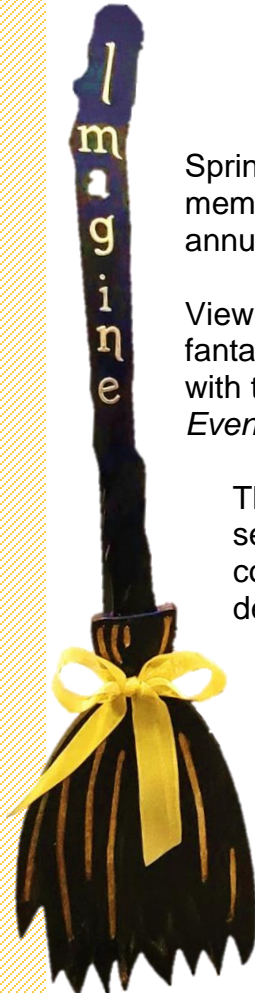


Wisconsin Gardens

Volume 75,
Issue 2
Spring 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
EXPO	3
Fun at Expo	5
Mound Vue GC	5
Madison District	6
Convention 2024	7
Fund Raising	8
Fox River Valley	8
Time to Measure	9
Ruth West Award	10
Convention Awards	10
Garden Design	11
Donation	12
Sugar River GC	13
Milwaukee District	13
Birds	14
Racine GC	16
Central Region GC	16
Willow River GC	17
President's Project	17
National Garden Week	18
Organizational Study	19
Herbs	20
Book Review	22
South Shore GC	22
What is a Nativar?	23
Ikebana	25
Plant Share	26
Environmental School	26
Endangered Species	27
Vinegar Kills Weeds	28
St. Croix District	29
Dates	30
Arbor Day	30
Sheboygan District	31
Easy Plants	32
Bees	33
Fox Point GC	34
Lake Wissota GC	35
Garden Journal	36
Yarrow	37
Hardiness Zones	40



“IMAGINING” SPRING

at the Garden & Landscape Expo
Gerianne Holzman

Spring arrived early in Madison when the Madison District Garden Clubs' members hosted *Imagine, a Standard Flower Show*, at PBS Wisconsin's annual Garden & Landscape Expo.

Viewers from across the Midwest strolled through the show, admiring the fantasy-inspired designs. The attendees entered a land of enchantment with themes including *Fairy Tales, Journey to Atlantis, Enchanted Evening, Three Wishes*, and *Elves & Fairies & Imps*.

The two-sided duo design especially challenged the designers with separate themes of *Which Witch Are You* and *Magic Spells* all in one container. With the help of previously held workshops, more new designers jumped at the chance to enter the show.

The unusually warm weather encouraged more members to transport their prized house plants and cut branches to the flower show, with a record number of entries. Flower shows educate the public, and this year's show included winter interest branches to inspire great ideas to add to one's garden for a winter landscape.

The crafters in the group especially enjoyed showing their skills with fairy gardens and *Cinderella's Slipper*, planted with succulents.



The Expo would not be complete without the exciting design challenge. The volunteer designers enthusiastically tackled the dreaded assemblage design of found objects and tropical flowers. The packed audience cheered them on as they attempted to defeat gravity.

The Madison District's Flower Show brought the world of the garden club to over 14,000 attendees;

IMAGINE THAT!



Making the World a Greener Place



CONSERVATION EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY



WGCF is a not-for-profit educational organization founded in 1928. It is a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Mission: WGCF provides education, resources and opportunities for its members to promote and share the love of gardening, floral design, civic and environmental responsibility.

President:
Linda McCafferty
 443 Woodview Drive
 Sun Prairie, WI 53051-6433
 lkmccm@gmail.com

First Vice President:
Joe Powelka
 5361 Betlach Road
 Sun Prairie, WI
 608-206-4238
 oneplus@chorus.net

Second Vice President:
Nancy Gregory
 1321 N. 21st Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53205
 enjaygee@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary:
Susan Wallace
 100 E. Parkland Drive
 Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
 naffer65@gmail.com

Membership Secretary:
Susan Johansen
 2249 122nd Street
 New Richmond, WI 54017
 715-781-6825

Treasurer:
Mary Jane Hull
 709 Brookstone Crest
 Mount Horeb, WI 53572
 608-437-2478
 hullmary249@gmail.com

Central Region Director:
Lynne Ehnert
 W143 N6828 Aspen Drive
 Menomonee Falls, WI 53051
 262-251-0452
 lehnert@wi.rr.com

NGC President:
Brenda Moore
 NGC Headquarters
 4401 Magnolia Avenue
 St Louis, MO 63110
 www.gardenclub.org



Message from our President

Gardening activities slow considerably in winter, but in the Madison District there was a flurry of activity with the NGC Standard Flower Show entitled "Imagine" and the exciting Design Challenge held in conjunction with the 2024 PBS Wisconsin Garden and Landscape Expo. It was a truly a spectacular event abounding with breathtaking beauty.

Oshkosh Garden Club held their annual fall Scholarship Luncheon. This year's event honored veterans and featured Dave Kersztyn, President of the Board of Oshkosh Military Veterans Museum and Educational Center. His presentation was entitled "Origin of Veterans Day and the Importance of Victory Gardens." The Museum honors the history of our veterans through education and preservation. The annual luncheon raised substantial funds for scholarships through silent auctions of unique items, drawings for luxuriously filled baskets, and ticket raffles.

On February 22, Lakeshore Garden Club commemorated its 75-year anniversary during a delightful Luncheon at Sheboygan Yacht Club. NGC, CR and WGCF Members, attended and extended their congratulations. Long-term members, Ginny Schreiber who joined in 1992, and Barbara Schneiderhan, who joined in 1993, were honored. Elaine Wagner presented a program showing how things have changed during the years, like clothing styles and members gaining their own identity, no longer being referred to by their husband's names. The presentation also included a review of long-standing projects that continue today.

Much work has been done planning the 2024 WGCF Convention in Milwaukee. If you have not already reserved your hotel room or completed your registration forms, please do that soon so you do not miss out on the serendipitous events planned for us.

Jimmy the Groundhog predicted that Spring will be early and the weather in the Midwest seems to be moving in that direction. The reality is that it is only April and more seasonal weather is likely. In any event, it will not be too long and our members will be avidly holding outdoor activities such as plant sales, garden walks, involvement with various community projects, and avidly providing education, resources and opportunities to promote and share the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibilities.



*Honoring Veterans and
 Gold Star Families*

Linda McCafferty



ADVERTISING RATES

Size	WGCF	Other
Full Page	\$150	\$200
Half page	\$75	\$150
Quarter page	\$37.50	\$75

Contact Laura Skoff, Manager
 lauraskoff@gmail.com

EXPO 2024

Jan Blooming



The PBS Wisconsin's Garden & Landscape Expo was a three-day event held in Madison in February. It featured the latest trends in gardening and landscaping. Now in its 31st year, this event offered more than 150 free presentations, the exhibitor mall with new products, horticulture experts, and a floral design competition. All proceeds went to support PBS Wisconsin.



At the website wigardenexpo.com, there are On-Demand Video Lectures from both 2023 and 2024. Topics include Trees and the Prairie Savanna Project, Garden Tools, Your Rose Garden, Container Gardening, Preserving the Harvest, and Preventing Bird Collisions with Your Windows.

Norma McReynolds,
 Enchanted Evening Table
 Artistry and Design
 Excellence Awards



Madison participants Jan
 Dixon, Maureen Wild
 Gordon, Gerianne Holzmann

Karen Lee-Wahl,
 Little Shop of
 Horrors Poisonous
 Plants



Gerianne Holzman,
 Which Witch are You?

The Madison District presented a
 Standard Flower Show, with the title

IMAGINE.

National Garden Clubs judges evaluated the entries and viewers voted for their favorite each day. A Standard Flower Show must conform to rules established by NGC as outlined in the Flower Show Schedule and the Handbook for Flower Shows. This includes not using artificial plant materials or coloring fresh ones.

Linda McCafferty, Three Wishes,
 Designer's Choice winner



WGCF President Linda McCafferty wrote, “Expo featured the Design Challenge with the designers using beautiful flowers flown in especially from Hawaii for the event, and miscellaneous staging items including curb-found hubcaps and pieces of metal fencing.

The twist introduced in the middle of the event was the requirement to use three plastic Nerf balls in the design. Three Flower Show Judges and a non-Judge competed against each other with the audience choosing the best design. Guess who that was – of course the non-Judge, our very own Jan Dixon!”



Competitors competing in the Design Challenge included Dawn Mozgawa, Kerry Krokos, Jan Dixon, and Wendy Kramer



Judy Niederberger, Oh My Petite Design



Diana Peterson, Mary Ross, Jan Dixon working the Madison District

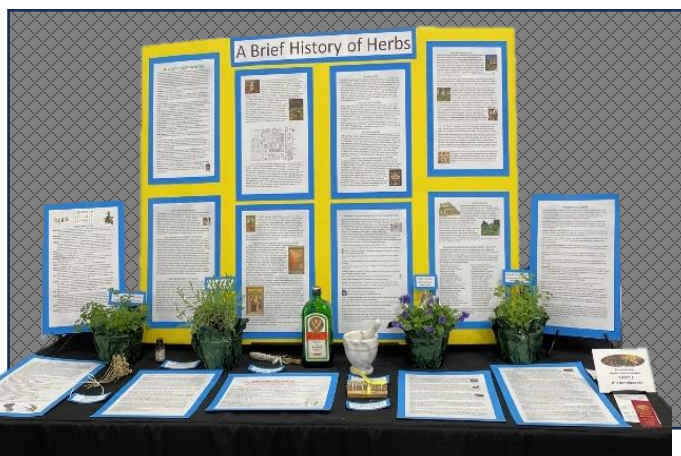
Design themes were somewhat unusual. They included *Three Wishes*, for novices only, *Which Witch Are You*, with two designs in one container, and *Magic Spells*, created by two designs in one container joined to appear as one.

Additional interesting arrangements were *Enchanted Evening*, a table for two, *Journey to Atlantis*, which included an underwater element, *Oh My*, a design up to 12” tall, *Fairy*

Gardens, a miniature landscape, and *Cinderella’s Slipper*, a shoe planted with succulents, and many more. If you did not make it in February, 2024, mark your calendar for 2025.



A Brief History of Herbs



Horticulture exhibitors did not need to pre-register, and entries were accepted on Thursday and early Friday. Weather was so agreeable, that they were swamped with greenery!



FUN at EXPO

Diana Peterson

Over 14,000 people attended this year's PBS Landscape and Garden Expo, and our Madison District booth was right in the middle of it all. Staffing the Madison District booth was so much fun. Meeting members of other garden clubs and talking with people about what you can expect from joining a club reminded me of why I still stay involved and plan to get even more involved with the Madison District. I know from my conversations that we will have more than a few new members from those we met and talked with at Expo.



Judy Niederberger, Sugar River Gardeners, working on her floral interpretation of Little Red Riding Hood. It received second place at the flower show.

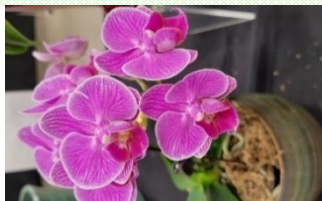
Our Flower Show, **IMAGINE**, was again a great hit. Fairy Garden was my first entry into a flower show, and I was surprised to win the 1st Place Ribbon in the Fairy Garden class, the overall Botanical Arts Horticulture ribbon and a Viewer's Choice Award. WOW how cool is that!

I learned so much from the judge's comments on the other entries that I may try my hand with an arrangement next year.



Mound Vue Garden Club

Barb Case, President



Maureen



Jan

MVGC had several noteworthy programs in the last several months. In January, John Heasley's presentation was *Preserving Our Dark Skies*. The February meeting featured *Fantastic Ferns and How to Grow Them*, by Dan Schuknecht, and in March Dr. Karen Oberhauser, former UW Arboreum Director, spoke on Conservation in a Changing World,

Ed Glover has reinstated his monthly Horticultural Hint! This month's topic was peonies. He outlined the difference between

Herbaceous, Tree, and Intersectional Peonies, and how they differ. Larry Kruckman, a new member, continues to make progress in managing the Club's Facebook page with posts of events and membership information.

Jan Swartz and Maureen Wild Gordon proudly represented Mound Vue Garden with entries at the Madison District Flower Show held at the Expo. We are happy to announce that Jan received a Blue ribbon, Grower's Choice, and Horticultural Excellence for her Moth Orchid. Maureen received a Blue Ribbon for underwater design, *Journey to Atlantis*.



