

WIMGA



September 2023

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 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 University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Horticulture, Division of Extension Master Gardener Program's educational role to the public.

September Updates

Marilyn Gorham, St Croix Valley MGV

A hint of fall is in the air, the warblers are beginning their journey south and our gardens are slowing down. It's been a difficult gardening year, but we've made it through another season. Hopefully, winter comes quietly and gently this year – we earned it.



The end of our 2023 WIMGA activity is also nearing, but there are still educational opportunities, a meeting of the Local Association Presidents and a membership meeting to discuss a proposed change to the WIMGA bylaws. Since the end of our year is now December 31, matching the reporting year for the Program Office, our Annual Meeting will be held by ZOOM on **January 16, 2024**.

In October, we will hold a meeting of our members to review and vote on a proposed bylaw change. The bylaws currently require that District Directors be selected from the current local association representatives for each district. This means a District Director could be serving as an officer within their Local Association, as a WIMGA Local Representative and as a District Director all at the same time. The proposed amendment would allow nominations to come from among other District WIMGA members - if a district is unable to find a willing candidate among representatives. Look for a September email regarding a meeting to review and vote.

Please be sure to read your Volunteer Vibe to stay current on changes in the Program for 2024. Enjoy the beauty of Fall – the snow will fly again soon!

Marilyn Gorham, WIMGA President

2023 Continuing Education Updates

In September, the Continuing Education Committee will restart their educational series with **Matt Wallrath** of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the Wisconsin First



Detector Network Coordinator and invasive species expert. We will discuss invasive organisms spreading near you. The current edition of state laws and trends will be presented, as well as tools for identification and reporting invasives. Bring an open mind and questions!

The education series will continue in October with **Susan Carpenter**, Native Plant Garden Curator and Gardener at the University of Wisconsin–Madison Arboretum. She works with students and community volunteers to maintain and monitor a 4-acre garden representing the plant communities of southern Wisconsin. She also supports students and the public in documenting native bumble bees, including the endangered rusty-patched bumble bee.



Susan’s presentation “**Stream and Savanna: Restoration in Progress**” will describe projects, lessons, and challenges of managing/restoring a diverse Driftless Landscape.

The committee is working on additional seminars for early 2024, including **Craig LeHoullier** for our Annual Meeting in January.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| September 27, 6:30pm | Matt Wallrath,
Wisconsin First Detector Network Coordinator
Invasive Species |
| October 26, 6:30pm | Dr. Susan Carpenter, Restoring Native Prairie
Stream & Savanna: Restoration in Progress |
| January 16, 2024 | Craig LeHoullier, Bring Your Garden to the Sun:
All About Container and Straw Bale Gardening |

We always check to see if speakers are willing to have a recording of their talk on the website for a short time for members who cannot listen live (not all are willing).

WIMGA Educational Grants

By Roseann Meixelsperger, WIMGA Treasurer

One of the WIMGA membership benefits is our Educational Grants. To aid in your efforts of community education, WIMGA awards several grants annually to MG Associations. The grant application forms for each of the three levels of funding (\$100, \$250, and \$400) and WIMGA educational grant criteria are on the WIMGA website at <https://www.wimga.org/grants-1>. This is a great opportunity for your Association to get some funding from WIMGA to help make your projects become a reality.

Some examples of how Associations are using the funds:

- Help with Speaker fees for educational topics
- Childrens garden needs
- Educational seminars and conferences
- Seed starter kits
- Senior garden resources such as elevated planters
- Seed saving reference books
- And many other great educational projects have been awarded funds.

Applications for each of the three levels of funding (\$100, \$250 or \$400) are due by October 1st (postmark date). Electronic submissions are recommended. Please e-mail your grant application(s) to treasurer.wimga@gmail.com

WE GROW Garden

*Jefferson County 2022 \$400 WIMGA Educational Grant
Article and Photos By Diane Kachel, Jefferson MGV*

The WE GROW garden was established in 2011 to teach the After School Club students about gardening, which has transitioned into an after-school club specific to the school garden, Green Thumbs Garden Club. The school garden is also utilized during school hours in the fall and spring by two first grade classes, one second grade class, two fourth grade classes, and the special education students. The summer school classes also use the school garden.

