

# WIMGA



January 2021

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 University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension's educational role to the public.

### President's Message 2020 WIMGA Annual Meeting

This year has brought about many changes, including cancellations, adaptations and expanding our use of online tools. WIMGA held its annual meeting virtually this year on December 3 via a ZOOM meeting. There were 225 people pre-registered for the call, which is great! The meeting included several reports and considerable changes to the Bylaws to bring them in alignment with the changes in the Master Gardener Program.

The slide show that was used during the meeting is on the WIMGA website for you to review the Treasurer's Annual Report, accomplishments for 2020 and Mike's Program Office Report. The Bylaw changes were approved and can now be used as a template for local associations to update their own Bylaws. (Keep in mind that your Bylaws may be simpler, but you must use the same membership categories that WIMGA uses.)



After the meeting, Amy Freidig of the Program Office provided a continuing education session "Where's the Mute Button...and Other Tales from the Land of Virtual Learning." Since virtual learning has been on everyone's mind this year, it was an especially timely topic. Amy covered helpful points from both the perspective of the presenter, as well as being a good online learner.

As we start a new year, I encourage you to look at the changes Mike highlighted in his report. We've all been through a lot of changes, and the MGP will continue to refine and implement these throughout 2021. Two keywords that I will remember from Mike's remarks are Scope and Patience.

Scope is knowing what it is WE do as Master Gardener Volunteers; as we work toward more uniformity with the MGP across the state. It will probably also identify some projects that really aren't within the scope of the MGP, and may need to be retired.

Patience in working through these changes, patience in implementing new policies such as MOUs with the University, patience in making sure that every association has a legal status in Wisconsin, and patience in learning the finer details of the new membership category of Honored, are just some of the changes we are tackling...patiently!

Becky Gutzman, WIMGA President



The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.

(whychristmas.com)

### WIMGA MEMBER DUES

Note the change in the Due Date due to the updated By-laws passed in December: WIMGA dues are \$5 per person. It is the responsibility of each Local Association's Treasurer to assure dues are paid by **March 1** of each year and sent to WIMGA's Treasurer along with a list of current paid members, including address and email for each member. MGVs not affiliated with a local association may send their dues directly to the WIMGA Treasurer.

WIMGA Treasurer  
N4511 Hwy 57  
Chilton, WI 53014

Contact [wimga.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:wimga.treasurer@gmail.com) for more information.

## ROOTING IN

### Cultivating Long - Term Restoration in Our Communities

*By Sarah DeGraff, Agriculture Educator, Ashland/Bayfield*

**You may have seen her hard at work** at the entrance to the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center (NGLVC) at the intersection of Highway 2 and County Highway G, sometimes with



groups of volunteers, though oftentimes she's out there alone: Susan Nelson, Interpretive Services Specialist with the US Forest Service in the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Unit and longtime UW-Madison Extension Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) has been working on three prairie restoration areas on the property for the past six years. "People always stop to say hi and ask what I'm doing – some even stay to help me! People are so nice!" Susan exclaims.

These areas were seeded with hundreds of species of flowers, grasses, sedges, and rushes to restore habitat on the NGLVC property for native plants and pollinators with funding provided by the Great Lakes Restoration

Initiative and USDA Forest Service. Since that time, Susan and her fellow Ashland/Bayfield MGA volunteers have been harvesting seeds annually at the Aldo Leopold Seed Orchard to propagate them at the old farmhouse on the NGLVC property.

Native plants range from purple cone flower and cardinal flower to great blue lobelia and turtlehead. These and other plants play key roles as forage and shelter for local wildlife; many are also used in traditional Native American (Ojibwe) medicinal practices and ceremonies. Alum root, for example, is used in a wash to clean sores, and chewing the dried root can help quell an aching stomach.

