



# Winnebago County Master Gardeners

## Newsletter

March 2021

### 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.

**“Springtime** is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.”

*Lewis Grizzard*



Don't forget to VOTE for your favorite plants on our Facebook page!

## What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am a native perennial sedge with a rounded form that grows in zones 3-7. My smooth, lime-green leaf blades are up to ten inches long and 1/8 inch wide. In early spring my foliage turns green before the warm season grasses begin to grow. Copper colored, oval shaped seed heads appear in summer. I grow from 1 to 3 feet tall and 1 ½ to 2 feet wide in full sun to part shade. Various kinds of soil are tolerated including loam and clay loam. I can be grown in both dry upland prairies and wet river bottom prairies. I am more tolerant of dry soil than other sedges.

Propagation is by seed and I spread by rhizomes. I am a useful component of prairies, meadows, wildlife gardens and rain gardens. I provide erosion control and am appropriate for groupings or mass plantings. My seeds are relished by birds including sparrows and gamebirds. I am deer resistant and have no major pests. During hot, dry summers my foliage may die back.

## WCMGA Contacts

*Check your membership guide for contact information.*

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

**Vice President:** Kathy Procknow & Debra Butch

**Secretary:** Anne Murphy

**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, submitting a photo, or sharing a story, please let me know by the 15th of each month by emailing [pakster0605@yahoo.com](mailto:pakster0605@yahoo.com). Each article submitted will count toward your volunteer hours. Thank you!

## Thank you Eric Kropp!

You probably didn't know it, but Eric helped with editing the newsletter. He was an "eagle eye" with spelling errors, link additions, content conformation and so much more. He will be missed. Best wishes in your new endeavors Eric!



### Tip: Garden Journals

Designate a notebook to be your yard and garden journal. Keep track of ideas and goals for your landscape. Note dates you see birds return, plants emerge, fruits and vegetables are harvested. Keep a record of what you plant including when and where and how much you spent. Save the plant labels in a clear plastic sleeve protector.

## Letter from your Presidents: Ed Dombrowski & Bob Kneepkens

We hope everyone enjoyed the statewide recognition program for Master Gardeners held on February 2, as much as we did. Hearing the testimonials about the importance and meaning of being a Master Gardener was inspirational. Hearing from members from around the state, helped us recognize how broadly based the Master Gardener program extends.

We found it particularly moving with the heartfelt expression from Mike Maddox about his personal experience and response to changes in the merger with UW-Madison. Mike's account of his struggle with the change, the uncertainty of his position and the future of the program struck an emotional chord in us. Many of us have faced, and might be currently facing, the uncertainty of the future especially during the pandemic. This stress can create many sleepless nights. Many of us can certainly empathize with the experience Mike was describing during certain times in our life. It is not often one hears such heartfelt and sincere expressions about the impact of change.

The change in the Master Gardener program, as Extension merges under the umbrella of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is a long-term stress on the system and the individuals in that system. Stress on organizational systems and the individuals in it, made us think of the stresses placed on natural systems, i.e. ecosystems.

Some environmental stressors exert local influence, while others are regional or global in their scope. This reminds us of one of the values of the Master Gardener Program to "Think globally, act locally: connect identified, local needs to statewide and national goals to better communicate value and impact of efforts; create resources at the global level and apply to local needs."

When we reflect about the activities of Master Gardeners, our connection with each other, our communities and our natural environment is clear. We are all connected in local, statewide, national, and global ways to our natural and cultural environments.

We have a strategic goal to build sustainable ecosystems. To do this we keep in mind that "Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations." (See EPA Sustainability at <https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/learn-about-sustainability#what>)

As Master Gardeners, we are connected in our volunteer work. When we answer a horticultural question or sow seeds in a garden, we are connected to the local, state, national, and global communities, both natural and social. We are all part of the web of our natural and social environments.

Ed Dombrowski

Bob Kneepkens

## Calamintha nepeta is Perennial Plant of the Year

By Lawanda Jungwirth

The Perennial Plant Association has chosen *Calamintha nepeta*, common name calamint, as its 2021 Perennial Plant of the Year.

