



# Sprinklings

March-April 2020

ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

VOL 23 NO. 2

## Garden U, March meeting canceled due to coronavirus

It took a pandemic to shut down Garden U, its only cancellation in 19 years. Monthly meeting cancellations and postponements, however, have occurred throughout the years due to weather conditions: rain and snowstorms, icy roads, extreme cold temps.

This time, the reason is historic. Following a rapid succession of warnings and "states of emergency" about COVID-19 (coronavirus) from world, national, state and county officials, cancellation seemed evitable at the March 11 Board meeting. When UW-Extension sent its announcement the following morning, it became mandatory: "We are requiring our volunteer clubs

and associations to cancel or postpone upcoming events between now and April 10 that expect to draw more than 50 people," wrote UW-Extension Interim Dean and Director Karl Martin.

Debby Walters' March presentation on monarchs in Mexico will be postponed. One of the Garden U speakers, Heather Holm, has agreed to speak at next year's Garden U, so all is not lost. Kudos to coordinators Carolyn Barrette, Lisa Esselman, and Bridget Kelley for their efforts and time to bring us informational and educational events.

One thing we've learned is that plants have their dormant season. This is ours. Lie low and be safe.

### Notification Protocol

SCVMGA has had an "Emergency Notification" plan in place since 2015 to notify members when events are canceled.

The decision is made by the board president (or designee) who contacts the program director, hospitality coordinators, webmaster, venue host and membership coordinator. The membership coordinator then emails all members.

If the cancellation is on short notice, a calling tree is enacted, staffed by member volunteers.

### *A Message from our Vice President*

by Karalyn Littlefield

*I became a Master Gardener in 2013. I came to my first meeting and there were many people. For those that know me, you will probably agree that I am outgoing and comfortable in groups. It is a bit intimidating, even for me, to go to a new event the first time. I willed myself to come in and Deb Pederstuen was there to greet me. Then, it was time to get food and sit somewhere, again a daunting task.*

*I have two reasons for bringing up this topic. The first is that we have a wonderfully active group at our meetings, yet I do not know very many of you. I seem to sit in the same spot with the same people. The second is that this is the time, early in the year, to greet our new interns. Please talk to them, introduce yourself and invite them to sit with you. If you do not know whether the person is an intern, talk to them anyway. Through our actions, we can show we are welcoming and inclusive.*

*I have a challenge for you to consider. At each meeting, talk to at least two people that you do not know very well and say hi to every intern you encounter. If someone looks a little lost or uncomfortable, be the one to talk with them. I accept my own challenge and hope that you will as well.*

### APRIL MEETING

## What's your answer?

by Carolyn Barrette

April's meeting will be Diana Alfuth on "Responding to Horticulture Questions." Part of our mission as MGVs is answering questions from the public. We're supposed to be factual and accurate in our responses. Diana will give us tips and techniques on hunting down easy and difficult answers. And probably tell us about some of the unusual questions she has received. ?

The business meeting starts **Thursday, April 16** at 6:45 p.m. with the speaker at 7:30 p.m. at First Covenant Church, River Falls.

### Communicating with our communities

Our members are involved in numerous volunteer projects. Our monthly meetings and events welcome the public to learn about gardening and the environment. Can we do a better job of getting the word out to our communities? Yes.

As traditional media is eclipsed by social media and smartphones, it's time to rethink our publicity strategy. What new methods can we use? Put on your thinking cap and join us for a brainstorming session in May. Look for details in the May Sprinklings.

# New president to serve on Board of Directors



**Donna Davis**

Donna Davis, a SCVMGA member since 2001, has agreed to serve as Interim President for 2020. She will be filling in the remainder of JoAnn Ryan’s term.

“Donna has a big heart!” says Deb Pederstuen. “This is the second time she’s bailed us out. She accepted the president’s two-year term in 2003 when nobody else stepped up.” She also spent five years on the Nominations Committee.

Having accumulated over 1,000 hours of volunteer service, Donna has contributed to a variety of SCVMGA projects. She volunteers at the New Richmond Community Garden (since 2001), donates more than 200 plants a year to our annual Plant Sale, manages the Education Table at the sale, participates in the Variety Plant Trials, collects hundreds of seeds to share with MGVs, helps with Fall Workshops, and recently started a food-shelf garden at her local church with financial help from a SCVMGA Community Grant.

Plus, she’s the one who got us all started on raising Monarch butterflies. Thank you, Donna, for stepping up – again.



