



WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION  
Serving its members since 1992

March 2024

# WIMGA

**WIMGA Vision** - The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association is 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.

## March into Spring

*Marilyn Gorham, St Croix Valley MG*

The days are getting noticeably longer. The grass and moss in my lawn are turning a brighter green and the buds on the trees are continuing to swell, adding new color to their canopies. It looks more like early April than early March in my area of Wisconsin. A friend in northern Wisconsin is already tapping maple trees that weren't tapped until April in 2023. Our unseasonable weather continues!

Our winter break will soon be over, and our master gardener activities will begin again in earnest. While you still have some free time from your volunteer interests, please go into ORS and review and accept the terms and conditions for 2024. Remember that you need to do this before your volunteer activities begin this year. This is very important so please do not hesitate to do it!

There is an important change to the ORS system that affects whether any of your information is shared with WIMGA and your Local Association this year. This information includes your status as a Master Gardeners, years of service and volunteer hours. Until the separation from the Program Office occurred, your information was shared with both WIMGA and Local Associations unless you "opted out" of sharing. Currently, none of that information is being shared. This year, you will need to check "yes". That way, WIMGA and your Local Association can keep up to date on your status with the Master Gardener Program and any changes to your contact information.



Please be sure to read the February Vibe to learn more about OnBoarding-Lite requirements for 2024.

*Marilyn Gorham,*  
WIMGA President

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## Continuing Education Opportunities

The Continuing Education Committee is excited to bring a new series with Diana Alfuth, Retired Horticulture Educator, in March to continue the Landscape Design Fundamentals that began last year. Not a repeat of last year's landscape design, but a new look at landscaping with the environment in mind. This series will be made available to members and non-members of WIMGA for a fee. This added income from educational programs helps to fill the lower revenue from member dues and allows WIMGA to bring an in-depth level of learning to interested gardeners.

### Environmentally Sound Landscaping in a Changing Climate

This series will be presented via Zoom on three Mondays in March. The sessions will be recorded and will be available for later viewing.

**March 4, 2024:** Landscaping for Water Quality and Conservation.

This class will cover design considerations to protect surface and ground water by reducing runoff and promoting infiltration, including proper use of hardscapes and rain gardens, as well as choosing plants properly, efficient watering techniques, and more.

**March 11, 2024:** Using Native Plants in Your Landscape—How & Why.

This session covers how to work natives into our conventional landscapes; pros and cons, which ones behave and adapt best, how to care for them, and more.

**March 18, 2024:** Landscaping for Energy Efficiency.

The final session will cover various design techniques to use that reduce energy consumption, such as reducing heating and cooling costs, snow removal, and maintenance inputs.

The cost of all three sessions is \$30 for WIMGA members, and \$45 for non-members. You can listen to all of the sessions through one registration; the Zoom link will be the same each week. You will need to register and pay for the workshop to view the recorded classes.



Diana Alfuth is a life-long horticulturist, having earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Horticulture, and a Master's Degree in Horticulture with emphasis on Landscape Design and Plant Pathology, both from the University of Minnesota. She recently retired after 22 years as a Horticulture Educator in western Wisconsin as part of UW-Extension, where she learned and taught about all aspects of horticulture.

The following recorded programs are available for a limited time under the Members Only tab at WIMGA.ORG. Members will need their password to access these recordings.

- 🌱 WIMGA Annual Meeting
- 🌱 Craig LeHoullier, Bring Your Garden to the Sun: All About Container and Straw Bale Gardening
- 🌱 Vanessa Mueller, Trees in the Landscape

## Coming in April: Mark Dwyer, Adaptive Gardening



Traditional gardening, while rewarding, can become physically challenging at times. Join Mark Dwyer as he shares tips on how to approach gardening in ways that are easier on your body while delivering the same fulfillment and beauty. He'll discuss strategies on not only adapting how we garden but making changes and modifications to the garden as well! He'll examine a wide range of adaptive examples for consideration and implementation.

April 11 at 6:30pm via Zoom – recorded program will be available for a limited time after the presentation.

### Upcoming Calendar:

March 4, 11, & 18, 6:30pm Diana Alfuth  
Environmentally Sound Landscaping  
in a Changing Climate

Cost will be \$30 for WIMGA members and \$45 for non-members.

April 11, 2024, 6:30pm

Mark Dwyer, Adaptive Gardening

September (date TBD)

Susan Betz, Fresh Start Herbs

## WIMGA Member Dues

*By Roseann Meixelsperger, WIMGA Treasurer*

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 email address for each member. The email address ensures members receive notifications from WIMGA including newsletters. MGs not affiliated with a local association may send their dues directly to the WIMGA Treasurer.

