



Sprinklings

September-October 2020

ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

VOL 23 NO. 5

via ZOOM

Learn about food security in Malawi at September virtual meeting

by [Karalyn Littlefield](#)

Drop by **Thursday, Sept. 24** for our MGV meeting on zoom. I am the regularly scheduled speaker. I am very excited to share my journey to Malawi last summer. We will learn about relationships, gardens, food, and permaculture concluding with a safari. Malawi is located in southeastern Africa (see map).

Food security is one of my passions and part of this trip was to explore different systems and methods of gardening and vegetable farming. I hope to see you there.

The meeting will begin at **7 p.m.** Diana Alfuth will send you a link on Thursday. This will count toward one Education credit.



Community Grants report scheduled for October

Grant Committee Coordinator Jenny Brazzale will present a report on the 2020 SCVMGA Community Grant projects at the Oct. 22 meeting. Watch for more details via email.

Topic ideas needed for winter Zoom classes

Diana Alfuth wants your input on horticultural topics for a series of Zoom classes she's planning to help get us through the winter months. Send suggestions to [Diana Alfuth](#).

UW Foundation donations help MGV program

Last February the SCVMGA Board of Directors approved a donation of \$150 to the Master Gardener Foundation Fund. The fund provides support to educational programs, training materials and program office needs.

Individual donations are welcome, too. For more information on how and why to donate, visit the WI Master Gardener Program website. [Click here for a direct link.](#)

Membership fees remain the same, but late fees will double

The membership renewal period is Oct. 1-Dec. 31, 2020. The SCVMGA Board of Directors approved keeping the fees the same, but doubling the late fee:

Individual - \$15 (Late fee - \$30)

Family - \$25 (Late fee - \$50)

A membership renewal form is attached to this newsletter and is also available on our website under the Forms tab.

The form includes sections on areas of interest, program suggestions and help with special projects. The information you provide strengthens our organization, brings members together, and helps with continuing education.

Please make checks payable to SCVMGA and send to our Membership Coordinator Deb Pederstuen before Dec. 31.

Consider joining the SCVMGA Board

Whether you've been a SCVMGA member for 20 years or just one year, your insight, background, and skills can guide our organization into the future. The following positions are open:

President

Treasurer

Secretary

St. Croix County representative

Pierce County representative

All positions are for two consecutive years. If you're interested or have questions, please call Donna Davis at 715-549-5941 or email her at donnaleedavis@att.net.

MGV Program Training to be on-line

Prospective Master Gardener Volunteers will still be able to take the beginning course this fall, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be via Zoom.

This opens up availability to those who were interested in the past, but could not attend in-person sessions. Plus, a recent Star-Observer editorial may inspire a lot of aspiring gardeners. It lauded the expertise and work of Master Gardeners and promoted the fall course.

So, get the word out to everyone you know and have them contact [Diana Alfuth](#). **Registration deadline is Sept. 25.**

President's Message



Donna Davis

This is a good time to review the garden season: what worked, what didn't, and the weather effects. With the rains and humidity, powdery mildew attacked my peas, monarda, and even two peony plants. Creeping Charlie grew like it was on steroids as well as most other weeds. Even now, my gravel walkway has weeds sprouting again. I tried to eliminate most of the plantain in my front yard by hand pulling since mid-July as I was trying to use fewer chemicals for the bees and butterflies, but recently gave up and resorted to chemical methods to treat the large patches areas of plantain.

This year I raised my lawnmower to its highest level and bagged all the clippings because there were so many weeds. I never water the lawn, and now my shady lawn has improved by collecting those weed seeds. I try to gain some control over the lawn weeds before putting down the fall fertilizer. I'm not a lawn person and mow less often than all my neighbors. My lawn mower deck is lower now to prepare for fall and winter.

All the western wildfires reminded me it's time to clear out more buckthorn and prickly ash and pick up the deadwood. The St. Joseph area is overrun with buckthorn so I try to cut the ones with berries first and pull all the seedlings out of the lawn all summer. While working on the buckthorn, I always end up with burrs and "stickems" all over my clothes, gloves, and hair and have to pick them off for hours!

One good thing with all the rains, I didn't need to water the vegetable garden as much this summer. However, now the vegetable garden is totally out of control with all the squash & gourd vines running all over and I need to jump over the vines to get to the tomatoes and other vegetables.