**Board members are (back from left) Carol Franta, Pierce County rep; Gloria Bonse, secretary; and Peg Wastell, treasurer; (front from left) Liz Whitchurch, St. Croix County rep; Karalyn Littlefield, vice president; and Sue Klatt, St. Croix County rep. Not pictured is Matt Schmitz, Pierce County rep.**

## What’s happening?

### Grape pruning workshop

Trout Brook Vineyard, a 13-acre vineyard is offering a two-part grape-pruning workshop on Saturday, March 28 and Saturday, April 4.



Part I will cover pruning theory with hands-on experience. Part II will cover propagation from cuttings. The

workshop is \$35 and limited to 12.

The vineyard, in operation for 27 years, is located at 1212 Trout Brook



Road North, Hudson. [Click here](#) for more information.

### Extension classes cancelled

The coronavirus has forced the cancellation of three UW-Extension classes in our area:

Monday, March 23 - Diseases of Evergreens, taught by Prof. Brian Hudelson

Monday, March 30 - Homegrown Tomatoes, taught by Diana Alfuth

Wednesday, April 8 - Beneficial Bugs, taught by P.J. Liesch

An apple-tree grafting workshop by Diana Alfuth is tentatively scheduled for April 13 in Ellsworth. Confirmation will depend on the coronavirus



### ‘3Mgives’ donates to SCVMGA

“3Mgives” is a volunteer match program that donates money to community organizations where their current and retired employees volunteer.

The program donates \$500 to organizations for each employee or retiree who volunteers 25 hours or more annually.

Last year **3M Science. Applied to Life.™** five SCVMGA

members named our organization as their volunteer group. That means SCVMGA receives a total of \$2,500.

SCVMGA members are **Barbara Kolpin, Connie Johnson, Nola Weber, and Barb Peterson, and Lynn Steely. Duke O’Brien** participated in previous years. Thank you all!

The program is 3M’s social investment arm. SCVMGA is one of 5,500 schools and non-profit organizations nationwide receiving funds.

# WIMGA Update

by Paul VanDenMeerendonk  
SCVMGA representative to WIMGA

The spring "Face-to-Face Meeting" for WIMGA Local Representatives is Saturday, April 18 at the Hancock Ag Research Station. This day will be our long-range planning meeting, and we'll be taking a close look at what's happening in the program, and where WIMGA needs to put its efforts in the future. If you have any suggestions, concerns, and/or compliments to be brought forward, please send an email to me by April 1 or sooner, so that I can forward an email to our President Becky Gutzman as a possible agenda item. Click



on my name above for a direct link to my email address.

I'd like to remind everyone of the WIMGA Educational Grants that are available in \$100, \$250, and \$400. In the fall of 2019, WIMGA awarded 27 grants totaling \$8,100. For 2020, WIMGA budgeted \$8,850. SCVMGA was last awarded a \$400 grant for an LCD projector for educational events in 2016. [Click here](#) for grant information. Applications must be submitted by October 1. So if you have an idea or project, let's talk about it, present it to the SCVMGA Board and try to obtain a \$100, \$250 or \$400 grant for our association and our community. We can obtain a separate grant in each amount.

I hope you have already seen the WIMGA March newsletter. A link to it is emailed to MGVs statewide. If you're not receiving it, please let me know so I can help you. (Note: The "Volunteer Vibe," also emailed, is a separate newsletter edited by staff of the UW-Extension MG Program.)

## WIMGA newsletter features SCVMG Bridget Kelley's gardens



In the [March issue](#), Bridget writes about the advantages of raised beds and using the Hügeltultur method. We'll have a chance to see her gardens at our July 23 meeting.



## January Meeting



Robyn Wefel

Seventy-one members, two guests, and Diana Alfuth attended the Open House January meeting.

MGV Robyn Wefel described her work as gardener for the St. Paul Hotel, preparing seasonal displays. She showed photos of the grounds, which were recognized as one of the "Historic Hotels with Magnificent Gardens," a nationwide honor.

## February Meeting

by Gloria Bonse

Seventy-seven members, a guest, and Diana Alfuth attended the meeting.

Professor Sonja Maki from UW-RF spoke at our February meeting. One of the horticulture courses she teaches is Floriculture. Students learn about various floriculture crops, bedding-plant production, plant quality, practice supervision, and sales.



PHOTO BY DEB PEDERSTUEN  
Sonja Maki

One of the major activities of the class involves growing bedding plants for the university's annual plant sale. Steps include planning, seeding, transplanting, and growing plants to have ready for the annual sale. Students learn to schedule procedures to meet timelines. One example of this would be growing Easter lilies and having them ready to bloom in time for Easter. Some of the seeds used for plants are donated by various companies. Maki shared examples of these seeds as well as examples of some of the texts used for the class.