Calamint boasts a confetti-like cloud of tiny white tubular flowers sometimes touched with blue or lilac. It has a low, mounding, bushy form that grows 18" tall and wide. Both the flowers and the gray-green ovate leaves are fragrant. Calamint checks two boxes that are important to gardeners: bees, butterflies and other pollinators love it, and deer do not.

Calamint requires full sun, but afternoon shade on the hottest days of summer is fine. It prefers an evenly moist, well-drained soil, but will tolerate drought once established.

Even though calamint will bloom from June until frost, it isn't the star of the garden on its own, but is the perfect foil for other perennial and annual flowers. It is ideal for rock gardens and can fill a space at the front, center or back of any flower bed depending on the height of its neighbors. It will fit into every garden landscape whether formal or more casual. It does well in containers, but pots must be brought into the garage over winter.

If calamint gets a bit raggedy over the summer, it can be sheared back lightly to shape and to promote new flowers. It should be cut back to 6" in fall or early spring.

Calamint is a member of the mint family and like all mints, will spread. It sends out rhizomes – horizontal roots that send up shoots – and in addition, stems that touch the ground may root where the nodes touch the soil. Besides that, it seeds prolifically. All this should tell you a few things: one, it is easy to propagate by either seed or division, and two, it needs watching to keep it in check.

Calamint is recommended for USDA Hardiness Zones 5-7. In Winnebago County, we are mostly in Zone 5a, which is the very coldest of the recommended range for this plant. Landscapes vary across our county and your own property's microclimate might or might not be Zone 5a. Because we're on the edge here, you should provide winter protection for calamint in the form of hay, straw or evergreen boughs placed around the stem of the plant after the ground freezes.

Are you wondering how a plant gets to be chosen 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. A committee reviews the nominated plants, which may number 400, and narrows the field to three or four 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. Look for calamint at your local garden center this spring!



## DISCOVERING YOUR GREEN THUMB CONTEST INSTRUCTIONS

**WHO:** Open to WCMGA members

**WHAT:** Indoor Plant Contest with 4 categories: **Flowering Plants/Non-Flowering Plants/Succulents/Chia's**

**WHEN:** January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 through March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Pictures received after March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 6:00 p.m. will not be posted. Voting (like the photo) starts once the pictures are posted

**WHERE:** Pictures are to be forwarded to ANNE MURPHY ([pakster0605@yahoo.com](mailto:pakster0605@yahoo.com))

Members without electronic capabilities can send a picture(s) to Anne at:

**Anne Murphy**  
**W1235 County Rd. X**  
**Berlin, WI 54923**



Go to the Winnebago County Master Gardener Facebook page:

[facebook.com/WCMGVA](https://facebook.com/WCMGVA).

Click on "More" and the Photos to get to the Plant Photo Contest Albums. Click on the Album you want to view and like the photos you

want to vote for. The photos with the most likes will be the winner in each album.

**WHY:** To supplement lectures, keep our members interested in winter horticulture activities

**HOW:** Picture(s) will be taken by WCMGA members of their own plants within their own household

Submit Indoor plant pictures in any one or all of the 4 categories: Flowering, Non-Flowering, Succulents and Chia's by March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 6:00 p.m. **Include your name and category with each picture submitted**

Members without electronic capability may call **Anne Murphy at 920-379-7132** to cast your vote. Ribbons will be given as follows: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places for each of the 4 categories. Winners will be recognized at the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 6:00 p.m. business meeting.

## February 2021: Deep Freeze Search and Destroy

FEBRUARY 6, 2021 DDLANG

Magnifying glass and hatcheting this month's Plant Disease Pointers, I discussed the advantages of pruning trees and shrubs in the winter to increase structural soundness and overall aesthetics. Winter is also a great time to inspect trees and shrubs for certain diseases and, where needed, prune out these problems. Diseases that can be corrected, at least in part, by winter pruning include canker and gall diseases.

