



Sprinklings

May-June 2020

ST. CROIX VALLEY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

VOL 23 NO. 3

MGV activities on hold

Because of the continuing concern for public safety due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Annual Plant Sale and monthly meetings have been cancelled.

We're now waiting for word on how/when to continue our volunteer gardening projects.

As of this printing, no activities outside the home are allowed. This mandate comes from the UW-Madison Division of Extension, under which the Master Gardener Program is housed.

"A designated group is determining the process on how we will eventually resume activities with priority being the safety of staff, volunteers and clients," wrote Mike Maddox, director of the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program in an email dated May 15.

Once a protocol is established, expect to hear from Mike via email – hopefully soon.

Feast your eyes on tulips

by Paul VanDenMereendonk

I visited Keukenhof eight years ago with my wife, Debbie, and another couple. The Countess Jacoba van Beiren owned land in the 15th century. The uncultivated land was used for hunting and gathering of herbs for the castle's kitchen, hence Keukenhof, or "Kitchen Gardens." These gardens, including 3 pavilions on 79 acres of land, first opened when 20 Dutch Bulb growers came together in 1949. Today, 30 gardeners work year round to plant more than seven million bulbs supplied free by 100 bulb growers. The gardens are only open from the third week in March for about eight weeks. Unfortunately, the Gardens did not open this year due to the corona virus.



When visiting, you will need at least five hours or longer to enjoy this most colorful event in the world of gardening.

Please take a few minutes to enjoy [this video](#) on the Keukenhof experience.

Editor's Note

This issue merges the months of May and June. A big "Thank You" to everyone who contributed articles.

Victory Gardens relevant today

by Trent Kowalchuk

There are a lot of new phrases and words we have had to learn in the last few months. Even old words now have new meanings. Social distancing, google hangout, DUO, self-isolation, flatten the curve and many more. Do you Zoom? Yes, but only on the freeway when I am late for work. A lot of new technology is helping us stay connected with friends and family or even allowing us to work from home. Advances in science and technology are a huge part of our changing society but jobs are still disappearing and incomes are shrinking.

Sometimes we need to look back into history to find solutions to our current problems. An old phrase comes to mind from the First World War: Victory gardens or War gardens. Victory gardens were an important source of food for many people during both world wars in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. Back yards, public parks, vacant lots, and even rooftops were turned into food-producing areas. There are even pictures of victory gardens growing in bomb craters in London. One-third of all vegetables produced during the war in the United States were grown in Victory gardens.

Most victory gardens in the US during WWII were grown purely for economic reasons, not patriotism. Produce and money were in short supply and Victory gardens were a way for households to stretch what resources they had.

I know we are not at war but many people are short on money and fresh produce. The concept of a Victory garden still works. Just like during the wars, Victory gardens can stretch household resources during this economic struggle. The fresh air and exercise also help deal with stress and frustration many people have. As gardeners, we can provide the knowledge and encouragement to our neighbors, family, friends, and coworkers to start their own Victory gardens. Maybe plant a bit more and let your neighbors harvest while you stay inside. Be creative.

Just remember we need to use our new words like social distancing, google hangout, DUO, or Zoom to keep everyone safe.



U.S. government poster from WWI

President's Message



Donna Davis

Spring Greetings!

I hope you are all well and adapting to our 2020 situation. As I look out my windows the daffodils, rhododendrons, and magnolias are blooming. Earlier the bloodroot, small early bulbs, and forsythia bloomed. Somehow when I turned my back, the trees leafed out. Soon when the lilacs bloom, it will be time to spread the crabgrass preventer. My goal this year is to get some of the plant thugs under control, mainly the purple dragon lamium which is trying to choke out other perennials.

I started my raised-bed food shelf garden earlier with peas, onions, and lettuce, but put on the floating row covers for this cold spell. I also added green netting over the deer netting surrounding that garden to try to soften some of the wind gusts this year since it's out in an open area. I haven't started my own vegetable garden yet, but started some seeds.

Have you tried raising microgreens and taking Diana Alfuth's challenge? I started peas that were for microgreens, the seeds were smaller and now it's time to enjoy eating them.

I'm grateful that the garden centers are open. I truly enjoy seeing all the colorful flowers and smelling the aromatic ones. It is an uplifting experience. Each year I try some new varieties of flowers and vegetables and hope for a good gardening year. With the cold snap, check your fruit trees and shrubs for damage to buds and blossoms.

