



# WIMGA

WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION  
Serving its members since 1992

**WIMGA Mission:** WIMGA is the collective voice for Wisconsin Master Gardeners who are cultivating the garden resources that bring our communities to life.

**WIMGA Vision:** We provide inspirational leadership and energy to Wisconsin Master Gardeners by:

- ❖ Sponsoring continuing education opportunities
- ❖ Supporting local horticultural projects with financial assistance
- ❖ Fostering leadership and mentoring skill development
- ❖ Promoting communication and information through multiple media platforms.

## Final Words

Marilyn Gorham, St Croix Valley MG

A winter fog casts a gray pall over my woodland scenery, adding to my sadness as I complete my final term as WIMGA President. We have journeyed together, over many hills and valleys navigating through three different Master Gardener Program leaders, significant changes in WIMGA's relationship with UW-Extension (UWEX), loss of members and Local Associations and many other obstacles. We have emerged stronger, more creative and resilient. We didn't just adapt to change, we thrived.



My sincere thank you goes to the WIMGA Board, especially the Executive Committee. Your willingness to freely give of your time and talents allowed us to survive when many questioned whether we could. You charted our course for the future and stepped in where needed to make it happen. You did it!

Thank you to our Local Representatives and Local Association Presidents. Your candid sharing of your concerns, ideas, and best practices helped your peers and assisted WIMGA leadership in pursuing ways to better support you. Your insight was invaluable!

Who would have thought three years ago that WIMGA:

- ❖ would host online educational programs for its members featuring top quality speakers.
- ❖ provide a record \$8,850 in grants to our member associations in support of their educational projects.
- ❖ develop reports that capulize the information you need to know the status of your current members and identify potential new members who are just emerging from training.
- ❖ begin the redesign of the WIMGA website making it more attractive, user friendly and functional
- ❖ would effectively use Zoom as an outreach tool.

The 2025 Executive Committee members will be announced at the Annual Meeting. I know you will continue to support and advise them as you did so graciously for me. Thank you!

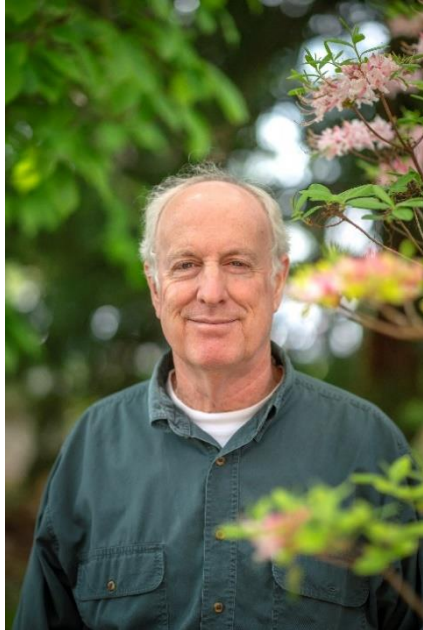
Marilyn Gorham,  
WIMGA President

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## WIMGA Annual Meeting Monday, January 13, 5:45pm

The Continuing Education Committee is excited to feature Doug Tallamy for our **Annual Meeting on January 13, 2025**.



Doug Tallamy is with the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, where he has authored 112 research publications and has taught insect-related courses for 43 years. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. His books include *Nature's Best Hope*, a New York Times Best Seller. In 2021 he co-founded Homegrown National Park with Michelle Alfandari ([HomegrownNationalPark.org](https://HomegrownNationalPark.org)). His awards include recognition from The Garden Writers Association, Audubon, The National Wildlife Federation, Allegheny College, Ecoforesters, The Garden Club of America, The Herb Society, and The American Horticultural Association.

**Nature's Best Hope** - Recent headlines about global insect declines and three billion fewer birds in North America are a bleak reality check about how ineffective our current landscape designs have been at sustaining the plants and animals that sustain us. Such losses are not an option if we wish to continue our current standard of living on Planet Earth. The good news is that none of this is inevitable. Choosing the right plants for our landscapes will not only address the biodiversity crisis but help fight our climate crisis as well. Tallamy will discuss simple steps that each of us can, and must, take to reverse declining biodiversity, why we must change our adversarial relationship with nature to a collaborative one, and why we, ourselves, are nature's best hope.

WIMGA EXTENDS A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE OZAUKEE MASTER GARDENERS FOR THEIR SPONSORSHIP OF OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER. THEIR SUPPORT OF OUR PROGRAMMING IS GREATLY APPPECIATED!!!

