

# Sprinklings

ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

May 2019

## Gearing up for the Annual Plant Sale

By Marilyn Gorham

Our 15th Annual SCVMGA Plant Sale is just around the corner and we do need everyone's help to make it a success. The sale will be held in Hudson on **Saturday, June 1** at the Octagon House at 3rd and Myrtle St. Hours are from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The Plant Sale funds the Community Grant Awards and our UW-River Falls scholarship, so the larger the profit at the sale,

the more we can provide in grants. The sale raised \$4,600 in 2018 and \$5,000 in 2017. Come to the sale and encourage your friends/neighbors/relatives/coworkers to come too!

Start volunteering for the plant sale today. Remember that all the hours you donate toward the plant sale, including digging, planting and preparing your plant donations, are eligible for volunteer hours credit.

A great selection of plant varieties makes a great sale. Divide your perennials and share them with us. Plant extra seeds and donate those seedlings to the sale. Clean out your garage or shed and share your extra garden tools, pots, etc. with us. NO HOUSEPLANTS, please. They just don't sell.

Please be sure that the plant is not on the Wisconsin invasive or restricted list. The WI DNR has a [list of 145 prohibited or restricted invasive plants that are illegal to transport](#) (as in digging and selling). You might be surprised at what is on the list.

We need portable banquet tables to display the plants. If you have any we can borrow for the day, please contact Marilyn Gorham (see the *Details box*).

We need volunteers who have

access to trucks and/or trailers who can help us transport plants as well as other volunteers who can maintain plants that are donated ahead of the sale. Don't forget we need boxes and boxes and boxes, so buyers can transport the plants they buy. These can be cardboard boxes or plastic trays.

Many members have volunteered to help at the sale and we thank you!

But, we can always use more help. You



**Plant Sale Team members (from left) are Cindy Gleason, Marilyn Gorham, Christine McGinnis, Leroy Clark, and Renee Clark.**

can volunteer to price and organize plants on Friday evening, set-up the sale on Saturday morning (6:30 a.m. start time), help during the sale, answer questions for the public and/or clean-up after

the sale. It's a fun experience and you get first look at the plants.

Our members are very generous with sharing their plants and you'll always find something new for your gardens. If you can volunteer, please contact Marilyn Gorham (see the *Details box*). Sign-up sheets will also be available at the May meeting.

See, we do have a wide range of volunteer opportunities for you!

## Water issues headline May meeting

by Carolyn Barrette

At our **May 23 meeting**, we will learn the latest in water quality and quantity issues from Tammy Traxler, Conservation Planner for the St. Croix Co. Community Development Dept. Traxler was involved with issues stemming from the new St. Croix River Crossing bridge. Studies included upgrades in water treatment plants in Highway 64 corridor communities, watersheds and potential storm-water run-off issues in rural areas, and a review of water collection ponds in subdivisions.

The meeting starts at 6:45 p.m.

### First Covenant Church

1374 N. Main St.  
River Falls, WI 54022

(Entrance is on Quarry Rd.  
Go east at Kwik Trip corner.)

### Nitrate Testing at meeting

If you have a private well, bring a half cup of tap water to the meeting. A county official will be on hand to test your water for nitrates.

## PLANT SALE DETAILS

### Potting Materials

Pots will be available at the May meeting. Otherwise use whatever pots you have.

### Labeling

Please use the Plant Sale Labels on our [website](#). Attach to a plastic or wooden stick or to the side of the pot. Clear packing tape works best and reduces the risk the label will get lost.

### Plant Information

Include name, color, variety, height, sun or shade. This helps buyers find the right plants for their needs, and the MGVs find

the right answer to any gardening questions. The more info we provide, the better chance the plants will sell.

### Dropoff Time/Location

4 p.m.-7 p.m. Friday, May 31.

Bring your plants to the backyard of the Octagon House. Volunteers will help unload your plants.

### Questions?

If you need help dividing or delivering plants, or have any questions, email [Marilyn Gorham](#) or call her at 715-381-5610

## President's Message

Back when I was a kid, I got stung by a bee. I was about 10 and was recovering from a bad case of measles. Part of the treatment for measles was protecting a child's eyes.