Also, a big thank you to Maureen, who has volunteered to be the MVGC liaison with the District and State Garden Clubs. Her many years of Garden Club experience will add immense value to our Club.

Goings on in the Madison District

Jan Dixon, Director



The major efforts of Madison District this winter were directed toward our involvement in PBS Wisconsin Garden Expo in February. From the district booth, educational displays, horticulture division and flower show, every club lent a hand. Sunset President Jacci See



Sunset Garden Club had a presentation by Paul Dearlove from *The Clean Lakes Alliance* and Gerianne Holzman helped members make holiday wreaths.

Sun Prairie Garden Club members did their highway clean-up in the fall and had a presentation from *Tallgrass Restoration*.



On the 61st anniversary of **Olbrich Garden Club**, they had a presentation by *The Road Home*, which provides support for unhoused families.



West Side Garden Club



Mound Vue Garden Club

Sugar River Gardeners created gift cards and bags for the residents of *Four Winds Manor*.



WGCF Convention 2024

Kitty Larken, Chairman

Kerry Krokos and Norma McReynolds, Convention Vice-Chairmen

Hosted by the Milwaukee District, the 96th Wisconsin Garden Clubs Federation Convention and Annual Meeting will be held May 19 – 21 at the Milwaukee Marriott West in Waukesha. It is easy to get to, as it is right off I-94, County Highway F, Exit 295.



The convention schedule, speakers bios and registration form are on the WGCF website as well as the Milwaukee District website. Questions? Please reach out to the convention committee.

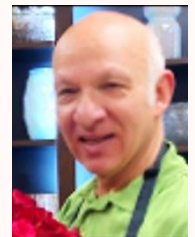


The convention's opening banquet and reception will recognize our WGCF Bronze Award recipient, Mark Dwyer, and honored guests Linda McCafferty, WGCF President, and Lynne Ehnert, Central Region Director. Mark will inspire us to develop beautiful and environmentally-friendly landscapes. His talk will be followed by a dessert reception and musical entertainment.

At Monday's luncheon, Pam Karlson will talk about her backyard oasis in Chicago, and how she puts out wren boxes every spring. After hearing Pam, you'll be glad you signed up for the *Build a Wren Bird House* workshop. Easy to assemble, the wren house parts and pieces are painted and have predrilled nail holes. You'll work with a partner to build your bird house and should have time to decorate it with decals and stencils if you like.



Speakers include Virginia Small, the author of *Great Gardens of the Berkshires*, and Doug Jaeger, a Certified Florist and a Life Member of National Garden Clubs. Monday evening, Virginia, an award-winning journalist and a member of the Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee, will discuss urban and landscape design and how gardeners can be the stewards for ecology resilience and beauty.



Our convention ends Tuesday noon with Doug, who began his floral designing career with WGCF and National Garden Clubs. He will be inspiring us and demonstrating how to create floral designs.

There is a waiting list for the peace post workshop. If you're interested in decorating a peace post, let us know when you register because a spot may open up. Space is available in the wren house workshop both Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning and in the photography and parliamentary procedure breakout sessions Tuesday morning.

We have vendors for your shopping pleasure, and garden clubs have donated baskets for the *Ticket-a-Tasket Raffle*. In your spare time, check out the educational displays.

Thanks to the many garden clubs and their members who are helping to make Serendipity happen.



FUND RAISING

Linda McCafferty, President WGCF



National Garden Club conducts periodic Zoom “Care to Share” events for Region Directors and State Presidents to share issues, ideas and problems.

January’s meeting discussed fundraising. Some states sell useful items such as jackets, t-shirts, umbrellas, and throws, but these are not necessarily of interest to non-members. One item that was discussed at length was small lapel pins containing the picture of an insect or animal and labeled, “I’m a Pollinator.” While bees, birds, bats, and butterflies first come to mind, small amphibians, reptiles and flightless mammals are also pollinators.

The person explaining the project mentioned that her favorite pollinator animal was an elephant and that got everyone’s attention. She indicated she wore numerous pins wherever she went, people asked about them and she sold them off her shirt. She also indicated that the pollinator pins were also sold at flower shows, garden tours and other gardening events that attract non-members.

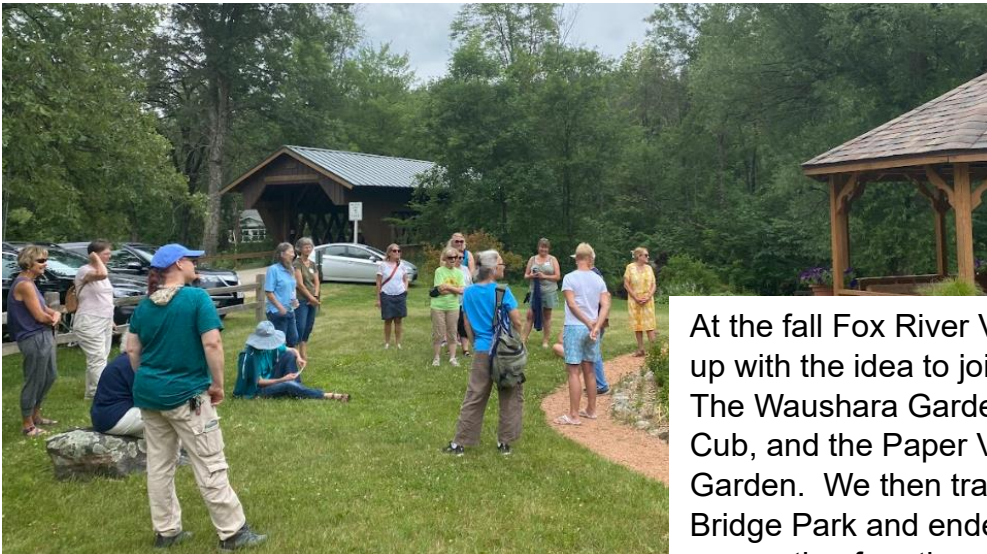


Another suggestion was Brent and Becky’s Bulb Flower Power Fundraising which is more likely to be used on a district or club level. We determined that unfortunately there are not any tried-and-true products for fundraising success. The topic of the next “Care to Share” will be lower cost sites for conventions and other types of meetings.

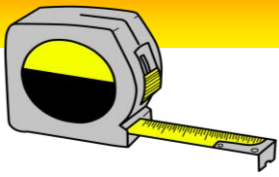
Fox River Valley District

Carol Caitlin, Director

The Paper Valley Garden Club had our meeting at the Fox Valley Technical College and made Valentine's floral boxes. Some small enough to decorate a hallway or some for gift-giving and decorating. Everyone had a great time and came up with these ideas! Come join us soon.



At the fall Fox River Valley District Convention, we came up with the idea to join clubs together for a garden tour. The Waushara Gardeners, Wisconsin Rapids Garden Club, and the Paper Valley Garden Club met at Graziano’s Garden. We then traveled to the Springwater Covered Bridge Park and ended with lunch. Great fun and a suggestion for other clubs.



Time to Measure



Diane Powelka, Operation Wild Flower

It's time to measure up your space for planting native shrubs. You can plan a variety of approaches whether you want to make a group or a single bush. Look at the measurements in your yard before deciding what to plant. We have a beautiful serviceberry, and it is in the right location. I'm glad we decided to put it in a place with adequate space to grow or it would have been growing sideways under the neighbor's lilac bushes.

Now I need some shorter shrubs to put under those lilac bushes and give them room for the sunlight they need. I will be looking for shrubs that have flowers on them and berries later in the season.

I will be looking at the following:

Wild Sweet Cranberry *Malus coronaria* prefers sun and moist loamy soil. Fruits are small and bitter but use them for preserves or cider. Wildlife uses the tree as a food source and for cover and nesting.



Flowering Dogwood *Cornus florida* is one of America's most popular ornamental trees. It is native to eastern North America and northern Mexico. It is planted as an ornamental because of showy bracts and interesting bark.



Frosted Hawthorn *Crataegus pruinosa* or waxy-fruited Hawthorn, is a native shrubby tree in the rose family found over much of the Eastern United States and Canada.



Northern Hackberry *Celtis occidentalis* is a U.S. native that is widely distributed throughout the East and Midwest. It is best grown in moist, well-drained soils in full sun. It will tolerate part shade, wind, and many pollutants.



I will also be looking for spring ephemerals and native plants that grow understory. They include . . .

- Spring Beauty *Claytonia virginica*
- Yellow Trout Lily *Erghromium americanus*
- White Trillium *Trillium grandiflorum*
- Liverleaf *Hepatica nobilis*
- Bellwort *Uvularia grandiflora*
- Big-Leaved Aster *Erybia macrophylla*

- Dutchman's Breeches *Dicentra cucullaria*
- Wild Ginger *Asarum canadense*
- Bloodroot *Sanguinaria canadensis*
- Jacob's Ladder *Polemonium reptans*
- Virginia Bluebells *Mertensia virginica*

Some books have all kinds of Wisconsin Wildflowers that I would not plant. You need to verify what is an aggressive plant or more of a weed but also grows in Wisconsin.

Early plants will be looking for sunlight while the shrubs will not sprout out for until later. So, what are you waiting for? Keep the area weed free as undesirable weeds will move in and it may be difficult to remove them once they anchor their roots.

I saw a catalog suggesting a Burning Bush to plant in your landscape, but please chose something else! The birds eat the berries and drop them in the forest or other places that are undesirable. The burning bush is a shrub that is banned in some locations because it can become invasive.



Ruth West

Ruth West Award

Mary Jane Hull, Treasure and Jan Blooming, Editor

Awards are given yearly at the annual WGCF Convention. The Ruth West Horticultural Award is presented to the club having an outstanding horticulture program throughout the year. It is a monetary award, with the amount to be determined by the Ruth St. John and John Dunham West Foundation in Manitowoc, WI. Information about applying and the application form are available on the WGCF website.

The award began with a donation from Ruth West many years ago, and each year the WGCF treasurer would apply for a funding grant for money to be awarded to the deserving club. Clubs could then use the money to promote horticulture through education and hands-on community projects.

We never knew from year to year if the funding would be granted. However, at the February meeting, WGCF treasurer, Mary Jane Hull, reported that WGCF was notified that the West Foundation had reviewed our grant application and will be making the funds available every two years, \$500 for two awards. We will no longer need to apply for funding, and the Ruth West Award will continue for years to come.



Thank you Ruth West Foundation.

WGCF deeply appreciates your interest in our activities and will continue to keep the name Ruth West active in our organization.

In 1944, Ruth became the Director of the Sheboygan District, and in 1946, was elected President of WGCF. Her theme was, Work for Your Federation and You Will Love It, and the biggest task of her administration was to bring the Constitution and By-Laws up to date.

The former home of John and Ruth West is just north of Manitowoc on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. The name of this attraction is

West of the Lake, and it is open to the public at no cost. It is a must see, and if you have not been there, add it to your bucket list. To learn more about Ruth West, take a look at the 2022 Spring Issue of Wisconsin Gardens.



AWARDS at CONVENTION

Doris Weber, Awards Chairman



It's that time of the year for the WGCF Awards Committee to evaluate applications for awards to be presented at our 2024 Convention in May.

It's also time for you start recording events, activities, garden walks, workshops, parades, plant sales, special programs, and youth programs, so you can easily complete applications for awards to be given in spring of 2025. Many awards are based on what your club accomplishes throughout the year. Take note also of members who go above and beyond the call of duty for the **"And-Then-Some" V.I.P. Award** and the **Lydia Schafer Award**.

There is sure to be a club member who can prepare the paperwork, complete the application, and gather the necessary pictures for your club to be recognized.

Information is on the WGCF website and some of the paperwork can be filled out on line. Applications can also be emailed to **Doris Weber, WGCF AWARDS CHAIRMAN**. Take note of the due dates, and include all needed items. Questions? Email Doris at doris@johnqweber.com, or phone 920-467-3266 with questions. Keep up your good work and earn awards. Get started by planning on getting applications to Doris in Fall!



GARDEN DESIGN

Carol Catlin



Designing a garden is a daunting task with lots of experimenting! Sometimes, your great ideas and designs are usurped by other events such as weather, insects, and animal pests, or when husbands remove all of the plant ID markers thinking that the markers clutter the garden.

An important element of a garden design is understanding the soils in the garden. Clay soils are prevalent in the Appleton area, and the last glacier deposited clay with bands of sand to our west. Clay and sandy areas are on the same property!

Clay soils are vexing to deal with. Clay is made up of small particles which hold water and become quite sticky when wet. Clay becomes like concrete when sand is added or the clay dries out. Over the years, I amended my clay soils with composted manure and compost from my local town landfill. Sandy soils benefit from amending the soils with compost, mulch, and manure. Over the years, clay soil is lighter and drains better.

