color all around!

Does it sound a little like Shakespeare? OK, we thought not, but it was worth a try! It really is nice to finally see the signs of spring, and we hope that the word "frost" is forgotten in our vocabulary for a long while!

The Paine Festival of Spring completed another successful event on May 18, despite the cool and partly wet day. We also had a steady supply of questions at the "Ask the Master Gardener" booth!

June 11, Tuesday, is just around the corner. This is our annual picnic that is held in the Great Room at Park View Health Center at 6 PM. We hope many of you can make it. It is always a nice start to our summer. Bring a dish to pass and mingle with your fellow garden enthusiasts - maybe take a stroll through the Park View project gardens. We will also have a list of events available that are planned for the summer months.

June activities include a walk through UW-O campus on June 13, starting at 9 AM. This will feature information on trees and wildlife. June 24 at 1 PM Sheila Glaske will host a garden walk through The Paine gardens; then on June 27 we will tour **Arlene** and **Bob Kosanske's** lovely garden.

Farmers Market has begun again for the season. If you have not signed up for a time to work at the MG booth, please contact one of the leads for this project to let them know you are interested. This is a great way to obtain your hours for community education. Thank you to **Janet Priebe, Dorothy Gayhard-Kunz, Synda Jones** and **Patti Schmitz** for organizing this booth every week. You have made our organization a well-known resource in our community!

In July, there will be no board or business meetings. We do have a bus trip to Madison planned for July (date TBA) to visit Olbrich Gardens and Epic gardens. Jeff Epping himself will be guiding us on both of these tours. Watch for emails on this.

The Education Committee is also working on a tour of the worm casting operation at the prison. Those of us who have gone on this trip can tell you that it is a very worthwhile trip. See you all at the picnic!

KATHY AND LINDA

Be Careful of What You Are Buying at the Greenhouse

By Lawanda Jungwirth

It's been a long winter and a cold spring, but it's finally time to go to the greenhouse to choose the plants that you will add to your landscape this year. There are three things you should be careful of before you buy.

First, if you have young children or pets, make sure not to buy anything that is poisonous. There is a long list of plants that have effects ranging from mild skin irritation to death. Depending on the plant, reactions can be caused by either touching or eating a plant or both. Some people are more sensitive to poisonous plants than others.

An example of a plant you don't even want to touch without plastic gloves is monkshood, also called aconite and wolfsbane. All parts of the plant are poisonous and even a casual touch can cause numbness, tingling and cardiac irregularity. If ingested, it causes burning, tingling and numbness in the mouth soon followed by vomiting and high anxiety.

Other common poisonous plants include columbine, elephant ear, jimsonweed, foxglove, Siberian iris, castor bean and calla lily. An internet search will yield many websites with extensive lists of poisonous plants.

If you have curious pets, you can find a list of plants poisonous to pets at www.aspc.org. Enter "poisonous plants" in the search box.

Secondly, avoid plants and seeds that have been treated with insecticides called neonicotinoids. Neonicotinoids are systemic insecticides, which means they are taken up by plants and remain in all parts of the plants as they grow. They persist in soil for months or years and are continually taken up through plant roots. Since they are so long lasting in the soil, untreated plants can even take up the poison when planted near treated plants or in an area where treated plants have previously been planted.

Neonicotinoids work on pest insects by affecting their nervous systems. The problem is that neonicotinoids also damage the nervous systems of important pollinator insects such as bees, wasps and butterflies as they visit the plants for pollen and nectar. Research has clearly shown that neonicotinoids are killing bees or changing their behaviors. For example, bees sometimes become confused and cannot find their way back to their hives, forget how to fly, lose their taste sensitivity, or are slower to learn new tasks.

If there are no signs posted at the garden center or greenhouse saying that the plants offered are not treated with neonicotinoids, ask an employee to confirm that they are not being used. If they don't know and can't find out, shop elsewhere.

Finally, even though nurseries shouldn't be selling invasive plants, you can still find some for sale that are listed on the Wisconsin DNR's list of invasive species. Go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/Invasives/classification.html and click on "Species List" and then "Plants." It might be interesting just to scroll through the list to see if you already have invasive plants in your yard. P.S. You probably do!