[Link to Annual Meeting Information and Registration Information.](#)

### Continuing Education Calendar

*All events will be on Zoom and tentatively scheduled for 6:30pm*

February 4, 2025

Doug Tallamy, Homegrown National Park

*This talk will be available to non-members for \$10*

*Free to WIMGA members; thanks to Ozaukee Master Gardeners*

April 2, 2025

Melody Orban, Herb Society of America

## March Speaker Series:

*\$30 for WIMGA members and \$45 for non-members for the full series*

Tuesday, March 4, 2025	Emily May, Xerces Society Pesticides, Pollinators and the Garden
Wednesday, March 12, 2025	Glenn Herold, the Cottage Gardener Ephemerals and Woodland Plants
Wednesday, March 19, 2025	Glenn Herold Unusual Perennials through the Three Seasons

## 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. MGVs 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.

## 2024 Grants Awarded

*Roseann Meixelsperger, WIMGA Treasurer & Finance Committee Chair*

A benefit of WIMGA membership is our Educational Grants. Grant Funding budgeted for the 2025 year is \$8,850. Applications for each of the three levels of funding are due by October 1st. Application forms and WIMGA Educational Grant Criteria are on the WIMGA website under the [Grants tab](#). This is a great opportunity for your association to receive funding from WIMGA to help make your educational community projects become a reality. Electronic submissions are recommended. Please email your grant application(s) to [treasurer.wimga@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.wimga@gmail.com). This year's awards are listed below:

### **\$100 grants \$600 awarded**

Barron Co MGA	Spring Expo educational breakouts
Jefferson County MGA	Replace native plants that flooded in Haumerson Pond
Madison Area MGA	Seed starting kits & educational mat'l at Garden Expo
Northern Lights MGA	Children's program native seed bombs
Outagamie County MGA	Landscaping around non-profit building
Sauk County MGA	Educational plant sale and tomato tasting

### **\$250 grants \$1,750 awarded**

Clark Co MGA	Spring Garden Conference
Columbia Co MGA	Keynote speaker fee for educational outreach
Door Co MGA	Sensory Garden at Children First Development Ctr
Dunn Co MGA	Seed pots & promo mat'l at UW Stout Wellness Fair

Manitowoc County MGA	Educational event on best practice gardening
Portage County MGA	Tri fold display and cart for booth at Farmers Market
Rock Prairie MGA	Grow at home lettuce bowls for Grades 6 - 8
<b>\$400 grants \$6,400 awarded</b>	
Barron Co MGA	Tables and other needs for horticulture space
Columbia Co. MGA	Hydroponics system supplies for children's educational program
Door Co MGA	Birch Creek Performance Center Gardens rehabilitation
Eau Claire Area MG	Revamp extension office to include educational opportunities
Green County MGA	Annual garden symposium speaker fees
Master Gardeners of the North	"Wildflowers" Speaker fee Stan Tekiela's presentation
North Central WI MGA	Children's program expansion materials
Northeast WI MGA	Seed cleaning strainers for Seed Library
Outagamie County MGA	Spring Garden Conference
Racine-Kenosha MGA	Spring Into Gardening all day conference
Rock Prairie MGA	Build three 4'x8' raised beds for school garden
Saint Croix Valley MGA	Venue cost for the 2025 Garden U programming
Sheboygan Co MGA	Junior MG program
South East WI (SEW) MGA	Improve Children's Sensory Garden education
Washington County MGA	Speaker fees
Winnebago Co MGA	Remove & replace invasives from Morgan House

**Total Amount Granted: \$8,750**

Note: 2024 WIMGA Educational Grant Budget: \$8,850

### **WIMGA Grant Reports**

Each association that receives a grant will be responsible for submitting a written report about how the grant was used. The progress report must be submitted electronically or by other written means to the WIMGA Treasurer by **July 31** of the following year. Reports should include a description of the project, what the grant money was used for, how that enhanced the project and how the project impacted and/or educated the community. Articles may be written narrative style and photos are encouraged.

#### **Micro-Farm Project**

*Becky Gutzman, Columbia Co MG*

The Columbia County Master Gardeners used their \$250 grant to support their on-going youth education project, The Micro-farm in Schools. We purchased more seeds and seed-starting mix for the planting portion of the experience, and disposable bowls, forks, and salad dressing for the harvesting/tasting portion at the end. Our expense for the consumable supplies runs about \$30-35 (depending on the total number of students) per six-week session.

Elementary students in ten classrooms in four different schools benefited from the micro-farm experience this year. They learned what seeds need to grow, how plants develop, and why plants are good for us to eat.