I also use shredded bark on all of my perennial flower beds. Weeds are controlled and in dry summers, the bark holds moisture in the soil. Sandy soils also benefit from mulch. Because rain runs quickly through sandy soils, it benefits from mulching.



Following ideas from Mother Nature, create curves in your garden. Plant taller perennials and shrubs in the background and shorter plants in the front of the garden bed.

An important ingredient in garden design is knowing the track of the sun. It seems simple to plant sun loving plants in sunny locations and shade tolerant plants in shady locations, but every so often, we try testing boundaries! Plants tell you if they don't like their location. They just do poorly!

Color of flowering plants is one of the important elements in planning a garden. Each gardener must choose their garden palette. I used too much yellow and the garden became so bland. Now, I search for strong colors in perennials that I plant between the yellows! I also try to place spring, summer and fall blooming plants among the yellows.



Planting annuals also is a way of providing color interest. I use petunias, especially the Wave Series, zinnias and marigolds. In autumn, the butterflies love the zinnias.



These are basic and simple ideas and I hope they inspire your garden designs!



*Best Wishes
To the Milwaukee
District*

*For A Successful
2024 WGCF
Convention*

*Hawthorn
Garden Club*



Sunday, July 14, 10 to 4

Rain or Shine



RACINE GARDEN CLUB

Invites you to

*Summer Magic
Garden Tour*

Seven private gardens, including an English Cottage Garden, an Oriental Garden and a Whimsical Garden that will delight you.

Tickets are \$10 each.

In June, please go to
www.racinegardenclub.org
for ticket sale locations.



DONATION



Sinceree from the Victory Garden Initiative and Helen and Grant

THE VICTORY GARDEN INITIATIVE is an organization that operates in Milwaukee to help people build and grow their own gardens. The Victory Garden Initiative has helped community members install over 500 raised garden beds and teaches people how to tend their gardens and raise food in areas where fresh produce is not readily available.

Recently, all of their garden tools were stolen from their storage area in the Harambee neighborhood.

President Nancy Cody announced that the **GARDEN CLUB OF GREATER MILWAUKEE** donated \$1,000 to help them replace the stolen tools. The group was contacted to find out what they needed and GCGM members Helen Dahms and Grant Kniedler volunteered to purchase the items and work with organization to have them delivered.

The Victory Garden Initiative is looking for volunteers this gardening season. If interested, check out their website here:

<https://victorygardeninitiative.org/>





Sugar River Gardeners

Dawn Mozgawa and Annette Stratman-Durrer, Co-Presidents

SUGAR RIVER GARDENERS, teacher Whitney Fowler, and the City of Verona, Wisconsin, have been working together on the Edible Gardens Project. Whitney Fowler taught gardening at the high school, but she seldom saw teenagers eating fruits and vegetables. Fowler read about a produce garden project, and it encouraged her to launch a similar garden in Verona. The concept became a reality with assistance from Sugar River Gardeners, grants from Wisconsin Garden Club Federation, the Ames Tool Company, and a Visibility Award. Verona Parks Department, Verona High School shop class, and Verona Press, provided access to parks and water, built the garden boxes, and wrote articles in the newspaper publicizing the project.



Central Park

The objective was to provide free produce, increase the consumption of fresh produce to those that did not have ready access, increase awareness of sustainable gardening, and build community around shared garden spaces.

Over the last six years the Edible Gardens have expanded into three locations, Central Park, Harriett Park and Hometown Junction.

Garden club members and the

Verona community planners enhanced the soil, planted, and maintained the gardens over the growing season. Neighborhood residents and passersby often comment on how wonderful the gardens are and purposely go out of their way to view, pick and enjoy what is growing.



Hometown Junction

In 2022, Sugar River Gardeners developed a website to promote awareness of the edible gardens, the Beautification Award Project, and garden club events. Plans for 2024 include adding a QR code on plant signs to disseminate information about vegetables and herbs, their value and how they can be used.



Harriett Park



Milwaukee District

Diane Olsen, Interim Director

The Milwaukee District is having a **FUNDRAISER** to raise money for a Blue Star Marker on the Hank Aaron Trail where we are installing the ADA bench. It will be located at 88th Street near the State Fair grounds. We are approved for the marker and three wild plums.

The District is selling **Starla's Seasonings Mixes**. The cost is \$6 a pack and there are 20 offerings to choose from. For a list of the varieties and an order sheet, go to the District website www.milwaukeeidistrictgardenclubs.org. Contact District Interim Director Diane Olsen for further information. Her email is gunga_din13@hotmail.com and her phone is 414-578-2513.





EASTERN PHOEBE

Kathy Shaw

The Eastern Phoebe is a songbird belonging to the flycatcher family, and flying insects make up most of its diet. They will also eat spiders, other insects, and small fruits and seeds. I encourage you to invite Eastern Phoebes into your gardens, where they will eat a great many insects that could damage your flowers and vegetables.

As one of the smallest members of the flycatcher family, the Eastern Phoebe is a seven-inch songbird with a medium-length tail. It is brownish-gray above and off-white below, with a dusky wash to the sides of the breast.

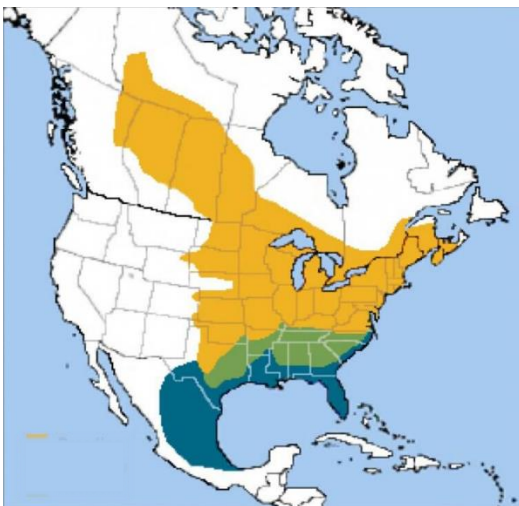
The head is typically the darkest part of its body, and in fact, it appears large-headed for a bird of its size. The head often appears flat on top, but phoebes sometimes raise the feathers up into a peak. Like most small flycatchers, they have short, thin bills used for catching insects. Best of all, its gentle tail-wagging habit and soft fee-bee song make the Phoebe easy to identify, unlike many flycatchers.

Fun Fact . . . Tail pumping is thought to be a predator deterrent, signaling to the predator that they've been spotted and should not try to attack.



The Eastern Phoebe favors open woods such as yards, gardens, parks, and woodland edges. These birds generally perch low in trees, on posts and on fence-lines. Phoebes are active, making short flights to capture insects and often returning to the same perch.

They are named for the song they sing. They make sharp “peep” calls in addition to their familiar *phoebe* vocalizations. Go to [Eastern Phoebe | State of Tennessee, Wildlife Resources Agency \(tn.gov\)](http://EasternPhoebe|StateofTennessee.WildlifeResourcesAgency(tn.gov)) to hear their call.



This flycatcher is among the earliest migrants, bringing hope that spring is at hand. They breed across the northeastern and central United States and into Canada before migrating to southeastern US states and Mexico for winter. Some birds may remain all year towards the south of their range.

Seemingly quite tame, this bird often nests around buildings and bridges where it is easily observed. Mostly found in the eastern half of the United States, in winter some birds remain all year towards the south of their range in the states in line with Tennessee and further south.

Breeding
Region



Resident
Region



Wintering
Region





It is easy to set up a nesting site for them. All you need is a small six-inch wall-shelf installed below an overhang on your house, garage, or shed, not more than fifteen feet off the ground.

Phoebes are not aggressive and are great neighbors, getting used to the comings and goings of humans very quickly. Our shelf is right by the patio, and we and our dog go in and out all day with no issues.

The nesting family even got used to us sitting on the patio reading. We just did shorter durations the first few sessions. A note of caution, we try to make sure the garage and shed doors are kept closed in April and May, so they don't try to nest in the rafters.

Phoebes are monogamous for the season and may stay so for multiple seasons, though they are solitary birds outside of the breeding season. The nest site is chosen by the female, who will begin building it and then be joined by the male. The same site is often used repeatedly, and they may build on top of the old nest. The nest will be a five-inch open cup with a solid base of mud, built up with moss, leaves, and grass, lined with fine grass and animal hair.

Phoebes will lay four to five white eggs, sometimes with a few dots of reddish brown. Incubation is about 16 days by the female only. Both parents bring food for nestlings. The young usually leave the nest about 16 days after hatching. The pair will typically raise two broods per year, though we have had summers with three broods on our patio.



It is fun to watch the phoebes venture from their perch and fly out to catch insects. As I said in the beginning, flying insects make up much of their summer diet and included are small wasps, bees, beetles, flies, true bugs, grasshoppers. They also eat spiders, ticks, and millipedes. Most insects are caught in mid-air, though some are taken from foliage while briefly hovering. They will also drop to the ground to pick up insects. Their favorite hunting perches in our yard are our dog's cable run and the posts and structures in our garden.

They will even perch on Copper's cable while he's lying in the grass enjoying the summer sun.

If you live in the right sort of environment, a mix of wooded and open areas, you may see this bird in your yard or garden. There's also a chance they'll come around for mealworms and fresh water, especially if there is a good place to perch nearby. Along with bluebirds and wrens, they are great birds to have around during the summer gardening season.



Racine Garden Club



Garden Tour Committee Ruth Mandala, Annmarie Bany Flynn, Maggie Smerchek, Jerilynn Barkdull, and Carolyn Seeger. Chris Hoffman took the photo.

Maggie Smerchek, President

The Racine Garden Club is busy planning and preparing for its 2024 Summer Magic Garden Tour, Sunday, July 14. Carolyn Seeger, tour chair, notes that it takes many members assisting the committee to produce a successful event. Seven gardens are featured and attendees will find creative ideas which can transfer to their own yards! Proceeds provide multiple scholarships to Gateway Technical College for horticulture students.

Meetings for 2024 started off with a Shamrock Brunch in March. Future programs will be about pollinator gardens, lifelong gardening and nutrients. Two bus trips are lined up. On



May 13, they head to Eberts Garden Center in Ixonia, Wisconsin and in August, the Chicago Botanical Gardens are on the schedule. Trips may be open to the public. Information will be posted on their website at www.racinegardenclub.org.

Come join the Racine Garden Club for friendship and fun! They were founded in 1927, and are going strong almost 100 years later. Their purpose is to educate the public, further principles of conservation, beautify the environment, teach horticulture, and help with worthwhile projects. Their next meeting and luncheon is at noon, Monday, April 8, at Christ Church, United Methodist, on Washington Avenue. The program is *Herbs and Their History*.

CENTRAL REGION GC

Lynne Ehnert, Central Region Director



As a garden club member, you are also a member of a District Garden Club, the State of Wisconsin Garden Club, the Central Region Club, and the National Garden Clubs, or NGC. Were you even aware that your club is part of several larger garden clubs?

This gives us the opportunity to share information across the country. NGC is divided into seven regions. Our region is the Central Region and it consists of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Wisconsin is broken down into six districts, Coulee, Fox River Valley, Madison, Milwaukee, St. Croix, and Sheboygan.

There are websites and newsletters for information online.



- National Garden Clubs
- National Gardener Newsletter
- Central Region Garden Clubs
- Central Region Garden Clubs, Newsletter
- Wisconsin Garden Club
- Wisconsin Gardens Newsletter

- gardenclub.org
- gardenclub.org/national-gardener
- ngccentralregion.com
- ngccentralregion.com/publications
- wisconsinngardenclub.org/members
- wisconsinngardenclub.org/publications



Willow River Garden Club

Charlotte Nicholes, President

The Willow River Garden Club celebrated its 60th anniversary last year. We have 25 members who live in New Richmond, WI, and the surrounding area. In the spring of 2023, we began holding our monthly meetings at the Riverwood Nature Center in Star Prairie, WI. The executive director, Kim Anderson, is excited about hosting us at Riverwood, and we're grateful for a place to hold monthly meetings.

Our ongoing projects include the maintenance of the Reflection Garden at the Deerfield Senior Living Center in New Richmond and the Blue Star Marker plantings on the St. Croix River Crossing Trail.

Both started out as Presidential Projects. The Reflection Garden was Carolyn Craig's project in 2013, and Peggy Grubbs initiated the Blue Star Marker project, which was dedicated in 2020. This project is especially important because we have club members who served in the military.



Last spring, the club decided to grow some of the plants for these two projects. We ordered plant plugs and grew them under lights. This effort allowed club members to get together during the early spring months when little was happening in the garden.