A long stretch of black plastic at the entrance to Visitor Center is a restoration area project for Susan this year and into 2021. On National Public Lands Day, September 26, she worked with volunteers to seed these restoration areas, and also had up to 9 (COVID restrictions dictate 10 or fewer at a time – following Northland and UW guidelines) volunteer students from Northland College also helped plant native perennial grasses, flowers, and plants on various days throughout the growing season.

In addition to her hard work at the Visitor Center, Susan's project donates seeds and transplants to the Washburn school district for the students to plant in restoration areas at the elementary, middle, and high school properties. Vicki Alldritt spearheaded the restoration projects with the school district and students for many years, though



she has recently retired. As a testament to her persistence and her contagious enthusiasm, Susan already has volunteers committed to the project for spring of 2021.

## “...paved paradise, put up a parking lot...”

*By: Cheryl Frazier, Crawford County Master Gardeners*

### **February 19, 2018**

I was taking the Level One class that year and this was my first shot at a garden project. A friend asked if we would be willing to talk to a local librarian about the landscaping in front of the library. My mentor and I both joined the librarian to listen to her ideas. The original work had been in place since 2013 and was in need of renovation. Iris, daylilies and hydrangea were taking over everything and sorely in need of thinning, at the least. There were two garden spaces, one level with the entry way to the building and the other dropped down about 3 feet.

During our chat, the suggestion came up to convert the space to a pollinator garden and provide an educational opportunity for the library patrons. The librarian thought this was a great idea but needed to run it by the city board before committing to the change. Permission was obtained from the board, a budget was set for the project, soil samples ordered and “Digger Don” came out to mark the utilities. We agreed to start on the lower garden and just maintain the upper garden until the first one was completed.

A team of master gardeners came out as soon as the ground thawed, to dig up 80% of the existing plants in the lower garden. These plants went to various plant sales during the spring and the money was used to purchase plants more suitable for pollinators. The city workers agreed to pull out two overgrown cedars that were blocking sunlight into the lower level of the library. Now we had a nice clear canvas to work with, as well as retaining a few of the original plants for continuity.

The majority of the new plants (rudbeckia, echinacea, salvia, indigo, Russian sage, lavender, sedums, butterfly weed) went in that summer, along with 3 layers of newspaper and 3 inches of chip mulch...everything organic! As we all know, new perennial plantings take time to establish so they all looked a little thin that first year. Fall came...my husband and I cleaned up and put the gardens to bed for the year. (note: Hubby is great at hauling weeds and sweeping sidewalks!)



### **Spring 2019**

Spring found us doing the usual post winter clean up and planning for the year. The librarian asked if I could add a butterfly bush in one corner...a dwarf would work well. We also talked about adding swamp milkweed in front of a larger window, so people could watch caterpillars develop during the summer. One of our Master Gardeners had seed starts for the milkweed so we were ready to go.

The upper level still needed to be dug up and a plan set for that space. It was decided to duplicate the mix from below but set the taller plants along the two walls and tier them down toward the patio area. The space was cleaned up and mulched to make it look neater in anticipation of a new dig.

Unfortunately, fate took a different course that year and late spring found me with a new knee. Three months of recovery was in my future so I asked one of the Master Gardeners to maintain the space until I could get back there at the end of the summer.



The librarian was very understanding and wished me well. Before I checked out for the summer, I placed two watering ponds in the lower garden and gave the librarian a demonstration on how to fill them so the water stayed just below the top of the pea gravel. I explained that butterflies don't do well in knee deep water but like to stand on small rocks to keep their feet/wings dry.

Labor Day...I made it back to work in the gardens. It was too late for a plant sale so we tabled that for 2020. The

lower garden had come into its own and was a beautiful variety of color, shapes and sizes. The far corner was home to a 15' serviceberry tree that was attracting Cedar Waxwings. It was fun watching them swoop in and strip the tree of berries.

The gardens were put to bed in late October and plans put in place for the spring. The librarian asked about adding an elderberry to the upper level. As luck would have it, I had several wild and two cultivars on my property and let her choose what she would like for that area. The cultivars don't spread as quickly as the wild variety, so that's the direction we decided would be best.