JoAnn Ryan

"Keep her in the house in a dark room, pull the shades, no outdoor light," Grandma said. This was my first day outside! I was so happy to be out of that dark room! And then, WHAM! I stepped on a bee in the back yard and ran crying into the house. That sting was the beginning of a healthy fear of bees. The fear stayed with me for many years.

I discovered recently that I had probably stepped on a rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*). They are often found in a lawn searching for nectar. These yellow and black bees are fat.

They lumber through the lawn looking for white clover. They prefer lawns because it's easy to drag that fat body along in the lawn instead of heading for wild clover.

They are endangered. The population of these bees is down by 90 percent over the last three decades! Who would ever imagine that we would have to feed bees to prevent their extinction? An easy way to help the bees is to plant a few patches of white clover in the lawn. It "mows" easily and continues to provide food for our starving bees. The standard lawn is a "food desert" for bees, but becomes a feast for the rusty patched bees with just a bit of effort. I no longer fear the bees and welcome the opportunity to provide food for them.



US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

## SCVMGA Tours

by Debby Walters

Three diverse "gardens" are featured for your enjoyment this summer. Please visit the SCVMGA website and register on [SignUpGenius](#) so carpooling can be arranged.

The first tour is on Thursday, June 6. We will head to Tavis's Wild and Exotic Mushrooms Farm near Cumberland. Established in 1982, this farm raises shiitake, oyster and wine cap mushrooms. They can also help with wild mushroom identification and supplies for raising your own. On the way home, we plan to stop at Bergman's Greenhouse in Clayton.

The second tour is to Barbara Burgum's gardens/landscape in Wayzata. It will be Sunday afternoon, July 21. Barbara's gardens have recently been included in the Garden Club of America archives at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. She has two acres of



vegetable, rain, perennial and prairie gardens on the shore of Lake Minnetonka. An article about her landscape can be found in the January/February 2019 Northern Gardener magazine.

On Wednesday, August 14, River Road Honey Farm in Prescott is the destination. Audrey and Eske Bennetson will share with us the plants that provide their bees with food plus information on beekeeping.

Hope you can join the group for one or all of the trips. Questions can be directed to [Debby Walters](#) or [Anita Justin](#).

## Learn to manage weeds

Weeds are the enemy in gardens and landscapes, causing frustration and even heartbreak for gardeners and homeowners. The battle against weeds takes many forms depending on the location, the weeds involved, and other factors. It's a battle we can win with proper management and prevention techniques. There are ways to reduce labor and have a beautiful landscape or productive garden with minimal weeds among your desired plants.

Diana Alfuth, UW-Extension Horticulture Outreach specialist, will explain how to identify weeds and various prevention methods.

The "Managing Weeds in Gardens, Lawns and Landscapes" class will be held **Wednesday, May 15** at 6:30 p.m. in the upper-level community room at the River Falls Public Library, 140 Union Street, River Falls. The class is

free, but space is limited so pre-registration is requested. To reserve a spot, please call the Pierce County UW-Extension office at (715) 273-6781. For more information, contact [Diana](#).

## New logo for new apparel

by Liz Whitchurch

At long last, clothing items with the new logo are available to order. The board chose a versatile light gray for the clothing.

The logo is on the upper left chest. You can choose among a V-neck (ladies cut) t-shirt, a crew or "rounded" neck (unisex cut) t-shirt, a long-sleeved round neck t-shirt or a polo shirt.

The logo is screen-printed on all shirts except the polo shirt, which will be embroidered. All come in sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL. Additional items may be available in the future.

All shirts, except the polo, require a minimum order of 12 before the order is processed. Polos do not have a minimum order.

Information on pricing and payment will be available on the website soon.



