



Sprinklings

Starting seeds indoors

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ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

March-April 2017

Meet our newest members



SCVMGA's newest members from the 2016 class are: (front from left) **Rebecca Strand**, Woodville; **Amanda Lawrence**, Boyceville; **Patricia Henderson**, Hudson; **Kathi Randall**, Maiden Rock; **Rachel Baumer**, River Falls; (back from left) **Janet Bliven**, Hudson; **Nikol Shirts**, Star Prairie; **Leslie Holt**, Hager City; **Elizabeth Schuster**, Durand; **Tom Kujawa**, Lake City, Minn.; **Erin Abrahamson**, Hudson; and **Patricia Miller**, Houlton.

Blending nature, man-made materials into landscaping designs

Three speakers will focus on landscaping at this year's Garden U.

Dan Sandager of Abrahamson Nurseries in Stillwater, Minn., will share his professional experiences in landscape design and installation, including hardscaping that incorporates man-made materials. Prior to purchasing Abrahamson's, Dan received a degree in Horticulture from the University of Minnesota.

Minnesota author Teresa Marrone will tell us about landscaping with wild berries and fruits. Author of a dozen cookbooks, including "Dishing Up Minnesota," Marrone has just completed a book on weeds —

Garden U

Saturday, March 18
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Hudson House
Grand Hotel

A registration form is attached to this newsletter

always a popular subject with gardeners. Her first book, "Dressing and Cooking Wild game," was published in 1987 and is still in print today.

Lynn Steiner, well-known area garden writer, will present ideas for landscaping with wildlife. A former editor of Northern Gardener

Magazine of the Minnesota Horticultural society, Steiner has written several books on gardening in the upper Midwest.

The daylong event will include lunch, breaks, our Garden Market Place with area vendors, and a variety of gardening-related door prizes.

Don't miss out on this continuing educational opportunity!

Thursday, March 23 MEETING

Benefits of Green Walls

by Carolyn Barrette

You've heard of the 'green wall' at UW River Falls? A vertical wall of plants growing in MGV Karalyn Littlefield's class room? The Plant and Earth Science office now has a portable green wall. UW-River Falls also sponsored and demonstrated a green wall exhibit at the 2016 Minnesota State Fair. Even the Vikings Stadium features a green wall.

Our March speaker, Prof. Sonja Maki of the UW-RF Department of Plant and Earth Sciences, will describe the beneficial environmental effects of a green wall. Among other findings, the wall demonstrates that foliage can positively impact college students' well-being and academic performance. We will also learn about the maintenance factors necessary for greenwall plant health and sustainability.

The meeting will be Thursday, March 23 at First Covenant Church in River Falls starting at 6:45 with the speaker at 7:15 p.m.

Thursday, April 27 MEETING

Tending to vineyards

by Carolyn Barrette

At our April 27 meeting Ernie Betker will be describing techniques in pruning and caring for grapes. Betker has five acres of wine grapes growing north of Hudson.

His relatively new plantings are prime examples of pruning techniques and vineyard care.

The meeting will be at First Covenant Church, 1374 N Main St, River Falls at 6:45 with the speaker at 7:15.



President's Message

February was an unusual month. I saw a robin in my apple tree, the daffodils are sticking out of the ground, wood ticks have been pulled off dogs, the weeds in my garden were starting to green up. I even saw a person kayaking on the St. Croix river among chunks of ice. It's amazing how things can change in a week. Snow has fallen twice since then. Spring is a season of change and we have grown accustomed to a progression of certain events. When the events happen a little sooner or little later than we expect, we always have plenty to talk about. The start of spring can be measured by our planet's location in relation to the sun. That day never seems to feel like spring.



Trent Kowalchuk

Spring is coming, maybe not fast enough for some. Be patient and enjoy the last days of winter. Complete the last of the winter chores. Get the garden planned, seeds ordered and starter trays organized. Enjoy a walk on a nice afternoon and resist the urge to be in the garden. There are plenty of garden seminars to hold back that spring fever for a day. Our Garden U is March 18 and is always fun and informative.

