



Winnebago County Master Gardeners

Newsletter

September 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.

“More grows in the garden than the gardener knows he has planted.”



Swallowtail Caterpillar on fennel in Kathy Schultz' garden. Submitted by Kathy Schultz.

What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am a perennial native herb which has been hybridized for garden use for my showy red, pink or lilac flowers. My flowers are in large heads or whorls of about 20-50 flowers at the top of the branching stem, supported by leafy bracts which are a pale green color. They bloom in mid- to late summer. My stem is square, grooved, hard and about 3 feet high. My leaves occur in opposite pairs, are rough on both surfaces, and are distinctly toothed and lance-shaped. When crushed they exude a spicy, highly fragrant oil. Fine dense hairs cover much of the stem and leaves. My roots are short, slender, creeping rhizomes.

I prefer full sun and moist yet well-drained soil. Powdery mildew and rust may disrupt established plants on occasion, but plants are in general highly resistant to most wilts and viruses. I am used in areas for naturalization and in beds and borders to encourage and increase the appearance of hummingbirds and pollinating insects. Because of oils present in my roots, I am sometimes used as a companion plant around small vegetable crops susceptible to subterranean pests. If grown around tomatoes, I am known for ostensibly improving both health and flavor.

Propagation occurs by seed directly or started in coldframes or greenhouses, by hardwood or softwood cuttings, root cuttings, layering and division. To keep me from becoming invasive, I should be divided every three years in either spring or fall by digging up the root clump, discarding the inner, older portion and replanting the new divisions.

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

Open

Newsletter Compilation

Anne Murphy



We would love your help! If you are interested in contributing to 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. Each article submitted will count toward your volunteer hours. Thank you!

Letter from your Presidents: Ed Dombrowski & Bob Kneepkens

The Ship Without a Rudder (Well, sought of!)

As we look back over our terms of office, we recognized how we became a rudderless ship. First the frustration of a health dilemma which peeled away some of our direction. Then we faced issues of social distancing, no membership contact, and new UW guidelines which confused us all. So, just like an onion, another layer of our direction was peeled away when our wonderful extension agent moved on to a new position.

It seems we have all expended huge amounts of energy sailing in a Sea of Frustration. Without clarity and the uncertainty we face with the new health scare, we all want to know what the future of the Winnebago Master Gardeners Association will look like.

As of now, we can not define the future for our membership. The daily events our membership faces are controlled by situations, circumstances, and other people of which we have no control. We hope, wish and wait to re-establish our goals and mission so that we can translate them into actual work in progress seeking something "better".

If we want "better", we will "need to once again spend quality time and energy gaining clarity about specifically what it is we want in...and from...our (membership)" says Craig Harper, Exercise Scientist and Motivational speaker. An organization without direction is a frustrated one. However sad, an unfulfilled member loses faith and begins to question whether or not to remain with an organization without a rudder, well sought of!

If you felt rudder-less lately, we want to offer some suggestions and thoughts we hope that will be valuable to you as we continue to seek near normal conditions:

1. Spend time determining your role in our membership. If you recall, the number one reason we all joined and stayed with WCMGA was camaraderie. Seeing our friends in an educational learning environment helps us redirect our mission. Having purpose brings back energy which in turn gives us momentum and joy in belonging to WCMGA. Yes, joy, you remember that feeling of sitting, chatting and snacking with your life-long friends as well as those newbies who want to learn from you.

2. Decide where you want to be. Now is not the time to panic if you do not know exactly what is going to happen. Know what you want and then we as a membership can once again start to figure out how we can get there. Not only do we want to fulfill our roles as a membership, but yours as well. Let us take the camaraderie momentum to a new level!

3. Make a changing commitment. Making a changing commitment infers that we lessen accepting our situational uncertainty and start to make things happen. As we move forward, we will face new obstacles, new rules, and a new rudder (well, sought of!) All successful memberships suggest

ideas, make decisions, make a commitment to WCMGA. As change affects our rudder, direction follows, which in turn makes things happen.