## 2020

\*Big sigh\*...best laid plans and all that. So much for plant sales, garden work or new additions. The library was also closed due to COVID-19. The librarian and I knew we would just need to be patient. The bright spot was notification we could resume projects on a limited basis. How more



limited can it be than one person! After consulting with the librarian, it was decided I would resume work in August, every other Sunday from 8 to 10 am. The library and city offices were closed, not to mention the local bar and brewery. The appropriate permission was obtained from the university and I was ready to go.

Those mornings were very quiet. We cleaned up the gardens...in anticipation of a “Big Dig” plant sale to be sponsored by the library (no Master Gardener involvement other than supplying some spare plastic pots). Everything rocked along until mid-September when the librarian called to let me know the board wanted to go in a different direction with the upper garden...lawn and a few pots. Over the course of the next couple of weeks, the decision morphed into a “scorched earth” approach for all of the areas fronting the building. All trees, all bushes, all flowers...gone. The librarian put up a fight and finally got the board president to agree to leave the lower garden alone if she could get the other board members to agree. One board member said “fine...as long as we cut down the weeds in front of the window.” Remember the swamp milkweed mentioned earlier? Yup, that’s the one!

Unfortunately, calamity struck mid-October. The librarian called to let me know the “bull dozers” would be there Friday...for everything! Thursday afternoon, my husband and I showed up around noon to start digging out as many plants as we could. It was a daunting task but the cavalry arrived a few minutes later, in the form of a half dozen friends of the library. We were all suitably masked and armed to the teeth with shovels, buckets, spades and garden knives. Both woody and herbaceous perennials were dug up and distributed according to need and light requirements. Lots of questions were asked about origin, habits and use of the various plants. We even moved a few into the



brewery’s landscaping next door. They kindly shared some cold fruit flavored sparkling water, which was wonderful after a three-hour dig.

The “bull dozers” showed up the next morning and tore everything out...down to the ground. We could not save the little serviceberry. It was too big for us to try to dig it up and too late to call a professional. The Cedar Waxwings will miss it next year.

The object lesson here is: our projects do not belong to us. We all work hard on our projects and treat the plants like our own, but they are not ours and are subject to the whims of the property owners. If their direction changes, the only thing we can do is dust ourselves off and move on to another project.

P.S.: I am still working with the library on adult and children educational opportunities for the library patrons...and waiting for spring. It will be interesting to see if the city workers remembered to get ALL the roots from the hydrangea and burdock before they covered it in mulch. Nature practices its own form of karma...

“...don’t it always seem to go  
That you don’t know what you got ‘til it’s gone...”



*Lyrics by Joni Mitchell, “Big Yellow Taxi”, 1970*

## A Visit to the Christmas Tree Farm

*Submitted by Bev Kindschy, Outagamie MGV*

Did you know that real Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states consuming about one million acres? There are about 15,000 tree growers in the U.S. and about 5,000 “choose and cut” farms. One of our favorite family traditions is cutting our own tree, so I reached out to Lori Vorachek, owner of Mosquito Hill Tree Farm in New London and asked her a few questions.

### What Types of Trees Are Grown in Wisconsin?

Trees grown in Wisconsin include Balsam, Concolor and Fraser Fir, Blue and White Spruce and White and Scotch Pine. A pine takes approximately eight years to get to market, spruce approximately ten years, Fraser, Concolor and Balsam take 12-15 years but it depends on how large the seedlings are when planted. Lori explained that they purchase 2+2 which are two years in a seed bed and two years in a planting bed. The Concolor Fir has long needles that stay on for months after it is cut down and has a citrus-like fragrance.

Sandy and well-drained soil is ideal for Fir trees while Spruce trees do well in heavier clay soil. The ideal amount of rainfall is 1/2”-1” per week. Lori mentioned that “although they seldom have to spray for bugs, large ant hills next to trees can kill them, but they limit insecticides since they are on a hill and aware that their property goes back to a river.” The trees are hand trimmed once they reach three feet tall.

