Wisconsin Gardens

Volume 74, Issue 4, Fall 2023

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Your Garden, A BIRD'S PARADISE

The St. Croix District Garden Clubs thank WGCF for their support of the St. Croix District's Bird Habitat Workshop held Friday, July 21. It was well attended with 59 members and 47 nonmembers, 106 in all. All shared a common interest. They wanted information on how to help our feathered friends in our own backyards.

The event featured four speakers: Steve Betchkal, ornithologist, Becky Brathal from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Don Mitchell, a conservation biologist and hummingbird bander, and Mary Jo Fleming, Master Gardener with a background in biology.

Their message was essentially the same. Plant a variety of native plants, plant densely, and plant in layers, grouping trees, shrubs, and lower growing plants. Don't rake up in the fall, but instead leave cleanup for spring. Even though it seems messy, remember birds are dependent on bugs and caterpillars and these creatures need habitat too.

There is a new concept suggesting you place native plants under the tree canopies. It is referred to as soft landings, and is meant to provide winter habitat for falling caterpillars. If you plan on planting a tree soon, oaks are the best for both insects and birds.

The three homeowners who shared their landscapes with us are already putting into practice the ideas that were shared. Cathy Usborne is providing habitat, working within a homeowner association's rules, and has others joining her efforts. Agnes Welsch has a mini-prairie in her front yard which neighbors enjoy and Liz Usborne is slowly converting her entire yard, plus tackling invasives in the woods behind her property.

Interest in providing habitat is high and hopefully the workshop's participants left with ideas on how to proceed and what to plant. From the evaluations that were returned, people are certainly interested in a similar event next year and suggested topics. Butterflies topped the list.

continued on page three

WGCF is a not-for-profit educational organization founded in 1928. It is a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Mission: WGCF provides education, resources and opportunities for its members to promote and share the love of gardening, floral design, civic and environmental responsibility.

President:
Linda McCafferty
443 Woodview Drive
Sun Prairie, WI 53051-6433
lkmccm@gmail.com

First Vice President:
Joe Powelka
5361 Betlach Road
Sun Prairie, WI
608-206-4238
oneplus@chorus.net

Second Vice President:
Nancy Gregory
1321 N. 21st Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205
enjaygee@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary:
Susan Wallace
100 E. Parkland Drive
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
naffer65@gmail.com

Membership Secretary:
Susan Johansen
2249 122nd Street
New Richmond, WI 54017
715-781-6825

Treasurer:
Mary Jane Hull
709 Brookstone Crest
Mount Horeb, WI 53572
608-437-2478
hullmary249@gmail.com

Central Region Director:
Lynn Ehnert
W143 N6828 Aspen Drive
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051
262-251-0452
lehnert@wi.rr.com

NGC President:
Brenda Moore
NGC Headquarters
4401 Magnolia Avenue
St Louis, MO 63110
www.gardenclub.org

ADVERTISING RATES

Size	WGCF	Other
Full Page	$150	$200
Half page	$75	$100
Quarter page	$37.50	$50

Contact Laura Skoff, Manager
lauraskoff@gmail.com

Message from our President

Good Friday is my target date for planting cold weather crops such as peas, beans, lettuce, radishes, and potatoes. I placed my square foot garden seed sowing template in the corner of the raised bed and started poking holes with the dibble but something prevented it from going into the ground. I lifted the template to dig out what I thought was a stone and discovered that the ground in the beds was still frozen. So much for that idea!

A couple of days later I presented to Sun Prairie Garden Club members a program about starting vegetables from seed and demonstrated planting potatoes in canvas bags. After the meeting, the bags sat in the garage until it was warm enough to place them in the raised bed.

By month's end I could plant pole beans and peas to crawl up the hog fences between two beds. Unfortunately, little rodent critters decided to eat the seedlings. A second and third planting of beans and peas and a plastic fence around the seedlings prevented further damage. The pea crop was okay, but the bean crop was spectacular! When the peas were done, I planted cucumbers and already have pickle sized cucumbers growing up the hog fence.

On Memorial Day I was able to sow seeds for carrots, lettuce and radishes. The weather continued to be cool and dipped into the 30's in June. So much for planting tomato, pepper, cabbage, and celery that I started from seed. Temperatures in the 90s during the end of June resulted in lettuce and radishes bolting! The weather vacillated between highs and lows the entire summer. In spite of late planting, the peppers are producing splendidly, green tomatoes abound, carrots will be small but sweet, a cabbage is growing like it should in spite of cabbage moths decimating its neighbors, and the celery looks and tastes like celery.