A couple of interesting things I took away from the presentation was about transplanting plant plugs and the importance of having a good strong root and minimal foliage.

The other helpful tip was regarding container plantings and the "spiller-filler-thriller" plan. Containers need a plant that vines out over the container to fill around and below container edges (spiller), plants to fill in the container using various colors, textures, and shapes (filler), and a plant that stands out – the thriller!



PHOTO BY DEB PEDERSTUEN

Orientation for the new Mentor Program occurred prior to the meeting. Twenty-seven members attended. Mentors (standing from left) are Susan Wallin, Linda Kelly and Rose Kuebker. Interns, (seated in front of their mentors from left) are Jeanne Gregory, Bonnie Eastvold and Kathy Hetzel.

## Membership News

by *Deb Pederstuen*

Let's give a warm welcome to new members who joined our Master Gardener family. Joining in 2020 are 15 of the 18 MGVI Interns in Diana's 2019 Fall MGVI Level 1 Training Class. They are ready to share their new gardening skills. Two interns from Pierce County are **Jeanne Gregory** and **Nancy Lindquist**, both of River Falls. Seven St. Croix County Interns are **Cathy Berling**, **Nicole Carignan**, **Colleen Cunningham**, and **Laurie Rohde** of Hudson; **Brian Johnston** of New Richmond; **Deb Dibble** of Osceola; and **Jordi Tiffany** of Baldwin. Six Polk County Interns are **Bonnie Eastvold** of Deer Park; **Kathy Hetzel** and **Christopher Stahlmann** of Amery; **Stephanie Tetzlaff** and **Carol Wickboldt** of Clayton; and **Sarah Tomson** of Clear Lake.

Joining last fall were 2019 MG Interns **Nora Bennett** of River Falls and **Cindy Hanson** of Hammond and 2018 MG Intern **Jo Stewart** of Osceola, who transferred from Dane County.

It's also a pleasure to finally have **Sherry Gilles** onboard. Sherry is a 2002 MGVI and President of the Plum City Garden Club who attended our monthly meetings as a guest for many years.

Our current membership is consistent with last year at 171; 152 renewing members (89%), 17 MGVI Interns, one 18 MGVI Intern, and 1MGVI.

### MENTOR PROGRAM FLOURISHES

It's so exciting to see our Mentor Program up and running! Nineteen new MGVI Interns are paired with MGVI's. Mentors will keep in contact with MGVI Interns during their first year, attend meetings or educational events, volunteer together on projects, or just be there to answer questions. We hope many new friendships will bloom!

Many thanks to our eighteen mentors and to my co-coordinators, Volunteer Coordinator Nola Weber and Vice President Karalyn Littlefield. With their help, we got this really important program off the ground. Our inspiration came from Washington County MGA's successful Mentor/Intern Expectations Program. See photo at right.



Ready to roll up their sleeves and spread their knowledge are SCVMGA's newest members: (back row from left) Brian Johnston, Nancy Lindquist, Nora Bennett, Nicole Carignan, Pierce County Horticulture Outreach Specialist Diana Alfuth, Colleen Cunningham, Cathy Berling and Sarah Tomson; (seated from left) Deb Dibble, Laurie Rohde, Carol Wickboldt and Stephanie Tetzlaff. Not pictured are Jean Gregory, Jordi Tiffany, Bonnie Eastvold, Kathy Hetzel, Christopher Stahlmann, Cindy Hanson, Jo Stewart, and Sherry Gilles.

Note: UW-Extension's new requirement is for all Inactive (Honorary) Members to have both Criminal Background Checks (CBC) and Mandated Reporter Training (MRT). Contact Diana if you need these requirements.

### APOLOGY

Special thanks to our former Vice President Dianne Wright for serving on our 2018-2019 Board of Directors. My apologies for not recognizing her contribution in the January Sprinklings.

### OPEN POSITION NEEDS YOUR HELP

Volunteer today for the St. Croix County Fair Coordinator to continue our 20-year MGVI presence in Greenwood City. This year's fair is July 15-19. Fifty fair volunteers are waiting to help at our indoor booth in the Commercial Building, with no wind and rain issues. Use SignupGenius for a no-hassle way to schedule volunteers. Former coordinators will assist you. Contact [Deb Pederstuen](#).



Our mentors are (back from left) Bonnie Rohr, Carol Franta, Leroy Clark, Marilyn Gorham, Helen Fryer, Sue Wallin and Deb Pederstuen; (front from left) Annette Rios, Linda Kelly, Karalyn Littlefield and Teresa Davis. Not pictured are Gale Gaard, Gladi Sippel, Connie Stoy, Paul VanDenMeerendonk, Debby Walters and Nola Weber.

