

UW Extension  
University of Wisconsin-Extension

# Sprinklings

ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

September-October 2015

**What's the buzzzz?**

p. 7

*Sprinklings begins its bi-monthly publication schedule for winter. The next issue will be published Nov. 13*

## Tour of MGV Garden Project at Houlton Elementary School



**Kathy Williams** (*left*) and **Jackie Daharsh** were among the MGVs who toured the Houlton school gardens on Sept. 10. Nine students, stationed at each garden, described the plants and work involved. Refreshments of produce from the gardens were served, including raspberries, melons, tomatoes, and cucumbers with dill sauce. A big “shout-out” goes to MGVs **Sandy Madsen** and **Julie Weinberg**, who meet weekly with the students, for organizing this impressive tour!

## All about seeds at Fall Workshop

By Peg Wastell

Saving and using seed is the thread that runs through our 7th annual hands-on Fall Workshop. Diana Alfuth will start with “Seed Collecting and Saving.” Next will be Ginny Gaynor on “Confessions of a Wild Seed Collector.” A hands-on activity of harvesting seeds will follow. After lunch, Ardith Beveridge will create floral designs using both fresh and dried materials.

This is your “last chance” to get those education and/or volunteer hours needed

for recertification since the deadline for turning in hours is Oct. 1.

Other reasons to join us are the slate of awesome speakers on timely and fascinating seed-related topics, “hands-on” opportunity, luscious lunch, and it’s exclusive to Master Gardeners at a rewardingly low cost of \$15! A registration form is available [here](#). Registration deadline is Sept. 20.

### It's seed-collecting time!

By Trent Kowalchyk

Sitting on my front porch the other day I noticed a curious pile of plant debris on the sidewalk. Above the pile was a purple coneflower that had reached out of the garden for some open space. The flower was spent and beginning to dry out. My resident finches had started to work it over, consuming the ripe seeds. This reminded me that I am not the only one that collects seeds, and that it's time to start collecting them before they disperse on their own or are consumed by the multitudes of critters that we share our gardens with. Many seeds we like to collect vanish quickly once they are mature. On your seed-collecting rounds, remember to save a few extras for the seed exchange at our November meeting. And, don't forget about the fall workshop - it's a great opportunity to learn more about seeds. Now, if only I could get the finches to consume more of those thistle seeds I see floating around my yard.

### FALL WORKSHOP

Saturday, Sept. 26  
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Seyforth Building**  
**Pierce County Fairgrounds**

### SEPTEMBER MEETING

By Carolyn Barrette

In September, Master Gardeners will hear **Diana Alfuth** tell us how to prepare our garden(s) for fall and winter. As gardeners we're supposed to know how to put the garden to bed for the year. However, it's been awhile since some of us have had a refresher. Diana will give us new updates and better techniques for that end-of-season task. Cleaning up the garden and disposing of debris ties into the topic of our Fall Workshop on seed saving.

### OCTOBER MEETING

By Carolyn Barrette

The October meeting will feature several SCVMGA grant recipients. Each is asked to prepare a short presentation on their grant activities. Money raised by our annual June Plant Sale funds grants that our Grant Committee distributes each year. [Click here](#) for a list of the 2015 grant recipients. Several recipients will be speaking at our October meeting. The remainder will be heard at the November meeting.

**Thursday, Oct. 22**

6:45 p.m. Meeting  
7:15 p.m. Break  
7:30 p.m. Speaker

**First Covenant Church**  
1374 N. Main St.  
River Falls

In addition, as part of the October meeting, **Vickie Reschke**, a new member from Illinois, will provide a firsthand account of how a speakers bureau works and how to set one up. Thank you, Vickie.

## President's Message

I am drafting this on a very warm and muggy September day with many monarchs enjoying the Joe Pye Weed that is thriving in one of my gardens. On a day like this it is hard to believe that fall is just around the corner. But of course one glance at the calendar tells me that is true.



**Barb Peterson**

I am very much looking forward to **Diana Alfuth's talk at our Sept. 24 meeting** on preparing our gardens for fall and winter. The research based knowledge that she shares is always very useful and her engaging style helps to make the information memorable and enjoyable to hear.

