



Sprinklings



ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



August 2018

August Meeting



The greening of Wisconsin

by Carolyn Barrette

Chris Trosen, manager of the Star Prairie Seed Farm (pictured above), will relay the history of the seed farm and detail the significance and importance of their work and why and how they continue to maintain the program. A tour of the facility inside and in the fields will be included at our August meeting.

**Thursday, Aug. 23
6:30 p.m.
Star Prairie Seed Farm**

Originally, the Seed Farm started out as a joint partnership between Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). With Wisconsin's need for seed diminishing, the USFWS took over management and maintenance of the seed program. The seed farm is located at 1643 County Rd. H. Take State Hwy. 65 north from New Richmond to St. Croix County Road H, turn east and go about two miles to the Seed Farm. Look for a medium-sized aqua blue pole shed. **The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.**, but we can start arriving at 6 p.m. Bring your own chair and bug spray.

"Autumn at the River" is just around the corner

It's not too late to sign up for the Wisconsin Master Gardener Conference on September 21-22 in Eau Claire!

Topics include woody plants, perennial design, plant diseases, sustainable gardening, preserving herbs, newest Daylilies, bulb planting, and photography. Plus, two of our own and Diana Alfuth will be giving break-out sessions: GMOs by **Trent Kowalchuk**; mushroom hunting by **Joni Garbe**; and gardening for kids by Diana Alfuth.

Friday's keynote speaker, Mark Dwyer, will talk about "Woody Plants for Fantastic Foliage." Dwyer is director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville and was recently a guest on the Larry Meiller Show, "Garden Talk."

Saturday's keynote will be on the "Principles of Planting Design with Perennials" by Ben Futa, executive director of Allen Centennial Garden at UW-Madison.

Click [here](#) to see the brochure. Click [here](#) to register.

MGVs interact with the public at county fairs



PHOTO BY LEROY CLARK

(Left) MGVs Shirley Ellingboe (seated) and John Norquist discuss tomato blight, Japanese beetles, lawn care and Canna lilies with Kyle and Dayna Strand of Prescott at the Pierce County Fair. (Right) At the St. Croix County Fair, Sandy Madsen congratulates a young fairgoer on being "smarter than a rutabaga." The quiz game was almost as popular as the "face-in-the-hole" photo boards depicting Scarecrow and Peter Rabbit (see page 5).



PHOTO BY COLLEEN CALLAHAN

President's Message



Trent Kowalchuk

I knew in the spring of this year that I was going to be gone for eight days in the middle of the summer. (see page 6).

The garden was planted just as normal without any regards to the date. Everything is planted in stages and when it was time to plant the green beans, I prepared the soil and walked out to the garden with seeds in hand.

As I placed the first seed in the ground, a realization came to me. If I plant them today,

they will all be ready when I am gone. The seeds went back into the house and I waited to plant my beans.

Patience and planning can be difficult, but it does work. Four days after I returned home, I almost filled a 5-gallon bucket with green beans.

Plenty to can for winter, have some for dinner and share with friends. My timing was a bit off, but still not bad.

Speaking of beans, dried beans are perfect for Karalyn Littlefield's Three Sisters Salad (see page 7).

What's happening?

SCVMGA members to vote on revamped Bylaws

by Barb Peterson

The SCVMGA Bylaws were last updated more than 11 years ago. Much has changed since then and so over a year ago, the Board appointed an ad-hoc team of five to review and propose changes. The team included Membership Director **Deb Pederstuen** and four current or former Board members: **Jackie Daharsh, Barb Kolbe, Dianne Wright** and myself. Three goals guided the team's work: 1) to have the Bylaws reflect the ways the Association currently operates; 2) to have the Bylaws include all the current IRS requirements for 501(c)3 non-profit organizations; and 3) to simplify the language and make the Bylaws easier to read and understand.

The Board has spent the last month considering the proposed changes to the Bylaws and will vote on recommending them at their Aug. 14 meeting. Following the Board meeting, the current Bylaws and the Bylaws with the recommended changes will be sent to all Voting Members at least 30 days before the Sept. 27 meeting. Approval of the changes will require a two-thirds vote of the Voting members present.

The ad-hoc team members will be happy to answer any questions about their recommendations.

Rounding up electric bills

by Sue Klatt

If you're a customer of St. Croix Electric Cooperative, you can elect to contribute "cents" to the Cooperative's fund for the "Commitment to Community" grants program.

When you fill out a form authorizing the cooperative to round up your monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar, the extra cents are added to the grants allocation the following year. There are three enrollment options:

- 1) Call 715-796-7000
- 2) Email www/billing@scecn.net
- 3) Return the "Community Cents" form you receive in the mail with your bill.