We understand that people don't mind change, but they mind being changed. Our organization faces changes as our world around us is changing. For us to survive, we need to find the courage and strength to change as well. For now, let's focus on our most valued asset, our camaraderie. Sometimes there is nothing wrong looking back first then forward to gain results. Finding what we want will often help us find our rudder. (Well, sought of!)

Bob and Ed



Photo by Sue Egner, taken in the Butterfly Garden. Submitted by Jane Kuhn.

A Thank You to the WCMGA

By Steve Cummings

A big thank you is due the Winnebago County Master Gardeners for the great job they've been doing at the Morgan House the past few years.

When we first met with them, we set a long term goal of returning the property surrounding the house to how it would have appeared in the 1880s. When the Morgan House was built, foundation plantings were less common than they are today. Our Victorian ancestors preferred to view their flowers from inside the house. Ladies of the period did not want to get a sunburn, let alone tan their delicate skin.

Planting boxwoods along the front walk to the house was one of our first projects. A small kitchen garden is planned for the west side of the house this year or in 2022.

We're adding plants annually that the Morgan's would have had their gardener plant. When you visit the house, you'll notice that hostas are now in front of the south porch. Hostas are very popular today, but they were just introduced to this country from Japan in the 1880s.

The beautiful circa 1890 cast iron urn in the period rose garden near the carriage house was donated to the Society by Crescent Moon Antiques and Salvage. The Master Gardeners arranged for its repair and painting. They have also placed identification signs near all plantings including our centuries old Burr Oak in the backyard.

We hope you enjoy the changes to Morgan House grounds. We want your visit to be both a visual and an educational experience.



Morgan House rose area tended by Sue Egner.
Submitted by Kathy Schultz.

Controlling Cabbage Worms

By Lawanda Jungwirth

Last week I gave up on brussels sprouts for this year and chopped them all down. The green cabbage worms won. I had been diligently checking every leaf every day and squishing – ugh! -the worms, which are actually caterpillars, but I then missed two days and things got completely out of control.

The pretty cabbage white butterfly that flits around the garden is the real culprit. She lays her eggs under the leaves of plants in the cabbage family which includes brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, kohlrabi, cauliflower and kale. When the eggs hatch, tiny green caterpillars chew the leaves to pieces, so much so that they can destroy the plant entirely if they chew the growing point in the center of the plant. The color of the caterpillar almost exactly matches the leaf color making them difficult to spot.

I really want to grow cabbage family plants next year, so I began to research ways to control the cabbage white and her offspring organically.

First on the list is daily checking and squishing, which as I said, requires diligence. Covering the plants with floating row covers is a second option. Make a tunnel with stiff wire or PVC pipe pushed into the ground on both sides of the row or bed. Use clothes pins or clamps to secure the floating cover onto the supports, making sure both ends of the tunnel are covered and that the material covers right down to the soil line.

Third, try planting a polyculture, a mixture of plants, to confuse the pests and make it difficult for them to find the cabbage family plants. There are plants that actually repel cabbage whites and include dill, onions, garlic, marigolds, thyme, oregano, lavender, hyssop, mint, rosemary and sage. The first four in the list are annual plants and probably the easiest to include in a vegetable garden.

Bt, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, is a naturally occurring soil bacteria that can be purchased and sprayed on plants. It kills the larvae of caterpillars and moths when they consume it. It is non-toxic for all other insects, mammals, birds and people. Follow directions on the label.

I'm not sure of the science behind this final tip but it looks like fun and can't hurt so I am certainly going to try it next year. Apparently, cabbage whites are territorial, so if they spot a white butterfly already in the garden, they will look elsewhere. I found a page of printable templates of cabbage white butterflies on the internet along with instructions on how to make them and place them in the garden. Search "cabbage white butterfly decoy" for instructions.

The only satisfaction I got from chopping down the brussels sprouts was the thought of the caterpillars on them starving as the leaves wilted and that the next day the cabbage white butterfly would have no place in my garden to lay her eggs.

With the tips above, next year I'll have brussels sprouts!

Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn



I am monarda or bee balm. Family: Lamiaceae (mint). Other common names are horsemint or wild bergamot. The red variety is commonly known as Oswego Tea. It was used by colonists in place of English Tea after the Boston Tea Party, when they threw the English tea in the harbor to protest the high taxes imposed on it by the British. I have a long history of use as a medicinal plant by many Native Americans. Due to the strong antiseptic action of my plants, I was used for skin infections and minor wounds

as well as mouth and throat infections. An infusion of crushed leaves has been used to treat headaches and fevers. I am the natural source of the antiseptic Thymol, the primary active ingredient in modern commercial mouthwash formulas. I can be found at the Park View Cutting Garden and at the Butterfly Garden at Miravida.

References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.



Hummingbird on salvia at Park View Gardens.
Submitted by Carleen Chistianson.

Watering the yard and garden in extreme drought

By Natalie Hoidal, Annalisa Hultberg, Julie Weisenhorn, University of MN Extension



Use raked leaves as mulch around trees, shrubs and perennials. Save time later this fall by cleaning empty rain barrels now.

A few weeks ago, we published **an article about watering wisely in drought**. Basic practices like watering in the morning and using mulches to keep the soil moist remain very important. Prioritizing what to water and re-using water safely will also help keep our landscapes healthy during extreme drought conditions .

An inch per week? Choosing what to water

Due to watering restrictions, fears of wells running dry, and simply wanting to conserve water, many of you are probably prioritizing which plants need water the most. The common saying that gardens need an inch of water per week is a good rule of thumb. But, in extreme drought conditions, many of us are wondering how to prioritize watering. Which plants actually need an inch per week and which plants can get by with less? Here's a quick guide to help you prioritize.

Water trees young and old – and shrubs too!

Mature trees need water yet are some of the last plants we think about due to their size and the fact most leaves are well above our eye level.

Saturate the top 6-9 inches of soil with water to ensure those important feeder roots are well-watered. Most tree roots are located in the top 18-20 inches of soil and spread far beyond the dripline (canopy edge) of the tree. Small, but effective, feeder roots are responsible for much of the water and nutrients the tree receives from the soil.

Late summer and early fall can be a good time to plant new trees and shrubs. Again, be sure to water them. Visit **How to water newly planted trees and shrubs** for a formula for how much and how frequently to water. Note that daily watering 1-1.5 gallons per inch of trunk diameter is required for the first two weeks after planting.

Evergreens need moist soil as we move into winter in order to reduce needles drying out. Think of each needle as a leaf. Deciduous trees and shrubs drop their leaves, but evergreens have to hang onto them through the winter and spring. Adequate water helps.

Focus on perennial flowers

Are you getting tired of watering your containers every day? We sure are! Annual flowers are wrapping up their life cycles for this year, so concentrate your water resources and effort on your perennials and bulbs that will be there next year.

And speaking of bulbs, September is a good month to plant **spring bulbs** like crocus, chionodoxa, daffodils, tulips — and garlic! Be sure to plant in well-drained soil and water bulbs like you water your perennials.

Wondering if your perennials are dry? Get your hands in the soil and water if the top 6 inches of soil are dry.

As you start raking leaves, put them around your perennials, trees and shrubs as a mulch. Mulch holds in soil moisture while protecting roots, moderating soil temperatures, and overall reducing stress on our landscape plants.

Don't over water vegetable gardens

We're actually receiving quite a few photos this year of vegetables that have received too much water. Likely due to concern over the drought, many gardeners seem to be overwatering their vegetables. Some vegetables are hardier than others, and each vegetable has a critical period when consistent water is especially important for high quality fruit, root, tuber, or bulb set. Usually this period falls between flowering and fruit maturation.

- Pay extra attention to vegetables that are flowering and fruiting. These vegetables need consistent moisture. Watering a little bit every day or two is better than watering all at once.
- Storage crops reaching their time of harvest like potatoes and onions can be cut off from water at this point in the season if you plan to harvest in the next few weeks.
- Deep rooted vegetables like tomatoes, squash and melons can pull moisture from deep in the soil, and so they tend to be hardier than some other common vegetables.
- Sweet corn has very shallow roots and needs water more frequently.
- Cool season crops like lettuce, broccoli and turnips need frequent water throughout the summer.
- Vegetables grown in pots need to be watered every day.