I am hoping to do all that I can this fall to prepare my gardens to be healthy and beautiful next summer. My husband and I are celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary

next July and we are planning an open house at our home and I want the gardens to be their best. I am also hoping to host our July 2016 SCVMGA meeting at my home since all will be ready for guests and our recent member survey suggested that members would like more opportunities to get to know one another.

I already know that one of the things I should do right now is to do a good job of documenting this year's results. I have a number of hanging baskets and pots; the pots were beautiful, the hanging baskets were not. The light conditions around my home have changed and of course that makes all the difference and I need to change the plant material I use.

Several years ago I won a study garden diary as a door prize at a gardening event and I treasure the notes I make in it. Now I just need to make sure there is much to read this winter as I plan for spring 2016.

Hope I see you Sept. 24.

## What's happening in Sept-Oct?

### LATE BLIGHT DISEASE

Wisconsin is one of several states reporting the appearance of late blight disease that seriously infects both potatoes and tomatoes. The first sign is a pale green coloring on leaves that quickly turns into an oily brown-black area. The organism thrives in cool, wet weather and can kill a plant within 10 days. Once the tomato or potato tubers begin to show symptoms, they should NOT be eaten or preserved. Three methods of destroying infected tomato plants are:

- 1) pull up roots, bag, leave in sun to allow pathogen to die and place in trash.

- 2) cut plants at base, allow to die in place and then incorporate into soil at a shallow level.

- 3) kill plants with a flame torch

The organism is unlikely to survive Wisconsin winters. UW-Madison plant



*Late blight on tomatoes.*



*Late blight on a potato leaf.*

pathologist Amanda Graves warns not to put any infected plants into a compost pile, as the warmth can keep the pathogens alive throughout the cold months. For more detailed info, go to <http://scvmga.weebly.com/gardener-resources.html>. Late blight is known for having caused the Irish Potato Famine in 1845.

### BRINGING IN HOUSE PLANTS

Many house plants that spend the summer outdoors need to return to their indoor habitat before night temps dip below 45-40 degrees. Preparing them for the move involves careful inspection of leaves, a thorough shower, and a gradual transition to indoor conditions. Spider mites are among the more serious pests; if left untreated, they can eventually kill a plant. An early sign of spider mites is a mottled yellow discoloration on the undersides of leaves. A number of

Internet sources recommend using an insecticide soap, but their availability on the market has dropped in recent years. Heidi Doering, St. Croix County Extension Educator, recommends making your own solution: 1 cup of

water, 1 cup of rubbing alcohol, and 1 tsp. of Ivory liquid soap. Ivory doesn't contain the harsh chemicals found in dishwasher detergents, she says, which can damage a plant. Shake well in a spray bottle and make sure to get underneath the leaves. Some gardeners leave their cleaned plants in a sheltered place for a week, such as a garage, and then make a final inspection before bringing into the house. Once back inside, provide them with as much light as possible; removing window screens will help. Because plants will enter into a dormant stage during winter, watering less often is recommended. Every month or so, clean the leaves to keep their stomata (pores) from clogging with dust.

### VOLUNTEER HOURS DUE

Remember to send your tally of volunteer hours for the year to Diana Alfuth by Oct. 1 in order to get recertified as a Master Gardener Volunteer. Click here for [timesheets](#).



*PHOTO BY JEFF HAHN  
Spider mite damage on a palm plant.*

### INVASIVE SPECIES WORKSHOP

UW-Extension in Dunn County is offering a workshop on "Invasive Plant and Earthworm Identification and Management" on Thursday, Sept. 17 in Menomonie. The workshop includes classroom instruction and outdoor demonstrations. For more info, [click here](#).

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### By Deb Pederstuen

#### FIVE BOARD POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Nominate a MGV or volunteer yourself for a position on the Board of Directors (BOD). It's very rewarding! Get to know and serve members in your county, share ideas, and help make decisions. Consider the secretary's position if you enjoy taking notes. Earn 24 hours of volunteer service just for attending the monthly board meetings.

All positions are two-year term commitments, except for Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA) State Representative which is three years.