Roseann Meixelsperger, WIMGA Treasurer,  
204 Donovan Cove Rd, Shell Lake WI 54871

Please feel free to contact Roseann at [treasurer.wimga@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.wimga@gmail.com) for more information.

**Grant Funding** budgeted for the 2024 year is \$8,850. Applications for each of the three levels of funding (\$100, \$250 or \$400) are due by **October 1st** (postmark date). The grant application forms 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 educational community projects become a reality. Electronic submissions are recommended. Please e-mail your grant application(s) to [treasurer.wimga@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.wimga@gmail.com)

## 4th Grade Garden Science

by Sharon Schweitzer, Jefferson County MG

The 2023 \$100 Educational Grant was used to fund the 4th Grade Garden Science Program at West Elementary Grade School in Jefferson. Guidelines and procedures previously developed enabled the classroom program to be offered to 4th grade students in conjunction with classroom curriculum. It was supported by the school garden project where students were given an opportunity to plant, care, harvest and give vegetables grown to other school programs.



Once a month Master Gardeners met with classes of 4th grade students. Details for these sessions were planned with the teaching staff. Students visited the garden, viewed fresh vegetables, pictures, and short videos to learn about different vegetables and plants. Discussions about plant parts, growing habits, soil and harvesting were offered. Students had opportunities to do some hands-on activities in a safe and structured manner.



The My Plate Nutrition and Youth Gardening materials from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction were used as guides and support materials for class discussions. These materials were easily shared by students with their families. The goal of the program was to give the students the opportunity to learn how plants/vegetables grow and their importance to one's health. Also, the teachers were able to use the garden as an outdoor classroom and

resource for other class subjects. All students were encouraged to grow vegetables/plants at home with their families to learn about vegetables and fruits not familiar to them.

This program benefited students and their families as they used resources to grow plants to support a healthier lifestyle at school and at home. The Association and WIMGA benefited from the opportunity to offer educational services to youth and to the community through the school system.



## Conover Park Signs

By Brenda S. Timken, Master Gardener's of the North

The Conover Town Board and Park Committee showed interest in town beatification and education to the public. After attending one of the Park Committee meetings, it was determined that the Master Gardener's of the North could assist in this project. In 2021 the Town of Conover provided monies to purchase many native perennials to start landscaping around their new recreation building. Local businesses also donated plants and materials to landscape this area. Many volunteers helped dig, move rocks, plant perennials, water, and add mulch.



This year, the idea of labelling many of the plants in this landscaping area was presented to the Conover Park Committee and welcomed approved. Our association applied for a \$400 WIMGA Grant for plant signage. Plant labels were ordered from [My Plant Label website](#).



Additional outside funds were donated to complete this project. Along with the native plant labels, multiple labels noting funding from WIMGA and our association were made and placed in

various Conover Town Park locations.

Signs were placed in a memory garden close to the Conover Chamber office and US Postal location, Memorial Flagpole, and the Recreation Center Building.

The WIMGA grant was successfully used to educate the many people who visit the Conover area. There are so many activities planned at the Conover Town Park Year-Round and the Recreation Center is also available to rent for weddings, reunions, celebrations and much more. A summer function called 'Ride With Leine' attracted 300+ bicycle riders and many more vacationers who visit the park and view these educational plant signs.



## How Are Your House Plants Looking This Winter?

by: Donna Mae Stohlmann, St Croix Valley MG

Are your house plants looking sad and in need of help? Here are ten observations that can help you lead to more beautiful houseplants: Check out your plants!!

1. Green scum forming on exterior of clay pot...too much water
2. Cacti and succulents become yellow...too little water or too much heat
3. Yellow or brown patches on leaves or plant...too much sun exposure
4. Bottom leaves of plant turn yellow...too much water, check drainage hole
5. No buds visible on plant that is supposed to bloom...over fertilized
6. Insect contamination...isolate plant and treat the insect larvae
7. Stem appears rotten and is dark in color...over watering
8. White webs spun around the base of the leaf is red spider mites...  
sponge plant with soapy water
9. Leaves are limp and lifeless...under watered
10. Powdery mildew found on stems and leaves...surrounding air too stagnant



If you are thinking of adding a new houseplant to your home, here are helpful tips on how to select plants and keep them healthy. Before you bring home a new houseplant give thought to where it is going to be placed. Houseplants have preferred light requirements; moisture needs and temperature ranges. The type of light a plant requires is one of the most key factors to consider.