Spring is coming – I just can't tell you when. The frogs in the wetland behind my house will let me know, usually extremely loud.

Volunteer Match Grant reminder: Need some extra money for a SCVMGA project and you are an employee or former employee of 3M? Remember you can get a match-ing grant for volunteer hours. See Page 8 for more details.

What's happening?

UPCOMING CLASSES

"Growing Healthy Plants: Basics in Disease Management" taught by "Dr. Death," Dr. Brian Hudelson, director of the UW-Extension Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 15 at River Falls Public Library. Need to reserve your place by contacting [Diana Alfuth](#).

"How to Fertilize" taught by Diana Alfuth, Pierce County Horticulture Educator. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 28 at Elmwood High School Science Classroom. Register with Diana by March 21.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

It's not too soon to remind you about our 13th annual plant sale on Saturday June 3 at the Octagon House in Hudson. While you're watching your seedlings grow on the kitchen window or anxiously wondering which plants made it through the winter, consider what you can donate to the plant sale and how you'd like to help this year.

If you are growing your annuals or vegetables from seed this year, please plant some extra to contribute to the sale. Annual flower of all kinds are welcome, as are vegetables like tomatoes, peppers and eggplant. People also ask for pumpkin and squash seedlings too. And herbs are always popular.

We especially need volunteers to help out before the sale date by digging plants from other people's gardens, hosting drop-off sites in the two counties and delivering plants to the Octagon House. If you can help, email [Corky Weeks](#) or call her at 651-210-5160.



PHOTO BY MARI MARSON

FUN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

For the past several years SCVMGA has had a booth at the St. Valley Builders Association Spring Expo. Our objective is to let the community know about the Master Gardener program and provide easy (and fun) access to horticultural information. This year the Expo will be held at the Hudson Sports & Civic Center, Friday and Saturday, March 24-25.

Our booth will have "Are You Smarter than a Rutabaga?" game to make it easy to interact with the public. There are still opportunities to volunteer Saturday morning from 9 to noon and Saturday afternoon 3 to 6. Contact [Barb Peterson](#) 715-549-6798 or [Maria Scheidegger](#) 612-578-2658. Trent Kowalchuk and Peg Wastell will be part of the seminar line-up Saturday afternoon at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Stop by to hear them and check out our SCVMGA booth.

"OUT & ABOUT" TOUR UPDATE

Our first tour will be to **Rush Creek Growers** in Spring Valley on **Tuesday, March 28 at 2 p.m.** Members can use Sign-up Genius on our [website](#) to register.

Thank you to everyone who provided input on tour suggestions via SurveyMonkey. Tuesday or Saturday afternoons were the preferred times. Rush Creek Growers near Spring Valley and Baileys in Hastings were top vote getters along with the Japanese Gardens and behind-the-scene tour of the Como Park Conservatory. MGVs' personal gardens, including Donna Davis's property, ranked high also. Coordinators **Debby Walters** and **Anita Justen** will be arranging tours in the coming months. Watch for more details in *Sprinklings* and on our website.

SPRING TOUR
Rush Creek Growers
Spring Valley

2 p.m.
Tuesday, March 28



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

by Deb Pederstuen



Deb is a 1999 MGV class graduate and our first Membership Director, beginning in 2000. Her mission has been to welcome and inform every new Master Gardener Volunteer.