2019 VARIETY PLANT TRIAL RANKINGS

## French Breakfast, Little Marvel among best varieties

by Peg Wastell

Rankings: #1 as best - #4 as last. More details in Diana's summaries will be available on our website.

Be sure to use 2013-2019 rankings as a guide for your seed purchases and recommendations to others.

### Celery



#1 – Conquistador, #2-Tango, #3- Tall Utah, #4- Golden Self-Blanching. Golden self-blanching was first in general meeting taste test and last in rankings because of low germination for several growers.

### Cucumber, Long Burpless



#1 – Suyo, #2-Summer Dance, #2-Tendergreen, #3-Tanja. First place and tie for second place were close in rankings while #3 was by far least favorite mostly because of being so seedy.

### Lettuce, Mini Romaine



#1-Little Gem, #2-Breen, #3-Truchas, #4-Dragoon. Rankings close, but clear winner was Little Gem.

### Peas, Garden Shelling



#1 Little Marvel, #2-Wando, #3-Mastro, #-Strike. Little Marvel clear winner and Strike clear last place.

### Pepper, Sweet Non Bell



#1-Giant Marconi, #2-Boris, #3-Cuballe, #4-Mel-rose. Giant Marconi was favored by many, but others ranked it last because slow ripening. The other selections were very close.

### Radish, Elongated



#1-French Breakfast, #2-White Icicle, #3-Dragon Hybrid, #4-China Rose. Tried and true #1 and #2 were well ahead of #3 and #4 although each variety did have at least one #1 ranking.

### Shiso/Perilla Herb



#1-Britton, #2-Asia, #3- Red, #4-Green. Taste testing of shiso pesto at general meeting was positive yet most growers ranked shiso very low in flavor. Most found it a beautiful plant and worth growing for decorative purposes.

### Snapdragon, Tall Mixes



#1- Madame Butterfly, #1-Rocket, #2-Tall Deluxe, #3-Jordan. Rankings for snapdragons were very close with first place tie and others close behind.

## Seed-sorting event for 2020 trials

by Peg Wastell

I'd like to thank everyone who spent time counting, sorting, and packaging more than 7,000 seeds for this year's Variety Plant Trials: Patricia Miller, Gloria Bonse, Robyn Wefel, Carolyn Barrette, Carol Marnel, Sandy Madsen, Barb Kolpin, Dot Seebach, Stephanie Tetzlaff, Joan And Will Kowalsky, Liz Whitchurch, Rose Kuebker, Jeanne Gregory, Donna Caden-head, Renee clark, Connie Stoy, Barb and Ken Kolbe.



The annual seed-sorting event at St. Joseph Town Hall includes a potluck lunch. MGVs (from left) are Connie Stoy, Stephanie Tetzlaff, Ken Kolbe, Joan Kowalchyk and Dot Seebach.



Paper plates were used to organize the seed packets.



Robyn Wefel (right) taste tests Will Kowalchyk's (left) home-made wine.

# Volunteer Opportunities

To stay certified, MGVs need 24 hours of volunteer work every year. If you're searching for projects, look no further! In addition to gardening or teaching, you can serve on **SCVMGA committees**. Openings on committees can be found in Sprinklings. If you need help with a project, please contact [Nola Weber](#), Volunteer Coordinator, who will add it to this list. A more detailed listing can be downloaded from our [website](#). Underlined names below are active links to email addresses.

## NORTH REGION

### *Osceola, Somerset, New Richmond*

- Butterfly Project**, Osceola  
5th Grade Girl Scout project  
[Jennifer Berg](#)
- Flower Garden**, Osceola  
Christ Lutheran Church  
[Karen Nork](#)
- Reflection Garden**, New Richmond  
Willow River Garden Club  
[Carolyn Craig](#)
- Pantry Garden**, New Richmond  
[Donna Cadenhead](#)

## SOUTH REGION

### *River Falls, Ellsworth*

- Boulevard garden**, City of River Falls  
Old power plant garden on Winter Street  
[Zach Regnier](#)
- Community gravel bed**, bare-root trees, City of River Falls  
[Zach Regnier](#)
- Boulevard Rain gardens**, City of River Falls  
[Zach Regnier](#)
- Flower beds**, White Pathway, City of River Falls  
[Zach Regnier](#)
- Grow to Share garden**, River Falls  
[John Ramstad](#)
- Demonstration/Learning garden**, River Falls  
[Diana Alfuth](#)
- Raised bed gardening**, River Falls  
Have a Heart Farm  
[Bobbie Kuhn](#)
- River Falls Farmers Market SCVMGA booth**  
[Laura Milano](#)
- Westside Elementary School garden**, River Falls  
[Becky Cunningham](#)
- Ambulance Hall landscape gardening**, Ellsworth  
[Kevin Ballman](#)
- Ambulance Hall, North side shade garden**, Ellsworth  
[Ron Campbell](#)
- Ellsworth Public Library garden**  
[Ron Campbell](#)
- Ellsworth High School garden**  
[Ron Campbell](#)