Have you tried linking to UW-Extension's online classes yet for your continuing education hours? Some are in the daytime and others are at night. I just tried one recently and plan to participate in many more.

The need to cancel our meetings and the big plant sale at the Octagon House has been disappointing. So far our treasury is ok. Maybe small private sales will be the way to comply with UW-Extension guidelines.

The best news this year is that we do NOT have the Asian Giant Hornet (aka Murder Hornet). The biggest problem in Washington state is that they kill the bees. Protect yourself from the ticks, mosquitos, and biting gnats. The gnats have already attacked me recently. Enjoy the outdoors and hope for a good gardening year.



Two for one: Buy a plant, donate to SCVMGA

Heidi Doering, former Horticulture Educator for commercial growers in St. Croix, Pierce and Polk counties, is offering an array of plants for sale with all proceeds donated to SCVMGA. With a large yard, she can create social-distancing arrangements. She will also wear a face covering during transactions. Call Heidi at 715-977-2982 or email her at heidid@dishup.us to schedule a visit.

Alocasia spp. Giant Elephant Ears is a tropical plant with 12"-15" diameter leaves and grows to 6' tall and wide. Needs full or part sun with moist soil and regular fertilizer for best growth.

4.5" - \$5

1 gal - \$10

2 gal - \$15

10-14" - \$20-40

Lycoris squamigera.

Surprise Lilies are bulb plants in small and large plants that I'll guarantee as viable through October 2020. If the plants in pots don't root and establish this season, contact me before 10/31/20 and I'll dig fresh bulbs in Sept/October for you to plant this fall.

4.5" plants - \$5

1 gal - \$10

2 gal - \$15



Miscellaneous plants – I have an assortment of perennials that I can dig from my perennial gardens for you to take a division back to your garden. I don't know specific species/cultivar of some, but I have photos that I can share or you can come by throughout the summer to pick and dig specific perennials.

LA Lilies. A lovely, hardy cross between *Asiatic* and *Longiflorum* (Easter) lilies. Pink or peach-flowered varieties available.

Iris siberica. Siberian Iris – I have large clusters of these that you can dig and take back to your garden to divide and plant.

Bearded Iris – various colors – lavender/yellow tones



Bearded Iris

Peonies – pinks and whites

Hardy Fern – grows to 3 ft tall and spreads to fill space.

Baptisia australis – I have seed and seedlings.

I have more plant species from which divisions can be taken.

I may have some tomato seedlings available of Brandywine and Roma paste varieties.

I also have 'plantlets' of my favorite houseplant – **Neomarica spp.** (Walking Iris), available with pricing at \$1-5 each, depending on size. This plant flowers every winter in Feb/March with flowers that are delicate, fragrant, and last just one day each, with waves of flowers over a one-month period. They bring me joy with fragrance and beauty during the dark days of winter.



Can you help?

MGV Intern Cindy Hanson planted a bare-root Red Maple tree four years ago, and is wondering why the branches are growing straight up, and not branching out (*photo at right*). Someone told her to put weights on each branch, but she'd like to hear from a Master Gardener with expertise on trees. Cathy also seeks help about overwintering Dahlias. So far, she hasn't had any success. If you can help, [click here](#) for Cathy's email.



MGV Intern Catherine Berling would like a tree identification. It's about 6 years old and this is the first year with buds (*photo at left*). If you can help, [click here](#) for her email.



She's looking forward to moving to a 3-acre property where she wants to grow blue lupine and would appreciate any tips. One thing she won't do on her new property is install landscape fabric, one of the many things she learned in the MGV class.

Dear Master Gardener Volunteers,

I hope that everyone is doing well and keeping safe. I have spent the last few months converting all of my classes to online and spending extra time checking up on those who fell behind. I am happy to report that out of 250 students, I only 'lost' one.

With the semester finished, it is time to work on the projects that I have on 'the list.' Last July, we went from mostly shade to full sun in our yard in a few drastic moments. The canvas is blank, or mostly blank, for landscaping and gardens. The first task is to smooth and seed an area of steep slope. I am going to use no-mow grasses which are a blend of creeping fescues. My goal is to plant spring bulbs in that area. Since I am staying home this summer – no Spain, no Grand Marias, no Malawi, no Oregon. I want to build and use a small raised bed with square-foot gardening techniques.