- **Vice President:** assumes the role of president in their absence; oversees committees
- **Secretary:** keeps a record of all the proceedings of the Board of Directors meetings
- **Pierce County Representative:** represents Pierce Co. members and votes on issues
- **St. Croix County Representative:** represents St. Croix Co. members and votes on issues
- **WIMGA State Representative:** relays information between the state and SCVMGA

Elections take place at the Nov. 19, 2015 meeting. Currently, BOD meetings are held second Tuesday from 6-8 p.m. at the Hudson Public Library, 1st Street, Hudson. Interested candidates may email Nominations Committee Coordinator, [Deb Pederstuen](mailto:Deb.Pederstuen@gmail.com) or 715-386-6681 for detailed descriptions of each position.

#### ONLINE TRAINING REQUIRED FOR NEW MEMBERS

Only MGVs joining in 2015 must complete the online mandatory "Child Abuse and Neglect Reporter" training before Oct 1. It takes 30-60 minutes to complete and counts as one hour of continuing education. Click here: <http://wcwps.wisc.edu/mandatedreporter/>.

As a UW-Extension volunteer, follow directions for the "UW-Systems Employee." Download your completed pdf certificate, keep a copy for your records, and email Diana Alfuth your certificate for her records. She will notify the state of your certification.

MGVs who completed their online training certification last year are not required to repeat the online training for 2016 certification.

#### "VOLUNTEER VIBE"

Did you catch **Diana Alfuth's story** about her mysterious cardinal? It appeared in the August issue of Susan Mahr's "Volunteer Vibe," a monthly electronic newsletter reserved only for certified MGVs.

Don't miss out on the "Vibe" next year! Get certified for 2016! Email or mail your time sheet of education and volunteer service hours to Diana Alfuth on or before Oct. 1. Send in your hours even if you didn't meet your required 10 hours of education and 24 hours of volunteer service. All of our volunteer hours count on our SCVMGA annual accomplishment report. [Click here for 2015 time sheets](#). If you intend to be an active MGV in 2016, but didn't get enough volunteer hours to recertify, you can still receive the "Vibe" by completing an exemption request form. [Click here](#).

#### RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Meet my new assistant, **Lynn Steely**, who will help collect dues at the next three monthly meetings in September, October, and November. Membership forms are available on the [SCVMGA website](#) or contact Deb Pederstuen at [debnrick@gmail.com](mailto:debnrick@gmail.com).

The \$5 annual Wisconsin MGV state fee is included in your dues and is paid for you. You can avoid the \$10 late fee if dues are postmarked before December 31, 2015.

#### Annual Dues

|  |
|--|
| \$10 – Graduate of Fall 2015 MGV Class |
| \$15 – Individual member               |
| \$20 - Family (all must qualify)       |

#### MEET YOUR NEW PIERCE COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE

**Dorothy (Dot) Seebach** of River Falls felt a calling to serve as Pierce County Representative on the Board of Directors, following Pat Tremaine's passing last month. (*A memorial to Pat appears on page 6.*) Dot will be fulfilling the remaining year of Pat's two-year term. Dot's service begins immediately and continues through 2016. Dot was among several MGVs who gave Pat a

"Helping Hand" with her garden this summer. Dot is from the 2013 MGV class. If needed, you can contact her at [rjdasee@yahoo.com](mailto:rjdasee@yahoo.com).

## PROGRAM NEWS

### By Carolyn Barrette

#### MONTHLY PROGRAMS

It's that time again - to set up the 2016 monthly program schedule. People often ask how it happens that we have such good, interesting speakers on such a variety subjects. The answer is: YOU. You, Master Gardeners, who tell someone – me, or Deb or just mention it at a meeting – about a subject you'd like hear about. Or volunteer to give a talk at a meeting about your favorite subject or something you would like to share.

What's this leading up to? Your suggestions are welcome and needed to schedule speakers for 2016. Is there some issue or subject you want to know about? (Pruning, for example.) Is there a speaker you heard somewhere and think we might be interested in? (David Zlesak, always.) Someone you know who is really into a subject we might be interested in? (Garlic, anyone?) We do want to go on a 'field trip' (have an off-site meeting) in June or July, for sure.

In January, we will be hearing from MGV **Margaret Smith**, Executive Director of the Trumpeter Swan Society.

In February, the owners of Plantables will describe their work making seed-embedded products that are beneficial to bees and other insects. In March we will learn about butterflies.