At our monthly meeting in February, we discussed plans for the coming year. In 2024 we're looking forward to planting containers on the Bookworm Trail at Homestead Park, a monarch butterfly program, and a log home-building field trip.

President's Project

Joe Powelka, President's Project Chair

President Linda McCafferty's President's Project has received \$3,655 in donations from 55 individuals, Clubs and Districts to date. This places us at 73% of our target funds raised. The signs have been ordered to avoid a cost increase this year.



We are less than \$1,400 from our goal. Can you help us now to meet that goal?

Donations can be sent to

Joe Powelka
5361 Betlach Rd
Sun Prairie, WI 53590



Make checks payable to Wisconsin Garden Club Federation and please write President's Project in the memo line. For contributions over \$25, you will receive either a Gold/Blue Star pendent or pin. Please indicate which you would prefer to receive. All contributions are tax deductible in accordance with the 501(c)(3) IRS status of WGCF.

National Garden Week

Doris Weber

National Garden Week is a delightful festivity that takes place the first full week of June, celebrated this year from June 2 through June 8.

It is a wonderful time to focus public attention on activities of our garden clubs.

Draw attention to gardens and recruit new members with a variety of activities. Plan educational programs or workshops at your library, public garden, or garden center. Share knowledge about gardening techniques, plant care, and sustainable practices.

Sponsor a hands-on workshop on selecting flowers and shrubs. Collaborate with an area nursery to engage participants in practical learning.

Organize a garden tour where friends and community members can explore beautiful gardens and learn from each other. If you're having fun, others will want to join in!

Beautify a blighted area or clean up an existing garden. Partner with other groups to make a bigger impact.

Plan activities with youth groups or school students. Teach them about gardening, sustaining the environmental, and the joy of growing plants.

Place plant or flower arrangements at public facilities, accompanied by one of the beautiful **NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK POSTERS**. These posters serve as a visual reminder of the importance of green spaces and community pride.

Let the community know what your garden club is doing for the community with news releases. Posters proclaiming this special National Garden Club week are available from the NGC website, NGC member services, or **contact Doris Weber**, at doris@johnngweber.com.



**Let's celebrate the beauty of gardens
and the joy they bring to our lives!**

Is this position for you?

Country Club Gardener Needed in Middleton

Do you know the right person?

GARDENER needed to maintain flower beds and pots, including annuals, perennials and woodyes. Planting, weeding, watering, dividing, transplanting, pest scouting, fertilizing, mulching, edging and so on. Pruning may be required for bushes in some of the beds.

Seasonal plantings include spring bulbs, summer annuals, and fall plants like mums and kale.

Seasonal outdoor holiday decorating may also be included for Easter, July 4th, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

This is a seasonal position and available each year approximately April through November for the right person. Flower bed design and plant selecting for the next season is also a possibility.

Flexible schedule is available, however morning hours and 30 hours minimum per week are required, as is experience caring for outdoor ornamental plants.

If interested, please contact Marc at marcd@rpswi.com
Bishops Bay Country Club, Golf Course Superintendent



Organizational Study

Lynne Ehnert, Chair

The Organizational Study Committee has a number of members that meet several times a year to review and update the WGCF Bylaws, Standing Rules, Awards and Convention Guidelines. This review and update meets needs and policy changes required for WGCF to function smoothly.

Changes come from various resources. Updates may be prompted when National Garden Clubs (NGC) makes changes to their bylaws or standing rules, or when changes are made within the WGCF organization that have been approved by the Executive Committee.



When by-laws are approved by the WGCF Executive Committee, they are published in Wisconsin Gardens in the Winter Issue. Once approved, they are published in the Summer Issue. All changes to Standing Rules, Awards and Convention Guidelines are approved by the Executive Committee.



HERBS



Jan Blooming , Editor

PARSLEY, SAGE, ROSEMARY, AND THYME

Herbs add flavor to food and are used for medicinal purposes. Fresh herbs are often best, but your own dried herbs are also wonderful to have on hand throughout the year, and can make a huge difference in flavor. Growing your own is beneficial as they can be expensive.

Many herbs can also be attractive ornamental plants. A gourmet herb garden will look lovely in your flower beds, in borders and rock gardens, in containers, and even in hanging baskets or in pots on a sunny windowsill.

Some herbs are annuals and can be seeded directly in the garden or started from seeds indoors for transplanting, and you can save seed for next year's crop. To do so, harvest the entire seed head after it has dried on the plant, and spread the seeds out on paper to continue drying. Store it in canning jars with lids, and don't forget to label and date!

Perennial herbs can be propagated by cuttings or by division. Divide plants every three to four years in the early spring. Plants should be dug up, cut into sections, and replanted in the garden.

Harvest herbs for fresh seasonings. At the same time, trimming keeps plants from getting too big, stops them from flowering and going to seed, and makes them thicker and more attractive. To dry herbs for later use, hang bunches upside down in loosely tied bundles in a well-ventilated room. Use a rubber band to fasten them together, and it will tighten as the herbs dry.



GROWING TIPS

Many of the herbs we grow today are from the Mediterranean which has hot, dry summers. Most will need at least six hours of sun every day. They are fine without too much water or fertilizer, but need good drainage.

Give the herbs room to grow. It may look a little bare at first but the plants will expand to fill the space. Crowded plants compete with each other for nutrients and water and can be difficult to harvest. Air circulation is important for healthy growth, especially during humid weather. Again, clip the plants regularly and often, and new growth will be encouraged.

In late spring, garden centers offer a wide selection of herbs. In addition, many annual herbs like dill, basil, and cilantro, are easy to grow from seed. You might look in your cupboard and see what herbs you often use. This will give you a few ideas of what to grow.

Biennial herbs such as parsley and caraway can be started from seed also. They will grow well the first year and come back the second year when they will bloom and set seeds. Then the original plants will die.

Perennial herbs include oregano, thyme, sage, chives, and mint. Once established these plants increase in size and come back every year. Tender perennial plants such as tarragon, rosemary, and stevia need to be grown in pots so they can spend the winter indoors. Put the pots outside as soon as the weather warms in the spring.

BEST HERBS TO GROW



BASIL, an annual, grows one to two feet tall in moist soil. Encourage bushy growth by pinching off flower buds. Pick the leaves often, from the top. Use them with pasta, vegetable dishes, soups, salads, and oils or vinegars.

CHIVES, a perennial, grows 12 to 24 inches tall in moist soil. Harvest the hollow, grass like leaves in the spring by snipping them close to the ground; they will soon grow back. Chives enliven rice, cheese dishes, eggs, vegetable dishes, dressings, sauces, and dips.



CILANTRO is an annual that grows 6 to 30 inches tall in light soil and full sun to partial shade. Pick the leaves sparingly when the plant is 4 to 6 inches tall. Pick the aromatic seeds, called coriander, when they ripen. Use leaves and flowers raw in salads and cold vegetable dishes, and the seeds in pastries, custards, confections, and meat dishes.



DILL, an annual or biennial, grows 2 to 3 feet tall. Harvest the leaves when the flowers begin to open, and collect the seed heads when they are dry and brown. Use the leaves with soups, seafood, salads, green beans, potato dishes, cheese, and sauces, and the seeds for pickles.



MINT, a perennial, grows 1 to 3 feet tall in moist soil and partial shade. Mints can be invasive. To prevent spreading, plant them in pots. Harvest young sprigs and leaves frequently for a bushy plant. Use fresh or dry leaves and stems with roast lamb or fish and in salads, jellies, or teas.

OREGANO, a tender perennial, grows 1 to 2 feet tall and tolerates poor soil. Harvest leaves when young and use in any tomato dish. Try it also with beans, mushroom dishes, potatoes, and summer squashes, or in a marinade for lamb or game.



PARSLEY, a biennial, grows 12 to 30 inches tall in partial shades. Leaves can be curly or flat, depending on the variety. Cut or pinch the leaves as needed. Use fresh in soups, salads, and sauces or as garnish for anything.

SAGE, a perennial, grows 1 to 3 feet tall in well-drained soil. Pick the leaves as needed for use in soups, salads, stuffings, cheese dishes, and pickles. Its strong flavor makes it excellent for salt-free cooking.



ROSEMARY, a tender perennial, grows 4 to 6 feet tall in neutral to slightly acidic soil. Gather leaves and sprigs as needed for use with vegetables or in lamb, poultry, and tomato dishes, breads and custards, and soups and stews.

THYME, a perennial, grows 12 to 18 inches tall in well-drained soil and full sun to partial shade. Harvest the tops of the plants when they are in full leaf. Use the leaves, fresh or dried, in casseroles, stews, soups, and ragouts, and with fish, potatoes, green vegetables, and eggs.



Are you going to Scarborough Fair? Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Remember me to one who lives there, for he once was a true love of mine.



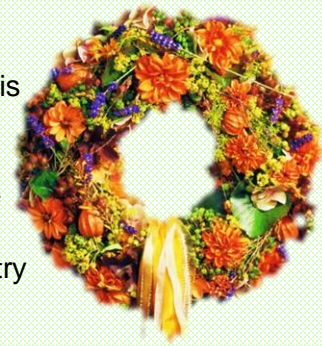


Wreaths For Every Season

Karen Thaker, Book Committee Chair

Wreaths can be so much more than a ring of greens with a few baubles added. Laura Marx's elegant book, *Wreaths, 150 Ideas for Every Season*, opened my eyes to possibilities in terms of base materials, decorations and techniques. Its glorious photos stimulate the imagination throughout the seasons.

In Spring, flexible branches of red dogwood or willow can be twisted into a ring. The wreath is then wrapped in fresh grasses instead of a bow. Another possibility is using twine wrapped test tubes of fresh flowers to embellish your wreath. Uprooted blooming bulbs can also be woven into a twig wreath or secured with toothpicks into another base. Blooming tulips have an especially long shelf life out of the ground. Don't forget to add wispy bits of faux florals. Even consider making your wreath into an egg or heart shape. Instead of a traditional bow, try streamers of various ribbons and vines trailing off the bottom.



Summer wreaths can be created with a ring of wet oasis wrapped in aluminum foil to prevent dripping. Fill your wreath with fresh flowers and greens from your garden or the farmers' market. Another unique idea is to loosely wrap red and white plaid napkins around a straw wreath embellished with a water filled test tube of daisies. Many other fabrics can also wrap wreaths.

Laura's Fall and Winter wreath ideas are equally as intriguing. They feature unique materials including clay mixed with water and wood glue applied to a straw wreath. Scavenged natural treasures embellish many of her creations, so available and free.

With so many stimulating ideas, Laura Marx's book, *Wreaths*, deserves a place on your bookshelf. I just ordered my copy!

South Shore Garden Club

Kitty Schaefer, President

South Shore Garden Club is in the Milwaukee District,

The South Shore Garden Club meets Mondays at Grace Presbyterian Church at 2931 S. Kinnickinnic Ave in Milwaukee. Please check our website southshoregardenclub.com for the dates. We meet at 6:00 for supper, have a program at 6:45, followed by our business meeting. Guests are always welcome. Our March program was *Preservation of the Bounty of our Gardens*, by Ann Wegner, and by the time this newsletter is out, we will have enjoyed *Edible Organic Landscaping* presented by Melissa Hansen.



At this time our club is planning our **Annual Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show** on Saturday, April 27, 2024 at the Wisconsin Club in downtown Milwaukee. Our theme is **NATURE'S PARTY**, and our members will decorate the tables with floral centerpieces. Clothing will again come from the Delafield Main Street Boutique, a women's apparel store where you can also find shoes, purses, jewelry, scarves and gifts. Join us and enjoy the vendors and raffle items!

Our May program will be *Cooking with Herbs* plus a *Plant Sale Fundraiser* is scheduled for the 18th. Do join us! We would appreciate your support.



WHAT IS A NATIVAR?

Sue Donohoe, Horticulture Chair



Let's be sure we know the definitions, Before we begin looking at nativars in the garden.



NATIVE PLANT: a plant that occurs naturally in a region where it has co-evolved historically with other plants, insects, animals, and physical conditions. Natives are straight species and bring the best ecological outcomes in the food chain.

CULTIVAR PLANT: a plant species that has been developed through human intervention for a specific trait such as leaf coloration, fruit size, plant size, disease resistance and so on. Such plants are reproduced through grafting, cutting, root divisions, layering, and tissue culture.

NATIVAR PLANT: a plant cultivated from a native plant for a specific trait. A nativar can also be a genetic plant variant found in nature which then has to be reproduced through human intervention.

We can now discuss the value of nativars in our gardens. As we know, natives are used to attract pollinators, to provide food for insects, butterflies and their larvae, and to keep the ecosystem in balance. This is important for more than just the natural world. It is important for humans to grow food and keep nature in balance.

