



Sprinklings

January-February 2021

ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

VOL 24 NO. 1

Educational opportunities abound

“Growing Together”

In place of Garden U this year, SCVMGA has joined forces with area MGVA associations to host a series of virtual learning seminars. Pierce, St. Croix, Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire counties have organized four Saturday presentations at 10 a.m. in February and March for a total cost of \$10. See the flyer attached to this newsletter for more details.

Feb. 20: Sonya Burke, “Soil Preparation for Planting Vegetables”

Feb. 27: Melinda Myers, “Creating a Private Space”

March 6: Dr. Laura Jull, “Planting Trees and Bulbs”

March 13: “Kelly Povo & Phyllis Root, “Searching for Wildflowers in Wisconsin and Minnesota” (*this presentation had been scheduled for our Garden U last year*)

The events will be on YouTube Live. Attendees will receive a link the day prior to each seminar. To register go to: <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org>

For questions or problems, please contact Andy Heren, Eau Claire UW Extension at 715-839-4712 or Andy.Heren@co.eau-claire.wi.us

“Beat the Winter Blues”

The Grant County Master Gardener Association is sponsoring a free set of seminars via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on the following Thursdays:

Jan. 21: Molly Wood, “Fatal Flora”

Feb. 25: Linda Conroy, “Planning the Apothecary Garden”

March 25: Appleman Family, “Stone Hollow & Shroomery”

More information is available [here](#). To register, email [Lori Vesperman](mailto:Lori.Vesperman) to receive the Zoom link.

“Garden Visions”

UW Extension’s Master Gardener Program teamed up with Northcentral Technical College, Wausau, for a morning conference via zoom on Saturday, **Jan. 30**. The cost is \$5.

8:45 a.m.: Mark Dwyer, “Transitional Seasonal Containers”

9:50 a.m.: Briana Frank, “Urban Trees in the Landscape”

10:55 a.m.: Janell Wehr, “Basics of Garden Design”

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

SCVMGA MONTHLY MEETINGS

Houseplant care, monarch migrations

Controlling houseplant pests and keeping plants healthy through the winter will be Diana Alfuth’s topic at our January Zoom meeting. She will include a discussion on some of the “whacko” recommendations she’s read on social media.

Monarch butterfly migration and sanctuaries in Mexico will be the focus at our February Zoom meeting. MGVA Debby Walters will describe one of the miracles of nature she’s witnessed on her two trips to the monarchs’ winter destination.



Other topics for the year include growing peonies, growing orchids, raised bed/hügelkultur gardens, heirloom tomatoes, and lupine gardens.

Thanks go to Program Director Bridget Kelley for all her work, especially during these challenging times amid the pandemic. Special thanks to outgoing director Carolyn Barrette who planned our programs for more than 20 years (*see Page 3*).

Upcoming Meetings

Thursday, Jan. 28

6:30 p.m. Business meeting
7 p.m. “Houseplants”

Thursday, Feb. 25

6:30 p.m. Business meeting
7 p.m. “Monarch Migration”

Members will receive a Zoom invitation via email.

“Spring into Gardening”

The Kenosha County Extension office presents a Zoom webinar on four Saturdays in **March**. The cost is \$20. Topics include seed starting, annuals for containers, sustainable lawn care, new perennial trends, trees and shrubs for pollinators, dwarf fruits, no-till gardening, and new shrub varieties. Click [here](#) to register.

“Healthful Gardening”

Melinda Myers, a regional gardening author, TV/radio host, and columnist, is offering two free seminars February online: indoor edibles, **Feb. 17**; and low maintenance gardening, **Feb. 24**. The seminars begin at 6:30 p.m. The seminars count toward continuing education credits.

Registration is required. Click [here](#) for details.

President's Message

2021 is here!! We made it through 2020 doing things very differently than we were used to. It looks as though we will have to continue in the same manner for a while yet. Oh well, WE CAN DO IT!