**Trumpeter Swan**  
CREATIVE COMMONS PHOTO

#### GARDEN U

Do you have a hot topic for Garden U? Our March seminar is always ahead of the game in having a presentation on an upcoming issue. What's next year's issue?

Call or email me with suggestions: [tbarrett@pressenter.com](mailto:tbarrett@pressenter.com) or 715-549-6438. Thank you.

## Harvesting and preserving herbs

By Lisa Mosby

Have you been preserving your fresh produce so you can enjoy it throughout the coming winter? What about your herbs? Here are some simple and easy ways to preserve herbs for a nutrient-rich, spring-fresh addition to salads, vegetables, pasta dishes and more.

Drying herbs is by far the easiest method. I clip a bundle of stems about an inch thick, remove old or damaged leaves, then swish the bundle through cold water and pat dry. Tie it up and hang where it's cool, dry, and dark. I tapped nails into the rafters of my storage room to hang my herbs. Depending on the moisture content, it will take 1-5 days to dry. To preserve the green color of the leaves (especially basil) it's important to avoid light. If you don't have a dark room, tuck the herb bundle into a brown paper bag before hanging; this blocks the light. Holes in the bag will promote air circulation. Dry your thyme, parsley, lavender, lemon balm, peppermint or anise hyssop for a cup of tea when it's cold outside; add a spoonful of local honey for a soothing throat or cough remedy.

Sun-dry herbs by laying them on window screens to allow good air circulation, and let them sit outside in a shady spot. Bring them into the garage or house at night to avoid the morning dew, and put them out again the next day until dry. This method works great when preserving flowers of chamomile, calendula, and borage.

One other place you'll find herbs drying in my house is the oven. I fill up cookie trays and pack the oven with the door open just a crack to release the moisture. To speed the process, heat the oven to 150° and turn it off before adding the herb trays. Just remember to remove them before pre-heating the oven for dinner.



Freezing herbs is the preferred method to preserve flavor or color. Basil, lemon balm, arugula and parsley all make fresh-tasting freezable pesto sauces that can be used over noodles or vegetables. Just add a cup of green leafy herbs, 1-2 garlic cloves or scapes, 1/4 cup parmesan cheese, 1/4 cup nuts and 1/4 - 3/4 cup olive oil; blend or process to the consistency you desire.

To create herb flavor cubes, finely chop parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, dill and even green onions; mix them together or prepare them individually. Add water or olive oil to bind, then pack into empty ice cube trays and freeze. Once frozen, remove from trays and store in a freezer bag (date and label it). Use in stock, soups, crockpots or pasta sauce.

Herb butters can be prepared and frozen to top off everything. Add 1/8 cup (or more) finely chopped herbs to 1/2 cup soft butter and mix well. Roll in plastic wrap, twist the ends, and store in tin foil in the freezer. Cut off pieces as needed to add to a dish or top warm bread.

Finally, punch up your oil or vinegar by adding two or three fresh sprigs of your favorite herb per cup of liquid. Let the flavors meld together for a week or two before using in salad dressing or as a vegetable drizzle. *TIP: I dry my herb sprigs for 24 hours to reduce the water content before adding to an oil; be sure to store herb oils in the refrigerator.*



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.

## New Richmond Community Garden needs help with harvest

By Carolyn Barrette

August is the beginning of the big harvest time at the Community Garden. The tomatoes came in. The beans are still around. But we are only up to a little over 1,000 pounds of produce to share with seniors, food shelves, Grace Place, etc.

Blight hit the tomatoes big time. The Sun Golds – usually a big winner – split a lot this year, and we can't give those away. The second planting of beans is starting to produce now, so there's still work to do. Volunteer hours are dismal. With one exception, our 23 volunteers

have put in a total of just 145 hours. That works out to only six hours apiece. With that kind of response, it probably is not worth continuing with the community garden as it stands now next year. For comparison, we volunteered 350 hours and donated 1,700 pounds of produce in 2014.

We want to thank Darrell and Jerry for chopping all those corn stalks for mulch or we would be lost in the weeds. Thank you Julie for taking vegetables to Deer Park, and Karen for going to Hammond and Baldwin. We don't always get there. Thank you

**Donna Davis** for all the hours you put in. The people in New Richmond, Somerset and Hudson appreciate the vegetables we deliver.