The 21 raised garden beds have been constructed of wood, with five of them that were constructed out of usable 17-year-old cedar deck boards. These five beds were built in 2015 and have served their purpose for seven years but were starting to show their age.



The original grant request was created using pricing for red cedar boards and corner brackets from local businesses. After receiving the grant, I approached the high school shop class instructor, Eric Rucks, to see if he had a class that would be interested in constructing the garden beds. Luckily, he did, but asked us if we would consider changing the materials to a more durable plastic lumber, which is food safe based on the safety data sheet. Of course, this resulted in the bottom line increasing significantly!

The elementary school principal, Mike Howard, was in the loop with the project and said he would take this to the PTO for consideration of donating the remaining amount for the garden beds. Because the school garden is an important feature to the school, plus all staff and students have access to it, the PTO decided to approve donating the remaining amount to get the new garden beds.



The materials were purchased, the construction shop class then came to the school garden and constructed the five garden beds in time for us to plant. We are fortunate to have a great partnership with the school district so projects like this can be used for more than one educational experience.

The new garden beds will provide a place for children to plant and learn for years to come. Thank you for providing us with this grant to help make it happen.



Day in the Garden—2023 Explained in Three Quotes

By Beth Howman-Combs, Fond du Lac MGV

The Fond du Lac County Master Gardeners have sponsored a spring garden seminar, “**Day in the Garden**” annually since 2000. In 2020, plans were made; speakers were set, venue was reserved, and contracts were signed. Then COVID arrived and we were cancelled. *“Life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans.” J. Lennon*

This spring we were able to once again host “A Day in the Garden” in person for the first time since 2020.

There were many changes that occurred since our previous “Day in the Garden”. The cost of our long-standing host venue increased over 25%, speakers now seemed to prefer “zooms”, and Extension support was non-existent. This led us to the question: “would people attend an all-day in person event?” In discussions, a committee member suggested a smaller venue, and decreasing the length of “A Day in the Garden” to half a day. *“There’s nothing permanent except change” Heraclitus*

A search for a new venue began. Fortunately, our Master Gardener group already had a relationship with the Fond du Lac Public Library. One of our long-standing activities is creating seasonal containers with corresponding information for the library. In discussion with the library, we learned they had a space we could use, and they were very happy to host a spring gardening seminar.

We entered into an affiliated partnership with the library. The benefits for our group included the library handling the advertising, publicity and registration for “A Day in the Garden”. However, due to library policies, we would not be able to charge admission to our seminar. *“If you have a book and a garden you have all you need.” Cicero*

Our revised Day in the Garden was held Saturday April 1. While the venue was smaller, it was full to capacity at just under 100 attendees. Our speakers for the day were Marilyn Cech and Ann Loper from SEW Master Gardeners, and Kathy Baum from Outagamie County Master Gardeners. Marilyn and Ann presented “Gardening for Life” and Kathy presented “New & Underused Perennials”. The speakers were engaging, and entertaining, as well as educational. Attendees learned what tools we should buy, tips for good garden posture, and why we should always carry a cell phone when we garden. We also discovered an abundance of new perennials, and many underutilized ones that we should try.

At the conclusion of Day in the Garden, attendees stated they appreciated that they had the rest of the day to do things. (Such as look for new tools!)

Our WIMGA grant supported “Day in the Garden” in numerous ways. First, it made the seminar possible! The grant covered speaker honorariums. It also covered the cost of supplies such as refreshments, and door prizes to complement the day. “Day in the Garden” provides attendees with gardening education. It also enables MG members to earn support service hours. The grant enhanced “Day in the Garden” by helping us to again create and produce a seminar people want to continue to come back to. A sincere “thank you” to WIMGA for providing us with the grant.



Joy: Gardening and Volunteering Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum

Article and photo by Lynn Eby, NCWMGA MGV

The Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum (LYWAM) is located in the heart of Wausau and is known for its internationally acclaimed **Birds in Art** exhibition which was launched in 1976.

