

# 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 Gardener 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.

## JULY THOUGHTS

I am thankful for every Master Gardener who reads this newsletter! It's WIMGA's chief communication tool, but a one-sided message is not very effective. I've had emails from MGVs wondering about the State Conference this year...it was announced in the May newsletter that it was canceled for this year due to COVID-19. If you read about that, please make sure your fellow members have read their newsletter too.



Even though there's no conference, WIMGA is still required by its bylaws to hold an annual meeting. The Board will discuss how we will do that; an online format is a likely possibility. I am impressed with the amount of online learning that our Extension Educators are creating for us, and I am doubly wowed by the virtual meetings that you are organizing and holding! Technology is not my first language and my DSL internet connection at home is not great, so I am happy when I can participate without too many hiccups. We will consider those barriers, and we will also rely on our tech-savvy colleagues as we consider how to meet as a statewide group.

This fall will be the end of my third year as WIMGA president, the maximum allowed in the bylaws. Let's make sure all of our Local Representative and Board member positions are filled, and think about whose leadership skills could be used in advancing our organization. It's hard to predict the future, but if the stay-at-home experience has taught us anything, it's to order our priorities to accomplish what we must. I regret that my time as WIMGA President has been limited in the past few months, but taking care of my family has been my highest priority. The "extras" fit in when I can!

*Becky Gutzman*, WIMGA President

# WIMGA GRANT REPORTS

*Don't forget to send in your Grant Reports by July 31.  
Requests for a WIMGA Grant are due by October 1 each year.*

## Washington County Grants

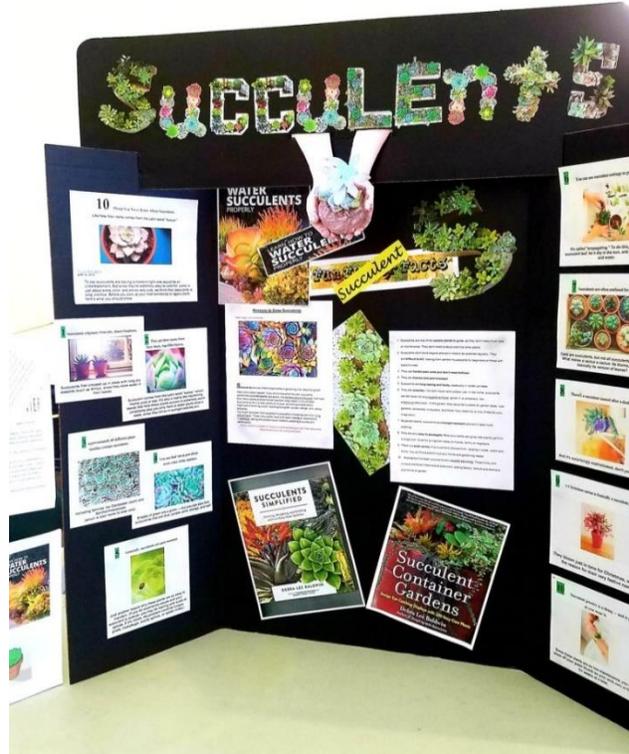
Sandy Vold & Sadie Zobel-WIMGA

Washington County Master Gardeners used their \$250 grant to purchase resource material and supplies for classes and projects at their county libraries.

They purchased plant materials and pots for a make and take class on succulents. The class was so successful, said master gardener, Vicky Hopp, that it was repeated five times, with 30 to 40 people attending each class. "The class was about taking care of succulents, but participants had other gardening questions as well, so we were able to deliver a lot of information about gardening," she said.

Unfortunately, a second set of classes scheduled for 2020 had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. They had scheduled two seminars on adaptive therapy, for which they had purchased tools and other supplies. Those classes will have to be offered at a later date.