Lori feels that Spruce trees are the most fragrant, which have stiff branches and prickly needles while Fir trees have softer branches and needles and boast the best needle retention.



Concolor Fir

### What Type of Maintenance Is Involved in Owning A Tree Farm?

Lori said “We start the year with cleaning up from Christmas by grinding the stumps to ground level and picking up the branches. Planting is next using an auger to dig the holes. We cut the grass on the farm six to seven times per year. We hand fertilize the farm over a two-year period. In early July, we begin trimming the White Pine, then the White Spruce and progress on completing trimming by the end of October. Finally, we mark the tree sections for Christmas, update the website and repair signs and saws if needed.”

### What Types of Trees Are People Buying and Have You Noticed Any Trends?

Now that families are so busy, they want to get their tree up earlier so needle retention is important. The market boasts “Fir” trees, but we have many customers that purchase Spruce and if they are kept watered and never run out; they have excellent needle retention. Lori shared “if a tree runs out of water, a seal forms on the stump and they are unable to absorb moisture. A thin cut needs to be made (about two inches) to allow them to drink again.”

Mosquito Hill Tree Farm chooses to price their trees by species, not by the foot, so customers can cut and purchase the size they want. "We have many younger adults purchasing and it is not uncommon to see 3rd generation customers experiencing their first real tree! We even have groups that draw names and pick out the "ugliest" tree for their friends!"

After Christmas most counties recycle the trees, but another option is to dig a hole in the fall and put a PVC pipe in the hole to act as a tree stand. After Christmas, put your tree outside to provide cover for birds and enjoy their beauty.

#### Why Should People Choose A Real Tree?

Choosing a real Christmas tree over an artificial tree is an environmentally sound choice and a favorite holiday tradition. Walking into the house and smelling the tree is one of the main reasons why I choose a real tree over artificial. But here are some others:

- Consumers are showing their preference for real, natural products that are socially conscious.
- Real trees are a renewable, recyclable resource. Artificial trees contain non-biodegradable plastics and metals.
- For every real Christmas tree harvested, two to three seedlings are planted to keep the land in green space.
- Tree farmers nurture their land so they can continue to grow more trees.
- Trees make oxygen for you to breathe and absorb carbon dioxide.
- Tree farms provide habitat for wildlife, birds and insects.

For information on where you can cut your own tree visit the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association at <http://www.christmastrees-wi.org/>.

**O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,**  
How lovely are your branches!  
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,  
How lovely are your branches!  
Not only green in summer's heat,  
But also winter's snow and sleet.  
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
How lovely are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,  
Of all the trees most lovely;  
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,  
Of all the trees most lovely.  
Each year you bring to us delight  
With brightly shining Christmas light!  
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,  
Of all the trees most lovely.



O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,  
We learn from all your beauty;  
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,  
We learn from all your beauty.  
Your bright green leaves with festive cheer,  
Give hope and strength throughout the year.  
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,  
We learn from all your beauty.

## GROWING AND USING GOURDS

*By Sandy Vold, MGV & Editor*

Although the vast majority of them cannot be eaten as food, gourds are among the most fascinating of plants because of their long history as cultivated plants and the many uses for things other than food. As a matter of fact, some believe them to be the world's first domesticated crop.

In an essay posted online<sup>(1)</sup>, gourd enthusiast Raymond Konan listed the many ways in which gourds have been used over time. These include: containers for carrying things, storage bins, scoops, bowls, cups, hats, flotation devices, many musical instruments and artistic creations. For a much more thorough list of uses, consult his article as referenced.

Konan believes gourds are the plant most manipulated by humans by selective breeding to alter size or shape; by intervention during growth, such as resting them stem up to get a flat bottom, hanging them for a straight handle, putting a mold around them to get a desired shape or scratching the surface to leave permanent scar patterns; and by alterations after growth such as cutting openings for a container, scratching designs in the surface, and coloring them.