Leroy Clark

We will be having our monthly meetings via "Zoom", with a business meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. and then a speaker or program starting at 7 p.m. These meetings will be on our regular Thursday meeting date.

And let's keep our fingers crossed, maybe we can be back to in-person meetings again before the year is over.

Welcome to our new Board President, Leroy Clark. Leroy lives in Beldenville and joined SCVMGA in 2011. He served on the Board as a Pierce County rep for four years when he helped plan the 20th anniversary celebration (one of his favorite projects). He was Pierce County Fair coordinator for several years, has served on the annual Plant Sale Committee and volunteered at the Demonstration and Learning Garden in River Falls.

We will also be having a virtual "Garden U" this year, in conjunction with several surrounding counties/organizations. These will take place on four consecutive Saturdays starting on Feb. 20. Mark your calendars, and join us!

In the meantime, sit back and study all the new seed and garden catalogs and plan all your gardening projects for this summer. Watch the birds! Or go for a walk in the snow! (Just be careful, don't slip and fall.)

Also, don't forget to complete your annual enrollment for 2021 (*see below*) so you can stay active in the Online Reporting System. And please feel free to call or [email](#) me with any concerns or ideas about St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners.

Matt's Picks

by [Matt Schmitz](#)

This tree comes from the University of Minnesota breeding program in 1980. In appearance it looks like Ohio Buckeye (*A. glabra*). Unlike Ohio Buckeye it resists leaf scorch and will maintain glossy green leaves all summer long with maroon fall color. The leaves are palmately compound with a flower spike that points upward like a candle and blooms in May. It will produce some seeds that look like they would be good for slingshots and they germinate almost immediately. There is mention of tolerance of de-icing salts, but I am not sure. There has been one in my yard for many years and it the first tree to leaf out and the first to drop its leaves.



MINNESOTA NURSERY RESEARCH CORPORATION

Autumn Splendor Buckeye
(*Aesculus x arnoldiana*)
'Autumn Splendor'
35 ft. tall x 30 ft. wide

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

SCVMGA Scholarship becomes annual gift

An updated agreement with the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Foundation was finalized a little over a year ago.

Changes include turning the \$1,000 biennial award into an annual one and making the eligibility requirements less restrictive. Beginning last year an applicant must be a junior or senior with a 3.0 cumulative GPA, and major or minor in horticulture, agricultural studies, agricultural engineering, conservation and environmental studies, crop and soil science, dairy science, environmental science, or food science and technology. An applicant is no longer required to live in Wisconsin.

The 2020 recipient is Kimberly Mackiel, a senior chemistry major from Lake Elmo, Minn., who won the "Quick Pitch" competition on campus, sponsored by the WiSys, a nonprofit organization that works with UW System to foster research. Her pitch was explaining nanotech research in three minutes.

In popular demand

Interest in gardening spiked at least 50% in 2020 and is listed as the second most popular lockdown activity, according to GlobalData, a market research company.

Annual Enrollment for 2021

To remain active in the Online Reporting System (ORS) for 2021, you will need to complete an annual enrollment registration.

Log on [here](#). Click on the ORS green box, then the Online Reporting System words. You will need to enter your username and password.



Membership News

by Deb Pederstuen

WELCOME BACK

For 2021, 150 of 173 members (87%) have renewed their memberships. With Covid-19 restrictions still in place, Happy New Year hugs and the pizza party are out! Thanks to Zoom, we can still see each other at our January 28 meeting.

FIRST TRANSFER

We welcomed our first new member! Christine 'Cricket' Lafond is the first certified MGV to transfer from the former Polk County MGA. Last fall, WIMGA released Margaret Murphy as their Horticulture Outreach Specialist. Thus, Polk Co. lost its WIMGA connection. All Polk Co. MGVs are invited to join our group.