Now is the time to try something new, something that we did not have time for when we were busy with other things. Have you wanted to start a rose garden? Build a stone wall? Grow grapes on an arbor? Read a book about permaculture? Well, what are you waiting for? Start with the planning. If it gets no further, no matter. I feel like we are in suspended time. I worry about my family and friends. I worry about you. I will see you when this clears and we can resume our face to face activities. Until then, be safe and stay well.

Karalyn Littlefield, SCVMGA Board Vice President

Garlic Mustard

by [Debby Walters](#)

If you love spring ephemerals, such as bloodroot, hepatica, trilliums, this appreciation of the spring woods should encourage you to get out and battle garlic mustard.

Garlic mustard, if uncontrolled, will take over the woods and eliminate native wildflowers and other woodland plants. Garlic mustard spreads very rapidly and is hard to eradicate once it is established in an area.



The plant is a biennial which flowers in its second year. Each plant produces hundreds of seeds that are spread by humans, wildlife, water, and other means. The seeds remain viable for 5-8 years. The plant also puts out a chemical that impedes the growth of other plants. It can become dense enough that it also prevents tree seedlings from growing. Usually an infestation begins at the edge of a woods, along a roadway or along a waterway.

The best time to pull garlic mustard is prior to flowering, when it can just be pulled and dropped in place to decompose. Once it has flowered, it needs to be bagged and burned so the flowers cannot mature and produce seeds.

Of course, garlic mustard was originally introduced to the U.S. for medicinal purposes and food in the 1800s. A common recipe is a Garlic Mustard Pesto: crush garlic, slice up garlic mustard, and also garlic chives if available, puree both in food processor with olive oil and walnuts (or pine nuts); add parmesan cheese. Start the water for pasta!

Six Ways to Help our Bees

by [Maria Sanocki](#)



- 1. Plant natives.** Some bees can only feed their larvae on a specific native plant. Also, native plants do not need additional fertilizers or chemicals that are harmful to bees.
- 2. Add a new garden bed.** Lawns offer no habitat for bees so add a new garden filled with native plantings.
- 3. Go organic.** Avoid using insecticides, especially those with neonicotinoid chemicals. Many commercial growers use these before shipping plants to nurseries.
- 4. Add a water source.** Bees and insects need a water source to drink from. Fill a shallow saucer with water and stones to provide landing places for bees to drink. Refresh the water often to deter mosquito larvae.
- 5. Offer nesting places.** Some bee species are solitary and will lay their eggs in a nesting channel. Nesting houses can be purchased at naturalist shops.
- 6. Help spread the word.** If each of us shares these important factors, collectively we can help stop the decline in the bee population.

Gilding the Lily in your Kitchen

by Karalyn Littlefield

One of the best things that you can add to any menu is a spectacular sauce, dressing or marinade. These take a dish from really good to WOW!

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This French Dressing recipe is one that was always in the refrigerator when I was growing up. We would make a double batch in a wide-mouth quart jar and shake it to mix it. I think shaking the jar was my favorite. Not so if I did not get the lid quite right.

French Dressing adapted by Karalyn Littlefield from her mom

- 1/4 c. vinegar
- 1/2 c. oil
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. catsup
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp celery seed

Mix all ingredients together thoroughly and store in the refrigerator. Shake or stir before serving

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The Taste of Home magazine for June/July 2020 arrived recently. A recipe for Easy Breezy Bahamas Seafood Salad by C. Heyd literally jumped out at me. As written, the dressing is the zest and juice of an orange, lemon and lime with a small amount of onion and red pepper added to the salad. Simple and refreshing in its own right, though presented with major adaptations by me. The dressing is mixed with 8 oz. each of cooked shrimp and crab meat served on shredded lettuce with crackers. I think this would be great on a strawberry spinach salad or a mix of fresh greens. I would like to try it on grilled asparagus. I used dried mint and parsley and can only imagine the deliciousness with fresh herbs. Let me know how you use it.

Citrus Dressing developed by Karalyn Littlefield

- Juice and zest of one orange, lemon and lime
- 1/4 sweet onion finely diced and/or 2 green onions finely sliced white and some green part
- 1 tsp dried or 1 Tbsp fresh chopped mint
- 1 Tbsp dried or 3 Tbsp fresh chopped parsley
- 1 Tbsp fresh grated ginger or 1 tsp dried powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/4-1/3 cup olive oil

Mix together and dress salad or vegetables. If possible, refrigerate for a few hours before serving.