16 MGV INTERNS JOIN SCVMGA

Our fantastic Master Gardener family has steadily grown to 192 members! It was wonderful to renew memberships for 174 MGVs in addition to our two new MGVs **Joan Forsythe** and **John Ramstad** and two 2016 MG Interns, **Rachel Baumer** of River Falls and **Patricia Henderson** of Hudson. During the week of our January Open House, **Lynn Steely** and I welcomed fourteen 2016 MGV Interns: **Erin Abrahamson** and **Janet Bliven** of Hudson; **Bob & Faye Gartmann** and **Rebecca Strand** of Woodville; **Carol Hokenson** of Somerset; **Leslie Holt** of Hager City; **Tom Kujawa** of Lake City; **Amanda Lawrence** of Boyceville; **Katherine Mastny-Byboth** of River Falls; **Patricia Miller** of Houlton; **Kathi Randall** of Maiden Rock; **Elizabeth Schuster** of Durand; and **Nikol Shirts** of Star Prairie. Let's reach out to our new members as they begin their volunteer projects.

HOSPITALITY

This applies to our social time at monthly meetings. Special thanks to our Master Gardeners for donating their delicious treats. For the past six years, longer than any Hospitality Coordinator, **Trina Frank** has served us every meeting but three! That's dedication! A special thank you to MGV Interns **Rachel Baumer** and **Janet Bliven**, who have volunteered to help Trina in the kitchen.

NEW LOCATION AT ST. CROIX COUNTY FAIR

The St. Croix County Fair Board has approved a request to house the SCVMGA booth in the UW-Extension Home, Community and Education (HCE) building. Diana Alfuth and 10 MGVs met last month to discuss how to utilize and beautify the available space around the HCE Building. **Cindy Doty**, **Ginny Drath**, **Cindy Gleason**, **Patricia Henderson**, **Barbara Kolpin**, **Wendy Kramer**, **Tom Kujawa**, **Amanda Lawrence**, **Deb Pederstuen**, and **Lynn Steely** attended.

NEW BOARD SECRETARY

Upon the resignation of Barbara Johnson, **Jackie Daharsh** was appointed

Board secretary until the Fall 2017.

HUDSON FARMERS MARKET NEEDS COORDINATOR

Looking for an easy way to get your volunteer hours? Consider coordinating MGV volunteers at Plaza 94 on Thursday mornings from July-September. Contact [Deb Pederstuen](#).

ANOTHER SMILING FACE ON WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Guests and members alike appreciate a smiling face! I'm happy to announce that **Susan Wallin** of Hager City has joined our six-member Welcome Committee.

NEW PHOTO COORDINATOR

A big thank-you to **Leslie Holt**, a MGV intern from Hager City, who has agreed to coordinate the Photo Committee. If you enjoy taking pictures of our events, please contact [Leslie Holt](#).

NEW WEBMASTER TEAM

Previous website assistants **Debby Walters** and **Mari Marson** are now sharing Webmaster duties. Thank you both for all the time you devote to keep our website up to date.

2017 Variety Plant Trials

How many people does it take to sort 10,000 seeds?



PHOTO BY PEG WASTELL

Standing from left: **Robyn Wefel**, **Carolyn Barrette**, **Mary Vagt**, **Barb Kolbe**, **Rose Kuebker**, and **Gloria Bonse**.
Seated from left: **Patricia Miller** and **Sandy Madsen**.

A big thanks goes to the 18 volunteers who counted seeds at the "Seed Sorting and Potluck" project on Saturday, Feb. 25 at St. Joseph Town Hall. More than 10,000 seeds were sorted, and orders and evaluation forms placed in envelopes to send to 34 participants in the 2017 Variety Plant Trials. Clean-up was completed by 2 p.m. Our crew brought an amazing array of edibles and beverages. Thanks to Carolyn Barrette for use of the town hall and hot coffee first thing. Thanks to Ken Kolbe for labels for plants and orders – saves so much time. Thanks to everyone else who came with their clever and quick fingers. – *Peg Wastell*

NOTE: A summary of results from last year's trials is on page 4.

The Bristly Roseslug and other Sawflies

by Jerry Bridge

The Bristly Roseslug (*Cladius difformis*) is a common, non-native sawfly in Wisconsin, the larvae feeding on leaves of rose bushes (as well as raspberry and strawberry). The adult is one of the first insects observed in the spring, with this species often having multiple generations each year. There are about three similar species in Wisconsin that feed on roses and related plants, with a couple of others tunneling inside canes as well as feeding on leaves.