# 2019 Community Grant Recipients

The St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners Association awarded community grants totaling more than \$2,800 to 14 recipients in St. Croix and Pierce counties. This year's projects include:

- gardens for area food shelves in Hudson, New Richmond, River Falls
- curriculum materials for park programs in Hudson, River Falls, Amery
- veggie, herb window boxes in Baldwin
- planters, books for libraries in Greenwood City, New Richmond
- main street hanging baskets in Baldwin, Elmwood
- school gardens in Houlton, River Falls
- gardens at healing centers in Hudson, New Richmond, Woodville
- pollinator project, Prescott



Recipients are (standing from left): Tom Jonas, Dean Grage, Peg Gagnon, Nancy Hoffman, Barb Nelson, Debby Walters, Zach Simones and Travis Petroske. Seated from left are Pat Jonas, Becky Strand, Virginia Drath, and Sandy Madsen. Not pictured are Sharon Reyzer, Jackie Daharsh, Nora Ellen, Mandy Pfingsten.

## Another successful Garden U

by Lisa Esselman

We had a beautiful day, and a good turnout for Garden U this year at the Hudson House Grand Hotel.

Thank you so much to all the volunteers who helped the event run so smoothly. More than two dozen MGVs pitched in. Lunch was served to 126 attendees.

The total proceed amount was \$4,840 with total expenses of \$2,731.74 and a profit of \$2,108.26.

Alex Bouthilet, co-manager of Star Prairie Seed Farm, explained the importance of prairies to the ecosystem. Orchard owner Rachel Henderson described the care of fruit trees from start to finish. Agriculture agent Jerry Clark discussed year-round care for berries.



ABOVE Garden U event planners were (from left) Carolyn Barrette, Lisa Esselman, Donna Davis and Peg Wastell. LEFT Trent Kowalchuk ensured the event ran smoothly from lights and microphones to slideshows.



Alex Bouthilet



Rachel Henderson



Jerry Clark

## SCVMGA scholarship offered for 2019-2020

Once again, SCVMGA will offer a \$1,000 scholarship to a horticulture major at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

The scholarship is open to students who maintain an accumulative grade point average of 3.0 and a 3.33 grade point average in their major. Horticulture majors prepare for careers in landscaping, fruit, vegetable, turfgrass, interior plantscaping, golf course, woody ornamentals, greenhouse and related industries. The department's laboratories include a tissue culture lab, computer-controlled greenhouses, nursery and fruit orchard.

## March, April meetings

We had 64 members and two guests attending our March meeting with Jonna Klukas (right) from Garden Expressions, who talked about container gardens.



The April meeting drew 73 members, two guests and five grant recipients. JoAnn Ryan presented "All About Evergreens."

## Membership News



by Deb Pederstuen

*Deb is a 1999 MGV class graduate and our first Membership Director beginning in 2000. Her mission is to welcome new members and inform everyone about SCVMGA's activities.*

### NEW MEMBERS

This spring, SCVMGA had another growth spurt to 171 members! We welcomed six more 2018 MG Interns - **Gail Bahner** of Hudson, **Lisa Cheever** of River Falls, **Gail Gaard** of



Ellsworth, **Ninette Nolan** of New Richmond, and **Susan and Dale Olson** of Amery. To date, fourteen of seventeen MG Class graduates, or 82 percent, have joined our family.

Three of our newest members are (from left) **Nola Weber, Gale Gaard, and Gail Bahner, Hudson.**

### NEW PROGRAM ASSISTANT

In March, **Bridget Kelley** of New Richmond joined **Carolyn Barrette** in scheduling our monthly programs. Bridget is experienced in finding and vetting speakers and securing venues throughout the United States for the International Aromatherapy Conference as their Conference Chair. Being a registered Aromatherapist, she owns her own company and has held several board positions, including President of the Association of International Aromatherapists. While assisting Carolyn, Bridget hopes to "gain the wealth of information that she has."



**Bridget Kelley**

### EIGHT YEARS IN THE KITCHEN

Many thanks to **Trina Frank**, our Hospitality Coordinator 2011-2019, for her excellent service. Rarely missing a meeting, she ensured our social time had plenty of refreshments and a variety of treats donated by our hospitality committee.

### HOSPITALITY COORDINATORS DEBUT

What a fabulous display of treats offered at the April meeting! Thanks to our treat donors and our new Hospitality Team, **Helen Heggernes** of New Richmond and **Bev Schomburg** of Prescott on their first meeting. Contact Helen at to sign up for treats at the June and July field trips, the only months available.



**Helen Heggernes (left); Bev Schomburg**

### VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VMS)

A reminder to check the accuracy of your online records on the new VMS for the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program. This fall, you will need to record your volunteer/education hours online.