Cricket earned her MGV certification in 2014. She has substantial experience in grant writing being the Director of the Clear Lake Public Library for twenty years. She's offered her expertise to the Grant, Financial Review, and fundraising committees. Cricket knows many of our Clear Lake, Clayton, and Amery members so she anticipates an easy transition.

MENTORS ARE NEEDED

Coordinators Nola Weber, Karalyn Littlefield, and Deb Pederstuen want to continue the Mentor Program that we spearheaded in early 2020. We encourage mentors and their 2019 MG Interns to stay together another year. Though we can't meet in person, it works to link up with a phone call, email, or text. For 2021 new members, we need another 10-12 members. For a Mentor & Intern Expectations guideline or to volunteer, contact Deb Pederstuen.

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At our annual November 19 meeting, we held our first virtual election. Of the five Directors elected, Leroy Clark and Linda Kelly were new to the 2021 Board of Directors (BOD). Gloria Bonse was elected to finish her term as she was board-appointed in Jan. 2020. Continuing on the BOD were Peg Wastell and Matt Schmitz. Our bylaws permit Directors to serve two consecutive two-year terms.

We're grateful for all our Directors' time and service, attending board meetings every month: Pierce Co. Rep Carol Franta, St. Croix Co. Rep Liz Whitchurch, and Vice President Karalyn Littlefield. Paul VanDenMeerendonk is serving the last year of his two 3-year terms as our WIMGA rep. Newly elected members are:

President: Leroy Clark

Secretary: Gloria Bonse

Treasurer: Peg Wastell

St. Croix Rep: Linda Kelly

Pierce Rep: Matt Schmitz

President Leroy Clark of Beldenville will do

very well as he's quite familiar with Robert's Rules of Order. He was Pierce Co. Rep for four years, 2016-2019. His relationship with Pierce Co. members dates back to 2011 when he joined. He volunteered at the Pierce Co. Fair four years before coordinating it for four more years, 2015-2019. Leroy joined the Plant Sale Team in 2019, taking charge of clean-up at Hudson's Octagon House. You'll probably agree Leroy is most identifiable – he always wears his cowboy hat!

Linda Kelly of Roberts is excited to be our new St. Croix Co. Rep. She replaces Sue Klatt. Linda is a fairly new, but very active, certified MGV, who joined in Feb 2019. So far, she's volunteered at both county fairs and at Hudson's Christian Community Home gardens. In 2020, Linda became a mentor for 2019 MG Intern Bonnie Eastvold. Since her July retirement as church secretary, she's been searching for another way to volunteer. After her BOD election, Linda said, 'I'm very happy that I found a way to serve.' She's already signed up for the Financial Review Committee!

OUR APPRECIATION

Most Board of Directors serve two, maybe four years, and move on. Last January, we began 2020 without President JoAnn Ryan after she retired unexpectedly. We were so appreciative Donna Davis filled in by mid-March, a position she held in 2003-2004. She was accustomed to board meetings, but Zoom-hosting was another story! Special thanks to our retired 2019-2020 St. Croix Rep Sue Klatt. Ironically, Matt Schmitz was WIMGA Rep and Sue was St. Croix Rep during Donna's 2003-2004 term.

NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

It's official! Bridget Kelley advanced to Program Director after Carolyn Barrette stepped down last year. Bridget was Carolyn's assistant for a year. For 2020, Bridget diligently put together a fantastic Schedule of Events and then Covid-19 hit! We look forward to Bridget's new 2021 programs over Zoom!

DESERVES SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The day I met Carolyn Barrette, she made me feel welcome with her infectious smile. I left the meeting knowing I had made a friend. Her friendly personality and determination attributed to her success in recruiting our monthly meeting speakers. For the past twenty-two years, 1998-2020, Carolyn tirelessly scouted all avenues to find a variety of interesting speakers and tours.