In modern times, gourds are used mainly for decoration and for birdhouses. Some are brought in for fall decoration; some are used in a variety of craft projects, and some, under the hands of talented and creative people, become items worthy of exhibition in museums.

Gourds come from two different genera, Cucurbita and Lagenaria. Cucurbita, those gourds native to the Americas, share this classification with squash, pumpkins, melons and cucumbers. These gourds have yellow flowers. They are usually useful for only one season and should be harvested before frost. Lagenaria gourds, bottle, dipper or birdhouse gourds, are Old World gourds and have white flowers. Once mature, their fruit is not damaged by frost. These develop a hard shell and will usually last several years.

### **Growing gourds**

Gourds require sun, heat and a long growing season. They do best on light, sandy, well-drained soils with high organic matter, and should receive about an inch of water a week. They can be planted in rows or raised mounds, as is often done with other vining crops. To save space, the vines can be trained onto fences or trellises. Gourds should be left on the vine until just before a frost, although bottle gourds can survive a light frost. To harvest, cut the stem with a sharp knife or shears. If you wish to save seeds from these gourds keep in mind that they will cross pollinate with other cultivars of the same species, so you could get some odd-looking plants the next year.



## Curing

When harvested, the gourds should be wiped with a cloth dampened with alcohol and spread on several sheets of paper or on shelves in a warm, dry place. They should be spaced so they are not touching. They can be outside during the day, but protected from dew at night. Throw away any that show signs of shrinking or spoiling. After the first week, wipe them again with a soft cloth soaked in household disinfectant and spread them on newspapers in a warm, dry, dark area, such as an attic or closet. Warmth encourages drying and darkness protects them from color loss. This process will probably take another three or four weeks.

## And then. . .

Your gourds can be left in their natural state or turned into wonderful crafts or even works of art. The Purdue extension article<sup>(2)</sup>, referenced below, has several suggestions as well.

I need to relate, however, my experience with gourds to keep others from making the same mistake I did. I had brought in gourds for fall decoration, and didn't get around to throwing them out. As they dried, they became coated with mold, and when I finally got around to tossing them, I found they had developed a beautiful patina with all sorts of swirls. I decided I wanted to keep them, and although I knew mold should be wiped off, I was afraid if I wiped them, even though there was no longer any mold visible, I'd destroy this lovely finish. However, I also knew that the mold was a potential health hazard, and in case there was any mold left on them, I purchased a can of spray shellac, took the gourds outside and, wearing a pair of gloves, I sprayed the gourds. This left them nice and shiny and, I thought, put a barrier between me and any mold residue.

As you can see from the photos, they looked very attractive. I did, however, keep



wondering about what made the beautiful patterns, so I contacted the American Gourd Society and learned that this beautiful patina was, indeed, the remains of the mold, and that the lacquer would most likely crack and expose the mold.



In addition, I was warned not to suggest this process to others because of the health risks. Had I followed the directions about cleaning and disinfecting the gourds as they dried, this would not have happened.

## REFERENCES

- (1) "The Gourd - Lagenaria Saccharia. Most Important Plant in Human History, Raymond Konan, Orlando, Florida, 2 December 2017
- (2) Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service Publication. "Gourds" HO-1335-W
- (3) American Gourd Society, [americangourdsociety.org](http://americangourdsociety.org)
- (4) Indiana Gourd Society, [www.netusa1.net/~twill/index.html](http://www.netusa1.net/~twill/index.html)
- (5) "Growing pumpkins and other vine crops in Wisconsin," A3688, UW Extension Service

## Growing Together Wisconsin Project 2020 Adams Friendship Elementary School Garden

*By Angela DeSmith, RD, FoodWise Coordinator, Adams/Juneau Counties*

The FoodWise Program has applied and received grant funds for the project during summers of 2017, 2019 and 2020. The purpose of the project was to increase access to local/fresh produce to people who are low-income, provide education around the garden, and aim for the garden to eventually function without FoodWise funding.