### FALL WORKSHOP COORDINATOR NEEDED

Volunteer or invite a friend to help you organize our Fall Workshop, a one-day seminar on the last Saturday in September for about 60 to 70 SCVMGA and Western District MGVs in Ellsworth's Seyforth Building. Detailed procedures are available from our former coordinators who will be happy to mentor you.

What's so great about this event? It's the last chance for MGVs to get education and volunteer service hours before the Oct. 1st deadline! To volunteer or ask questions, contact Deb Pederstuen, or former coordinators Vickie Kittilson or Peg Wastell.

### SPEAKERS BUREAU COORDINATOR NEEDED

Assistant to our Speakers Bureau Coordinator to create a list of potential MGVs who will give presentations on the area of their expertise to organizations. To volunteer or ask questions, contact Deb Pederstuen or Vickie Kittilson.

MGVs are invited to tour the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum with the Hudson Home and Garden Club on Tuesday, June 4. The trip begins at 9 a.m. aboard a motor coach. The \$40 fee covers the transportation, a goodie bag, Arboretum entrance fee, and a narrated tram ride. Lunch is on your own at the cafeteria. Reserve your spot by May 15. For more info contact Cheryl Coots.



# Volunteer Opportunities

If you have a project that you would like to include on this list, please contact [John Ramstad](#), Volunteer Coordinator.

*Note: click on underlined names for direct email links.*

## BALDWIN-WOODVILLE

Western Wisconsin Health (hospital)  
[Rosa Magnus](#)  
 B-W Giezendanner School Forest\*  
[Debby Walters](#)  
 Viking Middle School\*  
[Debby Walters](#)

## ELLSWORTH

Pierce County Fair (Aug. 8-11)  
[Kevin Ballman](#)  
 Ellsworth Ambulance Hall  
[Kevin Ballman](#)

## GLENWOOD CITY

St. Croix County Fair (July 17-21)  
[Amanda Lawrence](#)

## HAMMOND

Hammond Community Garden  
[Mike Deneen](#)

## HUDSON

Hudson Farmers Market Plaza 94  
 (Thursdays)  
[Maria Scheidegger](#)  
 Hudson Hospital Community Garden  
[Karen Jilek](#)  
 Octagon House gardens (Mondays)  
[Jean Haut](#)  
 Willow River Elementary School\*  
[Ramona Robinson](#)  
 Willow River State Park  
[Carol Hardin](#)  
 Christian Community Home  
[Deb Pederstuen](#)  
 Hudson Public Library  
[Joan Bushman](#)

## NEW RICHMOND

SCVMGA New Richmond Garden\*  
[Donna Cadenhead](#)  
 Deerfield Gables Care Center  
[Carolyn Craig](#) Reflection garden

## OSCEOLA

Butterfly Project  
[Jennifer Berg](#)

## RIVER FALLS

Demonstration and Learning Garden  
 (Hoffman Park) [Diana Alfuth](#)  
 Junior Garden U\* (late June)  
[Diana Alfuth](#)  
 Grow to Share Community Garden  
 (Hoffman Park)  
[John Ramstad](#)  
 Rain Gardens, City of River Falls  
[Zach Regnier](#)  
 Have a Heart Farm  
[Bobbie Kuhn](#)  
 River Falls Farmers Market (Saturdays)  
[Laura Milano](#)  
 Westside Elementary Garden\*  
[Becky Cunningham](#)

## ROBERTS

Cross Community Garden  
[Mike Deneen](#)

## SOMERSET

Christ Lutheran Church  
[Karen Nork](#)

## TROY

Town Hall  
[Jill Berke](#)  
 Glover Park Entrance  
[Jill Berke](#)  
 Glover Park Prairie Garden  
[Jill Berke](#)

## WOODVILLE

Norseman's Manor (senior living)  
 Becky Strand, 715-222-5521

## OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Hospitality  
 Bring treats to meetings. Contact  
[Helen Heggernes](#) or [Bev Schomberg](#)  
 Vegetable Garden Education  
[Catherine Engstrom](#)  
 Sprinklings Newsletter  
[Colleen Callahan](#)

\* Gardening with children

## New home for New Richmond garden



Thanks to Diana Alfuth's help, the New Richmond Community Garden has a new home on the grounds of the St. Croix County Services Center at 1752 Dorset Lane, New Richmond.