Take the “Soil Your Undies” Challenge to Test Your Soil

By Lawanda Jungwirth

Driven by social media, the last few years have presented us many challenges – the 2014 ice bucket challenge that raised \$115 million for ALS research, the 2012 cinnamon eating challenge that injured and even killed participants, and weekly step challenges where friends compete to see who can walk the most steps as measured by a Fitbit or other wearable device.

Here’s a new one with the dubious name “Soil Your Undies Challenge.” It’s a different kind of garden soil test, completely unscientific, but science is definitely going to happen!

The basic premise is to buy a new pair of white cotton men’s underwear and bury it a few inches down in your garden. Either leave the waistband exposed or mark the location so you can find it later. After six or eight weeks dig it up again.

If your soil is healthy, at the end of the burial period, you’ll be digging up an elastic waistband with a few soiled shreds of cotton clinging to it. The healthier your soil, the more decomposed the condition of the underwear.

Just what happens to the underwear while it is underground? If you have healthy soil containing sufficient organic matter, you also have organisms like earthworms, fungi, bacteria and other microbes that like to eat organic matter. They apparently also like to eat cotton underwear.

If you dig up the underwear and find that with a good washing it is still wearable, you’ve failed the challenge and your soil needs serious help.

Here are some things you can do to improve the health of your soil:

- Minimize disturbance. Stop tilling. Instead of pulling up dead plants, cut them off at the soil line and allow roots to decompose in place.
- Add compost.
- Keep soil covered at all times. Organic mulches like leaves, pine needles, wood chips, straw and shredded newspaper slowly decompose and improve soil structure and fertility as well as reduce the need for supplemental water and fertilizer, reduce runoff, increase drought tolerance and reduce pest and disease problems.
- Keep living roots in the soil at all time. There is a symbiotic relationship between plant roots and soil microbes as they provide food for each other.
- Maximize plant diversity. The more kinds of roots in the soil, the better the diversity of soil microbes.
- Stop using non-organic chemical fertilizers. The salts in them kill soil life.
- Do not use soil-applied fungicides or other pesticides. Anything with the suffix “cide” means something is going to die and the last thing you want to do is kill soil life.
- Do not apply phosphorus to your soil unless a soil test says it is necessary. Soils with excess phosphorus discourage growth of soil fungi. Phosphorus is the “P” on a bag of fertilizer, and is always the middle number. For example a bag of 10-5-10, has 5% by weight of phosphorus.

If you take the “Soil Your Undies” challenge, please email me your results, good or bad. Photos welcome!

From the Plant Health Desk

Conifer Fungal Diseases

submitted by Bob Kneepkens

There are several relatively common fungal diseases affecting Wisconsin conifers. Fungal diseases tend to be more prevalent during wet weather. Since treatment is specific to each fungal disease, the reader is referred to the UW-Extension publication referenced.

Cytospora canker damages Colorado blue spruce more frequently and more severely than any other species. Cytospora cankers kill branches by destroying water-conducting tissues during their development. Symptoms usually don't appear until the trees are about 15 years old and at least 20 feet high. It first appears on the lower branch needles, which turn purplish and then brown as they die. Diseased needles eventually fall off and the infected branches die. Infected branches will often produce a bluish-white sap that oozes somewhere along their length. Cytospora canker is caused by the fungus *Leucocytophora kunzei* (also referred to as *Leucostoma kunzei*), which survives in infected branches. Spores of the fungus are spread by wind, rain splash, insects, birds and mammals. Additional information about Cytospora canker disease and can be found in publications [XHT1003](#) and [A2639](#).