I thoroughly enjoy vegetable gardening and every summer have certain expectations. Given my health issues this summer and inability to garden as much as I could due to vertigo, the majority of which has been resolved, my expectations were low. Mother Nature, however, apparently had other plans for me and used her magic to not only augment my harvest but to mostly heal me from my fall in May, the result of which could have been very different. For that I am grateful.

The next gardening season will be here before you can say Jack Robinson and we can do this all again, without the fall, I hope!

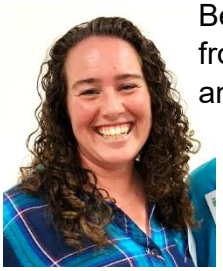
Linda

A Bird's Paradise, cont.

The free plants included in the registration from Dragonfly Nursery were popular once again. Of course, most people went home with more than the four they were given!

106 attended! The room was full.

Speaker Steve Betchkal, an author of birding guides, and District Director, Debby Walters.



Becky Brathal from U.S. Fish and Wildlife

The St. Croix District collaborated with other organizations to put on this event. Funding came from the district and from a Wisconsin Garden Club Federation grant, as well as from Tropical Wings, the St. Croix Valley Bird Club, the Eau Claire Garden Club, Eau Claire Master Gardeners, and Thrivent. Information about the event was sent out to ten other garden clubs in the area, Master Gardeners from Dunn, St. Croix, Eau Claire and Pierce Counties, and the general public.

Speaker Mary Jo Fleming, a Master Gardener

The community knew WGCF was active!

Perhaps your district would like to host a similar event? Assemble a dedicated group of planners and give it a try.

Bryan Gjevre, Bonnie Ringer, Ginger Wierman, Deb Woodford, Judy McQuillan, Wendy Kramer, Susan Wallace, and Debby Walters

Photos from Wendy Kramer and Nancy Gregory

State Fair Flower Show

The Floral Designers of Wisconsin Garden Club held an NGC Standard Flower Show, *Seasons of Life*, at the Wisconsin State Fair in Milwaukee.

Garden club members from the Milwaukee District and the state brought color and a creative touch to the Grand Champion Hall for four days, August 10 through August 13, 2023. State fair goers enjoyed advanced floral designs based on the theme, as well as exhibition and functional tables arrangements.

There were more than 113 horticulture exhibits, and rounding out the show were educational exhibits explaining how to turn plant waste into compost.

Jan Dixon

Turning Garbage into Gold by Nancy Gregory won top honors in the Educational Division.

Exploring the Waterways, Lynn Laufenberg's Underwater Design, received a blue ribbon. She used gladioli.

Liz Murken

Judy Newman

Diane Powelka

Working Together, Wendy Kramer's Multi-Rhythmic Design received the Designer's Choice Award. Calla Lilies were used.

Gerianne Holzman's Exhibition Table *A is for Apple for the Teacher* took the Design Excellence Award and the Table Artistry Award. She used Granny Smith and Cosmic Crisp Apples.

Diane Olsen's Construction Design, *Building a Future,* received a blue ribbon. She used painted allium.

Years ago, the State Fair Flower Show was put on by the Milwaukee District Garden Club. As time went by, the Floral Designers of Wisconsin Garden Club ended up managing the show, and it is now handled by this group.

It is a tremendous amount of work. A Standard Flower Show requires a written schedule to define the rules, a theme, and directions as to the floral arrangements and horticulture that may be entered. Preparation starts several months in advance.

Paperwork is published, exhibitors registered, and NGC flower show judges, clerks and hostesses are scheduled. Awards and ribbons are purchased, and staging is planned to enhance the theme.

Dawn Mozgawa

Love and Marriage, Carol Catlin's Functional Semi-Formal Table received a blue ribbon.

Sandy Ingram

Lynne Ehnert's Early Years Exhibition Table took First Place Title was *Gone Fishing* with plant material Dracaena, and Blanket Flower.

Marion Books

Lynnette Rakun

Mary Kozlowski

With help from other members of WGCF and several members from the WGCF Judges Council, the Floral Designers of Wisconsin were able to fill all of the classes, and had more than enough entries in horticulture. Everything was judged on August 12, 2023 by six National Garden Club judges.