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Here is another Taste of Home (Oct/Nov 2019) adaptation, Sweet & Tangy Carrots by P. Zsiray. It is written for carrots and is excellent. I plan to try it with sweet potatoes, parsnips and maybe even squash. It might be good with fresh peas. Again, I would like to hear how you use it.

Sweet and Tangy Sauce for Vegetables adapted from P. Zsiray by Karalyn Littlefield

- ~2 lb. vegetables peeled, if needed and cut into bite size pieces.
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/3 c. packed brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

- 3 Tbsp. orange juice
- 1/4 - 1/2 tsp ground white or black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. Minced fresh parsley or 2 tsp dried.

Cook selected vegetables (about 2 lbs.) to slightly less than desired doneness. Drain if necessary. Place vegetables in a saucepan and add the brown sugar, butter, mustard and pepper. Cook and stir over low heat until well coated. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve.

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In our effort to shake it up a bit, we made egg rolls and discovered that the most necessary of sauce - sweet and sour - was almost gone. So, what is a desperate for sweet-and-sour-sauce person to do, make some. I looked at multiple recipes online and the ingredient statement of the mostly empty bottle and came up with this rendition that was enjoyed by all. I enjoy this sauce on steamed or roasted vegetables. If you do not have rice wine vinegar (which is a mild vinegar) use apple cider, wine or white vinegars, though use less.

Sweet and Sour Sauce by Karalyn Littlefield

- 1/2 cup pineapple juice
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup brown, turbin or raw sugar
- 1 tsp corn or potato starch mixed with 4 tsp water
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- Taste and adjust salt after cooking

Mix all ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil with continuous stirring. Lower heat and simmer until texture is thicker and glossy.

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Since it is grilling season and some may successfully argue that every season is grilling season, I am including a marinade that I use on chicken wings, chicken parts and pork. Instead of the soy/oyster sauce combination, use all soy sauce or replace the oyster with Hoisin.

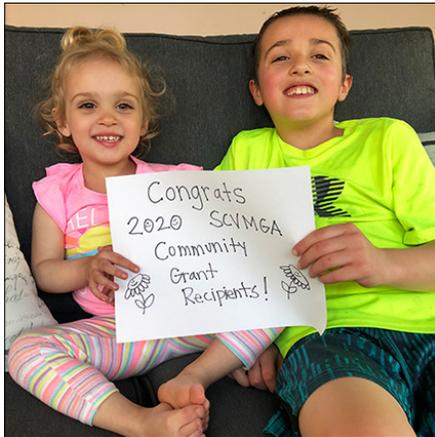
Grilling Meat Marinade by Karalyn Littlefield

- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup oyster sauce
- 1/2 cup brown, turbine or raw sugar
- 1/2 cup pineapple juice
- 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 c oil
- 2 Tbsp minced or grated fresh ginger
- 1 Tbsp minced or pressed garlic
- 1/2 - 1 tsp ground black pepper

Mix all ingredients until sugar is dissolved. Place meat and marinade in a gallon zip top bag. Massage marinade and meat. Place bag in a large bowl or pan to catch any drips. Refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight. Remove meat from marinade and discard marinade. Prepare meat as desired.

I hope that you enjoyed this exploration of sauces, dressings and marinades. Everything is meant to be modified. If you do not like something or do not have it, replace it or leave it out. All of these recipes have a few things in common. They all have a sweet component, a vinegar component and a salt component. Add some WOW to your meal.

Happy Cooking!



Jenny Brazzale's kids found a creative way to honor the recipients. Gianna is 2 years old and Landon is 8.

SCVMGA Community Grants support education, healthy living and beautiful grounds throughout the area

by Jenny Brazzale

St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners Association awarded the following 20 community grants totaling more than \$4,300 for 2020.