Rhizosphaera needle cast is one of the most common fungal diseases of Colorado blue spruce but can also affect other conifers such as black, Engelmann, Serbian, Sitka, and white (e.g., Black Hills) spruce; Austrian, mugo and eastern white pine; Douglas fir and western hemlock. The first noticeable symptom of Rhizosphaera needle cast is a browning and loss of the innermost needles on the lower branches of affected trees. Often the youngest needles, at the tips of branches, remain healthy. Rows of small, black spheres form along the length of infected needles and are visible with a 10X hand lens. These black spheres are fruiting bodies (i.e., reproductive structures) of the fungus. Rhizosphaera needle cast is caused by the fungus *Rhizosphaera kalkhoffii*, although other species of Rhizosphaera can be involved depending on the host. Infected needles, including those that are still attached to branches and those that have fallen to the ground, produce spores that can be blown or splashed to healthy needles. See publications [XHT1006](#) and [A2640](#) for further information

Phomopsis tip blight is one of the most common fungal diseases of conifers in Wisconsin and affects eastern red cedar, creeping and Rocky Mountain junipers, arborvitae, Douglas-fir, true firs, larch and jack pine. Most infections occur in the

spring, whenever new foliage is produced or when moisture or humidity is high. Late summer infections can occur when over-watering or over fertilization stimulates new growth. Phomopsis tip blight initially appears as small gray lesions on the terminal four to six inches of new shoots. These lesions turn dull red or brown and then to an ash-gray as the disease progresses. Phomopsis tip blight is caused by the fungus *Phomopsis juniperovora*, which survives in diseased branches. Spores of the fungus are produced throughout the growing season, and are spread by wind and rain. For more information see [XHT1099](#).

Dothistroma needle blight is a common needle disease that can affect over thirty species of Wisconsin pine trees. Dothistroma needle blight first appears as dark green, water-soaked spots on the needles. The spots become tan, yellow, or reddish-brown, and may encircle the needles to form bands. The tip of the needle, beyond the band, eventually dies leaving the base of the needle alive and green. Watch for tiny, black reproductive structures of the fungus (called pycnidia) that can be found erupting from the surface of infected needles. Spores are produced in these structures throughout the growing season, and infection by spores can occur at any time but especially in wet weather. Young trees are more likely to suffer damage than older trees. Dothistroma needle blight is caused by the fungus *Dothistroma pini* which survives in diseased needles. Symptoms appear from five weeks to six months after infection. More information can be found in publication [XHT1078](#).



[Master Gardeners June Picnic](#)

Tuesday, June 11, 2019 6:00-8:00 pm

Great Room at Park View Health Center

We supply sandwiches, drinks, plates, cups, napkins, plastic ware.

** Bring your favorite dish to share.

Seating is limited to WCMGA members and 1 guest

The sign up sheet for the June picnic circulated at the May meeting. If you want to attend but couldn't sign up at the May meeting, please contact Diana Dougherty - text or call 920-420-0431 or email dldoug5@charter.net



Got Garlic Mustard?

Make Garlic Mustard Pesto!

(from Monches Farms web site)

- 3 cups Garlic Mustard leaves, washed, patted dry, and packed in a measuring cup
- 2 large garlic cloves, peeled & chopped
- 1 cup Walnuts
- 1 cup Olive Oil
- 1 cup grated Parmesan Cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Romano Cheese (or more Parmesan)
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Combine Garlic Mustard leaves, garlic and walnuts in food processor and chop or divide recipe in half and use a blender. With motor running, add olive oil slowly. Shut off motor. Add cheeses, salt & pepper. Process briefly to combine. Serve warm over pasta or spread on crackers as a appetizer. It also makes a great topping for baked fish.

Enjoy....and get rid of that Garlic Mustard!

Become a Smarter Gardener in 2019:

Pick plants that will THRIVE, not just survive!

Author: Julie Weisenhorn, Extension Educator - Horticulture
jweisenhorn@umn.edu



Today is a lovely, early spring day in central Minnesota and I am thinking about my garden--what I want to keep, what I want to change and what I want to plant. With winter a recent memory, Minnesota gardeners are more than ready to invest in plants at this time of year and get back out in the garden.

Let's visit three key points to choosing plants that will *THRIVE* and not simply survive.

Match plant needs to site conditions

1. Choose plants with growing needs that match the kind of soil and amount of light you have available.

- Avoid plants that need rich, moist soil if you have sandy soil.
- Blooming plants that require full sun (8+ hours of sunlight per day) will not bloom as well in shadier conditions.