Grant applications are reviewed in June and November. Last June, grants were awarded to 27 organizations.

SCVMGA has applied for and received grants from the St. Croix Electric Cooperative's "Commitment to Community" grant program for the past five years:

June 2018	\$60 grant
June 2017	\$110 grant
June 2016	\$375 grant
June 2015	\$125 grant
June 2014	\$320 grant



rizing the cooperative to round up your monthly

Monthly meetings, Garden U

What topics interest you?

by Carolyn Barrette

It's that time again. We are looking for leads, subjects, speakers, paths to knowledge, curious people who want to know something about gardening so we can plan meaningful monthly meetings. We're also looking for a topic for the next Garden U. There are questions and ideas out there – just let us know.

Vickie Kittilson's presentation in September on succulents is an example of a suggestion from a member. So far this year, we've received just one request: trees. What other topics, ideas do you have? Remember, monthly meetings count an hour toward your education hours needed to keep your MGV certification. Contact Carolyn Barrette at tbarrett@presenter.com or call 612-201-5916. Or tell a board member and they can relay the information. Thanks for your help.

MGV Name Badges

by Paul VanDenMeerendonk

If you need a name badge, which costs \$9, please contact me. You must meet the mandated reporter training, and the required service and training hours. I will add your name to the list and make a bulk order in November.

Applicant MGVs in last year's Level 1 Training need not contact me.

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)

[Anita Justin](#), [Rosa Magnus](#)

B-W Giezendanner School Forest

[Debby Walters](#)

Viking Middle School

[Debby Walters](#)

ELLSWORTH

Pierce County Fair (Aug. 9-12)

[Leroy Clark](#)

Pierce County Fairground Gardens

[Karen O'Brien](#)

Ellsworth Ambulance Hall

[Kevin Ballman](#)

Ellsworth Public Library

[Tiffany Meyer](#)

GLENWOOD CITY

Glenwood Community Garden

[Barb Nelson](#)

St. Croix County Fair (July 19-23)

[Amanda Lawrence](#)

HAMMOND

Hammond Community Garden

[Mike Deneen](#)

HUDSON

Hudson Farmers Market (Plaza 94)

Thursdays

[Maria Scheidegger](#)

Hudson Hospital

[Karen Jilek](#)

Octagon House (Mondays)

[Janet Haut](#)

Willow River Elementary School

[Ramona Robinson](#)

Willow River State Park

[Melissa DuPont](#)

Christian Community Home

[Deb Pederstuen](#)

Hudson Public Library

[Joan Bushman](#)

Prairie Community Garden

[John Mueller](#)

NEW RICHMOND

SCVMGA Community Garden

[Donna Cadenhead](#)

Deerfield Gables Care Center

[Carolyn Craig](#) *Reflection garden*

Cancer Center of Western Wisconsin

[Julie Walsh](#)

Friday Memorial Library

Noah Wiedenfeld

St. Croix Health Center

[Cindy Prokash](#)

OSCEOLA

Butterfly Project

[Jennifer Berg](#)

PRESCOTT

Pine Glen Cemetery

[Jayne Brand](#)

RIVER FALLS

Demonstration and Learning Garden

(Hoffman Park) [Diana Alfuth](#)

Junior Garden U (June 14)

[Diana Alfuth](#)

Grow to Share Community Garden

(Hoffman Park)

[Kaitrin Halvorson](#)

Grow to Share Herb Garden

(Hoffman Park)

[Heidi Nemcek](#)

Rain Garden, City of River Falls

[Crystal Raleigh](#)

Have a Heart Farm

[Bobbie Kuhn](#)

River Falls Farmers Market

Saturdays

[Elaine Baker](#)

VFW Cemetery

[Kathye Beebe](#)

Westside Elementary Garden

[Becky Cunningham](#)

Grow to Share

[Kristin Wilson](#)

ROBERTS

Cross Community Garden

[Mike Deneen](#)

SOMERSET

Christ Lutheran Church

[Karen Nork](#)

TROY

Town Hall

[Jill Berke](#)

Glover Park Entrance

[Jill Berke](#)

WOODVILLE

Norseman's Manor (senior living)

[Becky Strand](#), 715-222-5521

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Hospitality Committee

[Trina Frank](#)

bring treats to monthly meetings

Helping Hands

[Cindy Gleason](#)

help fellow Master Gardeners with their gardens in time of need

Sprinklings Newsletter

[Colleen Callahan](#)

contribute articles, photos

Garden Book Collection

[Joni Garbe](#)

donate used gardening books, bring to monthly meetings

Event Photographers

[Colleen Callahan](#)

photograph SCVMGA events

Help Wanted

Are you an "idea person"?