YMCA Camp St. Croix

\$250 for hightunnel farming tools

Anna Zimmer

St. Patrick Elementary School, Hudson

\$90 to develop gardening plot

August Hoffman

Family Resource Center, Baldwin

\$116 for window box gardens

Barb Nelson

Family Resource Center, Baldwin

\$140 for curriculum, "Play & Learn in the Park"

Barb Nelson

Learning to Grow Center, Glenwood City High School

\$250 for fruit and asparagus plants

Sean VanderWaal

Houlton Elementary Garden Club, Houlton

\$250 for outdoor planting projects

Sandy Madsen

River Falls Garden Club, River Falls

\$250 for library rain garden

Kim Kiiskinen

Head Start program, New Richmond

\$250 for container gardening for 2-5 year-olds

CESA #11

Prescott Area Community Garden, Prescott

\$250 for garden for local food shelf

Ashley Payne

Senior Center, Woodville

\$246 for entrance garden

Karen Faro-Bonnstetter

Nora Allen Friday Memorial Library, New Richmond

\$250 for plantings for pollinators

Library staff

Forest Timberwolves 4-H Club, New Richmond

\$250 for flower displays at local library entrance

Elizabeth Hasselink

Malone Intermediate School, Prescott

\$250 for butterfly garden

Karey Sizemore

Little Hawks 4K, Baldwin

\$250 for school butterfly garden

Kalen Leque

Girl Scout Troop 57740, Prescott

\$150 for planters outside local library

Anna Anderson

Baldwin Public Library, Baldwin

\$200 for education booth on pollinators

Rebecca Dixen

Greenfield Elementary School, Baldwin

\$250 for courtyard planters

Nicole Kriener

Christian Community Homes & Services, Hudson

\$180 for signage and gazebo plantings

Deb Pederstuen

Friends of Glenwood City Public Library, Glenwood City

\$250 for pots, soil, plants, books

Virginia Drath

Norseman Manor, Woodville

\$250 for gardens

Woodville Housing Authority

Let's Grow Herbs!

by Maria Sanocki

Did you know that herbs have been around since pre-historic times? Cave paintings of herbs were found at the Lascaux Caves near Montignac, France. Scientists believe these artistic renderings date back to 1300 to 2500 B.C. Another archeological finding in 2010 was a discovery of a Neanderthal man from the El Sidron Cave in Spain, dating back 28,000 years. The Neanderthal man was found to have remnants of herbs in his tartar between his teeth. Besides using the herbs for medicinal purposes, many scientists believe Neanderthals used the herbs much as we do today, to increase the flavor of foods.

Please see the list below for a planting and flavor guide for some common herbs.

Basil, *Ocimum basilicum*



Basilicum translates to king or royalty in Greek. In medieval times, it was hung to ward off evil spirits. This member of the mint family requires a sunny location and well-drained soil. Germination takes 7-10 days. The plants do not like to be crowded so ensure good air circulation to keep the plants healthy. Never cut more than half of the plant at once and harvest the leaves just above the first set of leaves. This will result in a bushier plant. Fresh-cut basil can be kept on the kitchen counter in water but not refrigerated since that will alter its flavor.

Basil has an anise or clove-like flavor and aroma. There are two main types of basil: Sweet or Genoese and Asian basil. Mediterranean foods such as pesto and tomato sauce pair very nicely with sweet basil. Asian basil, with its more distinctive anise flavor, is often used in soups, stews, and stir-fries.

Parsley, *Petroselinum crispum*

Parsley should be started 8-10 weeks indoors before the last frost. The seeds should be soaked overnight to enhance germination. Parsley is slow to germinate and grows best in a partially shaded area with rich, moist, well-drained soil. It is not easily moved so caution should be taken not to disturb the taproot when transplanting.



Parsley, a hardy biennial belonging to the carrot family, has a light peppery flavor and is commonly used in sauces, salads, and sprinkled over dishes for a beautiful presentation and fresh taste. Parsley is a rich source of iron and Vitamins A and C. Flat leaf or Italian is used for texture and flavor in cooked dishes while curly parsley is only used as a garnish.

Cilantro/ Coriander, *Coriandrum sativum*



Cilantro is a fast-growing herb with two names. The leaves are the herb cilantro or Chinese parsley and the seeds are coriander, the spice. Interestingly, coriander

seeds were discovered in the tombs of ancient Egyptians as it was thought to provide immortality. It is a cool-season crop with its foliage ready in 45-80 days but it does tend to bolt in hot weather. Also, it does not transplant well due to its long taproot.

Cilantro with its distinctive citrusy taste is a staple of Latin and Asian dishes. The stems and leaves are usually eaten raw and added after a dish has been cooked while the roots of cilantro are often used in making Thai curry paste.

Mint, *Menta x piperita* and *Mentha spicata*



Mint is a staple in savory dishes from the Middle East and North Africa. Mint can also liven up a sauce or a summer salad. Additionally, its distinctive flavor and fragrance are a common delicacy infused in teas and beverages.