Re-use water

While most of our rain barrels have been pretty empty this summer, gardeners are finding other ways to conserve and reuse water, such as using dishwater, water from coolers, and even capturing water from the shower in buckets to water their plants.

- Avoid reusing dishwater that contains a lot of soap as it can burn foliage especially when applied in hot sun.
- Don't reuse water that has had meat or bones cooked in it as the fat residue can attract animals.
- You can reuse water used to cook vegetables, just let it cool down first before applying.

Take advantage of your empty rain barrels to clean and disinfect them for next year.



Park View cutting garden. Submitted by Carleen Christianson.

COVID-Approved Projects Open for Volunteers

The following is a list of projects that are Covid-approved and open to Master Gardener Volunteers:

- **Butterfly Garden at Miravida Living**
- **Parkview Cutting Gardens**
- **Parkview Vegetable Garden**
- **Parkview Prairie Garden**
- **Oshkosh Area Humane Society Memorial Garden**
- **Rain Garden at Coughlin Building**
- **Morgan House**
- **Paine Art Center and Arboretum**
- **Octagon House**
- **Pollinator Garden at Neenah Public Library**
- **Carter Memorial Library, Omro**
- **Sullivan's Woods-invasive removal only**
- **Plant Health Advising-virtual**

Please see the **2021 Winnebago County Master Gardener Guide** and contact the **Project Lead** for more information.

Continuing Education Opportunities

By Linda Werner

Four Seasons Gardening Webinar Series by the Illinois Extension Horticulture team. On select Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. Free but registration required by clicking on the link for each webinar. Space is limited

Garden Tool Maintenance, September 14

Make gardening less of a chore by maintaining your equipment. Sharp, rust-free tools are easier on the body and make whatever task is at hand quicker to finish.

Horticulture Educator Richard Hentschel will cover care for hand tools and small engine equipment commonly used in the garden and home landscape. Click here: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23879>

The Nuts and Boles of Tree Identification, October 19

Illinois is home to hundreds of native and non-native tree species, but identifying them isn't always easy. Besides leaves, bark, twigs, buds, flowers, boles, and fruit can also be helpful in identification. Gain confidence in your tree ID abilities by joining Horticulture Educator Sarah Vogel to learn how to recognize tree species based on the size, shape, and appearance of tree parts and their scientific names. Click here: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23881>

Tree Root Collar Disorders, November 30

A root collar is an important area of a tree where root tissue shifts to trunk tissue. Impacts to this part of the tree can have a variety of symptoms from yellow foliage and early fall color to dieback in the upper canopy, and even tree death. Horticulture Educator Ryan Pankau will explore how to prevent, identify, and treat common tree root collar disorders.

NOTE: Each program is recorded and available to watch on the [Illinois Extension Horticulture YouTube channel](#). Videos are available about two weeks after the live program. Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEYBGqFXZS6Sn37n1mVcY1g>



A bird perhaps planted a seed in the crook of this oak and it seems to like it there.
Submitted by Kathy Schultz.

WCMGA Projects

Check your Member Guide for contact information.

Project	Project Lead(s)
Butterfly Garden Miravida Living Oshkosh	Jane Kuhn
Carter Memorial Library, Omro	Jenny Breining
Coughlin Rain Garden	Ed and Jill Dombrowski
Octagon House, Neenah	Jerry Robak
Invasive Species	Valerie Stabenow/Sue Egner
Morgan House	Kathy Schultz
Neenah Public Library	Susan Forbes/Bette Hoytink
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	Carol Swannell/Ruth Eberwine
Park View Flower Arranging	Lil Hansche/Diane Thompson
Park View Vegetable Garden	Tom Weber (with assistance from Renee Donner)
Farmer's Market	Synda Jones/Patty Schmitz
Plant Health Advisors	Mary Shepard
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.

September 2021

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Board Mtg. 6 PM	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Business Mtg. 6 PM	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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