

# WIMGA



WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION  
Serving its members since 1992

## WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

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**WIMGA Vision** - The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association will be the collective voice for the local Master Gardeners Associations and individual members in active support for their horticultural projects and services; build networks to enhance outreach, share ideas and promote projects; and help extend UW-Extension's educational role to the public.

## Find a Speaker, Be a Speaker—WIMGA Speakers Bureau is Ready

The website for WIMGA is launched at [wimga.org](http://wimga.org). We know a number of you have taken a look at it and seen some of the features. We'd like to highlight a new service for WIMGA and for all of you: The Speakers Bureau. Part of being a Master Gardener Volunteer is providing horticultural education to the public and the other part is that we all need to get at least 10 hours of continuing education each year to further our skills as Master Gardeners. The Speakers Bureau is a great tool to advance both of those needs. And it is ready for you to add your talks.

Do you enjoy giving horticultural talks? Here's how you can get the word out of your availability:

1. Go to <https://www.wimga.org/speakers-bureau>-sign-up and open up the Speakers Bureau form.
2. Fill it in so that everything fits on one page. Please fill in every section and include a title. (Leave the formatting as it is).
3. Please fill in every section of the form and include a title. Look at the samples on the Speakers Bureau page.

4. If you have a photo of yourself and or one that pertains to your talk you can add that to the form.
5. Keep a copy on your computer and then attach it to the email contact form on [wimga.org](http://wimga.org).
6. One of the four people who update the website will upload the form and put it on the Speakers Bureau page for everyone to see.

Are you looking for a horticultural speaker - for your garden club, for your master gardener education, for a conference or for a community event?

1. Go to <https://www.wimga.org/speakers-bureau>.
2. You can look by category at the talks that are available.
3. Titles are listed. If a title sounds interesting click on it and you'll be able to look at speaker and talk information.
4. You can contact the speaker to make arrangements or get references.
5. We are just getting started so not many are listed. We are counting on you to help provide many topics and talks.

Who is eligible to be on the speakers bureau?

1. Master Gardener Volunteers.
2. Any other individual who has horticultural expertise who enjoys speaking about it. So please share our website link to people you know who are good speakers on horticultural topics.

Please Note: Speakers have volunteered to be listed. They have not been screened. Their listing on the wimga.org does not imply or constitute an endorse-

ment by the Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA) or any of its constituent entities. In order to assure the highest quality of your program, you may wish to ask speakers for references before extending an invitation.

If you no longer want to be on the Speakers' Bureau use the contact form to let us know. About once a year we will send an email to speakers' bureau participants seeing if they still want to be included.

## Plant Sales

### **Grant County Plant Sale**

May 12 — 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Grant County Fairgrounds, Crops and Soils Building  
916 E. Elm Street, Lancaster, WI

### **Garden Fair and Plant Sale**

May 19 — 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Fond du Lac Fair Grounds Cow Palace  
538 Fond du Lac Avenue, Fond du Lac, WI

### **North Country MGV Plant Sale**

May 19 — 8:00 a.m. and sells out fast  
Spoonerville Agriculture Research Station  
W6646 Highway 70, Spoonerville, WI 54801

### **Waupaca County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale**

May 19 — 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Rain or shine.  
Waupaca County Fairgrounds Education Building  
602 South Street, Weyauwega, WI

### **Waushara County Master Gardeners Plant Sale**

May 19 — 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Waushara County Fairgrounds  
East Division Street and Townline Road, Wautoma, WI

### **Kewaunee County Garden Club – Plant Sale**

May 26 — 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Harbor Park,  
212 Harrison Street, Kewaunee WI

### **Heirloom Plant & Herb Sale**

May 26 — 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Concordia University Field House  
12800 Lake Shore Drive, Mequon, Wisconsin

### **Barron County Master Gardener's Plant Sale**

June 9 — Starting at 8:00 a.m.  
Barron County Fairgrounds, Rice Lake WI

### **Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Volunteer Plant Sale**

June 10 — 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Phoenix Park Pavilion  
330 Riverfront Terrace, Eau Claire, WI