An **informational/work meeting** is scheduled for **6 p.m. Monday, May 13**. If you can attend, please come to the picnic pavilion (*see photo above*).

The plot is 42' x 30'. Plans are to grow 20 tomato plants, peppers, cucumbers, peas, beans, onions, and carrots.

Sharon Reyzer, St. Croix County Public Health Supervisor and our contact, would also like to see baby pumpkins in the garden. Last year she grew carrots for the backpack program which sends food home with kids over weekends and breaks.

**Student Service Day will be Friday, May 17.** Because the high school is conveniently located next door, students will be able to walk to the garden and arrive by 8:30 a.m. MGVs will be needed to help students plant the garden.

We'll still need volunteers throughout the season. Details will be made available in Sprinklings and on the website in the near future.



## Details on 2018 Seed Trial Results

by Diana Alfuth

### Beans, heirloom pole for fresh and dried use

#1 – Rattlesnake, #2 – Trail of Tears, #3 - Painted Pony, #4 – Scarlet Runner

While ‘Cherokee Trail of Tears’ has one of the more colorful garden variety names, ‘Scarlet Runner’ is the most ornamental, and it ranked lowest for eating. It is often planted and advertised to be an ornamental annual. ‘Rattlesnake’ took top honors, with a flavor described as sweet and similar to a bush bean. ‘Painted Pony’ ranked high for quality of raw beans, yet growers ranked it lower for cooked flavor and therefore it was ranked lower overall. None of the varieties had any significant disease or insect problems, although deer and rabbits were an issue. ‘Rattlesnake’ was a more vigorous climber. ‘Painted Pony’ produced smaller beans, which might be preferred in some cases. A few growers had plants and trellises tip over—a reminder that the plants can get quite heavy and sturdy trellising is needed!

### Chard, Swiss

#1 – Rhubarb, #2-Fordhook White, #3-Peppermint, #4-Bright Yellow

While ‘Rhubarb’ came in first, there wasn’t a lot of variability among the varieties tested. All ranked high and quite evenly for both raw and cooked flavor. ‘Rhubarb’ reportedly had a bit more consistency in stems and leaves. Wet, rainy weather affected yield in some gardens. There were no significant pest problems, except for some grasshoppers and deer. ‘Bright Yellow’ ranked last, but the majority of growers indicated they would still grow it again.

### Corn, sweet bicolor hybrid

#1-Luscious, #2-Xtratender, #2-Montauk, #3Native Gem

Luscious came in first by a significant margin, with the best flavor ranking. Montauk was second, but Little Gem and Xtratender were ranked quite a bit lower. Xtratender appeared to have a less stable root system, allowing it to blow down in wind. All had similar germination, but Little Gem had less yield with smaller cobs. While no disease problems were reported, Japanese Beetles did feed on some silks, affecting pollination.

### Lettuce, Summer Crisp

#1-Magenta, #2- Loma, #3- Nevada, #4-Concept

It was a tie for first place in the rankings with Loma and Magenta. All had similar germination rates and yield. The summer had some hot days in July, which affected longevity of the plantings. Bolting occurred in different stages among different growers, probably a result of soil type and watering. There were no disease or insect issues on any of the plantings, and an equal number of gardeners would grow each variety again! It looks like you can’t go wrong with any of

## Benefits of Reading Trial Results

by Peg Wastell

### Local testing.

You’ll discover which varieties grow best in our climate. Our results are based on our growers who reside mainly in St. Croix, Pierce and surrounding counties in the Wisconsin Master Gardeners Northwestern District.

### Advanced warnings.

You’ll be prepared for any disease, pest, or insect problems found with each variety.

### Garden catalogs’ accuracy.

The results act as a check on catalog descriptions and their ever-glowing promises. Our growers have learned which varieties perform best and which ones don’t.

### “Tried and true” testing.

We provide you with a resource to find out if “tried and true” varieties still hold up. For instance, growers who grew the same variety of carrots for years found a better one through the trials.