### VOLUNTEER MANUAL

**SCVMGA Community Garden  
New Richmond**

**What to bring, how to record your hours, a garden map, where to bring your harvest and much more!**

[Click here to access it](#)

# Volunteer Opportunities

## **Coordinator:** Lisa Mosbey

Lisa completed her MGV training in Nevada in 2009 where she taught herb container gardening classes. She transferred to SCVMGA in 2013. Lisa is a holistic health practitioner, herbalist, and aromatherapist.

## **Assistant Coordinator:** Deb Schommer

Deb Schommer is interested in all things organic, self-sustaining and "green" promoting. She enjoys raising chickens, gardening (including straw-bale gardening) and learning how to work with her new greenhouse. She completed MGV training in 2014.

### WANTED: Assistant Program Director

*Are you interested in selecting educational topics & finding speakers for our monthly meetings?*

It's a great way to learn more about SCVMGA & earn Volunteer Hours!  
For more info, email Deb Pederstuen or call her at 715-386-6681.

## BALDWIN

### **Community Garden,** 1650-8th Ave.

Wendy Kramer 715-684-3642  
*Supervise, maintain, harvest, donate*

## ELSWORTH

### **Pierce County Fairgrounds Garden** (May-Oct)

Karen O'Brien 715-273-4191  
*Plant, maintain flower gardens*

### **VFW Post,** 154 S. Plum St.

Carol Matzek 715-262-5232  
*Mulch, edge landscape, perennial care*

## GLENWOOD CITY

### **Glenwood City Community Garden** (April-Oct.)

Barb Nelson 715-307-3821  
*Plant, manage seed trials*

### **Glenwood City Welcome Cows** (April-Oct.)

Bonnie Walters 715-220-6975  
*Aid 4-H club with planting, maintaining sign plot*

## HAMMOND

### **Hammond Community Garden,** Ridgeway Road

Mike Deneen 715-386-9792  
*Coordinate, help with community food, flowers, orchard*

## HUDSON

### **Hudson Hospital,** 405 Stageline Road

Jean Weiler  
*Indoor plant caretaker; coordinate, help with garden*

### **Octagon House,** 1004-3rd Ave. (Mondays)

Jean Haut 715-377-0645  
*Redesign gardens in 2015, maintenance*

### **Christian Community Home,** 1320 Wisconsin St.

Jackie Daharsh 715-381-6804  
*2-5 hrs. monthly maintenance of Memory Care gardens*

### **YMCA Camp St. Croix,** 532 Co. Rd. F

Stephanie Lentz 612-465-0561  
*Landscape, greenhouse, flower & vegetable gardens*

### **Accessible Space**

Jennifer Richards  
*Design, install gardens for residents*

### **Humble Acres,** 433 East Cove Rd.

Diane Reszka 612-290-5004  
*Answer questions, assist with workshops,  
"Happy Gardener Tour" on July 13*

## E.P. Rock Elementary School

Heidi Schimon 715-222-6111

*Plant, supervise school learning garden*

## Hudson Farmers Market, Plaza 94

Janet Jones 715-386-9246

*Thursdays, 8 a.m.-noon, (June-Oct)*

*Set up, tear down table, provide information, answer  
gardening questions*

## Hudson Farmers Market, Faith Community Church

Dawn Kleinknecht 612-203-9030

*Saturdays, 8 a.m. -noon (June-Oct)*

*Set up, tear down table, provide information, answer  
gardening questions*

## Lakefront Park (April-Oct.)

Ramona Robinson 763-412-9936

*Help design, maintain, harvest, share edible landscape*

## Willow River Elementary School

Ramona Robinson 763-412-9936

*Help design, supervise, maintain education garden*

## Willow River State Park, Cty Rd. A

Lauren Brathal 715-386-9340

*Tours and garden maintenance near Nature Center*

## St. Croix County Park, Perch Lake (April-Oct.)

Justin Townsend 715-781-6833

*Need Coordinator, "Book Worm" trail maintenance,  
beautification of public areas*