Most plant tags are written by the grower and provide the basic growing conditions for the plant, so it's important to read a plant tag before you buy the plant and determine if you can honestly give this plant the growing conditions it needs to thrive. If you are not sure, ask the staff at the garden center / nursery / farmers' market stand / plant sale.



Give plants enough space

2. Space plants according to mature size. Along with growing conditions, the plant tag will also give you the mature height and spread / width of the plant.

Believe it. Plants that are planted too closely together - easy to do when plants are small - show a decrease in bloom due to a lack of light on the mid to lower branches. The form is also compromised, and pest issues can be more prevalent

thanks to less light and airflow through the branches / stems.

When planting, use a tape measure to locate plants on-center according to their mature width. In other words, the distance from the center of one plant to the center of another plant of the same kind should equal the mature width of the plant.



Take the extra step for pollinators

3. Pollinators and other beneficial insects and animals need plants for food and habitat. Quality nectar and pollen, free of pesticides, is critical for pollinator health and ultimately human health.

Animals like bats require plants that attract insects ([Become a smarter gardener in 2019: Grow plants for bats](#)) and birds consume insects as well as feed on seed heads of plants that have finished flowering.

When you are contemplating the look of a plant for your landscape, go one step further and also choose one that these important pollinators and animals would also like. [Plants for Minnesota Bees](#), [Grow landscapes for bees and other pollinators](#). Read more from Extension on [Lawns and Landscaping](#)

Member Business Meeting Minutes - May 14, 2019

Kathy Schultz, co-President, called the meeting to order.

Scholarship Presentation: Aiden Gehrke, a student at Valley Christian School, received the WCMGA Scholarship. He will use the money to defray tuition cost at UW Stevens Point this fall. **Jane Kuhn** presented the award along with **Vicki Daniels** and **Donna Kudlas** the members of the Scholarship committee.

Speaker: Roy Anne Moulton presented "GMO's Fact or Fiction, Friend or Foe?" Selective breeding of food began with the domestication of plants and animals at around 10,000 BC. There is a lot of controversy regarding GMO's (Genetically Modified Organisms) in today's world. Are GMO's safe? Educate yourself and make your decision based on facts.

Treasurer's Report: Joni Pagel reviewed the Cash reconciliation report for the period of April 2019. **Joni** noted the balance will drop significantly with the pay out for the Philadelphia Trip.

Secretary's report: The April Membership meeting minutes are in the newsletter. The Board meeting minutes are posted on the website.

Project Update: Britton Dake absent no project update.

UW Extension update: Kimberly Miller mentioned that the Wisconsin Horticulture Update weekly zoom meetings start this Friday (May 17th at 9:30 am). Master gardeners are invited to login and listen to what is happening around the state. This counts as 1 hour continuing education credit. Check the newsletter for how to login and other information regarding meeting etiquette.

Education Committee Update: Linda Werner thanked **Mary Moosemiller** and **Melissa Weyland** for a successful presentation on "Basic gardening skills" attended by 10 4-H members. Olbrich garden tour in July, still no date yet. 24 MGVs had a wonderful Philadelphia Trip. June 8th is the Cement Casting Workshop: cost is \$20.00, register now. Ben Fuda will be the main speaker for Winter Escape~Summer Dreams, still need two additional speakers.

State Representatives Report: Deby Voyles updated that the 2020 State Conference will be hosted by Washington County. 2021 conference still needs a host. Many state events to attend listed with links on the Wisconsin MGA website.

New Business: Book Club no update, to be continued in September. **Kathy Schultz** updated that **Kimberly, Joni, Linda L., Kathy S., Mary Wiedenmeier** met with Bonnie Graf, a CPA. The Board is taking a look at the information that Bonnie gave the group regarding fund balances of WCMGA. **Linda Loker** updated the garden walk dates: June 13th 9am-11am UW-O walk meet at the Alumni

Center. June 24th Sheila Glaske will lead a tour through the Paine Arboretum. June 27th 4pm – 7pm is at **Arlene** and **Bob Kosanke's** garden. Sign-up sheet available in the hall for the June picnic.

Online reporting of hours: sign in, read and accept forms available to you. Online report testing begins the end of May.

