

Winnebago County Master Gardeners Newsletter

October 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.

"And all at once summer collapsed into FALL"



Garden Walk at Sharon Slover's home.

Picture submitted by Kathy Schultz.

What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am a cultivar of a native North American perennial grass which is hardy in zones 3-8, reaches a height of 5-6 feet and a width of up to two feet. I have an upright, clumping habit. Being a native, I can handle just about any garden situation but love full sun and dry, sandy or clay, well-drained soil. I undergo a dramatic color transformation starting in spring with deep blue-green foliage which darkens to deep purple in late summer and then vivid scarlet in autumn. Even my turkey-foot shaped seed heads are shades of red.

My plants freely self-seed and develop an extensive root system which is effective in erosion control. I am effective when massed in wildflower meadows, prairie or naturalized areas and add winter interest to the garden. I attract butterflies and hummingbirds and tolerate deer and black walnut. I have no serious insect or disease problems. I withstand hot, humid summers and cold, wet winters in the landscape.

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!



Did you take some good pictures of your garden this summer? Do you have pictures of other Master Gardeners and the many projects they are involved in? Submit your pictures - whatever you think other members would like to see - to pakster0605@yahoo.com. Don't forget to send along the information about the picture as well. Thank you!

Letter from your Presidents: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz



The telltale signs of fall are showing! Leaves are falling, plants are beginning to wither, and some of us are ready to start our serious clean up, even if the first days of September did not give us much drive to do so with the wet and blah weather!

But oh, the colors of the outdoors are changing beautifully before our eyes. Mums are brightly displaying everywhere, hydrangeas are showing their wonderful shades of pink and all the other perennial plants that begin their flower show in the fall - Montauk Daisy, Solidago goldenrod, sedums of all varieties, to name a few. This is a favorite season for many of us!

We hope that everyone has gotten their hours in and not finding it too difficult to use the ORS (Online Reporting System). We think it has advantages over paging through all of the spreadsheet pages. We will continue to support members for the coming year, so please reach out to others to assist you. One great tip that we have mentioned in the past, is to enter your hours at least monthly so that it is not so difficult next September. That way all of your hard earned volunteer hours are accounted for.

We are updating the Membership Booklet at this time. Please take a look at your information and if it needs updating, please let us know. Also, project and committee leads, if there is any information changes in your description/information, please give us those updates as well. Remember, also, to complete the project summary form and send to **Britton Dake**, our Vice President.

November elections are getting closer. We are looking for members to fill the following positions: Board Member-at-large (2), Treasurer and President(s). We will talk about these positions at the meeting, plus there is an article in this newsletter detailing these positions as well. Please consider sharing your time and talents with our organization. We have a very active, successful and fun group to work with!

Our annual Awards Banquet will take place Tuesday, December 3, at LaSures Banquet Hall. There will be a wonderful meal, short program of our achievements for this past year, and a host of great door prizes. The meal will cost \$15 again this year - the organization covers any charges above this so that we can give some recognition to all of our members who do so much throughout the year. We again thank **Diana Dougherty**, and her team, for putting together the beautiful prize baskets. We will have invitation forms for the dinner available at the meeting this month. We hope everyone considers attending this year.

February is approaching fast, and the Education Committee is getting everything ready for another great seminar, Winter Escape~Summer Dreams, on February 15, 2020. We will have a raffle at the Awards Banquet to win a free ticket! Information about the seminar will be coming soon to you.

Our speaker for October will be Lisa Mick, Grounds and Auto Shop Supervisor for UW-Oshkosh. She will share the landscaping changes that have been made across all of Wisconsin university campuses and how this change benefits our environment.

Kathy, and Linda

Elections 2019

November elections are right around the corner and we have a few positions to be replaced this year. President and Treasurer are selected for 2 year terms, with a maximum of 4 consecutive years. Board members at large are selected every 2 years. These are the positions that are up for election. The election will be held at the November business meeting.

We would like each of you to consider serving at one of these capacities. To help you, we have listed a brief description of each position below:

President: The President(s) shall preside at all board and business meetings, setting agendas with the help of the board; may preside as ex-officio member at any and all standing or special committees. The President(s) shall update the member booklet and has the support of the extension staff to help; and will preside at the annual Awards Banquet in December. There is a timeline of events that assist the President(s), written in a monthly format. This is a great help in knowing what to do each month. There is also a number of members who assist this position, as well as the Extension's MG advisor.

Treasurer: The Treasurer shall have custody of the general funds; shall see that all funds and securities are deposited in appointed bank. This position has been fine tuned over the past several years, and is very organized so that anyone can step in and take over the job.