Last fall Washington County Master Gardeners were also awarded a \$100 grant from WIMGA. The grant was used to purchase 60 metal signs for their gardens. The metal signs hold a 5x7 sheet of paper that has all of the plant information on it. The paper is laminated so the signs can be out in our gardens in all seasons. The size of the holder can list the following items: plant name, growth habit, sun/shade and a picture of the plant. The sign holders are placed in community gardens, Washington County Fair garden and a flower garden in Washington County. Thank you for the grant money.



## Barron County Spring Expo

Hali Dessecker-WIMGA

The Barron County Spring Expo is hosted by Master Gardener Volunteers yearly. The one-day program invites experts to speak on a variety of horticulture topics, usually with a focus on Western Wisconsin growing conditions. With the help of the \$400 WIMGA Educational Grant in 2019, we were able to offer this event without raising our fees. In addition, we did not need to use income from raffle sales and that money will be used to plan next year's Expo.

The Expo is one of the primary education endeavors for the BCMGVs and brings quality, scientific information to gardeners in the area. This year's speakers were: Mark



Dwyer, Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville, Wisconsin; Mike Racette, Farmer's Market and CSA Gardener from Prairie Farm, Wisconsin; and Tim Fehr, a Hybridizer of Daylilies and a member of the American Hemerocallis Society from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The session topics ranged from basic landscape design, vegetable growing in northern Wisconsin and daylily varieties to enhance gardens.

It was great to have such a variety of topics available for participants as well as several vendors on hand to sell gardening products. Our attendance was 139 and surveys for the event were overwhelmingly positive.

## **North Country – Kids in the Garden**

*Nancy Jahnel-Barnes-WIMGA*

With attendance doubling in 2019, their second year of operation for Kids in the Garden, North Country Master Gardeners applied for and received a \$400 educational grant.

The money was spent as follows: books, \$162.40; garden supplies, \$112.79; food, \$52.69; activities, \$71.18; Little Free Library, \$93.99. The decision to add the Little Free Library, said Roseann Meixelsperger, who sent in the report, “grew out of the Story Walk interest, and our goal to provide teachable moments outside of our sessions.”



## **Baraboo Seed Library – Sauk County**

*Submitted by Doreen Hamburg and Joan Wheeler*

### **Focus on Pollinators**

The Baraboo Seed Library designated 2019 as the Year of the Pollinator. Our program focus was to bring pollinators into local gardens by introducing ornamental flowers. Although we had some edible flower seeds already in our Seed Library, we now were adding to them ornamental flower seeds. Our grant money was used to purchase ornamental flower seeds for the seed library.

We hosted a series of three programs and had a good turnout for each presentation. Our program focus was on pollinators (bees and butterflies, etc.) and how to encourage



bringing them into your yard, how to get them to stay with proper habitat, and counting pollinators and reporting as part of the Great Sunflower Project. The Great Sunflower Project is a worldwide citizen science project directed by Gretchen LeBuhn of San Francisco University. It is specifically designed to evaluate the effects of landscape change on pollinator service in North America and to provide tools for participants to take conservation actions. As the season began, we distributed a Seed Library brochure and used library social media to convey to the public information about the Sunflower Project and our programs. At the Pollinators Count program, we introduced our audience members to The Great

Sunflower Project, explained what they needed to do to participate, showed them how to use the website, and passed out an informational handout and one packet of sunflower seeds to each member for planting in their garden.

As the growing season progresses, we will be checking The Great Sunflower Project website to see if pollinator data from this geographic area appears, which we will interpret as progress made in alerting local residents to the plight of the pollinator, and encouraging some residents to participate in the project.

### **Seed Library Activity**

We had a lot of activity from the community for checking out seeds from the Baraboo Seed Library. As of July 22, 2019, 35 unduplicated individuals checked out seed packets from the Seed Library, with 372 seed packets checked out. The average number of seed packets checked out per person was 10.62. Between January 16, 2019 and July 18, 2019, Seed Library patrons checked out 92 flower seed packets; 21 fruit seed packets; 60 herb seed packets; and 199 vegetable seed packets.