Mary Shepard talked about the monarchs overlaying the milkweeds, 50 eggs on a plant. The Northern migration is almost complete.

Other New Business: **Ginny Slattery** has been named the “Volunteer of the Year” at the Paine Center. Congratulations **Ginny**. Festival of Spring prep on Friday, May 17th at 10:30 am. Check in with **Ginny**. More help needed for MGA booth at the Saturday, May 18th, Festival of Spring. **Renee Donner** stepping down from the Refreshment Committee, need a replacement for her. Thank you **Renee** for all your service.

Door prizes winners: **Carleen Christianson, Doreen Ditberner, Linda Werner, Margot Castle, Diane Iott, Kathy Schultz, Carol Swannell, and Vicki Daniels.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by **Mary Shepard**; second by **Stan Meyer**.



2019 WCMGA Scholarship Winner Aiden Gehrke with Vicki Daniels and Jane Kuhn, members of the scholarship committee. *Picture submitted by Kathy Schultz.*

UW Oshkosh Nature Walk

Thursday, June 13, 9:00 - 11:00 AM

You are invited to go on a walk through the UW Oshkosh campus with experts Lisa Mick, Grounds Supervisor at the university, and Anita Carpenter, well-known local wildlife specialist (especially butterflies and birds). We will experience UW Oshkosh's efforts in making the campus grounds a more sustainable, and green, environment. Plants and wildlife abound in this National Wildlife Federation backyard sanctuary. UW-O is a certified USA tree campus and a certified Butterfly Way Station <https://uwosh.edu/today/39835/uw-oshkosh-serves-as-monarch-way-station/>.

This is being offered during a weekday morning because Lisa is available weekdays only; and the birds are most visible in the morning hours. We understand that some of our members are unable to be available during the day, but hope that with this early notice, you can maybe adjust your schedule so that you can enjoy this nature walk. So much to learn and so much to see!

Park in the University's Welcome Center parking lot and the tour will begin there.

Thank you and hope to see you there! Please contact Linda Loker or Kathy Schultz for any questions.

Upcoming Events - See Calendar for June Events

July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM & Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM
August 6, 13, 20, 27: Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM & Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM
Aug. 20: Education Committee, Benvenuto's 5:30 PM
Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24: Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM & Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM
Sept. 17: Education Committee, Benvenuto's 5:30 PM
Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM & Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM

Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am blue flag iris. Order: Liliales. Family: Iridaceae – Iris family. Genus: Iris L. – Iris. Species: Iris versicolor L. – harlequin blueflag. Common name: blue flag. Other names: northern blue flag, large blue iris, wild iris. The rhizomes and rootstocks of this plant are poisonous to livestock and humans producing minor skin irritation when touched and low toxicity if ingested resulting in nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or elevated temperature. Gardeners should wear gloves when handling the rhizomes. Irises have been used medicinally in the past by colonists and Native Americans. Since this plant grows in a variety of moist to wet soils, it is an excellent choice for rain gardens. It can be seen in the rain garden at the entrance to the Coughlin Center.



References: *USDA Plants Database and associated links.*

Myth or miracle: Coffee grounds, eggshells, and Epsom salts?

Author: Anne Sawyer, Extension Educator, On-Farm Food Safety

Every once in a while, it's good to take a step back and think about what we add to our gardens and why. Some things we add are helpful, some are neutral, and some can even be harmful to your soil or plants. Let's take a look at three common "remedies" and talk about why they may or may not be helpful in the garden.

Remedy #1: Used coffee grounds will lower soil pH



Coffee grounds can be beneficial to your soil, but not because they lower pH. Coffee grounds contain carbon, nitrogen, and other compounds that feed soil organisms. Cultivating a robust and diverse population of soil microbes is the foundation for healthy soil - and healthy plants! Soil organisms then transform these nutrients into chemical forms that plants use for growth.

Coffee grounds can also contain compounds that help suppress some plant disease-causing microbes. However,

coffee grounds have not been shown to have a consistent effect on lowering soil pH. But don't give up on coffee grounds in the garden - they make an excellent addition to compost! Read more about coffee grounds in the garden [here](#).