When it comes to temperature, most houseplants can tolerate a broad range. Most foliage houseplants grow well with daytime temperatures around 70°F and nighttime temperatures about 10 degrees cooler. Houseplants can be adversely affected by being exposed to temperature extremes. Avoid placing them near heat vents where they will receive blasts of warm air or too near windows or doors where they may encounter cold drafts this winter.

The moisture needs of a houseplant can be influenced by several things including type of plant, container, soil, time of year and level of relative humidity. Try to water it on the same day every week. Plants should be watered only when they need it. This is when the top inch or two of soil is dry to the touch. With indoor plants, it is also a good idea to consider the humidity level in the house. Many houseplants favor a more humid environment than the average home provides, especially during winter. Grouping plants closely together can also help create a more humid environment. Misting houseplants is not an effective way to raise the relative humidity, and it may cause bacterial or fungal growth on the foliage. Bear in mind most house plants suffer from being overwatered.



Other things to consider when selecting a plant is to look for one with a well-balanced silhouette that does not look leggy or sparse. Your new plant should not start off wilted or with damaged leaves or stems. Check the plant carefully for any signs of insects or disease. Often plants will drop leaves or develop yellow leaves when first placed into a new environment. It is recommended to avoid fertilizing during this adjustment period to help minimize stress. Most houseplants do not need to be fertilized in the winter months. Spring is a suitable time to fertilize because of the increase of daylight hours.

Keep indoor plants well-groomed by removing dead leaves or stems. Some types of plants perform better if occasionally pinched back. This is best done in the spring or summer. Larger leafed plants may also need gentle dusting. Changes in temperature or light can also cause problems for houseplants. If a houseplant is losing its leaves or otherwise looking stressed, double check that it is receiving the proper amount of moisture, fertilizer, light and is not experiencing too much in the way of temperature changes.



The first thing is to always choose a pot with drainage holes. Drip trays make watering indoors so much easier, but they do need to empty after watering. Any leftover moisture will soak into the soil, resulting in waterlogging and root rot. About 30 minutes after watering, walk around to each of your plants and empty out the drip trays to stop them from sitting in water.



Regular potting soil is recommended for outdoor container plants. It drains far better than garden soil and often contains the right ratios of nutrients needed to grow plants, but it does hold on to quite a bit of moisture to combat the quicker evaporation that occurs in full sun outdoors. Indoors, the plants get far less sunlight and evaporation is much slower.

To allow your houseplants to truly thrive, you need to repot with a specialized houseplant potting mix with amendments that allow it to drain well and deliver oxygen to the roots. Regular fertilizing is an important part of your houseplant care routine. When you overfertilize, additional salts build up in the soil that end up burning the plant rather than improving growth. Always fertilize according to the instructions on the packaging. It is not recommended to put rocks in the bottom of your pot. Rocks give your plant less room and the water also cannot exit.

*Source: Margaret Murphy, Horticulture Educator for Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties, UW-Madison Extension*

## Curtis Strange Elementary School Garden – Kenosha, Wisconsin

*by Julie Whyte, Project Leader & Kenosha MG*

Curtis Strange Elementary school garden was started in 2010 with five raised beds and four MGs. It began with some parents developing the idea. When spring arrived however, the parent group decided not to move forward. The school contacted the UW-Extension Kenosha County Horticulture Educator who recruited MGs, with Julie Whyte as the coordinator. The MGs, with the help of family and friends, built five beds and started the after-school project, working with students and parents. A couple of families 'adopted' a raised bed, and the MGs would meet in the evening with these students and parents to prepare, plant and harvest their beds. The beds that were not adopted were cared for by MGs with produce given to the school and the local homeless shelter. We eventually moved to day classes, initially working with the special needs group (learning and behavior). We now work with fourth grade students. There are about 80 students (4 groups for 15 minutes each), so our lessons need to be concise and productive for each of these groups. Students are in the garden through the end of July. During the month of August, MGs care for the garden, and families in the neighborhood are encouraged to harvest. Excess produce is brought to the local homeless shelter.



The principal and faculty are very supportive of the garden, the students, and the MGs. Some former students return during the summer months to help care for the garden. Through the years, with the help of family, friends, and faculty, the garden has been expanded to nineteen raised beds, four barrels, as well as potato and raspberry patches in the ground. One year we also experimented with straw bales. The school also provides our water source.