Would you enjoy finding experts in gardening and horticulture to speak at Garden U and our monthly meetings? We're fortunate to live near the Twin Cities where there's an abundance of potential speakers. If you'd like to assist with monthly program scheduling, please contact [Carolyn Barrette](#).

Are you a "list person"? Would you enjoy helping to develop a roster of SCVMGA members interested in speaking to public groups? Contact [Vickie Kittilson](#).

JULY MEETING

Identifying trees, eating unusual plants

by Deb Pederstuen

Starla Enger's cart filled with bizarre plants and vegetables and a wood log was intriguing! Starla, who owns My Sister's Garden with her sister, Alecia Enger, selected "Unusual Edible Plants" for 28 SCVMGA members and one guest at our July meeting. She also talked about different varieties of vegetables she grows for her Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) customers and mushroom-inoculated logs she has for sale.

A Strawberry Cheesecake Trifle by **Pat Angleson** was so popular that many members asked for the recipe. (see *recipe on Page 5*). It is also available on our website.

Trek Posts Identify Trees

First, Starla informed us of her advisory role with the Hudson Urban Forestry Board for the City of Hudson's tree management program. In 2017, new trees, previously grown from bare-root in gravel, were planted along Vine Street.

This year, with funds from an urban forestry grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Forestry Program, the "Hudson Tree Treks" program was created. It's a self-guided tree identification trail in Hudson that is based on St. Paul's Mounds Park Tree Trek. A brochure includes a list of Hudson trek trees, marked with trek posts in Lakefront Park and on city streets,

from First to Ninth streets. The project's goals are to help adults and children learn to identify trees and encourage them to plant a diversity of trees in their yards to limit impacts of climate change.

Shitake Pre-Inoculated Logs

After meeting Matt Ratliff, owner of Ready-2-Fruit, at the Spring Home and Garden Show, Starla asked him to teach a mushroom growing class this fall. The pre-inoculated logs are now available for purchase.

It takes 9–16 months to grow shitake mushrooms, but the pre-inoculated log will produce for 4-6 years or longer. The log must be in a shady location that's accessible to rain. It needs to be watered if it doesn't rain for 2 weeks or more. The log goes dormant in the winter.

Unusual Edible Plants

These seeds are from Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds:

Garden Huckleberry is of the Nightshade family and is planted in the spring as an annual. It's 3 feet tall and wide and produces "ton of purple berries" that resemble ground cherries, also called 'sun berries' or 'wonder berries'. The berries, though not very tasty, are ripe after the first light frost when the leaves die back, and make great jams, tarts, pies, or muffins.

Litchi Berry is a perennial in South America, but here it is an annual to start from seed every spring.

It grows 3 feet tall and wide. Thorny stems! Fruit is red like a tomato that turns brown when ripe. Its flavor is "between a tomato and a sweet cucumber, but not as sweet as a cherry tomato." Texture is spongy like eggplant. Use berries in salads or grill with pineapple on skewers.

Berry Naranjilla is more fun to grow as a "conversation plant" than for the fruit. It grows 3-4 feet tall, is thorny like a cactus, and takes six months to bear one piece of red fruit! It's not worth the wait as it's not that tasty!

Strawberry Spinach is an 18" tall plant; bitter leaves, but delicious berries with the flavor of sweet spinach when almost purple and wrinkly. Great with balsamic vinaigrette salad. Very invasive, self-seeding annual.

Pineapple Tomatillo seeds need to be started in early April, like tomatoes. Very tasty small, cherry-sized fruit that tastes sweet like pineapple. Papery husk around fruit turns from green to brown and splits open when ready to harvest. Plants will reseed.

Roselle Plant is a perennial to start seed in early April. Grows 5-6 feet tall in first season. About 10 days after the hibiscus-like flowers appear, harvest the calyces when still tender. They can be eaten raw in salads or air-dried for herbal tea. Flavor is similar to cranberry, but less bitter.

Vietnamese Mint is an annual to start from seed. It needs staking as it grows 3 feet tall. It's like a 'Lifesaver Mint', sweeter than peppermint. It will produce seed in the same year.

Fun Combo-Herb Packs in 2018

Each six-pack is based on a different ethnic group, such as French, Latin, and Asian and includes enough plants to fill a 14"-16" container. For example, the French pack includes alpine strawberry, French tarragon, edible lavender, edible

Cont'd on next page



PHOTOS BY DEB PEDERSTUEN

Signs in Hudson's Lakefront Park provide details about various trees.