We are aware that a certain number of residents avoid the “checkout” process, which consists of the Seed Library participant completing and turning in a registration form. We would like to adjust the placement of the Seed Library and the checkout procedure to maintain more control over the seed inventory.

### **Seed Saving and Sharing**

The donation of seeds back to the Seed Library has been slower than we would like. Past seasons have yielded only a few packets of returned seeds. The idea of saving seeds to donate back to the library is a practice which most people today are unfamiliar with. Perhaps the presence of commercial seeds that are readily available for purchase each spring is a big deterrent to sharing seeds. People associate the racks of colorful seed packets in their nearby big box store with spring’s arrival, and don’t think of taking the time to harvest and prepare seeds for saving or sharing. Nevertheless, we are hopeful that at least some of the Seed Library participants will return harvested seeds to the library.

## If You Can't Beat 'em, Eat 'em: The World of Entomophagy

*(Warning: If you are allergic to shellfish, please skip this article...same issues apply to certain "bugs")*

*By: Cheryl Frazier, Crawford County Master Gardeners*

Arthropods (insects, spiders or crustaceans) have been part of the food chain for humans since the first hominid swallowed a bug. Research has shown that our ancestors, from 1.7 million years ago, developed bone tools for digging in termite mounds and stripping bark from trees to get at grubs. These tools bear a resemblance to tools used today for the same purpose.

More recent consumption (last 10,000 years) began in the lower temperate zones into the tropics. Insects, as a food source, were more readily available year-round and easily harvested vs. something larger, that might bite, kick or trample one into the ground. Since the upper regions of the temperate zone were seasonal and insect activity was limited to the



warmer months, people in northern climates did not harvest insects on a regular basis. Rarely did insects make it to the dining tables of northern Europeans, though I have had chocolate covered in ants in Paris. In fact, early European explorers to the Americas considered the consumption of insects to be a nasty practice of the indigenous peoples and used this as another reason for their "us" and "them" differentiation.

In more modern days (now), regions of southern Mexico consume more insect species than any other country-primarily grasshoppers. The hoppy bugs are purported to be (after cooking) crunchy, with a nutty flavor and great in tacos. Another favorite is freshly boiled termites-tastes like popcorn with a slightly lemony flavor from their acidic defense system. Another delicacy of southern Mexico is the caterpillar of the Giant Skipper butterfly. The butterfly lays its eggs on the maguey (agave) plant. Agave (think "tequila") farmers harvest the caterpillars and sell them fresh to the local markets. They can also be found in cans on the shelves of local grocery stores. This is another favorite taco filling, served with a little lime and a spicy sauce.

Various groups in Africa collect locusts in the early morning. They are then cleaned, boiled and salted before sold in local markets. The legs are usually removed (tough to chew) and then dried, ground up and added to peanut butter for extra protein. Rice farmers in South Korea also collect grasshoppers to supplement their income.

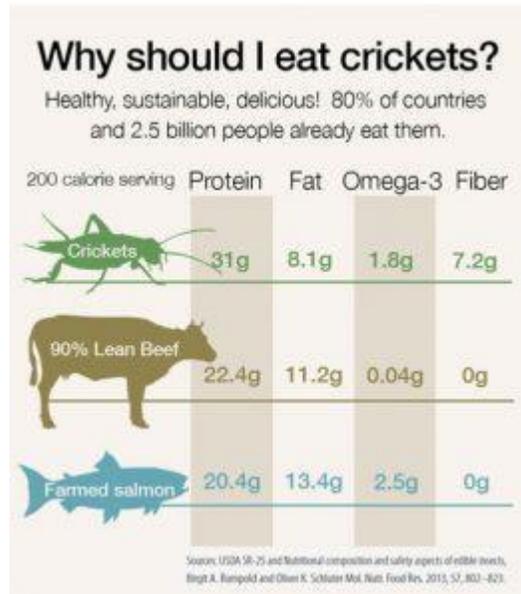
In Australia and Africa, large termite mounds are common and a source of protein for local societies. Termites also have a higher level of fat that enhances their calorie value, the queens being the largest and most desirable. Typically, termites are lightly fried, salted and eaten like peanuts. They are also a source of cooking oil.