Board Member At Large: A member at large doesn't have a specific role. This position serves as a liaison to the general membership and is available to the board for various support duties. Serving in any of these positions is very important to the organization. Not only are you gaining volunteer hours with the work that you do, you gain the knowledge of how this association works, and why we are so vital to our community. Having Kimberly as our advisor is a plus, because she helps us along the way, making the job easier.

Members may be reaching out to you, so please take careful consideration for one of these positions. Thank you to everyone in our organization!!!



Painted Ladies on sedum. Picture submitted by Linda Loker.

Be on the Lookout for Basil Downy Mildew

By Lawanda Jungwirth

Just when you're all ready to harvest big bunches of basil to make pesto, basil jam, a salad, a fruity basil drink or margherita pizza, you notice that your basil isn't looking so good. What happened?

Basil is generally easy to grow and has few problems, but there is a new basil disease, downy mildew, now found in southern Wisconsin that you should be on the lookout.

Symptoms develop first on lower leaves and move up the plant. You'll first see leaf curling and yellowing and a gray-purple-brown fuzz that looks like a fine layer of dirt on the underside of leaves. Leaves eventually turn brown.

Of the many types of basil, sweet basil is especially susceptible to downy mildew. Purple leaved varieties, Thai basil, lemon basil and spice basils are less susceptible than the green-leafed sweet basils.

Humid, warm conditions accelerate the spread of the disease. It can be introduced to the garden from contaminated seed, infected transplants or through wind-borne spores from your neighbor's basil plants. Once it is in your garden, it can spread farther by wind, rain or watering splash, or hands, clothing and gardening tools that come in contact with an infected plant.

There is currently no cure for basil downy mildew. Once it is discovered in your garden, you should pull up all the basil plants, both healthy and infected. Use the healthy plants immediately for whatever reason you grew the basil. If you have no immediate plans for use, it can be chopped and frozen in olive oil in ice cube trays or blanched in boiling water for 2 seconds before being plunged into an ice bath. Then dry the leaves and spread them on a cookie sheet. Place it in the freezer immediately. When frozen, store the leaves in plastic freezer bags.

As for the infected plants, bag them in plastic and put them in your garbage.

The easiest way to prevent basil downy mildew is to choose basils other than sweet basil. A few varieties have been bred for downy mildew resistance. They include 'Devotion', 'Obsession', 'Passion', 'Thunderstruck', 'Prospera', 'Eleanora', 'Emma' and 'Everleaf'.

If you grow basil from transplants, look carefully at the undersides of the leaves before buying. If you grow from seed, attempt to determine if the seed has been steam-treated to kill the downy mildew pathogen. This is a relatively new technique so it may be difficult to find steam-treated seed.

No matter which basil you plant, choose a sunny spot and allow ample space between plants so air can circulate. Try to keep the plants dry. If you need to supplement rainfall, use a drip or soaker hose rather than overhead watering. These practices also help prevent other diseases that may affect basil.

You may be tempted to use a fungicide to kill the mildew but those available to home gardeners just don't work. You would be wasting your time and money.

The September Garden

By Lawanda Jungwirth

September is a busy time in the garden, especially this year when everything seemed to get a late start. If your garden is like mine, it's just reaching peak vegetable and flower production. There is still much to be done.

In the vegetable garden, harvesting of zucchini, tomatoes, peppers, beans, squash and cucumbers continues. It's also time to pick apples and pears. After a full summer's work, it would be a shame to let any of this good food go to waste. If you've run out of ambition to can, freeze or dehydrate your garden's bounty, share with neighbors or your local food bank. If nothing else, add the excess to your compost pile so it can provide nutrition to next year's crop.

In the flower garden, things may be looking a little messy. Unless you are planning to save seeds, continue to cut back spent blooms. Make sure to remove weeds before they go to seed.

Pull up and compost both flower and vegetable plants that have fulfilled their purpose. Any diseased plant material, especially tomato vines, should be burned or bagged and placed in the trash.

In the greater landscape, be sure to keep shrubs, young trees and fruit trees well watered until they go dormant. Evergreens trees and shrubs should be kept hydrated until the ground freezes, which usually happens around Thanksgiving. Evergreen needles continue to transpire water all winter long but with the ground frozen, their roots can't take up any additional water, so whatever water they get in autumn has to last until spring.

There is still time to plant grass in any bare spots in your lawn. Seeds may take a bit longer to germinate than they do in spring so don't worry if growth doesn't begin for ten days or more. Read the label on the grass seed to ensure that the seed is appropriate for your light conditions, either sun or shade or a mix of both. Read the small print to be sure that a significant percentage of the seed is perennial grasses to ensure that it survives over winter.