When it was over, there was also a ton of work dismantling the four-day show. Designs needed to be broken down, specimens thrown out, vases wrapped to take home, and judge's evaluations written.

With a bit of luck, we'll all be back doing it again next year!

Judy Newman

Lake Wissota Garden Club

Barb Barrickman, St. Croix District

On June 8, the Lake Wissota Garden Club proudly dedicated a National Garden Club Blue Star By-Way Marker at the Lafayette Veteran's Memorial in Chippewa Falls, overlooking Lake Wissota. We honor the sacrifices of all veterans with flags representing each branch of the armed forces and areas for reflection.

Jenn Rogalski, retired US Air Force veteran and LWGC member gave the dedication speech. She also designed a poster listing veterans who were members of LWGC families. It included over 90 veterans from the Civil War to present day, bringing to mind the contributions veterans made to safeguard our freedoms.

Chippewa County veterans, including the VFW Post 159 honor guard, residents of the WI Veterans Home in Chippewa Falls, the Chippewa County Fire District, and Lafayette township officials participated. Eau Claire Male Chorus members sang the National Anthem and Girl Scout Troop 3411 led the Pledge of Allegiance. Linda McCafferty, WGCF President, and Chuck McCafferty, the WGCF Gold Star/Blue Star Committee Chair, attended with Chuck explaining the Blue Star Marker Program. The St. Croix District was represented by Debby Walters, District Director.

The ceremony ended with TAPS beautifully played by Jerry Zais, a veteran and husband of LWGC member, Judie Zais, after which we shared camaraderie and memories over donated root beer floats and cookies.

It was a lovely day to remember.

Oshkosh Garden Club
SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

★★★ Honoring ★★★
Our Veterans

NOVEMBER 11, 2023

BEST WESTERN PREMIER HOTEL
1 N Main Street, Oshkosh
Cocktails 11:30 am - Lunch Noon

TICKETS $30

Contact Mary Ellen Sedlachek
920-426-1084 - redspark@milwpc.com
oshkoshgardenclub.org

SMOKEY BEAR
WOODSY OWL
Poster Contest

Please contact schools, scout troops, home school friends, and after school programs, or any groups that have children in grades 1-5. Invite them to participate in the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest.

Entries are sent to
Pat Ritchie, N3752 County Road O
New London, WI 54961
and will be due January 15, 2024.

There will be a winner at each grade level. Please contact Pat Ritchie for further information, peritchie48@gmail.com.
Thank you for your help in this fun and educational event.

Little Known Bulbs

Sue Donohoe, Horticulture Chair

LITTLE USED SPRING BULBS FOR FALL PLANTING

With fall planting continuing through October, let's look at some little used bulbs that provide color come spring. You may be familiar with these little beauties, but if not, try planting one or two for some extra surprises in the spring.

HYACINTHOIDES HISPANICA – SPANISH BLUEBELL

Mature size: 9-18" H x 9-12" W

This spring bloomer will arrive in April and last through May with beautiful bell-shaped flowers on tall stems. 12-15 bells per stem will open in a lavender blue color. Bluebells grow in sun to part shade but will do best in the dappled shade of a large tree. They need well drained soil with a medium texture. If you have clay, amend the soil at planting to give your bluebells a good growing medium. Bulbs are planted 3-4" deep.

Bluebell foliage has long, wide, strappy leaves that grow 9-12" tall with the flower stalks growing as tall as 18". This is a great spring bloomer for under the black walnut tree as it is resistant to the juglone that the tree emits. Plant bluebells with other spring bloomers like daffodils, fern-like bleeding hearts, hostas and ferns.

FRITILLARIA MELEAGRIS – CHECKERED LILY

Mature size: 9-12" H x 6-9" W

This is a unique little flower that will make for conversation. The checkered pattern on this downward facing bell is very unusual in the garden, and who doesn't like the unusual!

Checkered lily blooms in April and should be planted in groups. It can get lost if planted singly, as it is small. Put 16 plants per square foot to make an impact. Dig a large hole 5" deep, place the bulbs 2-3" apart, and cover and water well. Plant in sun to part shade but they will do best in moist, dappled shade. This lily will self-seed.