Criteria of the project included: partnership with Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs), FoodWise to provide nutrition education, and produce to be donated to the local food pantry. Project awards for 2020 were delayed due to Covid. Plans were resubmitted to implement safety precaution guidelines. Finally, early July we received the go ahead.



Starting late in the season, Robynn Preston, MGV, suggested fast growing vegetables such as summer squash and beans. We were able to put in a few plants such as tomatoes, kale, and many herbs (mint, catnip, basil, tarragon, sage, oregano, thyme, stevia leaf, and chives). Everything else was started from seeds (cucumbers, zucchini, patty pan, swiss chard, mini pumpkins/gourds). The garden

was planted, and watering was set up on a timer. The garden, being exposed to direct sun all day, did not take long to start producing. Once there was produce to harvest, Cindy Wagner, MGV, started harvesting on Tuesday afternoons, then weighing before dropping it off at the Grand Marsh Food Pantry. The pantry volunteers were delighted to receive fresh produce that people could take home a few hours after harvest. FoodWise staff provided information sheets specific to produce grown in the garden that provided nutrient value, storage tips, and how to prepare the produce. At the end of the season the herbs were divided up into small pots and donated to the pantry to give away, as well. Overall, 229 pounds of produce was donated to the food pantry.

Students returned to school in the fall just in time to see a beautiful garden. Fourth grade teachers utilized the garden to teach literacy lessons and first grade teachers took the students to the garden to look at the mini pumpkin/gourd patch. Patch was the word of the day. The students were each allowed to take home a pumpkin or gourd. Also, a handful of students were encouraged to use the garden as a quiet space to work or take a break.



Moving forward, we have established a good connection with partners on the garden. Paula Becker, School Counselor, has taken the lead on the garden and plans to increase teacher/student utilization of the garden and promote as an outdoor learning space.

She would like to continue donation to the pantry with MGV support during the summer months. With continued partnership connection, the garden has potential for sustainability. Thank you, Master Gardeners, for your partnership and support on the project!

FoodWise will have the opportunity to apply for the grant again. I am hopeful we can partner on a different garden or site to implement a new garden.



### **NJ'S BITS AND BOBS:**

Old saying: *'Things have to get worse before they can get better.'*

As we begin a new calendar year, we all seek a new chapter in our lives. Ads scream: lose weight, fix your teeth, buy a new mattress...yadda, yadda.

Reflect on this past year, we had many firsts that we did not want to see. I would like to reflect on some wonderful events we had.

First off, the Winter Solstice on December 21<sup>st</sup> was a wonderous day and evening. Mother Nature has blessed us with beautiful trees, shrubs, water, fertile soil, sunshine, insects. I could go on, but you know I'm not wanting to add 465 other items to that list. We are all 'farmers – planters' at heart. We plant large fields, small vegetable gardens, a small pot of green growing on our windowsill. This brings us to the first wonderful event that happened in December:

### **Winter Solstice - The Holly King vs The Oak King**

With each passing day of autumn, we lose daylight. However, as the Winter Solstice arrives, the shortest day arrives, and we gain more daylight going forward. Ancient people, who spent more time outdoors, were acutely aware of this annual ebb and flow of daylight, the two poles of which are the Winter Solstice and its summer counterpart. For the Celts, what we know as Christmas holly trees had a place in their rituals marking these two poles, each of which indicate when the sun is at its greatest distance from the equator.

In Celtic mythology the Oak King and the Holly King were twins, pitted against each other in a never-ending fight for supremacy. Oak Trees, sacred to the Celts, lose their leaves, while the Christmas holly trees are evergreen. As cold weather approached, the Celts marveled at how the evergreen Christmas holly trees, hidden amongst the leafy oaks the rest of the year, now stood out prominently on an otherwise barren landscape. The Holly King had won out, as it were, as the incarnations of his twin brother had shed all their leaves and stood naked in defeat.