They planted the seeds, cared for the plants, watered and checked on the lighting for a six-week period. They compared growth rates, different plant forms, tastes and textures. Teachers loved how this hands-on experience extends their science curriculum, and parents appreciate that students have another way to learn about eating new foods.



This micro-farm program is one of the favorite volunteer activities for our association members. Our association has used this project to make county board members and other associations aware of the value of working with youth in our community.

limited resources.

We also do not charge for this program, so that makes this a very accessible program for schools and teachers with

## **Morgan House Information Box**

*Kathy Schultz, Winnebago Co MG*

The Winnebago County Historical Society (WCHS) project for Winnebago Co MG Association received a \$400 WIMGA grant in 2023 to purchase and erect a weatherproof information box to be placed outside the historical home. The box would then be used to display information, including photos, about the gardens surrounding the home.

The box was purchased, along with the supplies needed to place it in the ground at a site



frequently passed by all visitors. Our project team completed this task in early spring; and information was immediately placed inside. We point out garden methods used in the 1880's, as well as current issues facing all gardeners, such as invasive plants and jumping worms, both found on this property. This information will change with the seasonal changes of the garden. For example, in July, we inform readers of the Burning Bush, which is considered invasive in our state; and how to control the spread of this shrub. We also include pictures of plants in the box currently blooming to help readers identify the trees and plants on the property, including a 100+ year old Burr Oak tree. This would not be possible without the weatherproof box.

The WCHS members are very happy with this new addition. They open the doors of the home each week; and offer frequent events that bring people to the home. This box also invites those who visit to wander about the grounds to see what plants were popularly used during this 1880's period. The WCMG team for this project created an album, including seasonal information along with photographs that will be kept in the home for reference and for visitors to browse through.

## Plants Talking to Each Other, Really?

Article by: Donna Mae Stohlmann, St Croix Valley MG

Mr. Daisy, to his friend Ms. Daisy, “Hey, there Sweetie, there is this bug that keeps bothering me, watch out for him”. Did YOU hear anything? I didn’t...this plant is talking to another flower, and us, Master Gardeners, did not hear anything!

WHAT IS GOING ON WITH OUR FLOWERS AND VEGETABLES? WELL, LET ME EXPLAIN . . .



[Frontiers for Young Minds](#)

The bottom line is that plants are great communicators. They are constantly releasing lots of useful information into the environment, especially using chemicals and sounds. Scientists are only just beginning to understand how this information is produced and how it is then picked up by other plants for their own benefit. Faith Applequist, from Apple Valley, MN is also on the board of the Minnesota Arboretum and will be speaking at The Barron County [Spring Garden Expo](#) in Rice Lake, April 5, 2025, on the topic “How Plants Communicate and Adapt to Thrive”.



Applequist said it takes tremendous biological creativity to be a plant. To live and thrive while rooted in a single place, plants have adapted ingenious methods of survival. Science has learned in recent years about plants’ ability to communicate, count, behave socially, to hear sounds, to store useful memories that inform their life cycle and even to trick animals into behaving to their benefit. “Smarty Plants” is a deep immersion into the drama of the green life and the complexity of this wild world that challenges our very understanding of agency, consciousness, and intelligence.

There are many messages we know plants from a patch of moss to a 300-foot sequoia can send. “I think we’re seeing that communication is just as great with plants as it is with animals,” says Mamta Rawat, a microbiologist and program director at the National Science Foundation (NSF). “I think there’s a lot more to be learned—we’re just touching the tip of the iceberg.”

In March 2024, a new study showed many different plant species make ultrasonic sounds to communicate stress. It’s the latest evidence showing how plants “talk” with everything from predators to pollinators. Understanding how plants communicate could help us increase arable lands to feed our growing population and adapt to climate change. To react to their environment, a single plant must communicate among its roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruit.

Instead of signals moving through a nervous system like ours, Simon Gilroy, professor of botany at University of Wisconsin-Madison, says in plants, it’s more like plumbing. Leaves detect predators or changes in light and sound, and roots monitor conditions below ground—problems with nutrients, water, and predators could be there too.

Electrical signals travel through the movement of chemicals in those tubes, explains Courtney Jahn, a biologist and NSF program director who studies plant interactions. For example, roots can detect drought and tell leaves to limit transpiration and conserve



water. Researchers can see this electrical communication by placing electrodes in two unusual places on a plant. We've even made instruments that can translate that electric charge into sounds we can hear. If a plant is wounded, electrical signals emanate from that wound, Gilroy

says. And plants can transmit these electric signals between individuals if they are touching.