Cont'd from previous page

French marigolds, peppermint, and French thyme. **Sandy Madsen** was the lucky door prize winner of the awesome French combo-herb pack.

Growing Heirloom Varieties

CUCUMBERS: 'Poona Kherra' has a citrus flavor and is known as 'brown cucumber.' 'Dragon's Egg' is cream-colored, size and shape of a large egg; has a mild and sweet flavor. 'True Lemon' is a 2 to 3-inch lemon-shaped fruit that is light yellow when ripe with white flesh. Very mild flavor for salads, but can be grilled and cooked. 'Parisian Pickling' is dark-green; a French heirloom specifically grown for pickling.

EGGPLANT: 'Diamond' is not as large or as spongy as 'Black Beauty.' 'Thai Green' is green and mild flavored, thin and up to 12 inches long. Asian origin. 'Casper' is white skinned, 2" diameter by 6" long. 'Little Fingers' are purple-black in color; can be eaten when finger-sized or allowed to grow larger. Mild, sweet taste and tender texture.

TOMATOES: 'Garden Peach' unique heirloom tomato with peachy-yellow skin. South American native. 'Black Japanese Trifle' – burgundy color, pear shaped, an early and very prolific early tomato. Low acid orange tomatoes.

Starla encouraged Master Gardeners to plant something different in their vegetable gardens, to replant lettuce and peas for fall harvest, and to grow microgreens in a sunny window in the winter. Microgreens can be ready for harvest in 3-4 weeks.

Strawberry Cheesecake Trifle

by Pat Angleson

A trifle is a cold dessert layered with sponge cake, fruit and various creams.

Angel food cake

Tear into bite-sized pieces and set aside.

Cream Cheese Mixture

(2) 8 oz. cream cheese
2 C. powdered sugar
Reserve 1/3 C. for garnish
1 C. sour cream
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. almond extract

Whip softened cream cheese and sugar. Blend in sour cream, vanilla and almond extracts.

Whipped Topping

1/2 pt. whipping cream (or 8 oz. of non-dairy whipped topping)
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 T. sugar
In small deep bowl, beat together the whipped cream, vanilla and sugar.
Reserve 1/3 C. for garnish.

Cake Mixture

Fold the whipped topping into the cream cheese mixture, then fold in the cake pieces and set aside.

Fruit Mixture

Combine:
2 qts. strawberries, thinly sliced
(or a combo of 1 C. raspberries, 1 C. blackberries, 1 C. blueberries and 1 lb. strawberries)
3 T. sugar
3 T. Amaretto liquor (or 1 tsp. almond extract)

Layering

Using a trifle bowl or a 9" x13" glass cake dish, alternate layers starting with the fruit, then the cake mixture. End with top layer of the fruit mixture, reserved whipped topping and fresh fruit garnish. Chill well before serving.



PHOTO BY PAT ANGLESON



Trifle Bowl

"Face-in-the-hole" photo boards popular at county fairs



PHOTOS BY CINDY DOTY

Created by students in the Baldwin-Woodville High School Industrial Arts program, the boards were irresistible, even to MGVs. Carolyn Hasselman (left) and Richard Hasselman posed for their portraits at the St. Croix County Fair.

September Meeting

Succulents will be September's meeting focus with "hands-on" activities presented by Vickie Kittilson.

Following up on her Fall Workshop class last year, Vickie will help members create beautiful succulent displays.





PHOTOS BY TRENT KOWALCHYK

Postcards from Alaska

by Trent Kowalchuk

My wife and I were able to visit the great state of Alaska. It has been on our list of places we wanted to see for a long time. There are so many incredible things to see and do, it isn't possible to fit everything in. The plants and animals are a major attraction of the state.

I have one plant in particular to share with you. The state flower of Alaska is the forget-me-not, but from what I saw it should be **fireweed** (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*). Fireweed was growing every place we went except in the higher elevations. It's called fireweed because it is the first plant to grow after a fire passes over the soil. My observation is it seems to grow where the soil is disturbed, natural or manmade.

The flower opens from the bottom and progresses up to the tip. As the very top opens, the bottom starts to produce a cotton-covered seed.

Local lore says when the upper tip is open there are 6 weeks until snow: "Once fireweed turns to cotton, summer is soon forgotten."

The daughter of the lady running the quilt shop we visited was making her first solo batch of fireweed jelly. Fireweed is used to make jellies and syrups. Fireweed honey is also harvested. Each of these treats is available at almost every shop with varying prices and sizes. I can tell you the jelly is tasty; it reminds me of Grandma's crab apple jelly.