### **Wolf River Master Gardener Plant Sale**

June 16 — 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Shawano Farmers Market  
235 S. Washington Street, Shawano, WI

For more information on these plant sales and other events go to: <https://wimastergardener.org/events/>

## Come Visit Wordsnips!

Vicki Schilleman, Outagamie County Master Gardener

Did you know that the Outagamie County Master Gardener's blog has 132 followers from as far away as South Africa? We have fun posts about experiences our members have had with their gardens (some good, some not so good). We have educational posts about a variety of topics from plants to pollinators to disease and pest control. We have inspirational

articles looking at how working in our gardens can be compared to looking at our lives.

Visit the blog at [www.gardensnips.wordpress.com](http://www.gardensnips.wordpress.com) and 'Follow' our page. By providing your email address, you'll be notified whenever a new post occurs, and your email address remains private.

## Autumn at the River—Conference Tours



The 2018 WIMGA Conference organizers have selected three great tours for registrants to

choose from. The tours are offered on Friday, September 21st and all tours end by 4:00 p.m. in time for Conference Registration.

Tour 1 includes Silver Springs Foods, the world's largest producer of horseradish; Sunbow Farm, a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA); and wrap up by going to Down to Earth Garden Center, a nursery and landscape center. This tour is a chance to learn about some horticulture ventures unique to Eau Claire.

<https://www.silverspringfoods.com/>  
<http://www.sunbowfarm.com>  
<http://www.eauclairelandscaping.com/>

Tour 2 will take you to a vineyard and winery, River Bend Vineyard & Winery as well as a fruit orchard, Mary Dirty Face Farm. You'll learn how wine is made and what it takes to grow fruit. What could be better? - Yes, tasting that goes along with this tour.

<https://www.riverbendvineyard.com/>  
<http://www.marydirtyface.com/>

The cost for Tours 1 or 2 is \$45 and includes lunch.

Tour 3 is a 3-mile round trip walking Tour of BOTH Phoenix Park and the Mayo Clinic Gardens in downtown Eau Claire. This tour is only \$15 and includes lunch. An easy walk on paved sidewalks and trails features the beauty that can be found in downtown Eau Claire.

### 2018 WIMGA Conference Registration Available

Join with Master Gardener Volunteers and interested gardeners from around Wisconsin for a fun filled and educational two days in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Autumn at the River Conference will be held at the Lismore Hotel located at the confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers. On Friday you have tour options of area horticultural attractions and an evening dinner and keynote talk. Saturday morning, we will start our conference by visiting the Eau Claire farmers market. We'll learn about its history and how it works. From there we will have a delightful array of speakers to choose from. Both online registration and paper registration are available.

Go to <https://www.wimgaconferences.com/> for information and registration. A brochure for mail-in registration is available online. The 2018 WIMGA Conference is hosted by Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire and St. Croix Valley MGVA associations.

## Upper Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference 2018

### Our Plants, Our Planet, Our Volunteers

Thursday, June 14—Saturday, June 16, 2018  
Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska MN

The 2018 Upper Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference will highlight the intersection of food, pollinators, water and growing plants. Enhance your horticulture knowledge, engage in exclusive workshops, network with your peers, and explore the ways you can use horticulture to make a difference in our environment to create a healthy planet, through healthy plants, for healthy people.

Register at: <http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/EMGConference2018.aspx>

# Growing Young Learners

Sandy Madsen, St Croix Valley Master Gardeners

Houlton Elementary, a rural school of 226 K-5 children, in the Hudson School District sought out Master Gardeners to lead a student-based gardening program. The principal emailed the St Croix Valley Master Gardener Association in search of a willing volunteer, and I responded. The school was already very conscious of environmental concerns and encouraged many sustainable activities. They were ready, willing and able to add more health and nutrition to their curriculum through gardening.