Both Venus fly traps and sensitive plants (*Mimosa pudica*) send electrical signals when touched, Jahn says. The former closes its mouth to trap their prey, while the sensitive plant moves to shake insects off. Chemicals, including hormones, also travel within a plant. A hormone called auxin is produced at the top of a plant and travels downwards telling a sprout trying to break through the soil's surface which way is up. When there's an urgent threat, like predation from insects, the plant must react quickly or be entirely consumed. Many plants under this kind of stress send out the hormone jasmonic acid, which tells the plant to start producing a toxin to defend itself.



Some species can detect plants responding to danger (a mouse might "hear" it, an insect might "smell" it), like hearing someone yell "ow!" in the distance. It's difficult to say whether those signals just happen, or if they are intended for others to receive them. Communicating with their surroundings can help plants survive. Eye-catching flowers blooming in the spring send a message to insects and animals that their flowers are ready for pollination.

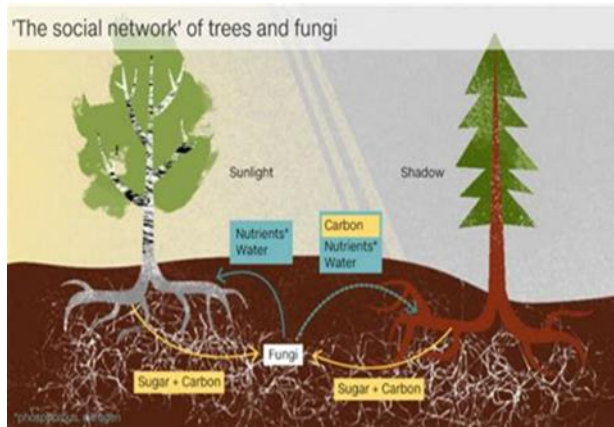
Researchers found that with special microphones that detect bat calls, you can hear plants, too. A wide range of species from tomatoes to cacti emit ultrasonic popping sounds when they're stressed that can be heard by insects like moths, and mammals like bats and mice. Scientists are listening to these sounds of distress to find new methods to diagnose, treat, and watch plants without touching them.

As humans, we may not be able to naturally hear them, but we can often smell plant messages. When grass is cut, it releases gaseous chemicals, a fragrant distress signal. It's a comforting scent to those of us who associate it with being outside in warmer months. Plants also release this scent when eaten by a caterpillar—and as if responding to their call for help—other bugs take notice and prey on those caterpillars. This smelly signal belongs to a group of chemicals called volatiles, which can travel far as gases both above and below ground. Each plant species has their own special mixture of volatile compounds.

Natalia Dudareva, biochemist at Purdue University, says these volatile compounds have many distinct functions. Volatiles can draw in pollinators when a flower is ready, and even direct them to flowers left unpollinated. Volatiles from fruits attract organisms that will eat and distribute seeds. They're also sent from leaves to drive away predators.

Researchers have also learned plants can send messages through volatiles about specific threats they're facing, like predation. Plants neighboring a volatile-emitting plant have been observed to prepare to defend against a threat before they experience it themselves.

Plants can also detect kin vs non-kin using volatiles and change their behavior accordingly. Plants will detect their offspring and help them grow instead of competing with them for resources, says Andrea Clavijo McCormick, research officer at the school of agriculture and environment at Massey University.



Plants release volatiles underground. Especially prevalent in forests, plants send a “come here” signal to fungi underground, which wraps around the root. Many fungi can stretch and gather nutrients, delivering it back to the plant in exchange for sugar the plant made through photosynthesis. Mosses are one of many kinds of plants that form symbiotic relationships with fungi. Mosses provide sugars they make through photosynthesis, and the fungi give the mosses nutrients.

A tree in a forest will form relationships with different fungi, and one fungus will have relationships with many different trees—connecting them in a mycorrhizal network, says Cathie Aime, professor of mycology at Purdue University and rotating program director at NSF. When multiple trees are connected by one fungus, they can share resources. Carbon has been traced going through an older nurse tree through fungal networks to another, younger tree that's too young to get a good source of light and photosynthesize.

Below ground, plants also communicate with microbes. Like fungi, they're drawn to the roots and attach themselves by forming a biofilm. For example, growth-promoting bacteria can prime the plant's defenses, increasing their resistance to disease. Research into plants' microbiomes below ground is ripe for exploration, and findings could help us enrich soil to feed our growing population.

So, the next time you tread on green grass or pick a flower, remember that the poor injured plant might be screaming out to its neighbors—but we humans just cannot hear it!