The larvae are greenish, about 7 mm (about 1/4 inch) long with distinct, stiff hairs on the body. The larvae are first common in June skeletonizing leaves then as the larvae mature more general feeding is observed, the insect eating holes in leaves. The term 'roseslug' comes from the slug-like movement and short legs of the larvae. The adult is a little shorter than the larva, short-lived and is blackish in color, looking like a thick-waisted wasp.

Roseslugs belong to the largest family of sawflies, with about 1000 species in North America from this family, most of them being not well-studied. There are many different species of sawflies in Wisconsin, belonging to the order of insects that include bees, wasps and ants. Most overwinter as a mature larva or a prepupa. The adults have a saw-like structure on the abdo-



Bristly Roseslug larva
(Yurika Alexander, BugGuide.net)



Bristly Roseslug adult
(Peter Bryant, UCI.edu)

men for laying eggs, hence the name. Many sawflies feed on leaves of conifers or deciduous trees and shrubs.

Damage to plants is mainly cosmetic, however they can defoliate a plant when numbers are very high which can put the plant under a good deal of stress. Control measures include: handpicking, insecticidal soap, and other conventional insecticides such as acephate or carbaryl, which are very toxic to bees. Some measures, such as the biological insecticide Btk that work on caterpillars, do not work on sawfly larvae since they are not caterpillars.

(Caterpillars are larvae of moths and butterflies and have no more than five prolegs, along with the three pair of true legs, as sawfly larvae have more than five pair of prolegs; prolegs being the short, stubby structures on the abdomen.) In identifying caterpillars or the caterpillar-like sawfly larvae, the number of prolegs is the first thing to look for to separate them from one another.

Jerry has been a SCVMGA member since 2013. With a background in biological sciences and mathematics, he was an education consultant in a former homeland of South Africa. His interest in insects began many years ago in subarctic Canada.

2016 Variety Plant Trial Results

Wondering which variety of carrot, eggplant, peas, muskmelon, kohlrabi, lettuce, flat-leaf parsley or cosmos to grow this year? SCVMGA members who participated in last year's trials have some answers for you. Listed are the Best and Second Best varieties. A complete report by Diana Alfuth is available on our website.



CARROTS
Sweetness III
Tendersweet



KOHLRABI
Kossack
Winner



EGGPLANT, COLORED
Diamond
Pintung



PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAFED
Giante D'Italia
Titan



MUSKMELON
Ambrosia
Goddess



PEAS, EDIBLE PODS
Sugar Snap
Cascadia



COSMOS
Sensation
Seashell



LETTUCE
Red Iceberg



Karalyn's Kitchen

Karalyn Littlefield, a MGV since 2013, teaches classes in Food Science and Animal Science at UW-River Falls. After receiving a master's degree in Food Science, Karalyn worked in the food industry.

Shrimp à la Ari

The honorable uncle of this month is Ari. Ari has two cooking specialties of which I have benefitted. The first is grilling steak and the other is a traditional shrimp dish from his home country, Greece. According to Ari, the only oregano to use is Greek Oregano. However, I do not have family back in the homeland to send it to me, so I use what I can find locally and that is usually labeled as Mediterranean. I imagine that fresh oregano would put this dish over the top.



The beauty of this dish is that it uses tomatoes and depending on the season, fresh or canned or a combination can be used. I have modified the recipe to include sautéed onions, though I think it best that we keep that as our secret. If using fresh tomatoes, add them to the pan after the onions have softened to drive off some of the juice. I like to use the largest shrimp that I can find or are economical. Raw or cooked work, however; I like to start with raw shrimp. This is a time to pull out the best and freshest olive oil. Serve in a bowl with the broth and a chunk of Italian or French country-style bread.