If you want to lower your soil's pH, use something like elemental sulfur or aluminum sulfate. For best results, do a [soil test](#) prior to establishing any perennial plantings that need a lower pH, such as blueberries. Read more about lowering soil pH [here](#).

Verdict:

Modest amounts of coffee grounds in the garden can be beneficial, but not for lowering soil pH.

Remedy #2: Crushed eggshells can prevent blossom end rot in tomatoes



The idea here is that blossom end rot is caused by a calcium deficiency, so adding calcium-rich eggshells to the soil will provide calcium to your tomatoes (or other plants that suffer from blossom end rot).

It's true that blossom end rot is a sign of calcium deficiency in fruits (tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, etc). However, most Minnesota soils already have plenty of calcium for garden plants. This kind of calcium deficiency is not a result of inadequate

calcium in the soil, but rather a signal that there's a water transport issue in your plants.

Calcium enters plants only through the actively growing root tips. Calcium moves through the plant and into the fruits along with water, via transpiration. Damage to roots and/or problems with water uptake and movement in the plant can limit the amount of calcium reaching the fruit. Sometimes, a great abundance of other nutrients in the soil (such as magnesium or ammonium) can also interfere with calcium uptake.

Therefore, prevent blossom end rot by:

- Keep the soil evenly moist by providing adequate water (but not too much!) and mulching around plants
- Protect your plant's roots. Don't cultivate too closely to the base of the plant.
- Do a soil test and add fertilizer according to recommendations and fertilizer label instructions.

Read more about preventing blossom end rot [here](#).

And finally, if you've added eggshells to your compost, you know that they don't decompose very quickly. It's no different if you add eggshells directly to your garden soil. Even if you did need the calcium in your soil, eggshells generally decompose too slowly to be effective. However, the smaller

the pieces are, the faster they'll decompose. Agricultural lime and gypsum are good sources of calcium, but do a soil test before applying.

Verdict:

Eggshells do not prevent blossom end rot. The good news is that they won't harm your soil or plants and they add organic material for soil organisms, but you may as well just put them in the compost.

Remedy #3: Epsom salts prevent blossom end rot and make peppers and tomatoes more productive.

Wouldn't that be nice?! Sadly, it's not true. Epsom salts contain magnesium sulfate (MgSO₄) and are touted as a common garden cure-all. However, after reading Remedy #2, you now know that blossom end rot is caused by a calcium deficiency and not a magnesium or sulfur deficiency. So,



Epsom salts will not prevent blossom end rot. In fact, adding too much magnesium to your soil can actually prevent adequate calcium from getting into your plants, making blossom end rot even worse.

As for increased productivity, there's no evidence to indicate that this is so, unless your soil is deficient in magnesium. Epsom salts can be a good source of magnesium, but only use them if a soil test indicates that you have a magnesium deficiency. Magnesium deficiencies in the home garden in Minnesota are most

likely to occur on sandy, low pH soils.

In fact, adding Epsom salts to soil that already has sufficient magnesium can actually harm your soil and plants, such as by inhibiting calcium uptake. Spraying Epsom salt solutions on plant leaves can also cause leaf scorch. Excess magnesium can also increase mineral contamination in water that percolates through soil. The best practice is to avoid adding any extra chemicals to your soil - even things that seem 'safe' - because you can easily do more harm than good. Read more about Epsom salts in the garden [here](#).

Verdict:

Unless you have a magnesium deficiency in your garden, there is no need to add Epsom salts. Doing so could even be harmful to soil, plants, and water.

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 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.

June 2019

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
						1
2	3	4 Butterfly Garden 9AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30PM	5	6 Carter Mem Library 4-7 PM	7	8 Carter Mem Library 9:30-Noon
9	10	11 Butterfly Garden 9AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30PM MG Picnic 6-8 PM Park View	12	13 Carter Mem. Library 4-7 PM Nature Walk, UW Oshkosh 9-11 AM	14	15
16	17	18 Butterfly Garden 9AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30PM	19	20 Carter Mem. Library 4-7 PM	21	22
23	24 Paine Art Center 1 PM	25 Butterfly Garden 9AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30PM	26	27 Carter Mem. Library 4-7 PM	28	29
30						

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.