The program began in 2009 and grew slowly over the last 10 years. By creating additional learning experiences every year, the gardens now include a perennial flower garden, a 1-acre restored prairie, an 80' x 12' bed for corn, beans, squash, raspberries and asparagus, a 700sq ft rain garden, a butterfly garden and 5 raised beds for vegetables, fruits and seed trials. Just last year their dysfunctional, glass sunroom was replaced through generous grants. We now have a beautiful 12' x 20' greenhouse!

This program thrives because of unwavering support from every person in the school as well as the St Croix Valley Master Gardeners Association (SCVMGA). The Principal and her Administrative Assistant are on the front lines fighting for many things that promote our program, such as applying for grants and recruiting families to volunteer during the summer. There is unlimited support from the Custodians, who among many other activities, take a leadership role by assisting composting. The cafeteria Cooks inspire us by preparing and serving whatever we grow and harvest, for example, kale chips, roasted Brussels sprouts and pizza sauce, which are devoured by the students. The enthusiasm of the teachers and students often amazes each of the MG volunteers, as every student in every classroom is involved. The gardening curriculum often embellishes the academic curriculum. An example of this is the enrichment of the Native American Unit through planting a Three Sisters bed full of corn, beans and squash.

The SCVMGA supports the program both financially and physically. The Houlton gardening program has

received a SCVMGA grant every year since its inception. Also, many Master Gardener Volunteers come when needed. Like the day the Rain Garden was planted, when 10 Master Gardener Volunteers helped 40 Fifth Graders plant over 400 plants. There are a few dedicated Master Gardener Volunteers that lead the students each and every week during the growing season.

The school's gardening program has 5 components that all work together: 1)Composting- cafeteria scraps as well as garden refuse enhance composting, 2) Classroom planting projects- each of the 11 classrooms has two planting projects, one starting in the greenhouse and one outside, 3)Garden Club- each classroom sends three different students each week during noon recess for garden maintenance, 4)After School program- takes responsibility for the flower gardens, 5)Summer Family Volunteers- each week, one or two families assist with harvesting and maintenance.

Houlton Elementary School was designated as a 2017 US Department of Education Green Ribbon School. The school has a superior level of accomplishment in all of the required qualities for this recognition. The award is given to schools that reduce environmental impact, improve health and wellness and provide effective environmental and sustainability education. The entire school is committed to all of these behaviors, which are also used as the foundation of their gardening program.

It is truly a delightful and rewarding Master Gardener project



1st graders in the greenhouse

# Morning Glory Vines

## A Whole New World

Tammy Borden, Outagamie County Master Gardener



Grandpa Ott.  
Photo from rareseed.com

Is anything as cheery as a morning glory vine adorned with hundreds of flowers to greet you each morning? I've enjoyed growing these beauties for years and try different varieties; although the classic heirloom, Heavenly Blue, is hard to top with its large, clear sky blue blooms. Grandpa Ott, another classic, has slightly smaller flowers in an intense deep purple and a deep pink throat.

Another heirloom variety looks like tie-dyed silk. Flying Saucers truly is a stunner when you see its 4-5" flowers covering a trellis or arbor. My only beef is that it is a late bloomer — sometimes as late August or September before it shows its glory. Some

years that I've only had a couple weeks of blooms because of early frost.

I decided to search online this year to see if I could find earlier flowering varieties. I've never really explored morning glories before, just those available on a typical seed rack. Little did I know that my eyes would be opened to an entirely new world! I discovered hundreds of varieties in every size, form and color imaginable.

The best resource I found for all these varieties is a seller in Jacksonville, Florida. I stumbled across his website ([jmgvines.com](http://jmgvines.com)) and ordered six varieties to try this spring. I began corresponding with the seller, named Jerry, and learning more about this beautiful vine.

The typical seeds found in garden centers are the common *Ipomoea Purpurea*. The type I was drawn to is known for massive flowers, reaching to a whopping 5-7"! This class is known as *Ipomoea Nil*, and hail from Japan. I was also enticed by the slightly earlier bloom time and variegated foliage for several of them.