Shrimp à la Ari

- 1 lb. shrimp, thawed, shelled, deveined
- 5 cloves of garlic finely minced
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cans of diced tomatoes or fresh tomatoes diced
- 1 medium onion diced
- 8 oz. feta cheese, crumbled. (more if desired)
- Oregano (about 2 Tbsp. fresh or 1 Tbsp. dried)
- Salt and pepper

Put the olive oil and garlic in a bowl. Let sit. Sauté onion in olive oil until soft. Do not allow to color. Add fresh tomatoes, if using. Simmer to reduce the liquid. Taste sauce and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. If flavor is sour or bitter, balance with a little brown sugar. If using canned tomatoes, mix with onions, taste and adjust seasoning.

Lay shrimp side by side in a 9" x13" baking dish (glass preferred). Evenly pour olive oil and garlic mixture over the shrimp. Lightly sprinkle with salt. Pour over onion and tomato mixture. Generously sprinkle with oregano. Bake in a preheated 350F oven for 20-30 minutes until bubbling. Remove shrimp from oven and sprinkle evenly with feta cheese. Turn off heat and return shrimp to oven for about five minutes until cheese has softened.



Easy Herb Gardens

by Lisa Mosbey

Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis stricta*)

Just another weed...you know it by another common name... sour grass, false shamrock, sheepshire or mistakenly called it a clover. Wood sorrel is an edible plant that grows 12-18 inches with tiny pea-like flowers clustered together on flower heads in yellow, white, violet, or pink each flower having 5 petals. In our area, I've only found the yellow flowering wood sorrel blooms. Harvest time is from April through September. Its small folded-heart-shaped leaves grow in threes which make it easily identifiable and often confused for a clover. Oxalis means "sour"; it's the oxalic acid that gives it a very sour flavor. You may also notice hints of lemon. Wood sorrel has been a food source and herbal remedy for centuries. The parts used are flowers, seed pods, leaves, stems if thin and tender. Add fresh to a wild greens salad, eggs, or even rhubarb pie. It can be made into a healthy salt substitute by mixing dried sorrel with equal parts dried peppergrass. Many vegetables contain oxalic acid, including swiss chard, beet greens, okra, spinach, and broccoli. The root is starchy and may be boiled to substitute for potatoes. Wood sorrel pairs well with wild game and other meats, fish, and raw or cooked wild greens.



Fresh is best when making a tea or infusion, use both leaves and flowers, cover with boiling water and steep for 30 minutes. The leaves are nutrient rich with Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, and calcium. Oxalic acid is considered toxic when consumed in large quantities because it inhibits the absorption of calcium. Moderate consumption is considered safe for a healthy person and is best avoided by folks with gout, rheumatism, and kidney stones. Known to alleviate thirst and heal mouth sores, it is a useful remedy for scurvy, fevers, urinary infections, nausea, and sore throats.

Precautions: Because many herbs are potent, small amounts used regularly may be safest. Anything beyond culinary amounts may be too strong for certain individuals, such as women who are pregnant or nursing; individuals with some health conditions (e.g., liver disease); or those taking medications such as blood thinners and blood sugar-lowering drugs. For the science and studies on herbal remedies visit www.Pubmed.gov.



Lisa, who received her MG training in Nevada, is a Holistic Health Practitioner, Herbalist and Aromatherapist whose mission is to educate and empower people to use herb and essential oil plant remedies to aid their health and well-being. She writes a [blog](#) on herbs, gardening tips and recipes.

January meeting packed with awards, new members, garden-art tips

by Sandy Madsen

The 2017 season kicked off with our traditional pizza supper, recognition of volunteer hours, and introduction of 2016 MGVI interns. Ninety-one people attended: 74 members, four guests, 12 interns from the 2016 class, and Diana Alfuth.

SCVMGA member Christine McGinnis, a landscape architect by training and an artist by choice, inspired and challenged us to visualize how to add beauty to our gardens.

Garden art might be repurposed, functional or antique structures. They could even be children's art.