The statement, "it's not what you know, it's who you know" applies to Carolyn. Did you ever figure out how she could recruit

Andrew Sankey, an English nurseryman, author, and speaker from Lincolnshire, England to talk about the history of English gardens, not once, not twice, but four times and still stay under budget? Yes, Carolyn had connections! She never left one stone



CHARLIE BARRETTE

Carolyn Barrette

turned if she could find a speaker she wanted. She was also very clever in her scheduling. If the New Richmond Community Garden needed weeding in July, Carolyn arranged for us to meet at the garden. Not sure if that worked!

Although she quietly stepped away this past year, Carolyn deserves special recognition. I know, firsthand, how hard it was for her to turn that spade over to Bridget Kelley, her 2019 Assistant Program Director. Congratulations, Carolyn! Best wishes, Bridget! You can be sure Carolyn, will be available for questions if needed. That's just who she is!

RETIRING COORDINATORS

As coordinators leave, we are thankful for their contributions. Vickie Kittilson (2015-2020), organized a successful 2017 "Propagation & Roses" Fall Workshop, featuring UW-RF Horticulture Professor Brian Smith and Master Rosarian Jim Beardsley. Also, well-received was her Sept. 29, 2018 "Growing Succulents" program.

Heather Lacke (2004-2020) was outstanding as Sprinklings Editor for 6 ½ yrs., 2005-2011, and in her press releases for Garden U and the annual Plant Sale. She's credited for coordinating an eight-member team to publish our 2011 fundraiser cookbook, "Garden to Table Recipes."

Lisa Esselman did very well in assisting Carolyn Barrette in organizing 2018 and 2019 Garden U, our major educational event. Lisa continues as an SCVMGA member.

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

Once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted and we resume our activities, we will need six coordinators—St. Croix Co. Fair, Fall Workshop, Garden U Co-Coordinator, Publicity – Press Releases, Membership Assistant, and Speakers Bureau. To learn more about these valuable positions, contact me ([click on her underlined name above](#)).

NOVEMBER MEETING

Food security in Malawi

MGV Karalyn Littlefield traveled to Malawi as a representative of her church to explore different methods of vegetable gardening and farming. Here's a synopsis of her presentation to MGVs at the November meeting.



Well water is the most treasured commodity in Malawi. Not only is it critical for cooking and growing plants, but it's critical to one's health. Water from streams is disease-ridden. Wells must be bored deep because dry seasons can deplete shallow wells. Gathering water is dangerous for women and girls and takes a lot of time.



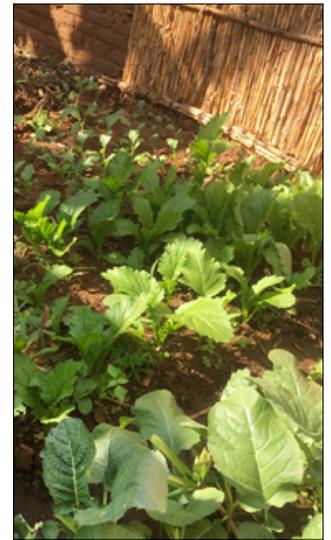
Garden cooperatives are run by women in a village of 300 people. Village elders listen to a presentation by one of the women.



Women grow and sell tomatoes to send their children to school.



The elders plant trees for shade and fruit.



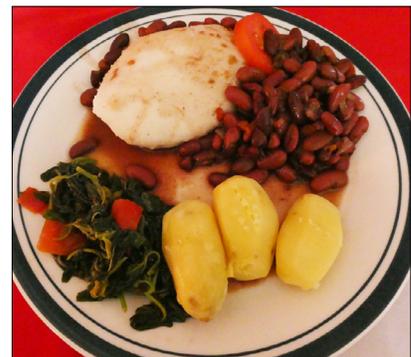
Women also have their own kitchen gardens.



Village women provide feeding centers for orphan children under 5. Two groups of 50 are fed corn porridge with ground peanuts everyday.



Corn hangs to dry for next year's seeds.



A typical meal clockwise from top: Nsima (cornmeal), red beans, boiled potatoes, tree leaves.