## NEW RICHMOND

### **Deer Field Gables Care Center,** 575 Hospital Rd.

Carolyn Craig 715-246-6242

*Spring cleanup, maintenance of therapy, rain gardens,  
bird sanctuary*

### **Community Garden,** 2050 Hwy 65

Carolyn Barrette 715-549-6438

*Planting, weeding, harvesting, planning, sharing*

### **Boardman Meadows Senior Complex,** 460 W. 8th St.

Ninette Nolen 715-246-7959

*Help senior gardeners with raised-bed vegetable garden  
Establish flower garden*

## PRESCOTT

### **Great River Road Visitor Center,** 200 Monroe St.

Jessica Bierbrauer 715-262-0104

*Maintenance*

(Cont'd on next page)

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# Sprinklings

## RIVER FALLS

**Boulevard Flower Plot** (April-Oct.)

Donna Reuter 715-821-7357  
Rejuvenate flower plot

**Town of River Falls Parks**

Dan Randall 651-775-6052  
Entrance sign planting, maintenance at 7 parks  
**River Falls Farmers Markets**, 2<sup>nd</sup> & Locust St.  
Bev Hoppe 715-425-8870  
(May-October)  
Saturdays, 8 a.m.-noon. Tuesdays, 4 p.m.-6 p.m.  
Man booth, answer questions

**Demonstration & Learning Garden**, Hoffman Park

Diana Alfuth  
"Grow to Share Community Garden"  
Plan, weed, demonstrate in garden, scout for problems

**St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity**

Susan Capparelli 715-425-5623  
Working on new gardens for Habitat for Humanity homes

**Grow to Share Community Garden**, Hoffman Park

Anna Zalusky 715-426-0826  
Weeding, planting, watering, harvesting

**Grow to Share Community Herb Garden**, Hoffman Park

Terry Anderson 612-240-3820  
(April-October)  
Plant, maintain, harvest culinary and medicinal herbs

**River Falls Community Garden**, RF High School

Amy Field, 715-307-7317  
Weeding, watering, harvesting

**VFW - Greenwood Cemetery** (May-Oct.)

Kathy Beebe 715-425-2015  
Maintenance

## ROBERTS

**Cross Community Garden**, 1246 Co. Rd TT

Mike Deneen 715-386-9792  
Growing community food & flowers, help with new trees, perennials, teaching garden

## SOMERSET

**Parnell Prairie Preserve**, 1823-45<sup>th</sup> St.

Jean Hoffman  
Weeding, watering showcase area  
4 hrs. per month (May-September)

## SPRING VALLEY

**Spring Valley Village Gardens**

Sue Christenson 715-778-4559  
Help weed, maintain village gardens

## ANYWHERE

**Hospitality**

Trina Frank 715-426-5659  
Treats for meetings

**Sprinklings Newsletter**

Colleen Callahan 715-381-9683  
Newsletter items, features, book reviews, ideas

**ReUse/Recycle Garden Books**

Joni Garbe  
Donate old gardening books for library/resale.  
Bring to monthly meetings

**MGV Helping Hands**

Gail Behr 715-698-4046  
Help fellow Master Gardeners in time of need

## IN MEMORY OF PAT TREMAINE

By Deb Pederstuen

It had been over a year ago when Pat Tremaine told me she didn't feel well. Sadly, she was later diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She passed away Aug. 31.

I hope you had a chance to find out how energetic Pat was during her five years with SCVMGA. Native plants was her specialty! In 2011, she asked me if she could form a new garden group called Gardening with Natives. Later,



she changed the name to Gardening with Native Plants after getting a teasing at the family Thanksgiving dinner table. Her group grew in numbers, from 3 in 2012 to 16 members this summer. She organized fun prairie hikes and tours to local nurseries, making a phenology chart of native plants in this area.

She didn't stop there! She created a detailed garden plan for the Demonstration and Learning Garden (DLG) in River Falls, including the native plant pollinator plot. Diana raved about Pat's plan - it's worth a trip to stop by. Pat was also a great resource at the annual Master Gardener Plant Sale as one of our native plant identifiers.

She served almost two terms as Pierce County Representative on the Board of Directors and board members

appreciated her input and enjoyed working with her. Pat also made history in the association! She was in the first garden group, Flower Garden Design, to speak and present a PowerPoint at the May 2012 monthly meeting. She talked about her own garden dilemmas in the program "Real Solutions to Real Problems."