Native plants are our best choice, as they are more likely, via cross pollination, to keep their species alive as climate changes. But some natives cause us stress because they are chewed by insects, rabbits, and deer, critters invited into our yards by the presence of native plants! Our yards then look messy to our neighbors! That creates problems because natural landscaping is misunderstood. I'm a big fan of planting natives, but on my small, city-size property, I've had to change my outlook regarding the appearance and the growth habits of these plants. Enter nativars!



Nativars can be the plants that help us bring in the pollinators, insects, butterflies and their larvae AND look beautiful for our neighbors. But selection of nativars must be done carefully, to stay as close to native as possible. When looking at nativars, you need to know for what they have been cultivated. Many changes can affect the number of pollinators that will visit the plant. It's best to look for nativars that are cultivated for size only. This keeps them closer to their native parents.

Studies done by Doug Tallamy found that in woody plants, a change in leaf color from green to red, purple, or blue, caused pollinators to avoid the plant because the leaf structure had been changed.

In contrast, plant size, drought tolerance, brighter flower color, and larger fruits, seem to have little effect on the number of pollinator visits. Changes in flower shape, such as single versus double, number of flowers, and actual petal shape can have a negative effect on pollinator visits because access to pollen may be difficult.

Interestingly, in the instance of native *Asclepias*, or Butterfly Weed, the nativar *Hello Yellow* attracted more pollinators than the species. The native species has orange flowers where the nativar has yellow flowers.



Here are examples of natives that have proved to be reliable, and home gardeners can use successfully.



Asclepias tuberosa, Hello Yellow, cultivated for a different flower color.



Panicum virgatum, Northwind, cultivated for a strong, upright growth pattern.



Echinacea purpurea, White Swan, cultivated for a different flower color.



Cornus sericea, Bergeson, cultivated for compact growth and bright red stems.



Rudbeckia fulgida, Goldsturm, cultivated for a shorter, more compact plant



Hypericum kalmianum, Cobalt-n-Gold, cultivated for compact growth and deer resistance.



Iris versicolor, Purple Flame, cultivated for some purple foliage color.



Physocarpus opulifolius, Little Devil and Amber Jubilee, cultivated for disease resistance and leaf color.



Penstemon digitalis, Husker Red, cultivated for stronger flower stems.



Amber Jubilee



Aster novae-angliae, Purple Dome, cultivated for a smaller size plant.



Cephalanthus occidentalis, Fiber Optics, cultivated for compact growth.



Solidago sphacelata, Golden Fleece, cultivated for a more compact plant. This nativar was discovered in a garden and is a natural cultivar. The nativar is available, but the native plant is not available in Wisconsin.



Ulmus americana, Princeton, an elm that is disease resistant.

Now you have some new nativar plants that you can mix into your garden. It is always best to plant native species, but when those plants don't fit your space, natives are the next best choice with non-native and alien plants being the last choice. Not all wildflowers are natives. Check where they originated to keep the "wild" from overtaking the native and nativar.



IKEBANA INTERNATIONAL

Chapter #22, Milwaukee
Lynn Laufenberg, President

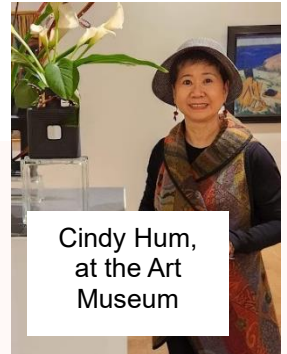


Carolyn Jackson at the Pabst Mansion

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Ikebana International Chapter #22, Milwaukee. The club is celebrating its 65th Anniversary this year. Chapter #22, Milwaukee, was organized by Mrs. Chester Thomas who also structured Chapter #27, Chicago, and Chapter #28, Madison.

Ikebana International was established by Ellen Gordon Allen. She had a dream to unite people of the world in their mutual love of nature and enjoyment of Ikebana. Forty-four countries and over 6,000 members now belong to the group.

Ikebana means “living flowers” and dates back to the 4th Century when Buddhist Monks used flowers as temple offerings. It evolved for use in common people’s homes and then to an art form in the 1900’s.



Cindy Hum, at the Art Museum

This year the club celebrated by spreading the beauty of Ikebana through exhibitions and demonstrations at Rooms in Bloom at the Paine Art Center and Gardens February 29 - March 10, and at the Milwaukee Anime Convention March, 8 - March 10, where Ikebana artistry is often seen in Manga books.



In Manga comics

Ikebana International Chapter #22, Milwaukee will be at Art in Bloom at the Milwaukee Art Museum April 18 – 21. They have participated in that event since its inception and earned many top awards. The club will also be at the Pabst Mansion, Milwaukee, May 10 – 12, their third year exhibiting there, at the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation Convention, May 19 – 21, and at the Wisconsin State Fair August 1 - 4. Their history with WGCF is deep, having featured former members, notably Doris Swartz, Kitty Larkin, Ruth Smith, and Liz Murkin.

There are over 2000 schools in Japan, but the Milwaukee Chapter’s members are associated with Ikenobo, the oldest, Ohara, which introduced Moribana, Sogetsu, or Ichiyo. The last two are contemporary in style.

Most follow the Ichiyo School and attend an annual retreat to practice and learn concepts and skills to achieve higher ranking within the school. Ichiyo School arrangements are intended to arouse our senses in a different way from traditional Ikebana, giving the viewer an experience with nature that is unexpected, stimulating, and profound. Ichiyo also encourages your interpretation. Imagination is considered as essential to creative designs as materials and containers. Flower arranging should reflect oneself.



Arrangement, Lynn Laufenberg

Ikebana International’s 19th North and Central American Regional Conference will be held in Philadelphia in October. Many Milwaukee members will attend. The headmasters from the major schools do demonstrations and workshops. All I.I. members are encouraged to exhibit.

Milwaukee Chapter welcomes new members and allows anyone interested to attend two meetings. They are held on the second Wednesday of most months. For more information, please email ikebanamilwaukee@gmail.com.



Lynda Curl, Anu Garg, Lynn Laufenberg and Madison Past President, David Staats



Plant Share



Susan Miller, Habitat for Humanity Chairman

I'm Susan Miller and I am the newly appointed chairman of the Habitat for Humanity Plant Share Project, previously co-chaired by Judy Newman and Connie Sandell. The annual event is a time for Habitat for Humanity homeowners to gather and pick out free plants to create or expand their gardens. Both Judy and Connie left huge footprints on the project. Connie will continue on the committee and serve as a mentor. We are also fortunate that Judy had been wintering plants in her yard, and her family graciously donated the plants to us.

Since 2012, I have been a member of the Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee, formerly the Art Museum Garden Club. I participated in Plant Share for many years, but in my new position, I will have a lot to learn. My goal is to have all clubs in the Milwaukee District participate to make Plant Share successful.

You need not be a Milwaukee District garden club member to contribute. How can you help? You can volunteer your time, give financial support, or provide plants from your yard or garden center. We'll happily accept your donation.


Plant Share will be held on June 1, with volunteers working on May 30 and 31 to sort, plant, and mark donated plants. If you have questions, or wish to join the crew, contact me at 414-254-5944 or sk8trmom@yahoo.com



*You have to believe in happiness,
or happiness never comes.*

Ah, that's the reason a bird can sing.

*On his darkest
day he believes
in spring.*



Douglas Malloch

Environmental School

Karen Merlau

Environmental School, Series 7, Course 2, had been tentatively on the calendar for this April, but has been rescheduled for September 27 – 28 in Sheboygan.

Our April weekend date conflicted with events going on in the local conservation community. Sheboygan County will be having their tree pickup and Kohler Andrae State Park is hosting a volunteer event. Neither could commit to speakers for our school, and we should have better luck with the fall date.

I am currently waiting for Kohler Andrae State Park to let me know if they can host a field trip at their Sanderling Nature Center and provide a ranger to speak on one of the topics.





Endangered Species



Cheryl Lausten, Chair

Endangered Species Act: Success or Failure?

2023 marked 50 years of the Endangered Species Act, ESA. Once a species is listed with the ESA, it becomes illegal for anyone to kill, harm, or harass that species. The act also provides a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved.

Extinction is defined as no member of a species being observed for at least ten years. Although extinctions occur naturally, the current rate of plant and animal extinctions is much higher than the natural rate. Habitat loss is the greatest threat to the variety of life on the planet and leads to the loss of genetic material and species diversity.

Increasing human food production is the major agent for forest loss and the conversion of natural habitat into agricultural land. Intensive harvesting of timber wood for fuel and overgrazing also degrades native habitats. Around half of the world's original forests have



disappeared and are still being removed at an alarming rate.

One of the most effective tools for conserving species and natural habitats is well planned and well managed protected areas set up with help from the ESA and other conservation groups.

Recovery of a species on the endangered list can take decades. The ESA has kept hundreds of species from blinking out of existence and helped dozens of others return to a healthy status. The ESA has prevented the likely extinction of 291 species and 39 species have been fully recovered, meaning they are now numerous enough that they no longer need protection and can be delisted.

Researchers found that the law has saved more than 99% of species listed under its protection.

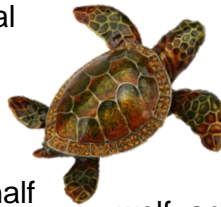


The bald eagle is one of the most widely known success stories. The population of bald eagles declined due to habitat loss, deliberate killing, and the widespread use of DDT which weakened their eggshells and led to death of the chicks. By 1963 only 417 breeding pairs remained in the country. Today thanks to actions by the ESA, some 316,700 eagles once again soar the skies.



The most important measure for their protection was the ban on DDT along with captive breeding and reintroduction programs. The eagles were removed from the threatened and endangered list in 2007. Peregrine falcons also declined due to DDT and after its banning in the 70s, these birds also began to rebound.

Other success stories include the Loggerhead Sea turtle, California condor, Hawaiian monk seal, gray wolf, and the grizzly bear.



A lot of lesser-known species have also been saved, like the Oregon chub, the black footed ferret and the Virginia flying squirrel. Plants that have benefited are Eggert's sunflower, Tennessee purple coneflower, and Robbin's cinquefoil.

Some species have their last living individuals in zoos. There, funds from the ESA help with captive breeding programs with the hope of reintroduction into the wild. Others needing protection have only one living member of their species. How can these species be saved? It might sound like a science fiction novel, but there has been some experimentation with cloning, surrogates, and even preserved and engineered DNA.



Jurassic Park anyone?





VINEGAR KILLS WEEDS?



Jan Blooming

The sight of Garlic Mustard or Thistle or Creeping Charlie, and I get the shivers! I just don't want those weeds between my flowers. One can pull them, but wanting to get the roots, I reach for a weed killer. I know the shelves at the garden center are stacked with herbicides when I need more. There is an option, however. Vinegar is an alternative that is effective and safe for the environment.

The environmental impact of chemical herbicides is a growing concern. These chemicals can seep into the soil, contaminating water supplies and harming non-target plants and animals. In contrast, vinegar is a biodegradable substance with minimal risk. It breaks down quickly, leaving no harmful residues in the soil or water.



Cost is also a factor when choosing weed control. Commercial herbicides are costly. Vinegar, on the other hand, is relatively inexpensive.

TYPES OF VINEGAR SUITABLE FOR WEED KILLING

White vinegar, commonly used for cleaning and cooking, has an acidity level of about 5%, and can handle most common weeds. For tougher weeds, a higher concentration may be necessary, and horticultural vinegar is an option with an acidity level usually around 20%. While it is more effective, it is also more caustic, and extra care is needed when applying.

PREPARING YOUR VINEGAR SOLUTION

For white vinegar with a 5% acidity level, no dilution is necessary, but dilution could be required for horticultural vinegar to minimize risks.

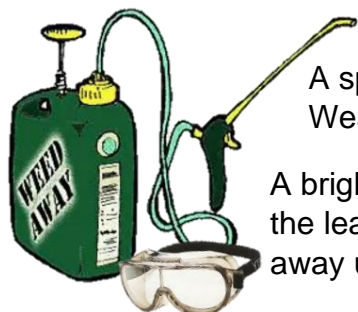
What is horticultural vinegar? It is diluted acetic acid, used for controlling weeds, and is sold by the gallon at concentrations of 20 to 30 percent. Acetic acid is biodegradable, so it is unlikely to damage soils in the manner of acid rain. Acetic acid is the byproduct of bacterial fermentation of sugars and ethanol, and is continuously being produced in all living soil, the byproduct of the breakdown of all plant and animal tissue. Horticultural vinegar can be used in place of other chemicals for controlling weeds that harm wildlife, pets, and all of us.