The grass-like foliage of the checkered lily is a silver green. This beauty does not appeal to deer and squirrels, and has a resistance to the black walnut. The foliage is airy so place these bulbs carefully where other plants will not overtake it. Along a pathway is a good option. Plant with daffodils, tulips and crocus.

FRITILLARIA IMPERIALIS – CROWN IMPERIAL

Mature size: 3-4' H x 12-18" W

Unlike the checkered lily, Fritillaria makes a bold statement. Its height makes it an excellent choice for a back-of-the-border spring bloomer.

With its pineapple shaped tuft sitting atop the 3-4' stem, place this lily in those hard to fill spots in the spring garden. Each plant sends up one stalk producing five to seven drooping orange flowers. A grouping makes an impressive display. The bulbs should be planted 6-10" apart due to their size.

Crown Imperial needs medium moisture in the top 6” of soil, though it will tolerate drought conditions and full sun. Don’t plant it under your trees as they will leaf out by the time this plant flowers in late May into June.

One thing to note about this bulb is how to plant it. Place the bulb into a 6-10” deep hole and tip the bulb slightly sideways. The top of the bulb has a slight dip and water can collect causing the bulb to rot. This slight tip should prevent this issue.

This is another black walnut resistant bulb plus deer, rabbits, squirrels and voles tend to leave it alone due to the bulb itself having a skunky odor. Crown Imperial looks beautiful when planted with tulips, spring blooming alliums and iris.

LEUCOJUM AESTIVUM – SUMMER SNOWFLAKE

Mature size: 12-18” H x 9-12” W

Summer snowflake is one of my favorite spring bloomers with a large presence in the garden. The foliage has the look of a daylily with long grassy leaves that seem to grow from one central point.

Plant this bulb in sun to part shade in soil that is kept consistently moist in the spring and during the growing season. In fact, some clay in the soil will ensure that this plant has the moisture it likes but do avoid standing water. Summer snowflake will tolerate dry soils once it is dormant.

These beauties are also deer and black walnut tolerant.

The flowers appear on single stalks above the foliage with 3-5 drooping flowers per stalk. The bell-shaped flowers are adorned with a green dot on each of the petal tips. When planted in mass, these flowers make a lovely display. Good companion plants are pulmonaria and bleeding hearts.

ANEMONE BLANDA – GRECIAN WINDFLOWER

Mature size: 6-9” H x 3-5” W

When I think of anemone, I think of the beautiful flowers of fall, but this little anemone is a welcome bit of color come April. A wonderful bulb for spring in the front of the border this plant has fern-like foliage and daisy like flowers. Windflower likes moist, well-drained soil so melting snow is welcome for robust growth. Grow in full sun for best results, to part shade. The blooms can last for several weeks.

Windflower is a spreader but not invasive and easily removed if it gets into spots that you don’t want it to. While it is considered a fall planting bulb it is really a tuber which helps with its ability to spread.

It makes a wonderful spring ground cover and grows well with crocus, grape hyacinth and early blooming daffodils and is deer and black walnut resistant.

In closing, all these spring bulbs bloom and the blossoms die back. Cut the stems, but allow the foliage to grow, as the bulbs pull food from the foliage to store over winter for next spring's growth. When the foliage turns yellow in color, remove from the garden for a cleaner look.

Happy bulb planting!

WGCF President's Project

BLUE and GOLD STAR MEMORIAL MARKERS

2023 - 2025 WGCF President's Project

President Linda McCafferty's President's Project has received $2,130 in donations from 43 Clubs, Districts, and individuals to date. Donations can be sent to Joe Powelka, 5361 Betlach Rd, Sun Prairie, WI 53590. Make checks payable to Wisconsin Garden Club Federation, and please write President's Project on the memo line. For contributions over $25, you will receive either a Gold/Blue Star pendent or pin. Please indicate which you would prefer. Contributions are tax deductible in accordance with the 501(c)(3) IRS status of WGCF.

Notice the updated photo for the brochure shows existing green plants and both Blue and Gold Star monuments that are correctly sized. The flag poles on either side of the entrance are existing and face the Medal of Honor wall.

Diggers Hotline

Wisconsin residents are required to contact Diggers Hotline prior to starting home projects that disturb the soil, like planting a tree, putting in a patio, digging a garden or installing a mailbox or fence. This is a free service that protects you from injury and repair costs if you strike or damage a buried utility line. Information is at diggershotline.com or call 800-242-8511.