Prior to COVID, we had indoor classes in fall and winter. Some of our projects included:



pinecone birdfeeders, making seed viewers with bean, corn and pea seed, putting a celery stalk in blue dyed water followed by a discussion of roots and stems, making whirligigs from recycled water bottles and beads, and making newspaper pots to start bean seeds. There were lessons on beneficial insects and worms, starting and maintaining a worm bin, making butterfly puddles, garden art, and, of course, making a garden plan.

Last summer in the garden, we brought our 'worm' discussion to life! Following our discussion of the value of beneficial worms and insects, the students 'planted' worms into the beds. We were unsure how the students would react to handling worms, but it turned out to be an exciting experience for the students. They loved it!



Through the years, we have planted many different types of vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Another activity we do to bring the garden into reality is MGs will pick one of the herbs we grow, crush it a bit, and ask the students to smell it. Then we ask them to identify the food that smells similar. Most enjoy the smells, and we've seen many 'ah-ha' moments from the students. In addition, the teacher we work with encourages the students as they leave school for the day to pick beans to eat as a healthy snack on their way home.



In 2019, one of the Strange Elementary students passed away. In her memory, the school installed a perennial butterfly garden next to the vegetable garden. MGs have been responsible for maintaining that garden as well. It is a beautiful addition to the vegetable gardens.

We are looking forward to a fun and productive 2024 in the garden with a new group of students and, of course, with new ideas!

### **WIMGA Board Member At-Large Elections**

Each year, one of the three WIMGA At-Large Directors is elected/re-elected to serve a three-year term on the WIMGA Board of Directors. The At-Large Directors represent all Master Gardeners throughout the state versus the 12 District Directors who represent only those Master Gardeners located within their District. Directors attend monthly Zoom Board meetings and currently serve on at least two Board Committees. The At-Large Director serves a three-year term on the Board.

Currently, we have two candidates for the 2024 At-Large Director Election:

**Janet Mangold**, incumbent, has been an At-Large Director since 2018. She received her training through Iowa State University in 2012 and joined the North Country Master Gardeners (NCMG) in 2013. She currently lives in the Spooner area in summer and Hudson in the winter. In 2015, Janet championed a move to recreate the Perennials at the Spooner Teaching and Display Garden into a certified Monarch Way Station. The NCMG won the All-American Selection Garden contest in 2017. Janet has also assisted with the Master Gardener training in Spooner for the last several years.



Janet's leadership and strategic planning skills were developed in her career as a Senior Professional in Human Resource Management. She has also served as President of the Metro Milwaukee Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), President of the NCMG and Communication Chair of the Norway House Gala in Minneapolis.

**Jeanne Mueller** has been volunteering with Ozaukee Master Gardeners since 2007. Her efforts are focused on communication including creating publicity and collateral materials for the annual plant sale, speaker series, and alike. In 2023, she redesigned the Association's website (<https://www.ozaukeemastergardeners.org>). In addition, she led efforts to move the annual plant sale to a new venue and chaired the event.

In January 2024, Jeanne finished a three-year term with the Ozaukee Master Gardeners Executive Board serving as president-elect, president, and past president. During this time, she helped plan for and execute the Association's independence from the Extension office. This included updating and writing a number of policies and procedures and better aligning the Association with its mission and vision. In 2024 Jeanne began serving as a member of the Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Program Focus Group.



Throughout her professional career, Jeanne developed and implemented strategic plans to build brand and reputational awareness in the marketplace. Outside of the Master Gardener program, she designed and executed the "2020 Focus on Trees" campaign for Cedarburg Green. This program won the 2022 Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council Innovation Award and resulted in a 627% ROI (Return on Investment) of the DNR Urban Forest Grant. She wrote for Cedarburg Green in 2019. In 2023, she developed the Commemorative Kwanzan Cherry Tree Program which resulted in raising \$5,000 to plant 20 cherry trees in Cedarburg (like the trees celebrated during the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington DC.).

Ballots for the At-Large Director position will be sent out with the ability to vote online.

## Education Events

### [Symposium- Healthy & Fit, the Garden & You](#)

Hosted by Green County Master Gardeners Association

Saturday, **March 9th, 2024, 8:30am-3:30pm**  
Albany Lions Club, 402 N Cincinnati St. Albany WI



"Soiling Your Undies" Tonya Gratz  
"Confessions of a Black Thumb" Brian Hudelson  
Questions and Answers with Brian Hudelson  
"Fitness for Gardening Lifestyles and Changes"  
Ryan Carroll

"Selecting Appropriate Trees and Shrubs  
for your Landscape" Parker Havens

"Winter Gardening & Seed Sowing" Heather Lynch Take home your own sowing kit!