### Money-saving.

Seed companies are always coming up with new choices. The new hybrids are costly. Are they worth it? Last year the least expensive chard topped the list and the most expensive seed was last!



*Results and summaries of trials dating from 2013 are available on our [website](#).*

these varieties. There are MANY different varieties of lettuce available to grow, and more so than with most other crops, it’s a matter of finding the texture and flavor you like best.

### Squash, winter acorn

#1-Thelma Sanders Sweet Potato Squash, #2- Jester, #3-Carnival, #4 – Tip Top

The top-ranked acorn squash was Thelma Sanders Sweet Potato Squash. It was noted to be prolific and great tasting with texture like sweet potatoes. Carnival and Jester also were noted to have good flavor and good yields. Tip Top was ranked lowest, both in yield and flavor. No disease issues were reported on any of the varieties, and squash vine borers and squash bugs visited a few of the gardens, with Tip Top being slightly more susceptible. Most gardeners would grow Thelma Sanders Sweet Potato and Jester again, but tastes vary so the other varieties were ranked well by some growers as well.

WIMGA UPDATE

# Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA) to host 2019 fall conference around the state

by Paul VanDenMeerendonk

## FALL CONFERENCE

WIMGA will conduct its annual fall conference in three locations around the state this year:

- Thursday, Sept. 12 at Wausau
- Saturday, Sept. 14 at Madison
- Friday, Sept. 20 at Eau Claire

The emphasis will be on learning presentation skills and using social media. The topic will be the same at all locations. Presentations will count towards Continuing Education (CE) hours. Morning refreshments and lunch will be included.

The Fall 2020 conference will be hosted by Washington County Master Gardeners in West Bend, Wis.



## NEW DIRECTOR

Diane Thieme is the new At-Large Director. She is from Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association, which comprises Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

## NEWSLETTERS

WIMGA newsletters will continue to be published six-times a year, but are now limited to email distribution and on WIMGA's [website](#). Paper copies will be available at local extension offices. Mike Maddox, director of the state Master Gardener Program in Madison, emails the newsletter to all qualified MGVs.

WIMGA welcomes newsletter contributions from all Master Gardeners. The focus is on MGV accomplishments

from around the state. Our own SCVMGA member **Peg Wastell** contributed an excellent article on Milkweed Variety Trials to the March 2019 issue.

## BYLAWS REVISION

Articles and ideas for the newsletter may be submitted to editors, [Nancy Jahnell-Barnes](#) or [Hali Dessecker](#).

Changes to membership categories in the WIMGA bylaws will be voted on and approved this fall. New category proposals are:

- A. Voting Members of WIMGA
  - 1. Certified Master Gardener Volunteers (CRT)
  - 2. Intern Master Gardener Volunteers (INT)
- B. Non-voting Members of WIMGA
  - 1. Inactive Master Gardener Volunteers (INA)
  - 2. Student Master Gardener Volunteers (STU)

*Note 1:* Friends of Master Gardeners (FMA) and Associate Members (ASC) have been eliminated. These members are visitors at meetings and should not be eligible for membership benefits such as newsletters or access to member-only pages on the state website. Because they are not certified with the Criminal Background Check(CBC) and Mandatory Reporter Training(MRT), they cannot qualify as Master Gardener Volunteers.

*Note 2:* Inactive Master Gardeners(INA) are persons who have been active Master Gardener Volunteers, but who have not accomplished the yearly training and service required by UW-Extension. They must now complete the CBC and MRT. Voting rights are suspended until requirements for recertification have been completed.

## Gardening on Earth Day

Both kids and adults got their hands dirty on a Sunday afternoon in Hudson to celebrate Earth Day. They planted Teddy Bear sunflower and mini pumpkin seeds to take home and nurture. MGVs **Amanda Lawrence**, **Carol Marnell** and **Colleen Callahan** guided dozens of enthusiastic gardeners-to-be on the basics of starting seeds.

Attendees also learned the developmental stages of Monarch butterflies and the importance of milkweed to their survival. Many left with a "Raising Monarchs" kit, created by **Donna Davis**. A necklace with pasta shells showing the stages of a Monarch's life, designed by **Amanda Lawrence**, was very popular. A special thanks to Donna and **Corky Weeks** for helping set up the booth.