Adding other ingredients to the vinegar solution can also enhance its weed-killing abilities. Dish soap helps vinegar stick to the leaves of the weeds, and lemon juice increases acidity, boosting effectiveness. A recipe could include one gallon of white vinegar, a cup of salt, and a tablespoon of dish soap. Just mix thoroughly.

APPLYING VINEGAR FOR WEED CONTROL

A spray bottle works for small areas, but for large areas, get a garden sprayer. Wearing gloves is non-negotiable and you may choose eye protection.

A bright, calm day is best, as the sun enhances the vinegar's efficacy. Coat the leaves thoroughly for maximum impact, and keep pets and children away until the vinegar has dried.



Vinegar can harm any plants it comes into contact with, so consider using a shield to protect garden plants. One application will kill most weeds, but reapply if needed. If you decide a commercial vegetation killer is needed here and there, be even more careful with your well-being.

St. Croix District

Debby Walters, Director

We happily announce that the WGCF 2025 Convention will be held at The Lismore Hotel in Eau Claire. Negotiations are complete and the contract is signed. The Steering Committee is evaluating a list of excellent speakers. More to come!



Cups of Cheer creators, Nancy Wittern, Jane Brakefield, and Faye Gartmann.

Botany Belles & Beaus:

- After years of planning, a Blue Star Memorial Marker is ordered. It will be installed at Windmill Park in Baldwin and hopefully dedicated this fall.
- The club partnered with the Woodville Library and the Glenwood Library to offer Christmas Topiary classes. It was fun to see all the variations of ornament stakes.
- Our December Club meeting was a trip to Como Park Conservatory, St. Paul, to enjoy the beautiful Christmas floral display.
- In January Maria Scheidegger from the Orchid Society gave a very informative talk about orchids and encouraged us to attend the St. Paul Winter Carnival Orchid Show. Some of the club members braved the crowds and viewed the beautiful plants.

Lake Wissota:

- Our holiday gathering in December featured a very successful silent auction. We were able to donate over \$400 to the Chippewa Humane Association.
- In January Wildlife Biologist, Christian Cold, gave a fascinating program on owls. What an awe-inspiring group of creatures!
- Our top-notch monthly newsletter keeps us updated on relevant topics and community events. Many different members contribute articles and photos.



Members of Lake Wissota GC delivering their donation to the Chippewa Humane Society.

Willow River:

- We held two work days to assemble holiday arrangements for the Doe-on-the-Go Sale in New Richmond. On sale day, we had all hands-on deck; many stayed for the entire event. The following week, we made evergreen wreaths at our November meeting.



- Our December meeting was a holiday potluck with a white elephant gift exchange at Vice President Cyndi Sommerfeldt's home. The executive committee met in January to plan programs for the upcoming year.

Willow River's evergreen arrangers

DATES



April 22	Earth Day
April 26	Arbor Day
April 27	South Shore Garden Club Style Show and Luncheon
May 11	Fox Point Garden Club Annual Plant Sale
May 18	Four Seasons Garden Club Plant Sale
May 18	Potpourri Garden Club Plant Sale
May 19 - 21	WGCF CONVENTION 2024, Milwaukee Marriot West
June 2 - 5	NGC Convention, The Westin Winchester, Denver, Colorado
June 2 - 8	National Garden Week
June 20	Executive Committee Meeting, Zoom
July 14	Racine Summer Magic Garden Tour
September 27-28	Environmental School, Series 7, Course 2, Sheboygan
October 17-19	Central Region Convention, O'Fallon, Illinois
TBD	Fall Executive Committee Meeting
February 20	Spring Executive Committee Meeting 2025
April 27-29	WGCF CONVENTION 2025, The Lismore, Eau Claire

ARBOR DAY, Jan Blooming

When Is Arbor Day?

Wisconsin's Arbor Day is always the last Friday in April, and the state tree is the sugar maple. The next **National Arbor Day** is **Friday, April 26, 2024**.

How Did Arbor Day Start?

The day was the brainchild of Julius Sterling Morton, a Nebraskan journalist who later became the U.S. Agriculture Secretary. Morton was a promoter of tree planting, and had long championed the idea of a day dedicated to planting trees.

When Was The First Arbor Day?

Arbor Day was first celebrated in Nebraska in 1874. The idea caught on in other states, and in 1882, its observance had become a national event. Nebraska made Arbor Day a legal holiday in 1885, moving it to April 22, Morton's birthday. An estimated one million trees were planted during the first Arbor Day.

Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, just west of Chicago.

The Morton Arboretum was founded in 1922 by Joy Morton, the son of Sterling Morton, on 178 acres of land adjacent to his estate. Today the Morton Arboretum has grown to 1,700 acres. The Arboretum displays woody plants that grow in temperate zones around the world, educates the public, and conducts research on the management and preservation of trees. Joy Morton owned the Morton Salt Company. He was also a partner in Teletype Corporation sold to American Telephone and Telegraph in 1930 for \$30,000,000.



News from the Sheboygan District

Elaine Wagner, Vice Director

The Lake Shore Garden Club celebrated their 75th Anniversary at a luncheon Thursday, February 22, 2024, at the Sheboygan Yacht Club. Congratulations!



Mayor of Sheboygan, the Honorable Ryan Sorensen, presented a City of Sheboygan Proclamation to Doris Weber, Lake Shore Garden Club President. Recognition was made of their 75-year commitment to the Sheboygan community and its residents through their work in horticulture.

Gerianne Holzman, NGC Third Vice President presented a National Garden Club, Inc, Certificate of Merit, honoring the club being a member of the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation and in recognizing the 75th Anniversary.

Elaine Wagner, club member and Sheboygan District Vice Director, presented a program, *A Walk in Time*. It journeyed from 1949 to 2024, and described garden therapy, civic beautification, and education projects, like *The Heritage of Trees Project* that resulted in planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers at six Sheboygan schools.

Lake Shore Garden Club members with WGCFF President, Linda McCafferty, second from the right.

Lake Shore Garden Club provides financial and gardening support to organizations like Elwood H. May Environmental Park, the Sheboygan County Historical Society, Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization, Bookworm Gardens, Sheboygan County Law Enforcement Memorial, and Plymouth Historical Society and Veteran's Park. Over the past 12 years, the club has also awarded several student scholarships.

Attending were Nancy Gregory, Linda McCafferty, Doris Weber LSGC President, Gerianne Holzman, Lynne Ehnert and Kitty Larkin

Monies are raised annually by conducting a Plant, Tag and Bake Sale, participating in the Sheboygan Area Garden Walk, and providing workshops as such as Porch-Pot Design and wreath making.



Ivy League Garden Club, of the Sheboygan District, enjoyed an outing at *Don Caan's Floral and Greenhouse* in Sheboygan



Any questions about the Lake Shore Garden Club, or happenings in the Sheboygan District Garden Club, may be directed to Elaine Wagner, elwagner@charter.net or 920-980-2406.

Easy to Care for Plants

Jan Blooming

These annuals and perennials have been suggested by growers as low maintenance, making it possible to grow a beautiful garden when you're short on time.

Double Up and Surefire Begonias, annuals

Begonias are workhorses in both the landscape and containers, tolerating sun and shade and blooming non-stop all season without deadheading. They do not require weekly feeding to stay in bloom and won't require daily watering. They are perfect for people who want the beauty of annual flowers without all the work.



Superbena Verbena, an annual

Verbena delivers performance without all the maintenance, even in full sun. An application of slow-release fertilizer when planting keeps them blooming all season long. They are spillers in containers; in the landscape they make a great groundcover.

Prairie Winds, Red Switch Grass or *Panicum*

Grasses are low maintenance. In early summer, switch grass shows wine-red highlights, and by late summer the clump is a shade of red. It stays a manageable 3' tall and 18" wide in borders or large containers. Just plant in full sun and cut it to the ground in spring. Hardy in zones 4-9.



Cat's Pajamas Catmint or *Nepeta*

This perennial is a top seller as it's easy to grow. You need a sunny spot that stays a little dry. This is a dwarf variety that stays in a 12-14" tall mound and doesn't tend to split open in the center. Give it a trim after it blooms in summer and it reblooms. Hardy in zones 3-8.

Decadence False Indigo or *Baptisia*

The ultimate low maintenance perennial is Baptisia. This is a native that is drought tolerant, attracts pollinators, and lives for decades. Once established, a 4' long tap root makes it tough to transplant, so be sure to plant it in a permanent spot. Hardy in zones 4-9.



Show Off Forsythia

Forsythia shrubs welcome spring. To see all these blooms do not prune it any time after midsummer. This low maintenance shrub thrives in sun to part shade. With three sizes available in the series, you can choose the right variety to make a privacy hedge, a short border under your front windowsills, or anything in between. Hardy in zones 5-8.

Scentara Pura Lilac

There aren't too many shrubs that can tolerate the winter cold like Scentara Pura Lilac. It is resistant to powdery mildew. Lilacs are super low maintenance shrubs once established. They need well-drained soil but are otherwise very comfortable in average to drier soils that are not rich in organic matter. Hardy in zones 2-8.



Simply Scentsational Sweetshrub, or *Calycanthus*

Selected from a native species, this easy shrub has scented blossoms. Its burgundy blooms appear first in late spring and then again in midsummer when the plant sends out a fresh round of flowers. Sweetshrub prefers moist, well-drained soil and grows beautifully in both sun and part shade. Hardy in zones 4-9.



BEES

Pat Greathead, Environmental Committee Chair, and Jan Blooming

In North America, 90% of commercially grown crops survive and thrive thanks to the work of pollinating bees. Worldwide, bees pollinate 75% of the crops. A drop in bee population would mean many crops would no longer grow, and our food supply would be limited.

Lately, we've been hearing more and more about the decrease in honey bee populations. There are still millions of bees, so many people are not worried. It should be noted, however, that a single event, like the spraying of an insecticide or one extremely cold day can wipe out thousands of bees quickly.



There are 20,000 bee species in the world, and the United States has the most, with over 4,000 different bees. From 2022 to 2023, beekeepers in the United States lost nearly half of the managed honey bee colonies. It was a hard year for the bees with colony collapse disorder, destruction of habitat, poor beekeeping, infestations of the varroa mite, and a decrease in the crops available to the bees.



Colony collapse disorder is when a majority of the bees leave their hive. It is often caused by pesticide poisoning which affects a bee's ability to navigate. When the bees head out to collect pollen, they become disorientated and can't find their way back to the hive.

Five years ago, colony collapse disorder was considered to be the biggest threat to bee populations, but CCD is on the decline.

The biggest problem now is the varroa mite, as it attaches to the body of the bee and weakens it. These parasites have been wreaking havoc all over the world ever since their discovery in 1904 on the Indonesian island of Java. It can reproduce only in a honey bee colony, and an infestation often leads to the death of the colony within two to three years.



Management of this pest focuses on reducing mite numbers. Pesticides are available, though difficult to time while avoiding harm to the hive. Honey bee lines in some breeding programs also have shown partial resistance to the varroa mite.

The question is, what can you do as just one person?

You can continue to plant gardens that attract and support pollinators. Locating gardens in full sun and providing wind protection helps as well as choosing plants that have not been treated with pesticides. You might also consider delaying cleanup until you see insects in spring, as bees survive the winter by taking up residency in hollow stems, by hibernating underground, and by burrowing in leaves.



To learn more, a good resource is the Xerces Society, a nonprofit organization that aims to protect wildlife through conservation of invertebrates and their habitats, at <https://xerces.org>.

Fox Point Garden Club

Barbara White, President
Fox Point Garden Club is in the Milwaukee District

For 54 years the Fox Point Garden Club has commemorated Arbor Day with a tree planting celebration by teaming up with local elementary schools and the Fox Point Village Forester.



Trees such as Dawn Redwood, Swamp White Oak, Northern Catalpa, and most recently, an Early Glow Ohio Buckeye, now grow at Stormonth Elementary and Maple Dale Schools. At each school, in alternating years, the Garden Club organizes and funds a celebration attended by the public, school children and village officials, and of course, Garden Club members. The event begins with the raising of the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a brief student program. Sometimes it's poetry reading; sometimes a choral or band number. One time the Superintendent of Schools even read a short book on trees to the kids. They loved it!

After introductions and entertainment, it's time for the best part of the celebration: the planting of the tree. The Fox Point Forester, who supervised the actual tree planting earlier in the day, provides shovels and mulch for the children to finish the job. A Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources representative is on hand to present the Village with a Tree City USA Flag. The new tree, kids with shovels, and showing off the flag always makes a great photo opportunity!

Nobody goes home empty-handed. The Garden Club purchases and pots tree seedlings which are distributed to all attendees. Every year it seems that somebody talks about an Arbor Day tree that they received and planted years ago and thrives to this very day.