Fall is the best time to fight invasive plants such as buckthorn that may be encroaching on your landscape. Small plants are easy to pull after a good soaking rain. Larger plants can be pulled using a brush grubber, or cut and carefully painted with a brush-killing herbicide.

Now is the time to order or shop for bulbs of garlic as well as tulips, daffodils, crocuses, hydrangeas and other early spring blooming flowers so you have them on hand for their mid-October planting time.

Consider getting a head start on changes in your hardscape that you want to implement next spring. New paths, fences, flowerbeds, stones or rocks, even a water garden can be installed now. Otherwise, take a good look at your landscape and make notes or sketches of changes you want to make next year.



Garden Trivia:

Ohio's state beverage is Tomato Juice!

Arlene & Bob Kosanke Garden Walk 2019







Pictures submitted by Arlene Kosanke.

Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am Red October Big Bluestem. Order: Cyperales. Family: Poaceae / Gramineae – Grass family. Genus: Andropogon L. – bluestem. Species: Andropogon geraldii Vitman – big bluestem. Cultivar: Red October Big Bluestem. With the first frost of fall the plant's color becomes vivid scarlet red that gives this grass its name. The genus name comes from the Greek word Andros meaning man and pogon meaning beard giving reference to the hairs on the spikelets of some species in the genus. It can be seen in the rain garden located at the entrance to the Coughlin Center.



References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.



Become a Smarter Gardener in 2019: Why so few pumpkins and squash?

September 06, 2019 by Natalie Hoidal, Extension Educator in Fruits and Vegetables, University of Minnesota Extension
Squash blossom. Photo: Natalie Hoidal, UMN
Extension

We've heard multiple reports of pumpkin and squash plants not producing well this year. Some plants have no fruit at all, and others produced fewer fruit than usual. If this happened in your garden, there are a few

explanations.

1. Pollination

Pumpkins and squash are dependent upon insect pollination. They are <u>monoecious</u>, which means that each plant will produce both male and female flowers.

However, these flowers emerge at different times. Male flowers bloom about one week before female flowers. In an ideal situation, bees and other pollinators would visit the male flowers and coat themselves in pollen. When the female flowers bloom a week later, those same pollinators would visit and pollinate them.

However, most squash and pumpkin flowers only last for about four hours, so conditions have to be just right for pollination. The time lapse between male flower bloom and female flower bloom means that conditions have to continue to be favorable for an extended period to ensure good pollination.

Penn State Extension has an excellent, in-depth article on pollinators in pumpkins and squash. Some of the highlights include:

- Bumblebees and <u>squash bees</u> (Peponapis pruinosa) are the best pollinators of pumpkins since they forage in the morning, and because squash bees have a lifecycle that's perfectly timed with the lifecycles of cucurbits. Cucurbits include pumpkin, squash, melons, cucumbers, and zucchini.
- Creating habitat (i.e. growing flowers throughout the growing season) for bee nesting sites may help boost pollination. For bumblebees, this means consistent floral blooms, ideally with native plants throughout the growing season. For squash bees, which nest in the soil at a

depth of 5-10 inches, this means minimizing the amount of tilling or digging you may do around your pumpkin patch.

Keep in mind that pesticide applications can also negatively impact pollinators. If you're spraying for cucumber beetle or squash bugs, try to time applications so as to avoid flowering times.

Bad weather for pumpkins...

This year, we experienced many days with heavy rainfall as well as significant temperature fluctuations. These environmental conditions can result in a failure to pollinate. Even if pollinators are present in your area, they are unlikely to come out and pollinate when conditions are too wet, too windy, too hot, or too cold.

While we can't control the weather, there are a few things we can do to encourage better pollination in next year's crop.

2. Planting density

If your plants are too close together, they'll experience competition for both light and nutrients. When plants have to compete for sunlight, photosynthesis is reduced, which in turn reduces growth and development.

Ideal spacing for pumpkins is:

- Compact / bush varieties: plants 18-24 inches apart with 4-6 foot rows (4-6 pounds seed / acre)
- Miniature pumpkins: plants 2 feet apart with 6-8 foot rows
- Vining varieties: plants 2-5 feet apart with 6-8 feet per row (2-3 pounds seed / acre)

3. Too much nitrogen or nitrogen applied at the wrong time

Too much nitrogen can delay fruiting, and cause plants to put energy towards vegetative growth rather than reproductive growth (growing vines and leaves rather than fruit).

Make sure to start your gardening season with a soil test, and make fertilization decisions accordingly. If you need help interpreting your soil test, talk with your local Master Gardeners.