The Japanese have been instrumental since the 9<sup>th</sup> century in cultivating and breeding the many varieties available today. Their love of this beautiful flower is depicted in art and horticulture. Other plants in the morning glory family include Cypress vine, cardinal climber, moon flower—a night bloomer, among others.

Here are some tips that Jerry shared to get the best results and flower show possible.

Seeds could be mistaken for tiny hard black pebbles, making germination difficult. Use an emery board to scrape the outside coating of the seed. Then soak (just covered) in a solution of 50% hydrogen peroxide and 50% hot (not boiling) water for at least 24 hours. The seed will begin to swell and the casing will crack. Then plant!

You can direct sow in the garden or start them early in a soil-less mix. Plant the seeds 1" deep in peat pots or pellets as they resent having their roots disturbed. If planting directly in the soil, prepare the site by digging a nice size hole and replacing the soil with a general potting mix, especially with clay soil. Morning glories need well-drained soil. You also can plant a few plants in a large two gallon container with drainage holes. Seeds should germinate in 7-14 days, but mine sprouted even earlier because I used a seedling heat mat.

Morning glories love sun and, like many annuals, fertilization is key to getting maximum number of blooms. Water your vines with a "bloom booster" fertilizer every few weeks. Overfertilization causes more foliage than flowers. If going organic, you'll still get blooms, but likely not as many or as early. Don't let them dry out in between watering. I've found that the vines are very intolerant of colder temperatures. They will succumb quickly to any hint of frost, and struggle when temperatures are in the 30s or 40s. Placing them in a protected area can help prolong their bloom time.

If you haven't grown morning glories before, give them a try this year. There's still time to direct sow in early summer, but remember these growing tips.



# Book Review: Water in Plain Sight-Hope for a Thirsty World

Author: Judith D. Schwartz

Reviewed by Karen DesJarlais, Outagamie County Master Gardener

Well it looks like I'll have to stop buying almonds. And is it possible that we've had the old saying wrong all these years; could it be that April flowers bring May showers? Why the almond abstinence? Because California supplies 80% of the world's almonds with almond milk fueling the demand. The trees are water guzzlers and it turns out it takes a gallon of water for **each individual** nut.

All this and more surprises are in *Water in Plain Sight*. Through travels in the US and several continents, Schwartz explores premises for the desertification and the water shortages we hear about. What we have is a filtration crisis, she says, not a water shortage. We need to slow down the water to allow absorption and avoid runoff. How do we do this? Animals and more plants especially grasslands, are the major players.

Apparently beavers are not getting the credit they deserve for slowing down water and for helping build soil aggregates that improve absorption. Beavers' dam building is crucial for keeping water in the landscape because they "slow it, spread it and sink it." This in contrast to storm water in urban areas where the story is "pave it, pipe it, pollute it". Without soil aggregates, soil acts like flour when you wet it which is analogous to fast run-off during rain. Encouraging soil aggregates is why good quality compost is so important. Beaver life in two continents is a piece of the story which will surprise you as you read *Water in Plain Sight*.

Plants, forests especially, influence the water cycle. The transpiration of the plants contributes to condensation. Water in vapor form accounts for five times the water in all the earth's rivers. Considering how fast the major forests are being cut down for various reasons, this is concerning.

Schwartz talks with experienced people in the Holistic Land Management movement. Avoidance of chemicals in the soil is crucial because chemicals destroy the natural bacteria and fungi which produce the soil aggregates. One of the experts says that our understanding of the role of water and plants in landscape functioning is the equivalent of medicine before Pasteur.

We are putting way too much pressure on ground water by irrigating crops. Irrigation causes salinization of soil. The UN says that since 1800 when irrigation dawned, 20 per cent of the global farmland is unfarmable because of accumulated salts. Ten per cent of the world's food is produced by over pumping ground water. Another way to think about it is: today's food needs are met with tomorrow's water. We could be in a food bubble.

All the concepts mentioned so far are expanded and fascinating with examples of successful land reclamation from deserts to productive water absorbing acres. The author sees the hope in people not in technology when it comes to "filling the water bucket."