“Fly burgers” are a regional sensation in the Lake Malawi region of Africa. The lake flies lay their eggs over water. The eggs drop to the bottom of the lake and remain there until the larvae are ready to hatch into flies, which they seem to do all at one time. The phenomenon creates rising clouds of insects that look like towering columns of smoke over the lake. Locals wait on the shore for local breezes to blow the insect clouds in their direction so they can be caught in large nets. The flies are then compressed into patties and cooked like a burger, with seven times more nutrition than the average beef burger. Just an fyi, it takes 500,000 flies to make a “burger”.

In 2013, the United Nations released a report listing 1,900 edible insect species, hundreds of which are already in use. Roughly 2 billion people regularly consume insects. Those most often eaten are: beetles, butterfly/moths in larval and pupal stages, bees/wasps also in larval and pupal stages, ants, grasshoppers, crickets, locusts, flies, mosquitos, water boatmen/backswimmers (for their eggs) and stinkbugs. Some cultures also add spiders and scorpions to the list. Countries, by bug cuisine:

- Africa – 36 species
- Americas – 23 species
- Asia – 29 species
- Europe – 11 species

There are multiple benefits to insects as a food source. Insects, by weight, provide more protein with less fat per pound. Compared to livestock, they are more efficient in converting food to protein and require less land to raise a crop. If we can get past the “ick” factor, insect protein is also less expensive than our more traditional sources. And, a real PLUS, considerably lower greenhouse gasses! (some bugs do fart, but they’re little, tiny ones).



We’re not going to delve into the realm of arachnids (spiders/scorpions) and terrestrial gastropods (slugs/snails), though they do show up on menus in various regions. It’s more of an “ick” factor than I can overcome. Personally, I took a pass on the deep-fried scorpions served at a popular restaurant in Beijing. Also, some gastropods carry a lungworm and require special handling.

Keeping that in mind, here are some critters we find in our midwestern gardens:

**Ants:** most ants and larvae are edible (avoid fire ants or anything similar). The easiest way to harvest is to poke a stick into an ant hill, wait for the crowd and brush them off into a container. Freeze to kill and roast them in the oven at 225 degrees until dry. After roasting, lightly salt them. They will have a slightly sour flavor. Now you can make “ants on a log” with real ants! (From: David George Gordon, Chef-de-Cuisine, Explorer’s Club, NY, author of “Eat-A-Bug Cookbook”)



**Crickets/Grasshoppers:** To trap, dig a hole in the ground for a large mason jar, bury up to neck and add a few slices of apple, carrot or stale beer to the jar. Leave out overnight and harvest critters in the morning. Freeze to kill and spread on baking sheet to dry in oven at 200 degrees for 1-2 hours, or until crunchy. Remove legs and pan fry in a little oil. Salt and snack. Add a little chili powder for

some zip. Can also be added to salads, soups and stews.

**Aphids:** Depending on which one of your plants they're eating, they can be sweet or bitter. Harvest and sprinkle (alive) on salads or use a garnish on soup.

**Sowbugs** (pill bugs): found under anything that's been sitting on the ground for a while (rocks, wood, thick brush). Harvest, boil to kill and sterilize. Lightly toast in a frying pan with a little butter. Supposedly, flavor is similar to shrimp. Add to soups, stews or salads.

**Earwigs:** To catch, same as crickets...just use a little stale beer. Next morning, strain out catch and lightly toast in frying pan until crispy. Lightly salt for a snack or add to soups/stews.