4. Water stress

Either too much or too little water can result in low yields. Drought stress can cause the plant to produce more male flowers than female flowers, and only the female flowers can make fruit.

If conditions are too wet, the plant can become stressed and even drown. If you are growing pumpkins in a low area that gets a lot of water, consider making raised beds or growing pumpkins in mounds. By elevating your planting surface, you allow excess water to drain away from the roots.

5. High temperatures

High temperatures during fruiting can cause fruiting problems in pumpkins and squash. Daytime temperatures in the 90s or nighttime temperatures in the 70s can cause flowers and small fruits to die, or to fall off the vines.

Unfortunately, there is not much that we can do in these situations since we don't control the weather. Making sure that plants have enough water is one way to help them make it through heat spells.

Using shade cloth during heat spells can also help to keep your garden a few degrees cooler.

6. Diseases

If your plant has produced small fruit that then shriveled up or fell off, it may have a disease. UMN Extension's "What's wrong with my plant" tool provides a nice overview of many of the diseases affecting squash and pumpkin fruit.

However, disease symptoms are not always easily identified using pictures alone - consider sending plants to the UMN Plant Disease Clinic for diagnosis.

From the Plant Health Desk......

by Mary Shepard

The 2019 Plant Health season for responding to client horticultural questions has been very busy and is now drawing to a close. This might be a good time to share some of the most frequently used resources that help the team answer questions. The first step is to develop a complete problem description (beyond "something is wrong with my tree", "bugs are eating my shrubs", "my plant is turning yellow"). Sometimes we have a good idea of where to start the investigation—other times it can be very helpful to use the search engine of Google to see what some of the possibilities are. When reviewing the available information, we focus primarily on data from northern tier universities. A few of the best ones are:

Horticulture

Wisconsin Horticulture

https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/

University of Minnesota-Extension Garden

http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/

Cornell Extension

Https://hort.cals.cornell.edu/extension-outreach/

Purdue Extension

Https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/default.asp

Michigan State University-Extension Lawn and Garden

Http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/lawn_garden

Wildflowers

Minnesota Wildflowers

Https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/

Plant Disease

UW-Madison Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic (Click on Fact Sheets tab)

Http://pddc.wisc.edu/

Cornell Vegetable MD Online

Http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/

Insects

UW-Madison Online Insect ID Tool

Http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/insectid/

The Xerces Society

Http://www.xerces.org/bees/

Hope these are a good starting place for your own detective work.





Left: Yellowbellied sapsucker damage on a birch tree.

Right: Sharon's sheep feeding on her lawn. =)





Garden Chub

Garden Club Scholarship Luncheon

Submitted by Kim Willman

The 21st annual OGC Scholarship Luncheon is Saturday, Nov. 23rd at the Oshkosh Convention Center, starting at 11:30. The meal is baked chicken, potato, vegetable, and cake. Music will be provided by Joe and Jamie Marie and the program is simple ideas you can try at home. Members will be demonstrating various holiday ideas, such as an outdoor display and a floral bouquet. We'll also have basket & table raffles and silent & live auctions. Cost is \$25 per ticket. Let me know if you're interested so I can plan how many tables I need. I need payment by Thursday, Nov. 7th.

Member Business Meeting Minutes - Sept. 10, 2019

Co-President **Linda Loker** called the meeting to order.

Treasurer Report: Joni gave the cash reconciliation report for the period of August 2019. There have been changes. WCMGA now is banking at Community 1st Credit Union, no longer at Associated Bank. With Community 1st Credit Union there are no account charges, no fraud control but the CU offers safer accounts.

Secretary Report: Member meeting minutes are in the Newsletter and the WCMGA Board minutes are on the website.

Project Updates: Britton reported that Project lead replacements are needed. 6 maybe 7 replacements and or co-leads are needed. Projects needing leads/co-leads are: Shattuck Park, Neenah Library, Omro Library, Farmers Market, Morgan House, and Octagon House. Project leads' Grant application deadline is Oct 1st. Project reports due December 31st.

Education Committee Report: Linda Werner reported that the Education committee would like to have a theme for this year's activities to reflect ecology and sustainability. To assist with this theme, WCMGA purchased two of Doug Tallamy's books "Bringing Nature Home," for members to checkout. **Barb Harrison** reported that she will be giving a 5-minute synopsis of this book, starting with the forward tonight and continuing at the monthly meetings. WE~SD speakers are: Ben Futa, Allen Centennial Garden Director, and Jim Nienhaus, UW-Madison vegetable geneticist. Mary Moosemiller continues to work on activities aimed at 4-H members' participation. Work with ASCEND and Food wise continues despite low participation. Over 100 pounds of produce was harvested from the raised beds project.