Amanda Lawrence helps a child string a necklace depicting the stages of Monarch development (right).



Carol Marnell verifies a child's activity at the MGV booth. Earth Day sponsors give children a reward for visiting each booth.

## Surveying winter damage



Did this winter kill off a beautiful bush? Or an expensive one you just bought last fall? Or a tried-and-true plant that survived other winters?

A survey form is attached to this newsletter, seeking your input on overall damage to plants following our brutal winter. Please fill it out and send to MGV Matt Schmitz. Results will be published in Sprinklings and posted on our website.

## Rhubarb Jam

by [Karalyn Littlefield](#)

Rhubarb is poking through the soil and unfurling its triangular leaves, a sure sign of spring. Rhubarb requires cold winters to grow; therefore, it is found in mountainous and temperate regions around the world. It is found in Northeast Asia although we commonly think of it as a North America and Northern Europe plant. It's a vegetable, but we often add sugar and serve it as a fruit. To add a bit of confusion, since it is typically prepared as a fruit, the USDA classifies rhubarb as a fruit.

Rhubarb lays claim to several amazing benefits such as aiding in weight loss, improving digestion and skin health, containing laxative properties, preventing Alzheimer's and increasing bone health. One can find evidence to support or debunk any of these claims. However, it is a good source of vitamin K and fiber. Above nutrition and health, rhubarb is probably best known for the fact that it is one of the first food plants to be harvested in the spring.

The Rhubarb Compendium (*an unsecure website*) contains information to answer all your rhubarb questions. I am going to answer one for you: "What do I do with all this rhubarb?"

Make jam, of course. This recipe is created by my grandmother, though we do not know where she obtained it. We call it strawberry rhubarb jam.

### Rhubarb Jam

From [Elda Whitner](#)



10 cups rhubarb-chopped fine  
8 cups sugar

Mix together – Let stand over night

Boil about 15 min. Remove from fire, add 1 large box strawberry Jello. Stir, skim, put in jars and seal with wax.

Adding ½ to 1 tsp. of butter helps reduce foaming. Instead of sealing with wax, we freeze our jam and bring it out when we are ready to eat it. Store in the refrigerator.

## Event Calendar

Spring is a busy time for Master Gardeners. Here's a snapshot of what you can do to earn volunteer/education hours in the next four weeks.

- Monday, May 13 Information/work meeting on new community garden in New Richmond. St. Croix County Services building. 6:30 p.m. ([page 5](#))
- Tuesday, May 14 SCVMGA Board meeting. All members are invited. 6 p.m. Hudson Library.
- Wednesday, May 15 Weeds Management class. River Falls Library. 6:30 p.m. ([page 2](#))
- Friday May 17 Service Day, New Richmond garden. 8:30 a.m. ([page 5](#))
- Thursday, May 23 Monthly meeting. Water quantity/quality. 6:45 p.m. ([page 1](#))
- Friday, May 31 Bring plants to Octagon House for plant sale. 4-7 p.m. ([page 1](#))
- Saturday, June 1 SCVMGA Plant Sale, Octagon House. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. ([page 1](#))
- Tuesday, June 4 Hudson Home and Garden Club tour of Minnesota Arboretum ([page 4](#))
- Thursday, June 6 SCVMGA tour of Tavis's Wild and Exotic Mushrooms Farm near Cumberland. ([page 2](#))

## Prairie Tour set for June meeting

by [Carolyn Barrette](#)

We saw the Star Prairie Seed Farm and its prairie acreage in the fall last year. Chris Trosen, Wildlife Biologist with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Alex Bouthilet, who spoke at Garden U, invited Master Gardeners back for an opportunity to see the prairie and wetlands in their early stages of flowering growth at the Seed Farm. The meeting will be June 27 at Fire# 1643 Co. Rd H, north of New Richmond. You may want to come about 6 p.m. to get an early start in looking at the prairie.

## Sprinklings

[SCVMGA Website](#)

*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. All SCVMGA members are welcome to contribute articles on any horticultural topic. Please email submissions or inquiries to the editor.

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