Shrimp and Fish Bisque

by Karalyn Littlefield

Today, we are going to make soup. A bisque to be exact. A bisque is a rich, creamy soup typically made with shellfish, especially lobster. The shells are used to make a stock and the meat is incorporated into the finished dish. The main characteristic is that it is smooth and has a velvety texture. Typically, heavy cream is utilized, however I skipped the cream and the lobster.

First, I am going to introduce you to two of my favorite seasoning blends, Old Bay Seasoning and "Slap ya Mama" Cajun seasoning. Now, before you get all up in arms about me suggesting violence against our Mothers, please check the back story on their [website](#). This blend includes salt, red pepper, black pepper and garlic.

The first step in making soup or bisque is to develop a good base, aka a broth or stock. If you do not have the time or desire to make your own stock, there are many good ones on the market. I suggest checking the salt content and keeping that in mind when seasoning the product. Be especially aware when using any seasoning blends that may have salt as the first ingredient as with the ones I introduced to you. This broth is a recipe within itself.

I like to use shell-on, deveined, raw shrimp. I have found that the shrimp do not shrink as much if cooked in the shell. Who would want a shrunken shrimp? For making stock, I like to use Argentinian Pink Shrimp that have a thicker shell than most other varieties. If using head on shrimp, remove and reserve the heads when you shell the shrimp.

Enjoy. This may be my best soup ever. Happy Cooking.



"Gotta catch the fish before you make the soup," says Karalyn. She caught this 33" Northern Pike on Jan. 6 in Lake Monona (one of the two lakes in Madison).

Boiled Shrimp

developed by Karalyn Littlefield

- 1-2 lbs. shell on, deveined, raw shrimp, thawed
- 2 quarts water, or more
- 1 medium onion peeled and quartered
- 2 bay leaves
- 10 +/- pepper corns
- 1 tsp Old Bay Seasoning
- ½ tsp Slap Ya Mama Cajun seasoning

Add all ingredients except shrimp to pot. Bring to boil. Add shrimp and return contents to a boil. After contents have returned to boiling, cook about 2 minutes more. Drain, reserving cooking liquid. Peel shrimp and reserve shells and tails.

Shrimp Stock

developed by Karalyn Littlefield

Reserved cooking liquid and shells/tails (and heads, if have) from Boiled Shrimp. Add a carrot and a stalk of chopped celery. Simmer for 45 minutes, drain and strain stock. Discard solids. Wash the soup pot.

The very first step to making a good fish bisque is to get a fish. If you have a whole fish, you can add the bones and head to the stock. If it's a big fish, take the cheek meat out of the head after cooking.

Shrimp and Fish Bisque

developed by Karalyn Littlefield

Rough chop:

- 7 green onions
- 1 medium onion
- 1 large carrot
- 2 celery stalks
- 5 peppercorns, 1 bay leaf and 4 sprigs of fresh parsley.

Sautee in 2 Tbls. butter over medium heat. Add ½ cup water to start the cooking. Stir often Sautee until mostly soft. Add small amounts of additional water if needed. Browning is not desirable.

Dissolve 2 tsp of Better than Bouillon vegetable flavor in 2 cups of hot water. Substitute other bouillon or prepared broth.

Move vegetables to side of pan and add 4 Tbls. butter and sprinkle 1/3 cup flour over butter. Stir butter and flour together. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring entire contents of pot. Slowly add the shrimp stock (about 1 to ½ quarts) or prepared stock and bouillon mixture with continuous stirring to prevent lumps from forming. Bring to a boil and boil for 2 minutes to completely cook the flour. Continue to stir.

Remove soup pot from heat, remove bay leaf, parsley and pepper corns if you can find them. Using an immersion blender or carefully using a blender, puree the bisque until smooth. Return bisque to medium heat.

Add fish and/or shrimp to bisque. Add raw items before cooked items. Taste and adjust salt if needed. There is no added salt in the recipe due to salt in seasoning blends and bouillon.