Every year at the Winter and Summer Solstices; these two fight for dominance. In actuality, the brothers are two parts of the same thing, the waxing and waning of the yearly cycles of the Earth. The Holly King rules the waning year, from Mid-summer to Yule, and the Oak King rules the waxing year from Yule to Mid-summer. The Holly King represents darkness, decay and destruction, however, also represents inner knowledge and mysteries. The Oak King, on the other hand, represents light, growth and expansion. These two mighty kings fight a symbolic battle to win the Crown of the year, at Yule when the Oak King wins, and at Mid-summer when the Holly King wins.



*Images | Anne Stokes Collection*

Despite being enemies, without one, the other would no longer exist.



### THE GREAT CONJUNCTION

The second great event we had in December was the 'GREAT CONJUNCTION'. Astronomers use the word conjunction to describe meetings of planets and other objects on our sky's dome.

They use the term great conjunction to describe meetings of Jupiter and Saturn, which are the two biggest worlds in our solar system. Though the two planets will appear spectacularly close together on the sky's dome now, Jupiter and Saturn are actually 456 million miles (734 million km) apart. Saturn is nearly twice as far away as Jupiter.



## Upcoming Events

Several opportunities for virtual learning are taking place in the coming months. Please visit our website, [www.wimga.org](http://www.wimga.org) for updates under the Conferences tab.



melinda myers

Melinda Myers free virtual gardening seminar series continues. Attendance is free, but [registration is required](#) for all sessions. Registrants will receive a link to the handout in a webinar reminder email one hour before the webinar. All webinars take place from 6:30-7:30pm CT. Click on the links below for a detailed description and to register.

Melinda's Healthful Gardening Series is sponsored by:



- Jan. 13, 2021 [Improve Your Indoor Environment with Houseplants - Tips for Indoor Gardening Success](#)
- Jan. 20, 2021 [Grow Flavorful and Nutritional Herbs Indoors](#)
- Feb. 17, 2021 [Growing Nutritious and Flavorful Edibles Indoors](#)
- Feb. 24, 2021 [Low Maintenance Gardening for Loads of Beauty & Health Benefits](#)



Do you enjoy gardening? Join us for a virtual garden conference hosted by the North Central Wisconsin Master Gardeners, Saturday, January 30, 2021, 8:30am-12 noon. Topics will include seasonal container gardening, healthy urban trees, and garden design basics.

\$5 registration fee.

For more information and to reserve your spot, go to:

[www.gardenvisions.info](http://www.gardenvisions.info).

## Beat the Winter Blues

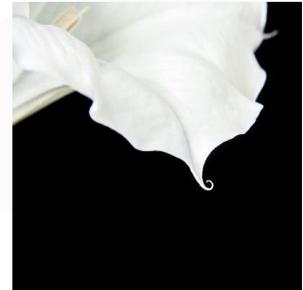
Grant County Master Gardeners invite you to join our first virtual  
TRIPLE SPEAKER SERIES!

Sessions are free and open to all. Registration is required\*  
Door prize drawings at each event

### January 21, 2021 – Molly Wood, “Fatal Flora”

Author and artist, Molly Wood will share stories about the use, history, and folklore of poisonous plants. Molly will also share her art form, which captures these toxic plants with alluring photographs. Her research into “Fatal Flora” led her to an artist residency in Northumberland, England at the Alnwick Castle Poison Garden. Molly is based in Des Moines, IA.

[www.mollywoodphoto.com](http://www.mollywoodphoto.com)



### February 25, 2021 – Linda Conroy, “Planning the Apothecary Garden”



For centuries, humans have relied on apothecary gardens to produce remedies and treatments. Conroy will share tips for choosing and sourcing plants and design ideas for ease, function, and beauty to create your own apothecary garden. Conroy is a 20+ year veteran herbalist and business owner. Moonwise Herbs, located in Stoughton, WI offers products, classes, consultations and so much more.