[To read her obituary, [click here](#).]



A colorful array of native plants lines Pat's driveway.

# Bumble Bees: Native Bees in Autumn

By Jerry Bridge

Native plants that flower in the fall are especially important food sources for bumble bees. Such plants would include various asters, goldenrods, chrysanthemums and some sunflowers. Bumble bees are mostly generalists, feeding on many types of flowers. The feeding of bumble bees in large part depends on the ability of the bee to forage on flowers which will accommodate the tongue length (short, medium or long). There is often great variability within a single species - there may be a number of different color forms, for example - making identification of species sometimes difficult. One of the most common bumble bees we have is the **Common Eastern**

**Bumble Bee** (*Bombus impatiens*) pictured above. This is a medium-length tongued bee with, in most cases, a yellow thorax and yellow hairs on the first abdominal segment, the rest of the abdomen being black. The bee nests underground and may be seen into October.

Bumble bees are social insects that make colonies, but the colonies do not overwinter like the non-native European honey bee. In the fall all of the workers (female), older

queens (female) and drones (male) die off. Only the recently mated younger queens overwinter. The bumble bees are some of the last bees to suspend foraging for pollen and nectar in the fall. Since the 1990s there has been a dramatic reduction in bumble bee populations throughout the country. A host of explanations has been offered: loss of habitat, disease, pesticides and urbanization are some of the reasons given.

There are about 4,000 species of bees (our most important pollinators) in North America, most of them native. The vast majority of bees are only found in the west or southwest part of the country.

The last survey of bees in Wisconsin was completed seven years ago, 388 different species being recorded. (The actual number is probably higher as the central and northern parts of the state were under-sampled.) We are fortunate with bumble bees as they are more of a temperate and boreal group, some found in the northern most regions of Canada. There are 46 species of bumble bees in North America; of these about 20 are in Wisconsin, a number of them being uncommon or rare.



USDA PHOTO

## AUGUST MEETING

### The craft and science of harvesting prairie seeds

By Donna Cadenhead

Thirty-eight members and two guests attended our August meeting. New member, **Vickie Reschke**, was introduced.

We met at Pure Prairie Seeds, a seed company run by Mike Miller and his wife, Susan. They sell to governmental agencies and non-profit organizations. Having begun in 2002, their first harvest occurred in 2005.

Mike had a plant and seed display of Little Bluestem, Big Bluestem, Indian Grass, Prairie Drop Seed, Bottle Brush, Switch Grass, Golden Rod and Yellow Cornflower for members to view in the processing building. He processes seed one crop at a time, beginning with a large framed screen. He puts handfuls of harvested stems on the frame and shakes it, letting the seed fall through into bins. He then puts them in a Clipper Fanning Mill which is a large machine that shakes and separates the seed from the leaves, stems and other chaff.

Mike's seed is certified by the University of Wisconsin Lab to obtain a Pure Life Seed Content (PLS) for purity. The lab checks the percentage of seed to assure there are no noxious weed seeds in the mix. The latest sample of Little Bluestem Grass from Pure Prairie Seeds contained 77.92 percent pure seed with a germination rate of 95 percent. The chaff left after processing still contains quite a

bit of seed, but it is not marketable. Mike donates some to a group called Prairie Enthusiasts for prairie restoration.

Harvesting usually occurs in late October and early November. Mike uses a seed stripper to pick the seeds and cleans all machinery and buildings after each harvest to avoid cross contamination between the different seeds. He leaves the stalks standing for wildlife cover and estimates that he may leave as much as 20 percent of seeds in each plot. This helps to reseed the next harvest and provides food for small animals.

The third stop on Mike's tour was to show the group a couple of pollinator plants. He had a stem of figwort, which he said attracts bees, wasps, and flies. He also discussed the merits of Virgin's Bower or native Clematis. He had two large plants next to his raspberry plants. Mike gifted members with Virgin's Bower plants and seeds for the figwort.

After refreshments, Mike took us on a tour of the farm, sharing information about some of his favorite flowers and plants. We saw several that provide food for small birds, such as Rudbeckia and a cup plant. Our last stop was next to a field of prairie drop seed, which is a fragrant mounded grass. Thanks so much to Mike Miller for a wonderfully informative field trip.