Over the past 20 years, I have used Purple Dragon Lamium as a ground cover under the pine trees. Now they are thugs crowding the hostas and other perennials and leaping over the garden edges. The bees like the lamium plant because they bloom from early spring throughout the summer until a hard frost. They produce lots of seeds so they become invasive. I like them, but trying to get them under some control is a garden reclamation project!

For the past 2 years, I grew Magellan coral zinnias in the vegetable garden, but this year I tried them as a flower garden border. They are easy to grow, 12-18" high, have strong stems with 4-5" flowers, but they are a hybrid so I must purchase seeds each year.



DONNA DAVIS

Magellan coral zinnias create a colorful border in Donna's garden

Did you notice that the gnats are back? Deb Pederstuen shared her tip to pin a clothes dryer softener sheet to my collar to deter the pests. Try that if you are one of those people who get attacked. Let's hope for cooler nights to end their peskiness.

Now all the fall cleanup and outside chores are a rush to get everything done before winter hits, especially since I fell behind in the hot, humid summer. I also maintain a food shelf garden at my church, so I am ready for the season to end even though I hope for more vegetables to share. As if I didn't have enough flowers, I've already purchased fall bulbs to plant.

I hope you enjoyed gardening this summer and found it a relief from the stresses of life.

Matt's Picks

by Matt Schmitz

Yellow Wax Bells is a large shade perennial that I have grown for many years. The leaves are maple-like in appearance with yellow bell flowers that face down and bloom in September. It is frost-sensitive. Late spring frosts have resulted in 40 percent dieback on new growth. However, new bud-break occurs below the killed tissue and by midsummer you don't see a difference. In the fall after frost, it lies completely on the ground and requires no cleanup. It prefers a moister soil under more sun. This is a distinctive perennial for the shade garden.

MGV Matt Schmitz is an assistant foreman at Bailey Nurseries, St. Paul, Minn.



MONROVIA.COM

Yellow Wax Bells (*Kirengeshima palmata*)
3-4' tall, 2.5-3' wide Shade/part shade

Keeping everyone in the loop at CCH gardens

by Deb Pederstuen

As our group of SCVMGA Master Gardener Volunteers at Christian Community Homes (CCH) in Hudson grew from four to seven members in 2012, it was obvious for me to keep everyone informed by email. With the COVID-19 virus outbreak this year, emails and Zoom became our major means of communication.

After the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program suspended all volunteer projects on March 20, seven of our ten MGVs chose not to garden for various reasons. A few helped with spring clean-up and planting annuals. At the same time, CCH Volunteer Coordinator Shelly Destasio told me, "We consider you essential workers. We need you to maintain the garden. Face masks are required. Visitors and volunteers are not allowed in the building or to use restroom facilities."

To say the least, it was a very challenging, stressful situation for me to keep myself and three MGVs safe. We had two large gardens to maintain, the Courtyard and later on, the Ardis Wells Memorial Garden, keeping ourselves socially distanced.

My solution was to develop a weekly "Project List" so MGV Pat Angleson, MG Intern Cathy Berling, new MGV Nancy Braschler, and I could work on our own, work separately in different gardens, or start at different times.

It was important to me to keep the other MGVs, Carolyn Barrette, Brenda Bodelson, Lisa Esselman, Linda Kelly, Annette Rios, JoAnn Ryan, and Connie Stoy, involved in our project. In my emails, I included photos of blooming plants and described our unusual encounters with animals, insects, and residents. I shared our "Plant Experiments" where we cut back the balloon flowers in early June to prevent flopping. Later, I initiated "Plant Challenge". For example, why isn't the yucca blooming, how do we deadhead petunias to keep them looking beautiful, or will the bacopa bloom again?

My plan is to create a fertilizing and pruning schedule for all the perennials and shrubs in the garden.

My favorite project is "Plant of the Week," which we plan to continue next year. Pat and I researched two fairly new plants, Boomerang Lilacs and Dutchman's Pipe. Nancy Braschler recently reported on the Pink Turtlehead (*at right*).

I like Colleen Callahan's suggestion to post a photo of a blooming plant with a brief description for CCH residents. They can search for it on their daily garden stroll with staff or visitors. Also helpful to residents is our plant labels we purchased with 2015 and 2020 SCVMGA community grants.

CCH residents and staff were so appreciative, it motivated us to do our best.

A while ago, Pat Angleson said jokingly (I think), "If I wasn't already in the group, I'd be signing up."

Plant of the Week

by Nancy Braschler



DEB PEDERSTUEN

Pink Turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*)

Pronounced chee-LOW-nee lie-OH-nee. In Greek the word Chelone means tortoise.