Now, for a treat:

#### **Salted Chocolate Pistachio Grasshoppers**

- 1 oz good quality dark chocolate
- 50 dried grasshoppers
- ½ cup crushed pistachios
- A couple of pinches of sea salt

Line baking sheet with waxed paper. Melt chocolate in double boiler or microwave. Remove legs from grasshoppers and drop by 2s or 3s into chocolate, using 2 forks to turn them over to coat. Drop onto waxed paper one by one and sprinkle with pistachios and a few grains of salt. Let cool and set before serving.

(The Hedge-Combers – Janie Hedgecomber, Cornwall, UK)

**Bon appetite!**

#### **Sources:**

NPR: Interview with Julie Lesnik, Asst Professor of Anthropology, Wayne State University – 7/16/2018  
Smithsonian Institute, Department of Systematic Biology, Entomology Div. Info Sheet #92-5/99  
National Geographic, U.N Encourages Eating

Insects, 8 Popular Bugs to Try, Jennifer S. Holland – 5/14/2013

GRIT Magazine, article by Mike Olsen, author of “Unlearn, Rewild” – May/June 2020

Cricketcare.org – recipes and nutrition

# Common Tomato Problems

By: Sadie Zobel-WIMGA

Tomatoes are a popular vegetable grown in home gardens and it is usually the topic I get asked most about when I'm working with the public. The questions usually start with "What's wrong with my tomatoes?" I've also heard more anecdotal advice and practices shared about tomatoes than any other vegetable. While some swear by these practices, it's critical to remember that our job as Master Gardeners is to share scientifically-based research and information with the public.

Below are some common troubles that impact tomatoes.

## Preventing Disease

The best way to deal with disease is to prevent it! Use resistant cultivars when possible. A vigorous well-cared-for plant is better able to withstand disease and insects better than a neglected one. Space your plants so that air can freely circulate and don't water foliage in the evening. Don't compost diseased plant material – get rid of it by burying, burning, or disposing.

## Blossom End Rot

Blossom end rot is commonly seen in tomatoes. It results from irregular or insufficient watering and/or calcium deficiency in the soil. It can be reduced by providing an even supply of moisture with controlled irrigation. One inch of water per 5 to 7 days from rain or irrigation is appropriate for most tomatoes grown in Wisconsin. Avoid frequent, light waterings. You should also avoid excessive use of nitrogen fertilizer, especially when the plant is fruiting. And, lastly, for next season, avoid planting in compact soil, which can interfere with normal root development and water uptake during dry periods.



*The tops of the fruit become soaked with water, turn light brown, and become sunken as the fruits enlarge and start to ripen.*

## Early Blight

Early blight spores survive on old plant debris or in the soil. It is best controlled using preventative measures. Destroy infested plants by burning or burying them. Rotate vegetables to different parts of your garden each year to avoid areas of infested debris. Use early blight-resistant vegetable varieties. Increase spacing between plants to increase airflow and decrease humidity and foliage drying time. Finally, where the disease has been a chronic problem, use of preventative applications of a copper or chlorothalonil-containing fungicide labeled for use on vegetables may be warranted.



*The appearance of circular or irregular dark spots on the lower, more mature leaves is one of the first symptoms of infection.*

## Late Blight

Late blight is caused by a fungus-like water mold. It impacts tomatoes and potatoes and makes fruits inedible. Plants showing late blight cannot be saved and should be disposed of immediately to prevent the spread to other plants. Consider planting tomatoes varieties with late blight resistance. Fungicides can be used to reduce the impact of late blight, but must be made prior to the onset of the disease or they will be ineffective.



## What's Eating My Tomatoes?

Hornworms can do significant damage in a home garden. They can devour up to four times their weight in leaves and fruit each day.



You can easily identify hornworms by their blue-green color and large size.