Christine McGinnis

The reason to add objects could be for surprise, whimsy or to add character. The objects can change with the seasons or be permanent.

Smaller objects can be grouped together to create just the right touch. The perfect object looks like it is part of an overall plan and often adds the finishing touch to an already lovely garden.

The process of art installation includes



Corky Weeks (left) and Cathie Burtzloff were recognized for 1,000 hours of volunteer service.

designing the garden around the object. A permanent larger structure becomes immovable when a concrete foundation is needed. Other smaller structures remain movable. "Art without structure doesn't reach its full potential," she said.

The gardens that have a "WOW" factor usually include these qualities:

- Structure using both plants and objects
- Repetition of colors, plants and shapes
- Variety with enough difference in design but not too much
- Balance using visual weighting as well as some asymmetry
- Scale that creates visual balance which works together so nothing is overwhelming
- Sequences that bring the eye through the

transitions gradually

- Emphasis that includes an accent where your eye is drawn
- Focal points that are created with color, texture or natural and manmade objects

Great gardens use structuring plus focal points to create a visual feeling. Use whatever delights you!

February meeting featured indoor winter gardening advice

by Sandy Madsen

Fifty-seven members and 11 guests attended our February meeting.

SCVMGA member John Ramstad entertained and educated us by sharing his extensive knowledge of indoor gardening.

He noted that there are two main styles of water-based indoor gardening: aquaponics and hydroponics.

Aquaponics uses nutrients from fish. One needs an 80-gallon reservoir for the fish, a tray system for the plants, a circulating pump to bring the nutrient-rich fish water up to the plants, timers for the lights and pump plus gauges to measure the nutrients and pH. He tried the aquaponics combination and had success, but found the balancing of nutrients and pH to be very time consuming. It's essential to maintain that balance because you have bare roots and susceptible fish that can die if anything goes wrong.

Hydroponics is another option.

John described four types. A static-solution system uses a big pool of water under a platform of plants. A continuous flow system uses "nutrient film technology" seen in sloping gutters. An aeroponics system uses a continuous fine spray on the roots. A flood/drain system uses periodic flooding and draining of individual containers.



PHOTO BY DEB PEDERSTUEN

John Ramstad displayed one of his plant stands used for his indoor winter garden.

John used a flood/drain system of containers for tomatoes. He harvested huge crops from his basement. The pots consisted of a two-bucket system with a colander holding the plant and clay pellets at the top of the water filled bucket. The bottom of the buckets had drain tubes connecting to a tank of nutrient-rich water which ran through a circulating pump. He started with 4 large pots of small tomato plants that were 4" below two lights. The plants were pruned to one or two stems. The lights were moved higher and higher as the plants grew. He added four more lights on the sides after they grew very tall after about two months. The liquid needed to be checked for dissolved salts and pH. Chemicals were added periodically to adjust nutrients and pH. He also pollinated the flowers with a Sonic tooth brush!

Many of us would love to have homegrown tomatoes in the middle of winter. We were inspired!

Gardening from scratch

Four SCVMGA members share their techniques



PHOTO BY KEN KOLBE

by Colleen Callahan

While there are some absolute “must dos” in planting seeds indoors, there’s also a bit of wiggle room.

Four of our in-house experts, Carolyn Barrette, Leroy Clark and the Kolbes (Ken and Barb), use slightly different approaches, but all achieve the same results.

Each utilizes a different space: Carolyn sets up a starter garden in her living room; Leroy in his garage; and the Kolbes in their basement and in an outdoor heated building. They all contribute plants to our annual Plant Sale in June, and participate in the Variety Plant Trials.

PURCHASING SEEDS

Because the Kolbes grow mostly Heirloom vegetables, they purchase seeds from SeedSavers.com. Carolyn buys from JungSeeds.com through an E-Garden Exchange that allows one to purchase seeds from various Jung catalogs with only one shipping fee. Leroy

is more diversified; he says he buys seeds from “all over the place.”