- Full sun to part shade
- Medium to wet soil
- Appreciates good composted leaf mulch
- Has no serious insect or disease problems
- Interesting cut flower
- No reason to deadhead
- Spreads slowly by rhizomes
- Yearly feeding with balanced fertilizer after first year
- Blooms in July-September for 3-6 weeks

Seriously, who wouldn't love this plant? No deadheading, no serious insect or disease problems, full sun to part shade and long bloom time! Lots of pluses! I will say I've never even thought of using it for a cut flower, but I will now look at it in a new way.

July, August meetings featured members' gardens, critters

More than 50 members submitted over 200 garden photos for July and 52 members submitted over 300 photos of critters for August. Karalyn Littlefield created Powerpoint presentations and thanks everyone who participated. Diana Alfuth administered the Zoom connections. Below is a sampling of what's found in our gardens. View more on our [website](#).



Edible 30-year-old prickly pear cactus patch from Carol Wilcox, River Falls



Herb garden from Ann Findlay, Baldwin



Giant Swallowtail from Linda Kelly, Roberts



Red Apples from August Hoffman, Hudson



Clematis from Gloria Bonse, Hudson



Hummingbird moth from Ken and Barb Kolbe, Hudson



Black bear from Marilyn Gorham, Hudson



Center garden from Sharon Reyzer, Roberts



Stick bug from Mary Vagt, Maiden Rock



Roadside garden from Leroy Clark, Beldenville



Doe and fawn from Nola Weber, Hudson



Cicada from Gladi Sippel, River Falls



Coneflower from Debra Andazola, River Falls



'Little Red' hen and rainbow chard from from Barbara Nelson, Emerald

Nebraska Bed and Breakfast delights

by Karalyn Littlefield

I really like it when someone cooks for me. Though sometimes, people tell me that they are nervous to do so. I wish they weren't as I enjoy eating other people's food and even getting a new recipe or two.

Pat Coldiron was nervous and she shared her recipes. She's the proprietor of Liberty House Bed and Breakfast in Seward, Neb. TripAdvisor reports the following about the Liberty House: "This charming old home was built circa 1890, during the early days of Nebraska's development."

Pat is just as charming as the house. She has a large antique store in the house as well. We learned that the house was originally built by the Goehner family who immigrated from Germany to Nebraska. The family built a number of downtown buildings, and the town of Goehner is named after them.

And a couple of other tidbits of knowledge for you are that Seward, Neb., is 3,342 miles from Seward, Alaska. Seward, Ala. was the terminus of a cruise we took a few years ago through the inside passage. And just when you thought I would be done with tidbits, in the morning we had honey with our coffee and tea and the honey was local from Bee, Neb. Now, I thought that was a joke until we passed the sign to Bee on our way to Surprise. The only surprise in Surprise is the delicious burgers and wings at the Eagles Lounge. Enjoy these recipes from Pat's kitchen.

Crustless Spinach Quiche

by Pat Coldiron

- 1 T. vegetable oil
- 1/2 large or 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 10-oz. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 5 eggs beaten
- 3 cups shredded Muenster cheese
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp .pepper

Preheat oven to 350°F.
Lightly grease a 9" pie plate.

Heat oil in a large skillet over med-high heat.
Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally until onions are soft.
Stir in spinach and continue cooking until excess moisture has evaporated.

In a large bowl, combine eggs, cheese, salt and pepper.
Add spinach mixture and stir to blend.

Scoop into prepared pie pan.
Bake in preheated oven until eggs have set, about 30 minutes.
Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.
Serves 4.

Pat grates the cheese the night before to save some prep time. She served fresh melon and berries to accompany the quiche. Going crustless is also a time saver and in a B&B, you do not have control over when the guests come to the table, so there is no crust to get soggy.



Oven Pancake with Fruit Sauce

by Pat Coldiron

Whisk together:

- 1 1/4 cup milk
- 3/4 cup flour
- 3 eggs
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp vanilla

Butter 9" pie plate. Pour pancake batter into buttered 9" pie pan. Bake in 375°F preheated oven for 15-20 min. Spoon fruit/berries and fruit dressing over top and dust with powdered sugar before serving.

Fruit Dressing:

- 2 big T. frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 big T. sour cream

Mix ingredients together.

Pat serves with strawberries and bananas. The fruit dressing adds a fresh, brightness to the pancake. The pancake will puff in the oven and fall when you take it out. This leaves a concave center to add the toppings.

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[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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