## OCMGA 2024 Garden Conference

Hosted by the Outagamie County Master Gardener Association on **March 16, 2024**, 8am - 3:45pm  
Best Western Premier Bridgewood Resort Hotel  
Neenah, WI 54956

- 🌱 PRINCIPLES OF PLANTING DESIGN WITH PERENNIALS - Benjamin Futa
- 🌱 EMBRACING AN ALTERNATIVE LAWN with Benjamin Futa
- 🌱 PRUNING TREES & SHRUBS a Science-Based Approach, Eamonn Lenaghan
- 🌱 INVASIVE PLANTS IMPACTS AND CONTROL with Mackenzie Manicki

## Spring into Gardening

Hosted by Racine-Kenosha Master Gardener Association  
**March 16, 2024 , 8:30am-3:15pm**

*Learn, Grow and Flourish*  
Kenosha County Center  
19600 75th Street, Bristol, WI 53104

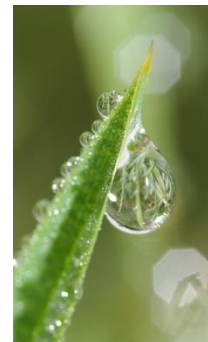


- ☆ **Keynote: Lisa Hinzman Howard**  
Vegetable Gardening for All Seasons
- ☆ Lisa Hinzman, Herbs for Butterflies
- ☆ Lindsey Bender, Mushroom Growing 101
- ☆ **Keynote: Richard Hawke**  
Perennials for All Seasons
- ☆ Dan Bussey, History of Apple Growing in Wisconsin
- ☆ Richard Hawke, Pollinator Friendly Perennials

## 15th Annual Let's Get Green & Growing!

Hosted by Columbia County Master Gardener Association  
Saturday, **March 23, 2024**, 8:45am - 2:45pm  
Rio High School, 411 Church St., Rio

Keynote Speaker: Susan Carpenter,  
"Native Plant Gardening: Resilience to Climate Change"



## [Spring Garden Expo](#)

**April 6th** all day

Hosted by Barron County Master Gardeners & Northwood Technical College

Discover fresh insights and inspiration for your gardening and landscaping endeavors at the Barron County Master Gardeners' Spring Garden Expo — where enthusiasts of all skill levels can cultivate their knowledge and grow their passion. Mary Schier, former editor of Northern Gardener Magazine, discusses garden trends for 2024 and also presents on the best trees we should be planting. Learn that there is more to shade gardening than hostas with Barbara Ronningen. Explore sustainable gardening with Gail Hudson, an Emmy-award winning journalist, garden coach and landscape designer.



### **ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE**

**SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024, 11:00am - 2:00pm**

**COURTHOUSE ANNEX PARKING LOT**

**1462 STRONGS AVENUE, STEVENS POINT**

**PORTAGE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS:** From our gardens to yours...

Grasses, perennials, Herbs, Vegetables (and a selection of local, nursery grown perennials). Master Gardener Volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions and help you choose wisely.

Go to the [WIMGA website](#) for more information on association events around the state. Send your events to [news@wimga.org](mailto:news@wimga.org) for publication in the newsletter and on the website.

### **2024 PDDC Plant Disease Talks**

*Brian Hudelson, UW-Madison Plant Pathology*

Each month in 2024, the University of Wisconsin Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic will sponsor a free Zoom presentation on a plant disease-related topic.



To register for one or more talks, visit <https://pddc.wisc.edu/>. Check at the bottom of the page for a link to the registration form.

**Fundamentals of Plant Diseases** March 27, 2024, 6:30 – 9:00pm

**Plant Disease Management by Design:** April 24, 2024, 6:30 – 8:30pm  
Preventing Plant Disease Problems During the Landscape Design Process

**Ask Your Gardening Question** <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/ask-a-gardening-question/>

This site is monitored by Master Gardeners around the state.



Tapping maple trees in progress with young help.

## Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA)

Serving its members since 1992



Article ideas, events, contributions and any WIMGA related questions/concerns may be sent to [news@wimga.org](mailto:news@wimga.org).

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

*The Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association Newsletter is published six (6) times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November). Articles, artwork and ideas are welcome, final selection and editing are the responsibility of the editorial staff. The opinions reflected in this publication are expressions from individual master gardeners or associations and not necessarily the viewpoint of the UW-Madison Department of Horticulture, Division of Extension Master Gardener Program Office.*

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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.*