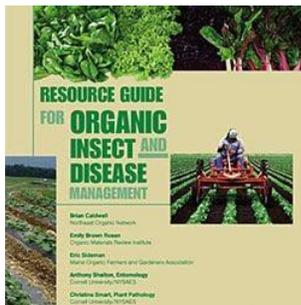
(Personally, I've had a tomato plant nearly decimated over the course of only a few days!) When fully grown, hornworm caterpillars can be up to four inches in length and easily seen. However, smaller hornworms, due to their color, tend to blend in with plant leaves and can be difficult to detect. In this case, frequently monitor tomatoes from early July through August, and hand pick the larvae from plants as needed. Till the soil after harvest to destroy any burrowing larvae. Tillage can kill up to 90% of larvae in the soil.

## For More Information

This really is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to tomatoes. I'm sure you can easily add 10 more commonly asked questions. The following articles were referenced and contain more detailed information.

- *Home-grown tomatoes for Wisconsin: UW Extension bulletin A1691*
- *Growing vegetables at home: UW Extension bulletin A2801*
- *Late Blight: UW Extension bulletin A3422, XHT1195*
- *Early Blight: UW Extension bulletin XHT1074*
- *Hornworms: UW Extension bulletin XHT1107*

## The Lowdown on Organic Sprays



Organic pest controls are very popular with vegetable gardeners trying to avoid excessive pest damage and also have less impact on the environment. However, detailed information about the organic pest control sprays available can be hard to find. Now a new resource guide from Cornell University will help organic gardeners and farmers decide on which sprays to use for various pests and diseases, and determine how safe they really are. The Resource Guide for Organic Insects and Disease Management, (Cornell University Press, 2007; \$15) features detailed information on various vegetable crops and the organic sprays registered for use on them.

The first section provides cultural information and management practices for a number of important vegetable crop groups, such as brassicas, cucurbits, and solanaceous crops. For each family, key pests and disease problems are described, as well as control techniques. The second section has fact sheets about specific sprays to be used, such as spinosad, neem, and copper. Not only are the materials and the insects and diseases they control explained, their impact on human health and the environment is also discussed. A third section explains other pest control methods, such as planting resistant varieties and trap cropping, and lists additional resources for growers.

## TRANSFORM DRIED PLANT MATERIALS INTO BOUQUETS

*By Sandy Vold, Crawford County MGV*

Do things get a little dull after that first killing frost and fall cleanup? Does that feeling of relief from planting and weeding and harvesting start to wear off? If so, consider putting together a few dried arrangements fashioned from your own flowerbeds and the dried weeds that seem to flourish in old fields and along roadsides. Better yet, consider sharing it at some fall community event in which your MG group participates.

I started doing this with my grandchildren when we first moved here and they came to visit in October and I needed something to entertain them. We live on around 35 acres



of former pasture land and fields. We collected masses of dried Queen Anne's Lace, Goldenrod, mullein stalks, dried milkweed pods, bunches of red sumac berries, round brown button centers from wild monarda, and armfuls of various grasses with attractive seed heads. We left most of them in their natural color, but since tones of beige and brown and rusty red do not have a lot of variety, we spray painted some of them, particularly the Queen Anne's Lace and the mullein, tinting those with gold and silver paint. Each child could make his or her own dried bouquet from these materials.

The following year, our Master Gardener group in Crawford County started participating in Oktoberfest in Prairie du Chien, concentrating on nature-related crafts for children. We decided to add dried bouquets as one of the crafts, so we all collected dried plant materials from the wild or from our own gardens. Most are left their nature color, but a few spray-painted materials in a variety of colors add contrast. Children can come and select the plant materials they want for their bouquets, and we put the bouquet together, trim the ends, and tie it with raffia. We've been doing this now for several years, and it has become one of the most popular activities there. As a matter of fact, about a third of our "customers" (there's no charge for any of the crafts) are adults, and most MGs take home their own dried bouquets at the end of the day.



I included a list of potential plants to use, but I'm sure there are many more that can be added. Some of these, such as goldenrod, are best sprayed with hair spray to keep them from shedding. Some of these plants have short stems and are best suited for small bouquets or wreaths. (A word of caution: in choosing wild plant materials, avoid picking invasive plants such as teasel, as simply picking and moving them can scatter seeds which will produce more invasive plants.)