STARTING DATES

Mid-to-late March is the most common time for planting seeds indoors. Some flowers, however, need to be started in early-to-mid February. Leroy already has young plants of pansies, petunias and calibrachoa thriving in his greenhouse. Ken started cabbage and broccoli seeds last month because they go in the ground early, around mid April. He will use row covers to protect them from cool temps and bugs.

The National Garden Center has a table listing the best times to plant vegetables organized by zip codes.

STARTER MIX

It really doesn’t matter where to purchase the starter mix. After all, it’s nothing special. “It doesn’t contain any nutrients,” says Carolyn. It’s just an incubator for the seeds to germinate and receive warmth and water. That’s because (*if you remember from*

class) each seed comes packed with its own food, usually starches or oils, stored in its embryo. Carolyn, however, adds a little Miracle Gro potting soil to the starter mix, which she buys from locally owned garden centers. Leroy prefers the big-box stores where “I can get large bags cheaply.” The Kolbes use mostly Jiffy Starter plugs (*shown at right*). Ken scours the Internet for the best price on bulk orders.



WATERING

All three water the starting mix before planting. Ken soaks the peat pellet to make it expand, then places the seed inside. They all water from the bottom. Leroy will mist the top as necessary to keep it moist. Once the seedlings poke through, he moves the cells from solid-bottom flats to rigid-mesh flats that allow drainage and moves them from the garage to his

(*cont'd on next page*)

(cont'd from previous page)

greenhouse. There he waters them with a sprinkler.

COVERING

All three cover the seeds until germination. It serves two purposes: retaining moisture and warmth. Leaving them on too long, says Leroy, can cause "damping off." Damping off is when pathogens kill seedlings due to too much moisture. Leaving lids on also invites mold. "Mold spores are everywhere," says Leroy. "If you find mold, ease off on the water and get more air to the flats. Usually that will stop it. Otherwise start over." As soon as Ken discovers mold, he says he "just picks it off."

LIGHTING

Not all seeds seek light in the beginning. Vegetable seeds can start in the dark, says Carolyn. "They need warmth more than light." She places them in front of floor heat vents in her house with space underneath for air flow. "In two or three days, the seeds are up and can be moved under lights," she says. Carolyn bathes them daily under fluorescent lights for 12 hours. Leroy turned his garage into a "germination chamber" where he leaves the fluorescent lights on constantly. Once in the greenhouse, natural light takes over. Ken installs two different temperature bulbs in his fluorescent fixtures: a 3500 degrees Kelvin and a 6400 one. Together they provide a wider color spectrum. The time will vary, but the longest he leaves them on is 12 hours.

BLOWING IN THE WIND

After the seedlings have grown a few inches, Carolyn turns on a fan periodically to provide a soft breeze. "It strengthens the stems," she says. Ken has timers on fans that run several hours a day. "It takes the place of the wind outdoors and appears to lessen dampening off and other diseases," he says. Leroy, whose seedlings are in his greenhouse, will open the door on warm days. In the meantime, he's working on installing thermostat-controlled automatic windows.

FERTILIZING

As soon as the seedlings pop through, Carolyn adds a liquid fertilizer to the water. Leroy transfers the seedlings immediately to new flats filled with potting mix and slow-release fertilizer. Ken waits until the seedlings have true leaves to fertilize. He uses half strength 8-16-8 liquid Montys fertilizer.

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Gardening seminars are one of the best ways to learn the "ins and outs" of planting from seed. The Kolbes have attended a dozen over the years and strongly recommend them.

If you use seeds saved from the previous year, you need to plant a number of seeds in a one cell because one never knows how well they'll grow, says Carolyn, so expect to find many seedlings crowded into one cell.

Leroy reminds everyone to enjoy the process: "Have fun. Learn from your failures and rejoice in your successes!"

There's still time to apply for a SCVMGA grant!