On any given Friday morning from May through October, you will find several Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) knee-deep in dirt and plants at the LYWAM. Our dedicated volunteers brave heat, cold, sun, mosquitos, and rain in cooperation with the grounds managers to keep the LYWAM gardens at their best. The volunteers used their knowledge and creativity to plan the designs of the seven gardens that surround the museum.



The fun begins in the Spring with selecting plants, digging and planting, Once Spring gives way to Summer, the fun continues with weekly weeding, watering, and maintaining the beds. In Fall, we shift into cleanup mode and start planning for the following Spring. There is always a big dose of joy and camaraderie.

The wonderful staff at the museum appreciate our work and financially support the gardens. We are delighted as visitors stop to compliment us on how beautiful the gardens are. The gardens provide a beautiful entrance to the iconic museum, and we are proud of the small part we play in the beauty of this special art museum.



*If you give a weed an inch,
it will take a yard.*

*Did you ever wonder what kind of
socks gardeners wear?
They wear garden hose!*



Back: Lynn Eby, Jane Blick, Jim King, Linda Peterson,
Barb Harness Front: Gloria Ziolkowski, Lois Joswick,
Marilyn Benz
Not pictured is Volunteer Kelly Crum.



Mosquitos in Wisconsin

by: Donna Mae Stohlmann, St Croix Valley MGV

HOW MANY MOSQUITOE BITES HAVE YOU HAD THIS SEASON?

HOW MANY MOSQUITOES HAVE YOU KILLED?

I am sure YOU are not alone this year. Let's see why we hate these little blood-sucking insects and how to try to prevent them next year. There are 56 known species of mosquitoes that live in Wisconsin. Many of these are never found biting people. Some prefer birds or amphibians. Mosquito season runs from about May to September. Some go through winter as larvae or pupae and some even spend the winter in tree bark. If your area is unusually wet, it will almost certainly mean more bugs. Mosquitoes also stop breeding in cooler and drier conditions, and most species either die off or hibernate until spring. While the Midwest and East are tracking warm and damp, November marks the end of mosquito season in most regions.

<https://mosquitosite.russell.wisc.edu>

Louisiana is the most mosquito-prone state. The Bayou State's hot and humid summers provide the perfect breeding ground for these pesky insects. If you want to move because of mosquitos, move to Antarctica or Iceland. The conditions in Antarctica are not fit for mosquitoes, as there is not enough food, places to burrow, or warm conditions for flying. Iceland is the only nation with no mosquitoes. Some experts believe that the oceanic climate of Iceland keeps mosquitoes away. Seasonal variations in rain and temperature can affect mosquito populations. As Wisconsin gets warmer due to climate change, we can expect our summers to trend toward being more and more mosquito-filled, and more chances for people to catch mosquito-related diseases.



Bug, Insect and Tick Protection

James King, North Central MGV



The risks of disease from insect and tick bites is increasing yearly and the number of diseases are also increasing. There are as many as 15 to 20 different diseases possible from mosquito, tick and other biting bugs. Wherever there is water, there are likely to be mosquitoes and wherever there are deer, or to a lesser extent, rodents, and tall grasses there are likely to be ticks. According to an article in the AARP Bulletin, many Lyme disease bites occurred in people's own backyards.

Gardeners, farm workers, backcountry hikers, rangers and others who labor outside are likely at a much higher risk. You will want to protect yourself from potential disease. Let's assume that you need to be in the environment of mosquitoes, ticks and other biting bugs. While ticks are most active during the late spring and the early summer, evidence is now available to indicate that ticks are somewhat active all year, given the right conditions. This has to do with the warming planet. If you have a dog, you also have to be aware of the possibility of a host transfer by the tick. That is, from the dog to you. Dogs are tick magnets. You will need to protect them as well as yourself. Work with your veterinarian to protect your dog and yourself.

There are multiple ways to protect yourself if you work in gardens: good garden designs, good fitting clothes and barriers, and the application of repellents.