NEXT ISSUE: Making Easy Dried Wreaths

### FROM THE WILD

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. bittersweet  | 9. seed heads from monarda (bee balm)                                   |
| 2. native grasses   | 10 tree leaves  |
| 3. Queen Anne's lace  | 11 sumac berries  |
| 4. mullein  | 12 cattails (heavily sprayed so they don't "bloom" all over your house) |
| 5. milkweed pods (let them dry, empty out the seeds for starting new milkweed plants) | 13 pine cones   |
| 6. wild senna-stems with pods   | 14 dock   |
| 7. berries from multiflora rose—the ones that escaped your efforts to eradicate it    | 15 locust tree pods   |
| 8. goldenrod  | 16 yarrow   |

### FROM YOUR GARDEN

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. seed heads from Siberian Iris    | 11 chinese lanterns          |
| 2. astilbe blooms                   | 12 money tree plant          |
| 3. hydrangea blooms                 | 13 baby's breath             |
| 4. gomphrena and other strawflowers | 14 bachelor's button         |
| 5. curly willow                     | 15 black-eyed susan (center) |
| 6. sorghum heads                    | 16 cockscomb                 |
| 7. mini Indian corn                 | 17 liatris                   |
| 8. ornamental grasses               | 18 yarrow                    |
| 9. rose hips                        | 19 dried clematis seed heads |
| 10 seed stalks from yucca           | 20 seed stalks from ferns    |

### NJ'S BITS AND BOBS:

I read a lot of gardening articles, especially when it is too hot for me to be outside. I came across this and thought I'd share it. Enjoy.

#### **I recently read about the most adventurous man in the world.**

He planned and hoped and dreamed for years to climb the highest peaks on each continent and sail the seven seas. He traveled the globe and sailed around the world and faced hardships and challenges and snow and ice and raging waters, but eventually he climbed that last mountain and sailed that last sea.

It is an incredible accomplishment.  
One requiring great fortitude and extreme endurance.  
I know.  
I think I understand.

Because that's exactly how I felt this week....  
....when my hydrangea finally bloomed. Thanks to Karianne of Thistlewood Farms.

## NUTS

I was thinking about how we all get suggestions from many so called 'gardening expert' writers and I know that I sometimes shake my head at the nonsense in some of the articles. Things I follow and often mutter when I am in the garden centers shopping for plants. People around me, stop and look at me . . . I mutter: 'nuts' or 'wrong zone', invasive, etc. The 'nuts' I refer to is from an article I read some time ago by David Beaulieu. He articulated my thoughts so well.

What is the NUTS rule? **NUTS** stands for Noxious, Unstable, Troublesome, Spreading. "**Noxious**" means that the plant in question can have an adverse impact on one's health. Some plants cause rashes, others are toxic if ingested, while still others are the bane of allergy sufferers. The plants that are "**unstable**" are those that at first seem robust enough to the newbie but then prove themselves to be surprisingly susceptible to storm damage. This category is primarily reserved for trees and shrubs. Plants subject to the charge of being "**troublesome**" require a lot of work as they are messy or require constant maintenance. Finally, there are the plants guilty of "**spreading**". Not that spreading is always a bad thing - sometimes, we really do want to have a plant spread. But the plants in this final category are those that spread against our wishes. – NJ

We love your WIMGA projects, horticulture articles or Grant ideas. **Send us your stories and pictures.** Some things to note about your WIMGA projects: the number of volunteers and hours spent, contribution to the community whether in education or with place-making and collaboration with UW-Extension. **Articles and ideas for the Newsletter may be submitted to our editors,** Nancy Jahnel-Barnes at [westcoasternancy@gmail.com](mailto:westcoasternancy@gmail.com) or Hali Dessecker at [halirenee@yahoo.com](mailto:halirenee@yahoo.com).

July 2020 Newsletter

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#### The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association

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