Sideline Notes

Fireweed reproduces quickly through seeds (*far left photo*) and rhizomes. Its seeds prefer soil with high mineral content, abundant after severe fires. After fires, it will quickly establish itself to cover the forest floor (*left photo*), providing food for animals and pollinators. The U.S. Forest Service uses fireweed in its land management practices.

Before China started exporting tea in the 1600s, Russia dominated the tea market in western Europe with fermented fireweed leaves (*right photo*). "Russian Tea" or "Ivan Chai" is still used today in Russia. SOURCE: Wikipedia



Salad with Native American roots

by Karalyn Littlefield

Native Americans always interplanted this trio of corn, beans and squash because they thrive together, much like three inseparable sisters. It sustained people both physically and spiritually. In legend, they were a gift from the gods and always grown, eaten and celebrated together.

They each have their task for successful growing: corn for support, beans for nitrogen in the soil and squash for mulch and racoon repulsion. Together, the sisters provide a balanced diet. They are complementary proteins and by eating them together, all the essential amino acids are obtained.

I started with a recipe from the Sioux Chefs Indigenous Kitchen cookbook and made modifications and have included several variations. After harvesting your plant trials, you may have enough vegetables to try all my creations and create some of your own.

Variations on a salad: What are we going to do with all the beans, squash and corn when the harvest is abundant? Be creative and prepare something with them. I am offering a few ideas from which you can use directly or create a bit on your own.

Happy Cooking!

Three Sisters Salad

Serves 4-6

- 1 C. summer or winter squash
- 2 ears sweet corn
- 1 C. prepared dried beans
- Sunflower or olive oil for vegetable prep
- Salt and pepper for each component
- Mixed greens
- Berry mint dressing
- Sunflower seeds, pepitas (pumpkin seeds) or raisins

Squash preparation: Slice Summer Squash in 1/4" rounds. Heat heavy skillet over high heat, lightly oil and sear squash slices on both sides until crispy tender. Alternately, slice squash in half, lengthwise, brush with oil and place on grill until crispy tender. Slice each half into 1/4" rounds. Peel and cut Winter Squash into 1/2" slices. Toss with oil and place on a baking sheet. Bake in preheated 400°F for 10-15 minutes until tender and lightly browned without becoming mushy. Cut slices into 1/4" lengths.

Corn preparation: Roast corn on grill or in heavy skillet. Remove kernels from cob. Alternately, use one can drained shoepeg corn.

Bean preparation: Prepare dried beans to your preferred recipe. Alternately, use drained and rinsed canned beans such as Cannellini, black or garbanzo.

Berry Mint Dressing

- 1/4 C. Berry Jelly (raspberry, blackberry or strawberry)
- 1 Tbls apple cider vinegar
- 3 Tbls sunflower or olive oil
- 1 Tbls maple syrup
- 2 Tbls chopped fresh mint or 2 tsp dry mint
- Salt to taste

Melt jelly in a small glass bowl in the microwave or on the stovetop in a small skillet. Whisk in remaining ingredients. Thin with 1-2 T of water if necessary. Taste and adjust seasoning. Lightly dress mixed greens and place a bed on individual plates or a serving platter. Put vegetables in a bowl with enough dressing to lightly coat. Mound three sister's mixture on bed of greens. Garnish with seeds or raisins, as desired.

VARIATIONS

Three Sisters Side Dish: Omit mixed greens. In a medium sauce pan, sauté one medium onion (any color) in 1 T. oil until tender. Add corn, squash and beans and 1/2 of the dressing. Cover and cook over medium heat until heated through. Mix in remaining dressing, seeds and raisins (if using). Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve hot. For a more substantial side dish, add 3 cups prepared wild rice when heating the vegetables.

Three Sisters Salsa: Prepare salad, omitting mixed greens and add one small chopped red onion. Use 2 T. apple cider vinegar in the dressing. Use a smaller sized bean and dice the squash. For uniformity, all vegetables should be similar sized pieces. Serve with chips.

Additional Variations – Herbs: Substitute your favorite herb for the mint. Try using parsley, fresh sage, cilantro or a combination. In place of apple cider vinegar, use lemon or lime juice, maple vinegar, or white vinegar. Use white sugar, honey or other sweetener.

Sprinklings

 [SCVMGA Website](#)

Sprinklings is a newsletter publication of the St. Croix Valley Master Gardener 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 listed above.

All SCVMGA members are welcome to contribute articles, information, book reviews, or ideas on any horticultural topic. Please email submissions or inquiries to the editor.

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