SCVMGA Grant Application deadline is
Monday, March 13.

Click [here](#) for the application.

WIMGA UPDATE

The Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA) will hold its 2017 Conference in West Bend Wis., Oct. 13-14. There will be a Friday night keynote speaker, and lots of breakout sessions on Saturday, as well as vendors. Vicky Hopp and the Washington County MGVs are working on a great conference.

Reminder: Add your events to the Master Gardener state website: <http://wimastergardener.org/submit-an-event/> —
Paul VanDenMeerendonk, WIMGA representative

SCVMGA is listed on 3M's Matching Gifts

Each year the 3M Foundation will donate \$250 to an approved nonprofit organization for each employee or retiree who volunteers at that organization. An employee must volunteer 20 hours a year; a retiree must volunteer 25 hours.

Thanks to MGV **Barb Kolpin**, SCVMGA has been accepted into the "Volunteer Match" program. Barb submitted the necessary nomination information.

If you are a current or retired 3M employee, all you have to do is register your volunteer hours by logging on to www.3mgives.com. Near the bottom of the page is a link to Employees and Retiree Matching Gifts.

Sprinklings contributors welcome your comments

Do you have questions or comments about an article? One click on the writer's byline will give you instant access to their email.

Sprinklings

Sprinklings is a newsletter publication of the St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners Association and is published eight times a year: monthly issues in May, June, July and August; and bimonthly issues in September/October, November/December, January/February, and March/April. It is emailed to members in PDF format, and archived on the association's website at <http://scvmga.weebly.com>

All SCVMGA members are welcome to contribute articles, information, book reviews, or ideas on any horticultural topic. Submission deadline is the first Friday of the publication month. The next deadline is **Friday, May 5** for the May issue. Please email submissions or inquiries to giverny@me.com.

Editor: Colleen Callahan

Communications Coordinator: Suzy Naschansky

Circulation Manager: Diana Alfuth

GARDEN "U"

Saturday March 18, 2017

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
(8:30 registration)

Hudson House Grand Hotel

1600 Crest View, Hudson WI

Sponsored by the St. Croix Valley Master Gardener Volunteer Association

9:15 a.m. Residential Landscape Design

Dan Sandager, Abrahamson Nurseries

Abrahamson Nurseries is a full service landscape and design company, garden center, and a greenhouse grower well known in the St. Croix River Valley area. They offer a wide selection of landscape plants, including trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals, plus hardscape materials, tools, and garden decor. Since purchasing the nursery in 1974, the Sandager family has been passionate about great landscape design and quality installation. Today designers and installers specialize in both residential and commercial.

10:45 a.m. Fruits & Berries in the Landscape

Teresa Marrone, author

Marrone has been studying and writing about wild plants and other outdoors topics for years. A forager and plant enthusiast, she is the author of several photographic field ID books for our region including a *Wild Berries and Fruits Field Guide*. A serious cook as well as a plant enthusiast, she'll talk about using edible wild berries and fruits for humans as well as landscaping to feed the wildlife. She'll be back to talk about weeds to our SCVMGA meeting in June.

Lunch and vendor booths from local garden shops

1:15 p.m. Grow Native

Lynn Steiner, author

Steiner is one of the area's best known garden writers. She is the author and photographer of several books advocating the effective use of native plants in the typical home landscape. Her newest book, *Grow Native: Bring Natural Beauty to Your Garden*, advocates the use of native plants to create a garden that is attractive to owners, and to pollinators, butterflies, birds and other native fauna. Steiner is a former editor of *Northern Gardener*.

Directions: I-94 to exit 2, south on Carmichael, turn right onto Crest View Dr. (west) to Hudson House

Registration fee:
\$30 payable to SCVMGA
Includes lunch on site

Mail to:
SCVMGA – Carolyn Barrette
1358 County Rd V
Houlton WI 54082

Questions:
Phone: 715-549-6438
email:
stcroixvlymga@presenter.com

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