That's exactly what Arbor Day is all about!

Wisconsin Garden Club Federation Website . . . **MAKE IT EVEN BETTER.**

Send webmaster Debby Walters
copy and photos about
your Garden
Club events.



Contact Debby Walters at 715-22-0021 or vikingms76@gmail.com

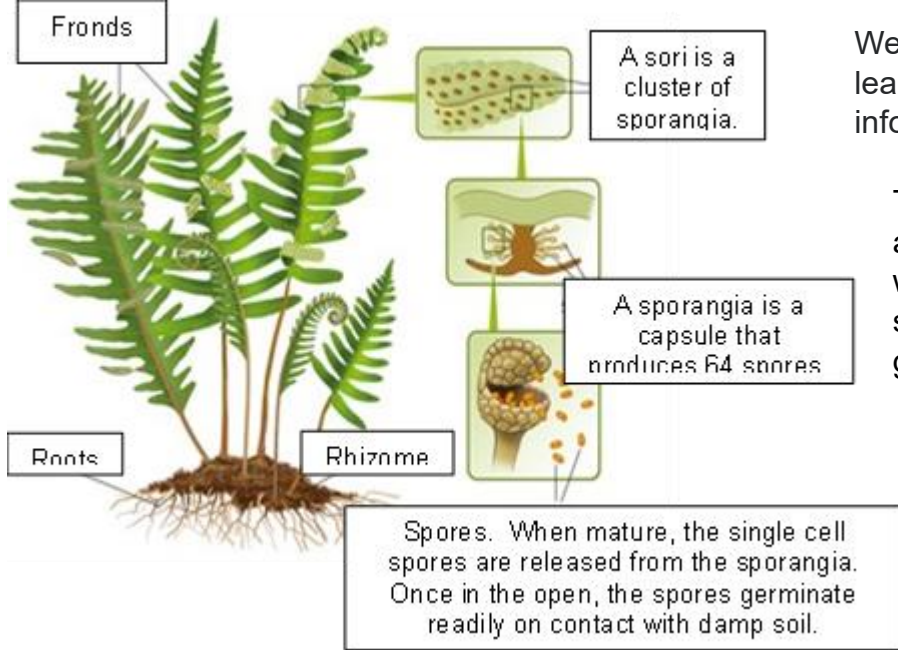
Lake Wissota Garden Club

Ginger Wierman, Chairman

Lake Wissota Garden Club was awarded a \$2283 Community Foundation of Chippewa County Grant to plant a fernery in the Irvine Park Native Wildflower Sanctuary. Our 18 committee members have now embarked on a steep Wisconsin native fern learning curve.

Last fall, members of the Irvine Park Native Wildflower Sanctuary looked at proposed projects for 2024, and voted to convert 1175 square feet of our shadiest corner into a fernery. A walking path was laid out and members inventoried existing flowering natives that we'll save in place. Calculations indicated we'd need another 113 ferns, 68 flowering plants and sedges and shrubs to fill the space. Our grant application requested these plants plus path covering material and 125 bags of mulch.

We then had to learn about ferns. The Gary A. Fewless Herbarium website hosted by UW-Green Bay helped. Visit uwgb.edu/herbarium. An herbarium is a type of museum that houses dried and usually pressed plant specimens. The Fewless Herbarium focuses on flora of the Western Great Lakes region.



We have been amazed at how much there is to learn and thought we'd pass along some of the info to our fellow WGCF members.

The large brown dots on the back of fronds are sori, not spores. See diagram to find out where the location of the sori, a cluster of sporangia. Spores are single cells generated in the sporangium.

Fern spores are released by the millions from the undersides of fern leaves. They are picked up by air currents and carried away from the parent plant, dispersing the species. They function like seeds, but, unlike seeds, they are single-celled and lack an embryo and seed coat.

Our next job has been to select seven to eight native Wisconsin ferns species to add to the Interrupted, Maidenhair, Sensitive and Intermediate Wood ferns we're already growing.

We're also considering moving our Ostrich ferns to a nearby hillside as they're such aggressive spreaders, and when our spring ephemeral flowers emerge, we'll mark their locations and create our final landscape planting design for our 2024 fernery project.



Interrupted fern

Intermediate Wood Fern



Maidenhair fern

Sensitive Fern



Ostrich Fern, or Fiddlehead Fern



Keeping a Garden Journal



As the seasons change, you should write down notes about the weather and when plants bloom, and you'll notice patterns from year to year. This info can help you choose plants and figure out when to time gardening chores.

WHY KEEP A GARDEN JOURNAL?

Whether you're choosing a flowering tree or a tomato seedling, you want to invest in a plant that will thrive. You need a variety that succeeds in your soil, responds well to the available sunlight, and can get all the water it needs to grow. When you keep a garden journal and record dates, you can time chores to assure gardening success.

Keep track of what you've planted. If you want to repeat your success with specific flowers and veggies, you have to remember what they were! With hundreds of plant names, it's easy to lose track of which flowers bloomed beautifully last year, or which tomatoes didn't perform as expected. Keeping records helps you repeat victories or continuing disappointments.

WHAT SHOULD YOU RECORD IN A JOURNAL?

Start simply, recording high and low temperatures. Remote digital thermometers mean you can record the temperature and the high and low temperatures for the previous 24 hours. Record it, as your garden is unique.



Record plant lists and planting times. As it becomes a habit, create a chart of what you've bought, where you've planted it, and how well it's done. These lists are helpful in the winter when you browse the garden catalogues.

If you start seeds, don't rely on memory to remember which ones you're sprouting. Record the date you started each seed and the variety.

HOW TO CREATE A GARDEN JOURNAL

Jotting down a few key notes on a blank calendar is a way to start. It's accessible and it's easy to go back and look at dates for indicators like bloom time and insect emergence. Hand-written journals allow you to insert extras like typed lists, plant tags, magazine clippings, and catalog details. If you'd rather go paperless, several apps offer you a way to use your smartphone to track what's happening in your garden.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR OBSERVATIONS

Your journal doesn't have to be perfect. The most important thing is developing the habit of observation. At the beginning of each season, reading through your journal will help to create a better garden. You'll be reminded of the plants you tried and what worked or maybe didn't.

Get ready to notice and record what you see!



YARROW

2024 Herb of the Year

Kathy Shaw

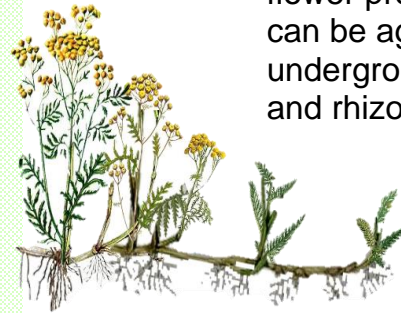


Achillea millefolium is the International Herb Association's 2024 Herb of the Year. It earned this title because it has decorative, culinary, and medicinal uses. Yarrow, the common name, is found along roads growing in full sun in well-drained areas. You will find it from the coast north to the Alpine zone in North America, Europe and Asia. The term to describe the area is circumboreal, which means *throughout the northern region*.



Good drainage is all yarrow asks for. The plants have deep roots, and have been used to prevent soil erosion. It flourishes in many types of soil and tolerates clay soil. It isn't a heavy feeder, and is drought-tolerant once it's established. Over-watering can promote the fungal disease.

Plants are easily divided and replanted every three years to maintain healthy growth and flower production. Yarrow plants can be aggressive, spreading underground by self-seeding and rhizomes, which are



underground roots. If left unchecked, they develop into large, naturalized clumps. Yarrow

Yarrow is between two to three feet tall and wide. Stems may flop over in hot, humid conditions or when grown in overly wet or fertile soils, but you can find cultivars bred for strong stems and compact habit. Common yarrow has tiny white flowers from June to September in large, flattened clusters, and new cultivars come in a rainbow of colors, pink, red, cream, yellow, and bi-color pastels.

makes a great addition to rock gardens, cottage gardens, naturalized areas, or as a ground cover.

The pleasant, spicy fragrance attracts a variety of pollinators, and it is a favorite of bees, wasps, butterflies, and moths. To extend the bloom season of yarrow, cut back the plant to the next flower bud after the initial flowers fade. This encourages more blooms and keeps plant growth tidy.

If it's happy, you will have it forever, even reseeding into lawns and walkways, which is okay in our pollinator-friendly yard as it stays about the same height as the grass and takes occasional foot traffic. The low foliage will even stay green year-round.

Dry the flowers by gathering stems with blooms that are just starting to open, strip leaves from the bottom 2/3s of the stem, rubber-banding them and hanging them upside down in a dry, dark room or shed until crispy. I have had the best luck with drying the yellow varieties.



The whole plant can be used raw or cooked. It is somewhat bitter, yet makes an acceptable addition to mixed salads in small quantities with a little lemon juice and sugar to help bring out the flavors. It can also be used for a vinaigrette to add flavor to potatoes and as part of a marinade for grilled meat and oily fish. The leaves have even been used as a hop-substitute for beer in Germany and Nordic countries.



Yarrow leaves and flowers can be used in tea blends, and you can even buy it on the internet. I recommend you use white common yarrow, and that only one-quarter to one-half of the tea herbs be yarrow due to bitterness. Add honey for sweetness. Yarrow blends well with catmint, peppermint, ginger, lemon balm, elderberries and other fruits.

While yarrow, has several common names, such as old man's pepper, devil's nettle, milfoil, soldier's woundwort, and thousand seal, its botanical name, *Achillea*, was derived from the Greek mythology war hero, Achilles, who used plant extracts to treat soldiers' wounds in the battle of Troy.

The name *milfoil* comes from its Latin name millefolium, meaning a thousand leaves. The Chinese considered yarrow plants to be good luck.



Tribes in North America used yarrow for a variety of ailments. The crushed plant was applied to wounds and burns. The dried leaves were used as a tea to

soothe colds, fever, and headache.

Yarrow contains chemicals that might help stop stomach cramps and fight infections. It is also a mild bitter that stimulates appetite and it's good for the circulation. People commonly use yarrow for eczema, irritable bowel syndrome, wound healing, and many other conditions, but there is no U.S. scientific research to support these uses.

Yarrow is sometimes called bloodwort and has been used to staunch bleeding from wounds, hemorrhoids, and nose bleeds. It has also been used as a sitz bath for painful, lower pelvic, cramp-like conditions in women.

It has been noted that extended use of this plant can cause allergic rashes and lead to photosensitivity in some people. Pregnant women should not take yarrow. It is also toxic to cats, dogs, and horses.

With all these health claims, it's not surprising that in the Victorian language of flowers, yarrow symbolized healing and love, making these a perfect gift when sending get well wishes.



Whether gifted to friends or kept for the home, the umbel-shaped flower clusters add dimension and color to cut floral arrangements and the flowers remain beautiful and vibrant when dried.



An umbel consists of a number of short flower stalks that spread from a common point, like the ribs of an upside-down umbrella.

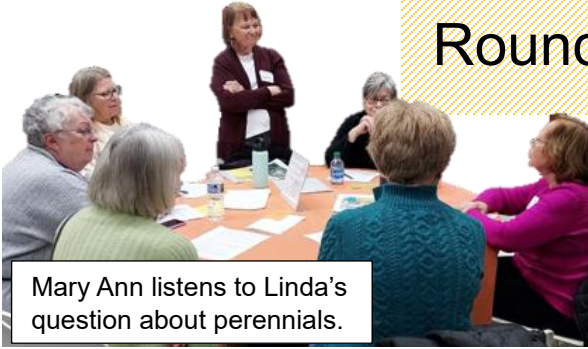
We grew yellow and pink varieties of yarrow at our previous Greenville home, and the common white variety is growing naturally in our meadow with the sandy soil we have here in Waushara



County. I'm looking forward to celebrating the Year of the Yarrow by drying the flowers for tea and adding leaves to our salads, dressings and marinades this summer.



Round Table for Gardeners



Mary Ann listens to Linda's question about perennials.

The Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee utilized the expertise of members for this workshop. Seven topics were offered, Perennials, Petunias, Growing Roses and Dahlias, Hydrangeas, Hostas, Cut Flowers, and Herbs. Each was presented by a person with a special interest in it, who was willing to do a little extra research and become an expert!