Mint grows 1-3 feet tall and aggressively spreads with underground rhizomes. Because of its prolific spreading, mint is a great plant to put in a container. It prefers full sun; in order to maintain flavor, remove any flower spikes as soon as they appear. Bunches of mint in a glass of water can be stored in the refrigerator for 3-7 days.

Rosemary, *Rosemarinus officinalis*

Rosemary is a perennial evergreen shrub grown in zone 8 and above. This herb will not survive our brutal Wisconsin winters so it is best to bring it indoors for the winter and placed in a sunny, but cool spot. When planting outdoors, rosemary requires a sunny location with well-drained soil. It does not transplant well so to minimize damage, plant in a container if they will be brought indoors for the winter.



The spiky leaves of this strongly flavored woody herb are great in cooking soups, meats, and stews. Because of its strong flavor, it's best to use it sparingly. Longer woody stems can be harvested and used as skewers for kabobs. To use this woody-stemmed herb, run your fingers along the stem to remove the leaves.

Thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*

Thyme prefers a full sun location with well-drained soil. While it can be grown from seed, it is easier to grow from divisions or cuttings. Thyme is another popular herb in American cooking and can be paired with poultry, fish, or vegetables. French and English Thyme are the most popular types. Like rosemary, the leaves can be removed by running your fingers down the opposite direction the leaves have grown. It can be dried and stored in sealed containers.



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Oregano, *Origanum vulgare* var. *Hirtum*

Oregano can grow from six inches to two feet tall with gray-green leaves. It is very closely related to marjoram and can be substituted for it. The Greek oregano is considered by many cooking experts to have the best flavor profile. Plants propagated from cuttings are considered easier to grow than starting from seed. This herb prefers full sun and good drainage. It is marginally hardy in zone 5. But it can be brought indoors for the winter. Oregano is often used in Mediterranean and Mexican dishes. Oregano is one of the few herbs that dry well and can be stored in an airtight container.



Chefs can attest that using fresh herbs will intensify flavors and liven up any dish; the key is to know the herbs growing conditions and flavor profiles. Sue Reinardy, a UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteer and presenter of an online "Container Gardening" class stated that herbs work very well in containers because they can be located close to where you use them and many herbs like heat and some dryness. Sue also stated that herbs can be combined in containers that share the same growing conditions. When growing herbs snip and pick often to prevent flowering.

Master Tip

Freezing herbs in olive oil is a great way to get the most out of the cuttings that your not using right away. The oil-infused herbs will give your cuisine a wonderful fresh flavor and the oil helps prevent freezer burn. Simply, rinse your herbs and let them air dry. Next, I pull the smaller leaf herbs from their stems and with the larger leaves such as basil, chop, or use herb shears, place in a BPA-free ice cube tray (the silicone ones with lids work really well for this). After

that, add some good quality olive oil and freeze. After they are frozen, add them to a freezer bag or a Mason jar and store in the freezer. Be sure to label them because they are hard to identify after they are frozen! Unfortunately, I know this from experience. These flavor cubes can be put into salad dressings, marinades, soups, stews, and beverages!

Throughout the centuries, herbs have been used for their medicinal, nutritional, spiritual, and flavor-enhancing properties. With the COVID-19 pandemic, seeds and gardening supplies have been in high demand as people are finding themselves at home and developing new hobbies such as gardening.



Maria advises to label trays (above). Basil cubes, which Maria's granddaughter calls "pillows," are ready to add to a salad dressing, soup, stew, marinade or beverage.

Sources:

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 Groeneveld, Emma. "Ancient History." Sept. 6, 2016
 Desdemaines-Hugon, Christine & Tattersal, Ian, "Stepping-Stones: A Journey through the Ice Age Caves of the Dordogne." Yale University Press, 2012
 UW-Extension Master Gardener Program, "Growing Herbs"
 UW-Extension, "Container Gardening," Sue Reinardy, MGV
 University of Illinois Extension. "Growing Herbs"
 The Foodnetwork.com Guide to Fresh Herbs. "Top Herbs that will add flavor to your favorite dishes."

Matt's Picks

by Matt Schmitz

When I observed this in nursery production, it really stuck out. The yellow foliage color is what catches your eye the most. Forget the pink flowers – the foliage alone makes it stand out and there is usually nothing else in the spring garden with this color. This also makes a good show at a distance.