## EAST REGION

### *Roberts, Hammond, Baldwin-Woodville, Glenwood City*

- Giezendanner School Forest**, Baldwin-Woodville  
[Debby Walters](#)
- Viking Middle School Prairie**, Baldwin-Woodville  
[Debby Walters](#)
- Raised bed gardens**, Norseman's Manor, Woodville  
Becky Strand, 715-222-5521
- Cancer Center garden**, Baldwin  
[Rose Magnus](#)
- Cross Community Garden**, Roberts  
[Mike Deneen](#)
- Community Garden**, Hammond  
[Mike Deneen](#)

## WEST REGION

### *Hudson, Troy*

- Christian Community Home**, Hudson  
[Deb Pederstuen](#)
- Hudson Farmers Market SCVMGA booth**  
[Maria Scheidegger](#)
- Octagon House gardens**, Hudson  
[Jean Haut](#)
- Prairie gardens consulting**, Hudson  
Faith Community Church  
[John Mueller](#)
- Willow River Elementary education garden**, Hudson  
[Ramona Robinson](#)
- Willow River State Park gardens**, Hudson  
[Carol Hardin](#)
- Hudson Hospital Community Garden**, Hudson  
[Sarah Thomson](#)
- Hudson Library Education class**, Hudson  
Joan Bushman, 715-386-3103
- Troy Town Hall garden**, Troy  
[Jill Berke](#)
- Glover Park Entrance, Prairie Garden**, Troy  
[Jill Berke](#)
- Annual opportunities:** Plant Sale, St. Croix and Pierce County Fairs, Garden U, Junior Garden U, Fall Workshop, Earth Day. Details will appear in Sprinklings.
- Ongoing:** Educate others with articles for Sprinklings, such as writing book reviews, sharing educational experiences (see p. 7), or opining on anything horticultural. [Colleen Callahan](#)

# Eight English Gardens

by [Gloria Bonse](#) and [Karalyn Littlefield](#)

Mike Shadrack took us on a tour of Southeast England Gardens in an event sponsored by the Northern Wisconsin Hosta Society. Shadrack is an author, educator and Hosta collector and Ambassador with the American Hosta Society (AHS). Originally from England, he has a Hosta named after him "Mike Shadrack." During his presentation, Shadrack took us on a photo tour of eight gardens featuring different gardening styles. We viewed beautiful photographs and were regaled by numerous details with a bit of humor interjected.

## The gardens

- Kiftsgate Court Gardens, Cotswold
- Glen Chantry, Essex
- Royal Horticulture Society Garden Wisely, Surrey
- The Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park, Surry
- The Royal Gardens, Highgrove, Prince Charles Hosta Garden
- Sissinghurst Castle, Weald of Kent. A must see. If you see one garden, this is the one.
- Great Dixter Gardens, Sussex Weald. Family Home of gardener and gardening writer Christopher Lloyd.
- The Beth Chatto gardens, Elmstead Market, Colchester, Essex

## Takeaway Tidbits

- English gardens are designed to be viewed from the home. What it looks like from the window, not the curb, is very important.
- A ha-ha is a recessed landscape design element that creates a vertical barrier without being seen from the house. It is used to keep livestock out of the gardens. The name is thought to come from the exclamations of surprise when discovered.
- Plant alliums among hostas. Allium will grow through the hosta leaves and bloom above them. It creates a topic of discussion among gardeners.
- Have objects that entice the visitor to go into the garden and see what is on the other side. A bridge, a door, a hole in the fence or a curve in the path.
- Deer do not like hellebore.
- Create vistas that lead the eye to the next area of the garden.
- Prince Charles is a national collector of big-leaf hostas
- For slug control, spread slug pellets just after snow melts and every two to three weeks. Be consistent. This will break the life cycle of the slug and after two years, there shall be slugs, no more.
- Water is important for reflection.
- England and Seattle have similar climates.
- Shadrack believes all good gardens have color.
- Meadows at Great Dixter and Beyond by Christopher Lloyd is a great reference.
- Beth Chatto wrote several books about planting the right plant in the right place, such as "The Dry Garden," "The Wet Garden" and "Gravel Gardens."



Royal Gardens, Highgrove



Beth Chatto garden



Great Dixter garden

## 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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