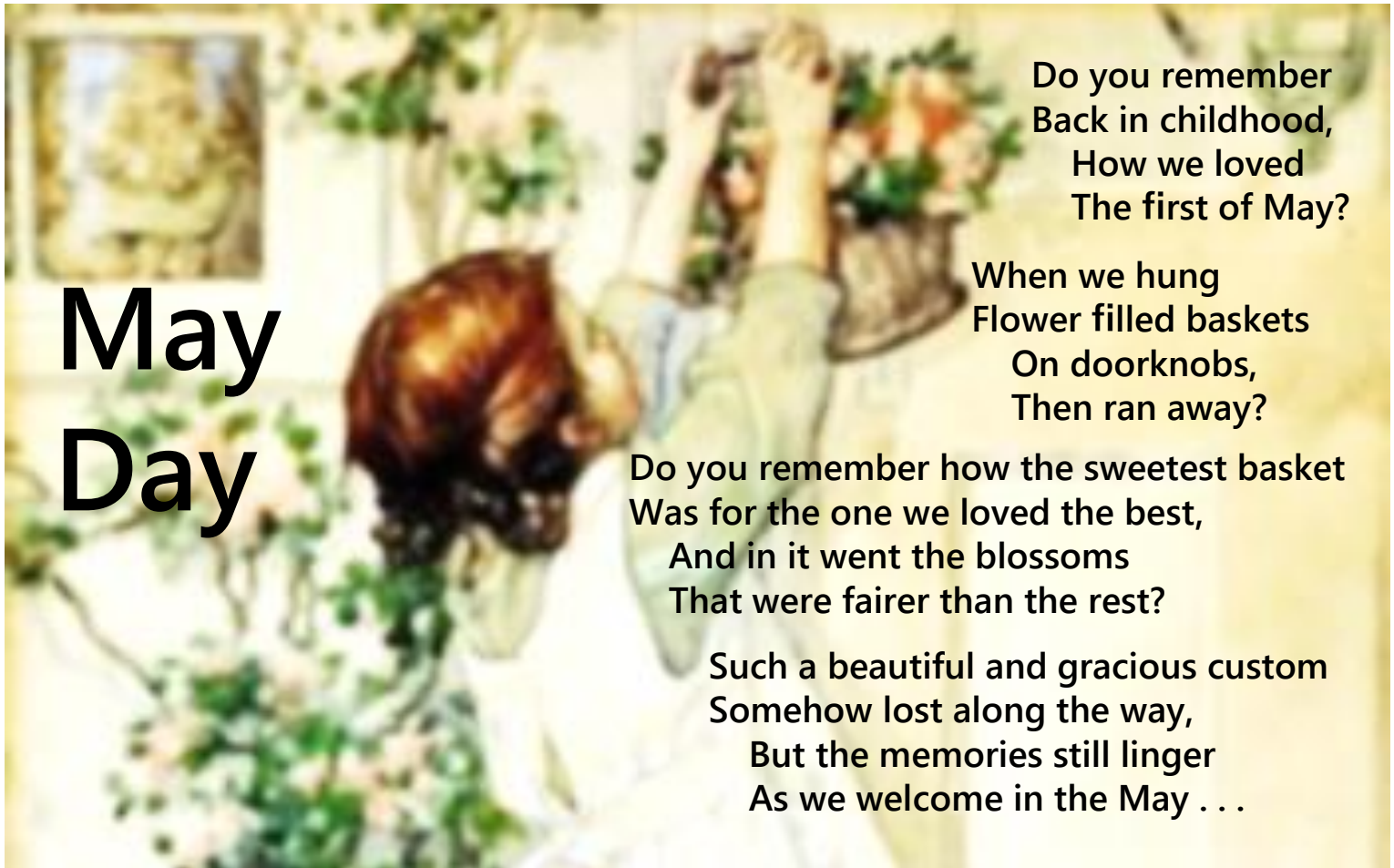
New member Robin talks about herbs.

Prior to the get-together, we each selected five topics we'd like to know more about, and were assigned four. When we arrived, we received a card listing our sequence of the round tables we would attend for the thirty minute talk and discussion.

Your club might be on a tight budget, but note that this cost nothing. If your club is small, it might be fun to pair up with a neighboring group, perhaps followed by lunch. Questions? Sandy Pike, Chair of the GCGM Horticulture Committee would be happy to give you pointers to get you started. Her number is 262-227-3694.



Lynn discusses dahlias and roses.



May Day

Do you remember
Back in childhood,
How we loved
The first of May?

When we hung
Flower filled baskets
On doorknobs,
Then ran away?

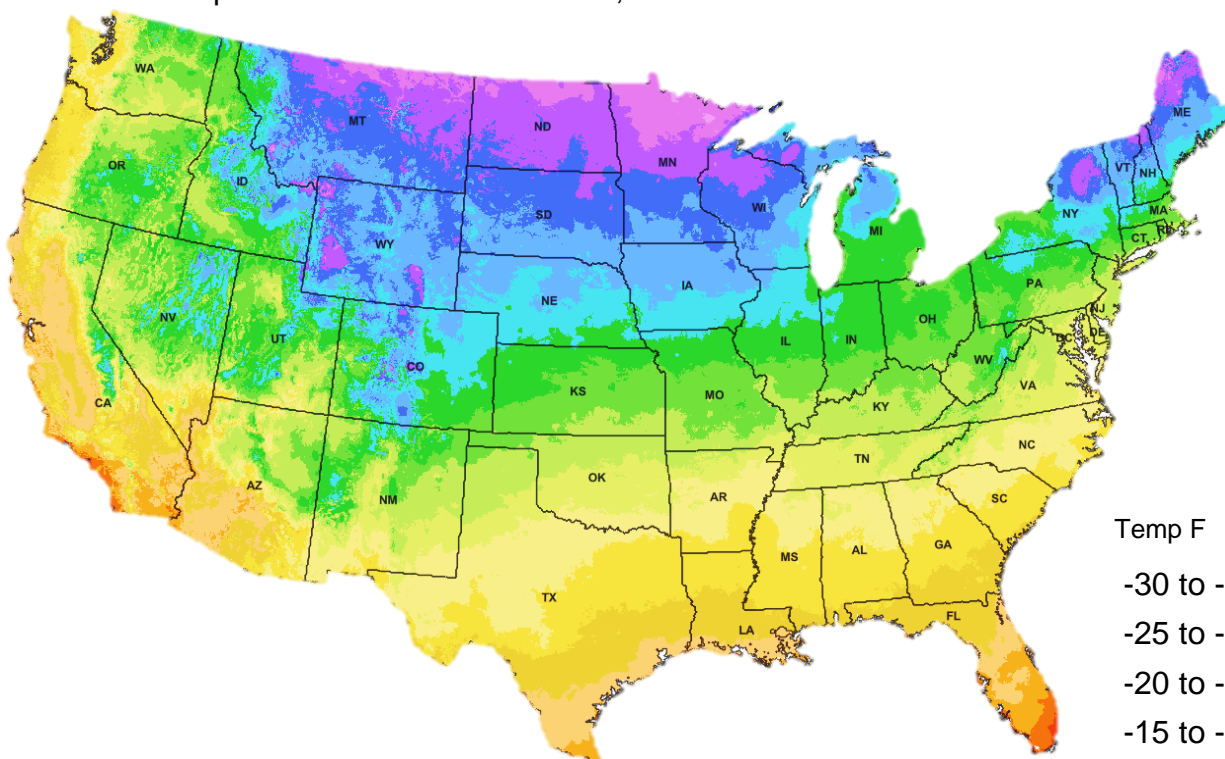
Do you remember how the sweetest basket
Was for the one we loved the best,
And in it went the blossoms
That were fairer than the rest?

Such a beautiful and gracious custom
Somehow lost along the way,
But the memories still linger
As we welcome in the May . . .

Hardiness Zone Maps

Jan Blooming, Editor

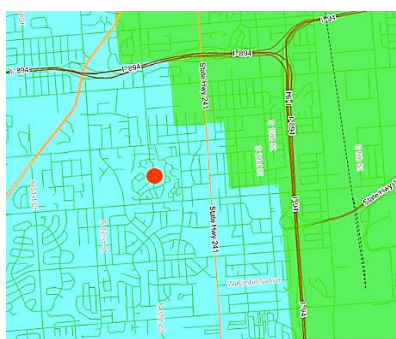
The United States Department of Agriculture has made major changes to the plant hardiness zones, based on data collected by over 13,000 weather stations across the country. It was last updated in 2012. According to the new map released in November 2023, about half of the United States has shifted to a new zone.



The 13-zone map sets the standards by which gardeners select plants, especially perennials. We choose plants that can be expected to do well based on winter low temperatures. Those guidelines have now changed for about 80 million people.

Temp F		Temp C
-30 to -25	4A	-34.4 to -31.7
-25 to -20	4B	-31.7 to -28.9
-20 to -15	5A	-28.9 to -26.1
-15 to -10	5B	-26.1 to -23.3

The good news is that the USDA has created an interactive map that gives you a color-coded view of your area. Go to planthardiness.ars.usda.gov. Type in your zip code and it shows you your zone .



To the left is my close-up map south of Milwaukee. It even shows streets and I am at the red dot in Zone 5b, with lows between -10 to -15. I am 10 blocks west of 5a, which runs narrowly along Lake Michigan, and only 20 miles from 5a, 20 miles to the northwest.

Zones are based on 1991-2020 weather data. This does not represent the coldest it has ever been or ever will be for a location in this 30-year span. Plants could experience an extreme cold snap that lasts just a day or two, and could still be lost. Gardeners need to keep that in mind and understand that past weather records cannot provide a guarantee.

Other environmental factors contribute to the success or failure of plants. Wind, soil type, soil moisture, humidity, pollution, snow, and winter sunshine affect the survival of plants. The way plants are placed in the landscape, how they are planted, and their size and health can also influence their survival.

The ASDA website provides links, videos, and gardening tips for vegetable and flower growers. This is probably more than our experienced gardeners need to research. I reckon most of our members could tell the USDA a thing or two . . . however, checking the zone guidelines might mean we could invest in a perennial we were just not sure about planting.

No harm looking.

Wisconsin Gardens Newsletter

DEADLINE AND PUBLICATION DATES

Winter Issue	December 1 – January 1
Spring Issue	March 1 - April 1
Summer Issue	June 1 – July 1
Fall Issue	September 1 – October 1

Coming in Summer 2024

Convention Report, Judges Council, Landscape Design, Landscape Design Schools, Membership, Books, National Project Design, Organizational Study, Horticulture, Protocol Membership, Publicity, Social Media/Web Page, and Scholarship Investment

Yes, I'm waiting for May flowers just like you!

I'm also looking forward to the Garden Club Convention to be held at the Milwaukee Marriott West off I-94 in Waukesha. It is **EASY** for you to get to.

Can't wait to paint my bird house!

Friend Karen and I both signed up as usual! I happily agree to her suggestions as she most often agrees to mine . . . see her name as copy editor? Six or seven years ago, she edited the club newsletter I wrote, making me look quite capable! When I took on this newsletter task, I knew I again needed her assistance, and she began the job of a copy editor.

Then, couple issues back, we needed a book reviewer, and since she has a way with words, I persuaded friend Karen to take on that task!

The significant word is friend. For four years, I was membership chair for Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee, and I told prospective members the best part is not programs or lunches or garden tours. The best part of being in a garden club are friends, fun and learning. If you want to grow your garden club, be sure to tell everyone about those three things!

FRIENDS AND FUN WILL DO IT EVERY TIME!

Jan

The first day of spring is one thing,
and the first spring day is another.

The difference between them
is sometimes as great as a month.

Henry Van Dyke

Send Corrections and Updates To
SUSAN JOHANSEN, Membership

2249 122nd Street, New Richmond, WI 54017
715-781-6825 h23j19@gmail.com

Editor, Jan Blooming
bloomingj@hotmail.com
5331 S. Cambridge Lane
Greenfield, WI 53221
414-541-8834



Assistant Editor and Copy Editor, Linda Reuss
lreuss@att.net

Copy Editor, Karen Thaker

Circulation, Susan Johansen

Advertising Manager Laura Skoff
lauraskoff@gmail.com

Contributors: Joe Powelka, Carol Caitlin, Linda McCafferty, Lynne Ehnert, Debby Walters, Sue Donohoe, Gerianne Holzman, Karen Thaker, Jan Dixon, Barbara White, Kitty Schaefer, Susan Miller, Kathy Shaw, Nancy Cody, Diane Olsen, Ginger Wierman, Elaine Wagner, Debby Walters, Karen Merlau, Cheryl Lausten, Lynn Laufenberg, Lynn Ehnert, Doris Weber, Charlotte Nicholes, Maggie Smerchek, Dawn Mozgawa, Annette Stratman-Durrer. Diane Powelka, Kitty Larken, Barb Case, Diana Peterson, and Sandy Pike

Published quarterly by the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation, member of National Gardens Clubs, Inc.

Editor reserves the right to edit contributions for size and content.