Extension Updates: Kimberly Miller reported that members need to submit their hours by Oct 1st, on the ORS (online reporting system). September 2018 hours should be reported with the October 2018 hours (change the date); this is a 13-month reporting year in 12 months. If a garden walk is not a guided tour, it does not count for education hours.

State Representatives Report: Deby Voyles said there will be no annual conference. There will be a "Superstar training" which will be held in: Eau Claire/Altoona, Madison and Wausau. More information can be found on the State MGA website. This training will count for education hours.

New Business

Golden Trowel Committee: Committee has a document that includes duties, eligibility criteria and member composition/criteria. The committee is looking for nominations for the Golden Trowel Award which will be given out at the December Awards banquet.

Nominations: Nominations for President, Treasurer, and Board: Elections will be held at the November membership meeting. Please consider running for any of these positions.

Buckthorn: Sue Egner will be heading up the buckthorn eradications, after the first frost, at the Oshkosh Conservancy.

Scholarship report: The committee received a Thank you note from scholarship recipient Aidan Gehrke.

Other New Business

Sullivan's Woods: Linda Loker reported that the Oshkosh schools are scheduled to visit the woods this Fall. Contact Linda to sign up to assist with these visits.

Butterfly update: Mary reported that the migrating generation of Monarchy butterflies is leaving soon. Good luck to them in their migration to Mexico.

Reminder: Send in your \$30.00 membership renewal to Linda Baeten, if you have not done it yet.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by **Britton Dake**. **Susan Raasch** seconded the motion.

Upcoming Events - See Calendar for October Events

Nov. 19: Education Committee meeting 5:30 PM at Benvenutos

Dec. 3: Awards Banquet

Feb. 15: Winter Escape~Summer Dreams

Battling Buckthorn

Submitted by Lynne Slat

So what do you do about it? The best time for battling Buckthorn is in late fall/early winter when it is easily recognizable, because it holds onto its green leaves much



longer than the other deciduous trees and shrubs. You'll also be able to identify it from the bold "lenticels" that create light, horizontal stripes on the dark stems. Larger, mature specimens will have long thorns on the branches. Scraping the bark reveals a bright orange/yellow color.

November is the perfect time to ramp up on battling Buckthorn, whether in your yard or natural areas. Plants are moving water and nutrients into their roots for the winter, so pesticide applications are most effective. Larger plants (1/2" caliper or more) that are too difficult to pull out of the ground or too large to be sprayed, can be destroyed with the "cut and paint" method. Easier with two people doing the work, one person cuts the woody plants to the ground, the other will come behind with a container containing the herbicide. Look for pesticides labeled for woody plants like Bonide Stump Out or glyphosate concentrates (like Round Up) mixed with a little water. Be aware that some herbicides require a minimum temperature to be effective; check labels. Use a sponge brush to apply the herbicide to the freshly cut stump. I like to add a little red food coloring to the mix so it's easy to tell which stumps have already been painted. Make sure to thoroughly coat the outer cambium ring (don't worry about the center on larger stumps). The sponge brush will give you more control so you don't accidentally drip onto desirable plants. Burning the debris of branches you've cut down is the best way to destroy the seeds so you aren't spreading them to another area.

If the task of personally removing large stands of Buckthorn is too daunting, contact a company like Wachtel Tree Science. When the Buckthorn is gone you can start replacing them with native plants like Gray Dogwood, American Filbert, Fragrant Sumac, Elderberry, and Bladdernut. Once you've won the battle, it'll be easier to spread the word about Buckthorn eradication to your neighbors, and we can finally win the war.

Find more information about Buckthorn from the Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species consortium. https://www.kb.jniplants.com/battling-buckthorn/?fbclid=lwAR1tf8ZwOZalFe2C8OJsiFXOoBvhDbrlOtbphPtQR MeKy0K-FJgel

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 Tamara Erickson Neenah Public Library 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 Lil Hansche Park View Flower Arranging Park View Vegetable Garden Tom Weber Farmer's Market Dorothy Gayhart-Kunz/Janet Priebe/ Synda Jones/Patty Schmitz Plant Health Advisors Patty Schmitz/Mary Shepard Shattuck Park, Neenah Diane lott Sullivan's Woods Linda Loker

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

October 2019						
Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesda y	Thursday	Friday	Sat
		1 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM Board Mtg. 6 PM	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM Scholarship Committee 4:30 PM Coughlin Ctr. Business Meeting 6 PM	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM Education Committee, 5:30 PM Benvenuto's	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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