**Mike Miller** (center) spreads stems, leaves and seeds over a screen held by MGVs **Matt Schmitz** (left) and **Paul VanDenMeerendonk**.

# It's more than "just weeding"

By Deb Pederstuen



**Marilyn Davis, Karen Jilek, Deb Pederstuen, Pat Angleson, Carolyn Barrette, Colleen Sutter, Paul VanDenMeerendonk, JoAnn Ryan, and Diane Offner after planting shrubs and trees last fall.**

**Sutter, Corky Weeks,** and MGV student **Mitzi Roy** are the current volunteers. We recall Carolyn replying to CCH's first MGV request in 2005. (*Pine Ridge Gardens, also at the facility, are tended by Jackie Daharesh and four other MGVs.*)

When JoAnn Ryan joined three years ago, we began our restoration project with an agenda, listing plants and shrubs to be pruned, replaced, moved to a sunny or shady location, or donated to the MG annual plant sale.

Last September, with help from MGVs **Karen Jilek, Diane Offner, and Paul VanDenMeerendonk**, our crew of nine spent six hours planting sixteen shrubs and trees. An excavating company removed the old, overgrown shrubs that same morning. To our delight, three overgrown, misshaped mugos, infested annually with pine sawflies, were replaced with three beautiful PJM rhododendrons, perfect for the sun-dappled shade of the three birch trees. Surrounding the gazebo, we planted four summersweet and five coralberry (1st Editions Candy) shrubs better suited for the partial shade where the sun-starved roses struggled. Along the border fence, we planted four pink flowering crabtrees.

A simpler project was creating a design outside the solarium windows with sun-loving perennials found elsewhere in the garden. We chose a drift of Russian sage, balloon flowers and coneflowers, edged with Johnson Blue Geraniums. Daffodils provide a bright yellow splash of color.

Besides planting colorful annuals in three large raised beds, MGVs apply their skills at pruning shrubs, detecting insects and diseases, teaching others to deadhead to extend blooms, and removing crown vetch, an invasive plant threatening to take over the garden. Last week, a dozen milkweed, left undisturbed for monarch propagation, were removed after aphids had taken up residence.

Yes, it's more than "just weeding." We do what we do for the residents' enjoyment. We strive to have the garden in tip-top shape for their concerts. In 2008, we featured the garden

It's not "just weeding" at Christian Community Home (CCH) in Hudson. It's restoring 16-year-old gardens that are aging along with its residents. The main garden behind the facility and the enclosed garden, professionally designed by **Diana Alfuth**, have "matured" and require more than just weeding.

Besides myself, **Carolyn Barrette, Teresa Anderson, Pat Angleson, Marilyn Davis, Grace Louks, JoAnn Ryan, Colleen**

on the Artful Garden Tour. Undoubtedly, our favorite is interacting with residents and family members as they stroll around the garden or sit by the pond. We're happy to identify plants or just listen to their gardening experiences. We hold a special place in our hearts for Anna who wanted her gift, a tiny pink tea rose, planted. Unexpectedly, her rose is still blooming near the window where she once watched it grow.

To hear how much the residents enjoy the beauty of the garden with "something always blooming" is our best reward. That's also Diana's reward who created the design in Spring, 1999 before she became St. Croix County's UW-Extension Horticulture Educator.

At her recent visit, Diana was amazed how the trees have grown and provide the shade she had intended. She was pleased with the circular concrete pathway she designed. Seeing the pond, Diana recalled how she and her friend picked two truckloads of rocks and arranged them around the newly dug pond. In her plant selection, she intentionally chose familiar plants and shrubs with fragrance, like peonies, roses, phlox, and lilacs. For variety, she interspersed not so familiar plants, like the pasque flower, a pretty tundra plant. Shrubs unique to the garden are yucca, a native of southwestern United States, and cutleaf stephanandra with its arching branches.

As MGVs, we don't mind "just weeding," but we really dig the challenge of restoring an older garden and sharing our expertise. It's a joy to see the garden come to life again!



**The recently rejuvenated garden at CCH.**

## 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, Nov. 6** for the Nov/Dec issue. Please email submissions or inquiries to [giverny@me.com](mailto:giverny@me.com).

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