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.

Editor: Colleen Callahan Proofreader: Maria Sanocki

Publisher: Diana Alfuth, UW Horticulture Outreach Specialist

Growing Together

2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminar



SAVE THE DATES: VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS
Saturdays at 10 am

February 20, 2021 Sonya Burke
Soil Preparation for Planting Vegetables

February 27, 2021 Melinda Myers brought to you by 
Creating a Private Space <https://www.diggershotline.com/>

March 6, 2021 Laura Jull
Planting Trees and Shrubs

March 13, 2021 Kelly Povo & Phyllis Root
Searching for Wildflowers in Wisconsin and Minnesota

Cost: \$10 covers all four presentations

The Spring Garden Seminar will be presented via You Tube Live. Attendees will receive the link the week prior to each presentation. All presentations are open to the public and we welcome both new and experienced gardeners. Registration at <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/>

Brought to you by Western Wisconsin Master Gardener Associations from the following counties: Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce and St. Croix



Growing Together

Speakers for Western Wisconsin Conference



February 20, 2021
Sonya Burke
*Soil Preparation for
Planting Vegetables*

Sonya Burke has been a Hennepin County Master Gardener with the University of MN Extension Services for six years. Her love of growing things comes from a long line of gardeners and farmers on her mother's side of the family. Since moving to NE Minneapolis from "the country", she has added five gardens to her yard – mostly for natives and other perennial plants; and works with her neighbors to create pollinator corridors. She is obsessed with tomatoes and cucumbers, and wages a seemingly never-ending war with the Creeping Charlie in her flower beds.

You'll learn how to grow better vegetables by evaluating and improving your garden soil.



February 27, 2021
Melinda Myers
Creating a Private Space brought to you by
[Diggers Hotline](#)

Nationally recognized gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers has a master's degree in horticulture, over 30 years of horticulture experience and written over 20 gardening books. She hosts the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program and The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series. She's a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and writes a nationally syndicated newspaper column.

Learn how to combine plants, furnishings and accessories to create an entertainment space, retreat or area for relaxation within your landscape. Melinda will share strategies for maximizing beauty and enjoyment whether you're dealing with a small yard or trying to create a garden room within your landscape.



March 6, 2021
Laura Jull
Planting Trees and Shrubs

Dr. Laura G. Jull is a member of the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Horticulture and the Wisconsin State Extension Specialist of Woody Ornamental Horticulture. She currently teaches Identification and Culture of Woody Landscape Plants, Arboriculture and Landscape Maintenance, and Plant Propagation. Laura's extension responsibilities include serving Wisconsin's Green Industry, providing direction for statewide proactive programs, supporting county extension agents in implementing and evaluating programs, and advanced Master Gardener training.

Ensure the best possible outcome for your landscaping investment by learning how to correctly plant trees and shrubs.



March 13, 2021
Kelly Povo & Phyllis Root
*Searching for Wildflowers in
Wisconsin and Minnesota*

Kelly Povo has been a professional photographer for over 30 years and has exhibited in galleries and art shows across the country. Her photographs have been published on posters, calendars, note cards, and in books.

Phyllis Root has written over fifty books for children, including several books on bogs, prairies, old growth forest in the upper Midwest. Phyllis lives in Minneapolis and teaches in the low-residency Master of Fine Arts in Writing for Children and Young Adults Program at Hamline University in St. Paul.

Our speakers will take you on a visual journey to learn how to identify, safeguard and enjoy our native wildflowers.

Registration Information

Registrations for the Growing Together Seminar or for an individual presentation are due the week before each presentation. One \$10 registration fee includes all four presentations. Participants will receive a link the week prior to each presentation. Go to <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/> for registration. Questions can be directed to Andy Heren at Extension—Eau Claire County at 715-839-4712 or Andy.Heren@co.eau-claire.wi.us