We are not at the mercy of what does or doesn't come down from the sky. Our focus should be on land health without chemicals. "Every piece of land offers a choice: restoration or deterioration. Even in harsh dry climates it is possible to have water in our pockets," according to the author. We don't have to approach the point of fighting wars over water.

Water is a human right. I'm glad that I never learned to like almond milk.

*All that in this delightful garden grows,  
Should happy be, and have immortal bliss  
Edmund Spencer*

## Book Review: Silent Sparks

Reviewed by Karen DesJarlais, Outagamie County Master Gardener

“Above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don’t believe in magic will never find it.” Roald Dahl

What better words to begin a book about fireflies than those from a man who can write a story about a magic peach?

Sara Lewis has lots of bright ideas about the wonders of fireflies in Silent Sparks. They are beetles whose outer wings are modified hard coverings to protect delicate flying wings. We have 120 species in North America and 2000 globally. Highest concentrations for us are in the American southeast.

Magical though they seem, the lights are a carefully orchestrated dance that turns chemical energy into light. Luminous beetles and other bioluminescent creatures include some fungi, earthworms, millipedes and fungus gnats. Many more light producing animals live in the ocean.

Luminous beetles shine in a rainbow of colors---red, orange, yellow and green. The colors change with a rearrangement in the amino acids in the enzyme luciferin. Quite a bit of chemistry in this section.

Not only are fireflies magical, they’re useful for improving public health, facilitating innovative research and advancing medical knowledge. You can read about the many ways they’ve done this.

Unfortunately, their usefulness might mean lights out for fireflies. Bounties for them gave kids and poor people a chance to earn some money. For 100 fireflies, the payment was 25 cents. Apparently at one time fireflies were abundant in Japan but from May to September in the early 1900’s, hunting became big business as collection shops sprung up. A skilled hunter could capture 3,000 in one night. After being removed from their native habitat, they were packaged and sent to cities to amuse visitors.

Japanese mountains, rivers, streams, marshlands and irrigated rice fields are ideal habitat. They like an environment where they can pupate for two years underground while they feast on earthworms, slugs, and other insects. They like moist leaf litter or a pond area. Once the larvae hatch, they only flash their lights as adults for about two weeks.

Lewis provides a 20 page field guide to help identify species by anatomy, maps out the wide areas for particular species, their life cycle and courtship rituals with male and female flashing codes. She goes into great detail, which she has accumulated in her many years of firefly study. For anyone but the determined researcher, it’s a little too much but she’s very clear about more causes of the serious decline in fireflies. Construction destroys their habitat and since fireflies may not move more than a few yards in their entire life, once their habitat is gone, they can never reclaim it. Construction also destroys the food source for firefly larvae. Pesticides do the same thing. In Malaysia, destruction of forests to plant palm trees is another habitat robber. Along one of the rivers a prime habitat, mangrove trees, were cut down clearing the riverbank to make way for shrimp aquaculture farms.

Light pollution is another problem because fireflies’ bioluminescent mating signals are drowned out by artificial lighting. The International Dark Sky Association estimates that 30% of all outdoor lighting in the U.S. is directed skyward where it’s useless. So we want to be sure that our outdoor lighting is pointed downward and shielded. Silent Sparks is a read you may want to get a look at if you enjoy being outside during our warm summer evenings. You can find the magic and illuminate your understanding at the same time.

Send your articles on projects or accomplishments to WIMGA Newsletter Committee Chair, Hali Dessecker at [halirenee@yahoo.com](mailto:halirenee@yahoo.com)



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## May 2018 Newsletter

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***The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association Newsletter*** is published 6 times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November) dedicated to providing horticulture education and information about the Master Gardener program to state association members. The newsletter is published in the Horticulture Department at the UW-Madison.

Articles, artwork and ideas are welcome, but final selection and editing are the responsibility of the editorial staff.

Visit the WIMGA Website at

<http://www.wimga.org/>