**Canker diseases:** There are a wide range of fungal and bacterial pathogens that infect branches and eventually lead to branch dieback. With some of these diseases (e.g., Diplodia shoot blight and canker, white pine blister rust), the pathogens initially infect through needles. With others (e.g., fire blight), the pathogens enter through flowers. Once in the plant, these pathogens work their way relatively rapidly down branches and can cause significant damage. Catching these diseases early and pruning out affected branches can reduce the overall damage that they cause. If not managed properly and removed, these pathogens can eventually reach and girdle the main trunk, thus killing the tree.

Other canker diseases tend to be more localized in their effect. For some, like Nectria canker, the pathogens often enter through wounds (e.g., pruning wounds, wounds from storm damage). For others, like Thyronectria canker of honeylocust or Cytospora canker of spruce, direct infection of branches appears to be the norm. With these diseases, the pathogens progress somewhat slowly, causing localized sunken areas (a "classic" canker symptom) around the point of infection. Eventually these diseases will progress to the point where the entire circumference of the branch is affected, which leads to branch death. Movement of these pathogens into the main trunk tends to be a slower process, although if left unchecked, these organisms can eventually cause significant damage as well.

**Gall diseases:** The classic diseases in this category include black knot of Prunus species (particularly plum and cherry) and the Gymnosporangium rusts like cedar-apple rust and cedar-hawthorn rust. These diseases typically do not cause branch dieback but can reduce the aesthetic appeal of infected trees and shrubs. In the case of black knot, you will see

fairly large black masses (what I call “poop-on-a-stick”) on infected branches. These are particularly visible in the winter when there is no foliage to hide them.

Galls associated with Gymnosporangium rusts are much smaller and more subtle. They look like tiny brown brains that form on the branches of junipers, particularly Eastern red cedar. In the winter, if you don't look carefully, you might miss these. In the spring however, the galls reach the pinnacle of their visual glory when they sprout gelatinous, orange arms/masses that produce spores. These spores infect certain trees and shrubs in the rose family (e.g., apple, crabapple, hawthorn, quince, pear and serviceberry) leading to brightly-colored leaf spots (in the case of cedar-apple rust and cedar-hawthorn rust) or spiny fruits and branch galls (in the case of cedar-quince rust). Spores produced in these diseased leaves, fruits and branches eventually infect junipers completing the life cycle of the pathogen.

Once either canker or gall diseases become established, pruning is the method of choice for management, and wintertime is a great time to do this pruning. Symptoms are often more visible during the winter months, and pruning in colder, drier winter weather tends to reduce the risk of infections through pruning cuts. For diseases caused by fungal pathogens, I suggest pruning four to six inches below where you see obvious symptoms. For diseases caused by bacteria, I suggest pruning more aggressively, roughly 12 inches below where symptoms are visible. When pruning in the winter, it may seem that decontaminating tools is not necessary. However, I recommend decontamination no matter when you prune. Treat pruning tools between cuts for at least 30 seconds with 70% alcohol (e.g., rubbing alcohol straight out of the bottle), a commercial disinfectant that contains roughly 70% active ingredient or 10% bleach. If you decide to use bleach, be sure to thoroughly rinse your tools after you are done pruning and oil them to prevent rusting that can be caused by bleach use. You can dispose of branches by burning (where allowed) or burying them.

So, as temperatures start to hover in the upper 20s or lower 30s this winter, think about pruning your trees. Remove diseased branches, and at the same time, prune out healthy

branches to improve the structural integrity and aesthetic appeal of your trees. All of this said, please DO NOT prune when it is excessively cold:

- Pruning diseased branches in winter: GOOD!
- Frostbite and freezing to death: BAD!!

For additional information on the PDDC and its activities, check out the PDDC website. To learn about new PDDC education materials and programs, follow the clinic on Twitter or Facebook (@UWPDDC) or contact the clinic at [pddc@wisc.edu](mailto:pddc@wisc.edu) and ask to be added to the PDDC's listserv (UWPDDCLearn).

## Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn



I am Bicknell's sedge. Order: Cyperales. Family: Cyperaceae – Sedge family. Genus: Carex L. – sedge. Species: Carex bicknellii Britton – Bicknell's sedge. Common name: prairie sedge. Carex is a large genus with over 600 species in North America. Genus name comes from Latin and means cutter in reference to the sharp leaves and stem edges found on most species. Carex bicknellii is named in honor of Eugene Pintard Bicknell (1859-1925), who is known for his keen observations of plant and animal life. I can be found in the rain garden adjacent to the Coughlin Center.

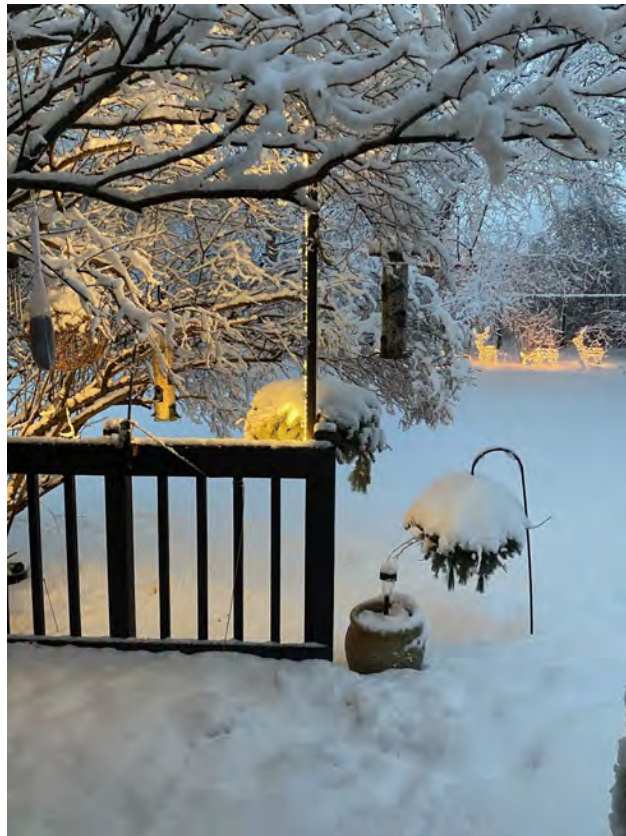
References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.

## Member Business Meeting Minutes - February 2, 2021

Business meeting was the Statewide Appreciation meeting for volunteers through the State program. No County meeting held.



## Upcoming Events - See Calendar for March Events



Submitted by Kim Willman. Bird feeders on deck after a heavy snowfall.

Those listed on the WCMGA website and Facebook page are approved for MG continuing education credit.

**Let's Get Green and Growing Conference** by the Columbia County Master Gardener Association. Saturday, March 20, 2021, 9 a.m. to 1:35 p.m. Sessions on "Creating a Garden of Four Season Interest," Addressing Invasive Species With Citizen Science," "Minor Fruits-Major Impacts," and "Daylilies-the Perfect Perennial." Free. Register at:

<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJllcOyprj8vHdRNMuCGGDpk7CwWXHkkPzs->

**Take Action to Keep Our Lakes Healthy** sponsored by UW-Madison, Division of Extension, Walworth County. Monday, March 4, 6-7 p.m. Presenters are Jason Granberg, DNR, and Anne Pearce, Wisconsin First Detector Network. Free. Register at: <https://go.wisc.edu/ixpf32>

**Shoreline Gardening for Healthy Lakes** sponsored by UW-Madison, Division of Extension, Walworth County. Thursday, March 18, 6-7:30 p.m. Presenters are Paul Skawinski, Wisconsin Citizen lake Monitoring Network, and Patrick Goggin, UW-Stevens Point. Free. Register at: <https://go.wisc.edu/663c99>

**Xerces Society (All free)** <https://xerces.org/events/webinars>

Thursday, April 1, noon-1:30 p.m. CST, Soil Invertebrates-Getting to Know the Life in Soil

Thursday, April 15, noon-1:30 p.m. CST, Getting to Know the "Good Bugs"- Scouting for Pollinators and Other Beneficial Insects