## Mount Hood

*Article & Photos by: Donna Mae Stohlmann, St Croix Valley MG*



I had a short vacation in November to Portland, Oregon to see the amazing waterfalls and Mount Hood. Mount Hood, also known as Wy'east, is an active stratovolcano in the Cascade Range and is a member of the Cascade Volcanic Arc. It was formed by a subduction zone on the Pacific Coast and rests in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. It is located about 50 miles east-southeast of Portland, on the border between Clackamas and Hood River counties, and forms part of the Mount Hood National Forest.



With a summit elevation of 11,249 feet, it is the highest mountain in the state of Oregon and is the fourth highest in the Cascade Range. Mt. Hood attracts an estimated 10,000 climbers each year.



Cascade Falls

The peak is home to 12 named glaciers and snowfields. Mount Hood is considered the Oregon volcano most likely to erupt. The odds of an eruption in the next 30 years are estimated at between 3 and 7%, so the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) characterizes it as "potentially active", but the mountain is informally considered dormant.

The mountain was given its present name on October 29, 1792, by Lt. William Broughton, a member of Captain George Vancouver's exploration expedition. Lt. Broughton observed its peak while at Belle Vue Point of what is now called Sauvie Island during his travels up the Columbia River, writing, "A very high, snowy mountain now appeared rising beautifully conspicuous in the midst of an extensive tract of low or moderately elevated land and seemed to announce a termination to the river." Lt. Broughton named the mountain after Samuel Hood, 1st Viscount Hood, a British admiral. ([wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org))



Multnomah Falls

## 2025 Events



The North Central Master Gardener's will hold their annual **Garden Visions** conference on Saturday, January 18, 2025, from 8am-3:30pm at Northcentral Technical College in Wausau. Our keynote speaker is Melinda Myers.

There will be other speakers, vendors, and lunch!!!  
Click on this [link for registration](#) and more information.

### Garden U: Gardening for the Future

Coordinated by the St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners, on Saturday, March 15, 2025, from 8am-3pm at the Northwood Technical College, New Richmond Conference Center, this session will equip you with tools for a thriving, future-focused garden.

Explore sustainable gardening practices to adapt to changing climates, from understanding zonal shifts to cultivating resilient landscapes. Learn the importance of native plants for supporting pollinators, eco-friendly approaches to pest control, and essential pruning techniques for healthier trees and shrubs. Follow [link for registration](#) and more information.



### Let's Get Green and Growing [Online registration](#)

Hosted by Columbia County Master Gardeners Saturday, March 22, 2025, 8:45 am - 2:45 pm. Keynote: Samantha Peckham – "Can Our Gardens Save Us From Ourselves?"

Send your association events to [news@wimga.org](mailto:news@wimga.org) for publication in the newsletter and on our website.



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Additional Resources from the Extension Horticulture Program:

**Ask the Experts:**

[A Monthly Garden and Landscape Q&A Series](#)

Sponsored by the UW-Madison

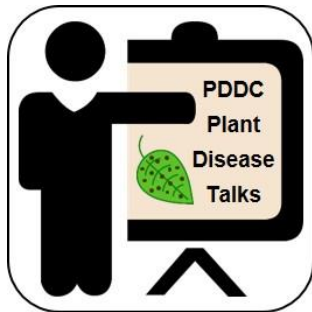
Division of Extension Horticulture Program

Join our monthly online programs in 2025 for an opportunity to connect with plant health experts from the UW-Madison Division of Extension. Each session, held on Mondays at 1:30 p.m., is your chance to ask questions about your trees and shrubs, garden vegetables and ornamentals, and lawn.

Whether it's about plant diseases, pesky insects, or the selection and general care of plants in and around your home, our panel of seasoned experts will provide you with insightful answers. Don't miss out on this opportunity to cultivate your knowledge and keep your plants thriving.

These online sessions are free, but registration is required for each session you would like to attend. Upon registration you will receive an email confirmation with the link for joining the session.

**2025 PDDC Plant Disease Talks**



Each month in 2025, the UW Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic sponsors a Zoom presentation on a plant disease-related topic.

Check out descriptions and a preview of the talks and register for one or more of the talks, [CLICK HERE](#).

**Top Ten Plant Diseases of 2024**

January 22, 2025. 6:30 – 8:30 pm

**Fundamentals of Plant Diseases**

February 26, 2025, 6:30 – 9:00 pm

**[Ask Your Gardening Question](#)**

This site is monitored by Wisconsin Master Gardeners.



## Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA)

Serving its members since 1992

January 2025 Newsletter

*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.*

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

### Wisconsin Master Gardener Association Team:

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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.*