[www.moonwiseherbs.com](http://www.moonwiseherbs.com)

### March 25, 2021 – Christopher & Emily Appelman, “Web of Life”

Feeding their community with healthy, safe food in an environmentally sustainable way is the mission of Stone Hollow Gardens & Shroomery. Bioremediation and Mycoremediation builds nutrient rich soil and grows nutrient dense foods. This amazing symbiotic joining of fungi, soil and plant is the “Web of Life”. The Appelman family homestead is located in the Midwest Driftless Region next to the Little Maquoketa River. [www.stonehollowgardens.com](http://www.stonehollowgardens.com)



\*Register by calling Grant Co. Extension office (608)723-2125 or email: [lori.vesperman@wisc.edu](mailto:lori.vesperman@wisc.edu). Zoom link will be sent, via email, to registered participants. Live sessions 6:30-7:30pm. For information about Grant County Master Gardener Association, visit our website: <http://grantcountymastergardeners.weebly.com/>

# Growing Together

2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminars



**SAVE THE DATES: Virtual Presentations. Saturdays at 10 am**

**February 20, 2021** Sonya Burke  
*Soil Preparation for Planting Vegetables*

**February 27, 2021** Melinda Myers  
*Creating a Private Space. Brought to you by*  
<https://www.diggershotline.com/>



**March 6, 2021** Laura Jull  
*Planting Trees and Shrubs*

**March 13, 2021** Kelly Povo & Phyllis Root  
*Searching for Wildflowers in Wisconsin and Minnesota*

**Cost: \$10 for all sessions**

Spring Garden Seminars will be presented via You Tube Live. Attendees will receive the link the week prior to each seminar. These seminars are open to the public and we welcome both new and experienced gardeners to attend. Registration information will be coming soon at <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/> Brought to you by Western Wisconsin Master Gardener Associations from the following counties: Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce and St. Croix



 **PBS Wisconsin**  
**GARDEN**  
& LANDSCAPE EXPO  
**FEB. 20-21, 2021**



**A New Virtual Experience**

## 2021 Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course

Wednesdays  
February 3, 10, 17, & 24  
1.00 – 4:00 pm  
Online Virtual Training  
(Zoom Webinar)

Speakers from other state universities, industrial reps and from UW-Madison Extension faculties will present on eight different topics during four sessions.



**For more information, registration and speaker bios visit:**  
[www.go.wisc.edu/landscapeshortcourse](http://www.go.wisc.edu/landscapeshortcourse)

CEUs are available for ISA arborist and NALP landscape professionals.  
**Special Thanks to the Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association  
Milwaukee Chapter for support of this program.**

*The Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Short Course is offered jointly online in partnership with  
Extension Kenosha & Racine Counties 262-653-1933  
Extension Waukesha County [waukesha.extension.wisc.edu](http://waukesha.extension.wisc.edu) 262-548-7770  
Extension Sheboygan County [sheboygan.extension.wisc.edu](http://sheboygan.extension.wisc.edu) 920-459-5900  
Extension Dane County [dane.extension.wisc.edu](http://dane.extension.wisc.edu) 608-224-3700*

**SPRING INTO GARDENING**  
SAVE THE DATE | 2021 VIRTUAL SESSIONS

Topics: Seed starting, Top 10 annuals for containers, Sustainable lawn care, New trends in Perennials, Trees & shrubs for pollinators, Dwarf fruits & berries, No-till gardening, and New hardy shrubs.

More information available at:  
[www.go.wisc.edu/springintogardening](http://www.go.wisc.edu/springintogardening)

**Dates:** Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, & 27<sup>th</sup>  
Two sessions per day  
9.30 A.M. – 11.45 A.M.

Registration opens  
January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Early bird registration fee - \$20.00  
After Jan 29<sup>th</sup> - \$25.00

We love your WIMGA projects, horticulture articles and 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 Janel-Barnes at [westcoasternancy@gmail.com](mailto:westcoasternancy@gmail.com) or Hali Dessecker at [halirenee@yahoo.com](mailto:halirenee@yahoo.com).

January 2021 Newsletter

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**The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association**



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