Thursday, May 6, noon-1:30 p.m. CST, Supporting Pollinators Over Time: How to Maintain Wildlife Diversity

**UW Arboretum, (\$10 each)** <https://arboretum.wisc.edu/learn/adult-education/winter-enrichment/>

Thursday, March 4, 10 a.m. CST, Holy Ground: Working With Faith and Indigenous Leaders to Build Resilience

Thursday, March 11, 10 a.m. CST, Beyond the Clinical Walls: Environmental Determinants of Health

Thursday, March 18, 10 a.m. CST, Climate Change and Wisconsin's Forests: What We Know, What We Expect, and How to Adapt

Thursday, March 25, 10 a.m. CST, Treaty Rights, Culturally Important Beings, and Indigenous-led Climate Adaptation in the Ojibwe Ceded Territories

Thursday, April 8, 10 a.m. CST, Climate Change, Reality vs. Development: Global South and Worldwide Perspective

**2021 Interactive Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop**, Thursday, March 25, 3-5 p.m. EST. Cost \$20. Sponsored by Michigan State University. <https://events.anr.msu.edu/2021FruitTreePruningWorkshop/>

## → WEBINARS ←

### Take Action to Keep Our Lakes Healthy - March 4th, 6:00-7:00pm

Our lakes are vital to where we live, work and play. But they need our help!

Lesser celandine, Phragmites, and knotweed are three invasive plants in southern Wisconsin that grow in wet areas, such as shorelines, and have significant impacts on our lakes. Learn how to identify them, their affects, and how you can take action by looking for and reporting infestations via email or with the Great Lakes Early Detection Network app. This is a **free** event, but registration is required. Please use the following link to register: <https://go.wisc.edu/ixpf32> Once registered, a connection link to the webinar will be sent the day before the event.

*Presented by:*

Jason Granberg- Conservation biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, focusing on invasive species monitoring, control, and grant administration and helping governments, non-profits, and private citizens on invasive species topics.

Anne Pearce - Coordinator of the Wisconsin First Detector Network, a citizen science network that empowers people to take action against invasive species through education and volunteer opportunities.

Hosted by UW-Madison, Division of Extension, Walworth County, in partnership with the Walworth County Lakes Association and other local, regional and statewide organizations. Questions can be directed to Julie Hill, [julie.hill@wisc.edu](mailto:julie.hill@wisc.edu)

### Shoreline Gardening for Healthy Lakes - March 18th, 6:00-7:30pm

Healthy shorelines provide many benefits, especially when it comes to keeping our lakes free from pollution and places where we want to live and play. In this webinar, you will learn what rain gardens are and how this special type of low maintenance garden can filter pollutants, recharge the groundwater and reduce pollution of local waterways. You will also learn the attributes of intact, healthy shorelines, and what services they provide, including habitat, improved water quality and decreased erosion. This is a free event, but registration is required. Please use the following link to register: <https://go.wisc.edu/663c99> Once registered, a connection link to the webinar will be sent the day before the event.

*Presented by:*

Paul Skawinski - Lakes Outreach Specialist and Statewide Coordinator of the Wisconsin Citizen Lake Monitoring Network. He teaches Aquatic Botany at UW-Stevens Point, is the author and photographer of the popular field guide Aquatic Plants of the Upper Midwest and is also an avid native plant gardener.


Patrick Goggin - Extension Lakes team. He helps lake organizations with their community goals, shares lake management tools and resources for aquatic ecosystems, and helps people in gaining a better understanding and appreciation for the native flora of Wisconsin lakeshores. He works for the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's College of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. Hosted by UW-Madison, Division of Extension, Walworth County, in partnership with local, regional and statewide organizations. Questions can be directed to Julie Hill, [julie.hill@wisc.edu](mailto:julie.hill@wisc.edu)

## 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	Looking for a new Lead!
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.

March 2021						
Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
	1	2 Board Mtg. 6:00PM	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Business Mtg. 6:00 PM	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

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.