In terms of care, it's very similar to the common Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*) of which this is a selection. So it will do well in the shade garden and go dormant in August.

I have noticed it takes longer to grow to a larger size in container pots and think this is due to the nature of the plant. It's certainly worth a try.



Dicentra spectabilis 'Gold Heart'
 2-2.5 ft tall x 2-3 ft wide

MGV Matt Schmitz is an assistant foreman at Bailey Nurseries.

Do you want tips on certain plants?

Did a project fail and you want to know why?

Send your inquiry with photos and a description to the editor. Your question will be printed in the July issue.

We MGVs love to help!

Costa Rica Delights

by Donna Davis



The blue morpho butterfly is not a pattern on Donna's rain parka; it's a live one resting near her shoulder.

I enjoyed a 10 day Master Gardener trip to Costa Rica in January before the travel restrictions. Dr. Susan Mahr, our former state MG program coordinator, was our Wisconsin group leader with a local guide and bus driver from Unique Adventures. There were 10 of us and we received handouts on the plants, wildlife, insects and

geography before the trip. We carried rain parkas, binoculars, cameras, and water bottles as we experienced the biodiversity of Costa Rica. We stayed 2 nights at each location with daily side trips to waterfalls, coffee & cacao plantations, and tropical gardens and forests. This trip focused on the north-east part and it rained 8 of the 10 days, but compared to the weather back in Wisconsin, it was great and warm. They use the same electricity as the U.S., so small appliances worked with a converter. At most places, U.S. currency is accepted.

After flying into San Juan, we stayed at Hotel Bougainvillea with 10 acres of exotic gardens that attracted tropical birds and butterflies. We could identify many of the plants while a Maine Audubon group staying there helped us identify many of the birds like the King Vulture.

Next, we arrived at Mawamba Lodge after a bus ride and a 1.5-hour boat ride. It is located on the Tortuguero canals and its backside is on the Caribbean Ocean. We picked up litter along the ocean where sea turtles will lay their eggs in August while on our way to a turtle museum. We took a boat ride through natural forests along the canals. We took another 1.5-hour boat ride back to our bus to continue to La Quinta Sarapiquí Lodge with individual cabins and tropical gardens with butterflies and frogs.

We walked the trails of La Selva Biological Station in 800 acres of tropical wet forest with 1,850 plant species, 350 tree types, 886 bird species. We also visited an old cacao plantation to learn the history of cacao from pre-Columbian times when it was used for money.

While at Arenal Springs Hotel, we visited the Eco-termales La Fortuna with natural volcanic water from the Arenal Volcano which last erupted in 1968. They had 5 pools from very hot to just

warm waters. We also had dinner there after showering and changing clothes. The next day we walked the Arenal Springs Hanging Bridges Park with 13 hanging bridges.

At La Paz, we toured the Waterfall Gardens and Animal Sanctuary in 70 acres, on 3.5 km of trails with 5 waterfalls from 25 feet to 125 feet. They had a butterfly observatory and zoo-like buildings for frogs, snakes, jungle cats, monkeys, and a hummingbird garden.

At Sibú Chocolate, we sampled their premier artisan chocolate, learned more history of chocolate, and enjoyed a delicious lunch.

In a park, I can't remember which one, we traversed an 853-foot hanging bridge over gorges, a rapid river, and more gorges. On this trip, we saw sloth, spider and howler monkeys, toucans, herons, macaws, tanagers, flycatchers, motmots, iguanas, caymans (little crocs), bullet ants, and more. The cabins had upper screens in the bathrooms (no exhaust fans) for the tropical climate. Food and lodgings were great. We had solar-heated hot water for our cabins at one place. It was a great break from winter.

Back to San Juan and the Hotel Bougainvillea, we visited the private house and tropical gardens of the founder of Save Costa Rica Orchids where we were treated to a wonderful dinner. Several of us left the next morning at 3:30 a.m. to make it to the airport to return home to the cold & winter.

If travel opportunities return, I recommend these MG trips, but not if you just want to lounge on the beach. If space is available, spouses and friends can join the trips. Always bring comfortable walking shoes! It was a great break from winter.



PHOTO BY DONNA DAVIS

This is one of five waterfalls at the Waterfall Gardens.



PHOTO BY DONNA DAVIS

Sunset highlights the smoking Arenal volcano.

Sprinklings

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