Good garden designs are helpful in maintaining a distance between you and the biting bug populations. Gardens should be well drained to keep mosquitoes at bay. They should have no standing water for any extended period of time. A grass border around any garden should be trimmed and maintained throughout the spring, summer and into fall so that ticks have no place to hide. Ticks love tall grasses. Flower and vegetable gardens should be away from any tall grasses by 9-10 feet (3 meters) or more. If you have vegetable gardens, then think about placing a fence around it to keep deer from coming through and potentially dropping ticks as they go.

Lawn recommendation for a well-kept yard is to cut grass to 3 inches nominal, knowing that some grasses need a slightly different height, and not allowed to grow beyond 4 ½" before being cut again to the 3" nominal. (Cut no more than 1/3 of it, at a time.) If you are going to work in a garden, then cut the grass around it as a first step. Make sure to blow the grass and ticks away from the garden area you intend to work in.

Good fitting clothes should not have gaps where mosquitoes or ticks can enter. Cover up or maintain a barrier, as much as possible. Always tuck your shirt into your trousers. Over-the-calf socks, long tight-knit work trousers and a long sleeved tight-knit shirt will help. If you are working in taller grasses, then insert your trousers into your socks or tape them off at the ankles. Wearing leather work gloves and shoes to provide less or no penetration of repellent. The sprayed shoes allow you to walk around on the unprotected ground when you are moving from workplace to workplace. In an extreme environment, you may want to have a mosquito netting to protect your face, head and neck. Ground barrier covers like tarpaulins maintains another barrier between the ticks and you. The tarpaulin should be sized for the job. A smaller one when you use it to kneel on and a larger one when you have to lie on the grass.

There are a number of repellents available, and the better ones are listed here. There are four things you will want to concentrate on for choosing a repellent - performance, reliability, cost, and safety. Aerosols are easy to use and should be applied outside. They can be applied without getting on your skin or hands. Do not spray them where you or someone else could inhale the aerosol or get it in their eyes.



Most of these repellents are a blend of chemicals. The blend is used:

- 1) to extend the time the repellent is active,
- 2) to enhance the ability of the chemistry to drive the insect and ticks away and
- 3) to allow the repellent to be sprayed more evenly over the surfaces.

In general, the repellent percentage is the most controlling factor in keeping us bite free. For the repellent, DEET, you want to look for a percentage of 25% to 30%. For the repellent, PICARIDIN, you will want a percentage of 20%. For the repellent, OIL of LEMON EUCALYPTUS (OLE), you will want a percentage of 30%. (*Tested by Consumer Reports—August of 2022*). Some of the DEET products have the best performance in the CR tests. They performed well for up to five hours of time. For reliability, the DEET product has been available for 60 years. It has had maybe one incident per 10 million users. This does not mean that next year, we potentially might have some issues because these companies are always searching for ways to improve their products and may miss something in their testing before a new product release. Remember these products are all blends of chemicals and even though the main ingredient may be acceptable, there is always the potential for other chemicals in the mix to bring on a new ailment.

If there is a small chance of mosquitos or ticks then apply the repellent only to your shoes, trousers below the knee and to your gloves and shirt sleeves. Leave gloves and shoes at the door, ready for next time. If you are working out in the tall grasses then you may want to apply the repellent freely all over except your face, head and neck. **Getting repellent in your eyes may require a hospital visit.** Mosquito netting can be used to protect your face, head and neck. Also remember to not touch your face, head, or neck while working in the garden.

When you are done working it is recommended you shower immediately. The quick showering can remove most of the ticks. Do a thorough tick check after showering. Remember, quick tick removal can prevent transmission of disease.



Garden Art or Garden Pest?



Looking for volunteer hours that you can do at home? WIMGA is looking for newsletter editors, website assistance and photographers. We welcome your 'snaps' and articles for our newsletter and website.

For more information contact **Hali Dessecker** at halirenee@yahoo.com.

Please send any WIMGA related questions/concerns to news@wimga.org.

Visit the WIMGA Website at <http://www.wimga.org/>



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The Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Program supports a network of individuals dedicated to horticulture education, service, and lifelong learning. Through unbiased university research-based horticulture training they are equipped to address needs and opportunities in their community and throughout the state. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.