This is not just for projects that involve large equipment and deep holes, because the depth of utility lines may vary. Use hand tools when digging within 18 inches of a marked utility as locating lines is not an exact science.

Know what's below. Call before you dig

Sewer laterals, sprinkling systems, and propane and electric lines are the responsibility of the homeowner. You will need to hire a locating company to mark private lines.

A three-business day advance notice is required to give utility company representatives time to arrive at the digging location so that they can mark the location of their underground lines. They will use paint or flags to indicate the approximate location of those lines.

Thanks for your help with this important step
in helping reduce the risk of injury and the cost to repair damage.

IKEBANA INTERNATIONAL
Milwaukee Chapter #22

Ikebanist Priscilla Farrell stands between two of her completed designs.

The mission of Ikebana International Milwaukee Chapter #22 focuses on learning about the different schools of Ikebana design and aims to foster "Friendship through Flowers."

Ikebana arrangements are not judged but State Fair staff selected this as one of their favorites.

Anu Garg

Carolyn Jackson explains to the young man and his mom, how a kenzan is used.

A kenzan is the traditional Ikebana flower support.

Incoming President Lynn Laufenberg puts the final touches on an arrangement.

The group displays Ikebana arrangements the first weekend of the Wisconsin State Fair in the Grand Champion Hall. They arrived the evening of Wednesday, August 2, their wagons piled high with flowers and everything needed to create stunning floral arrangements. On Thursday morning, August 3, the hall opened to visitors!

Roger Krawiecki

Lynn Laufenberg

Carolyn Jackson

Lynda Curl

Karen Copper

Save the date to hear speaker Kaye Vosburgh

Tuesday, November 7, PROGRAM and DEMONSTRATION

Location, Havenwoods, 6141 N, Hopkins Avenue, Milwaukee 53209

Time 9:45 to 11:30

COST $20, payable to Ikebana Milwaukee Chapter 22

Mail to Registrar Lynn Laufenberg, 626 Oakland Avenue, Mukwonago, WI 53149

QUESTIONS? Call Lynn at 262-370-9646 or email idlehoursdesigns@gmail.com

Even the governor came to take a look.
Roger Krawiecki, Tony Evers, and Cindy Hum

Cindy Hum

Anu Garg

Helen Surridge

Sharon Banaszewski

Kaye Vosburgh

Kaye Vosburgh holds the highest rank, Riji, in the Sogetsu School of Ikebana, and is a member of Ikebana International Chapter #17 Boston, and #7 New York. She has been studying Ikebana since 1981, and is an active teacher of Japanese flower arranging both in person and virtually.

She is a past Director of the Massachusetts Sogetsu Branch, and is a member of the New York Sogetsu Branch and Workshop Chairman of the New York State Capital District Sogetsu Study Group. She has twice been President of Ikebana International Chapter #17 of Boston.

Kaye has been involved in both Eastern and Western styles of arranging. She is a member of Creative Floral Arrangers and has given numerous programs and workshops. She is an Accredited Master Judge and a Flower Show School Design and Procedure Instructor for Judges in the NGC.

In 2022, Kaye wrote the book *Creations From The Garden, Growing Plants for the Art of Flower Arranging.*

You can visit Kaye's website at www.createwithflowers.com

NGC President Moore

Brenda Moore is the new NGC President for 2023-2025. Her theme for the next two years is "**GO GREEN - PLANT AMERICA.**" It appears to be simple, but Brenda says it is multi-faceted. To quote Kermit the Frog, “It’s not easy being Green.” It is not always easy being a good steward of our planet, and it often times means making hard choices.

Gone are unnecessary papers and plastics.
Outreach to diversify our membership.
Growth in our membership.
Recycling and upcycling will be emphasized.
Environmental concerns will be expressed.
Encouraging more participation in our schools, conventions, meetings, and programs.
Networking with our members and nature.

Brenda wishes to promote the planting of native plants and encourage participation in our youth projects. She wants us to make use of what we have, and not throw away so quickly. She'd like us to be happy with less than perfect lawns and choosing to protect pollinators and animal habits. She wishes to continue to support *Plant America* initiatives and sharing the bounty with others.

She encourages members to attend NGC schools, to serve in their club, on their state or the NGC board of directors, and to make garden clubs more appealing to all individuals. Brenda would like to be friendly as we try go green, encouraging rather than criticizing.

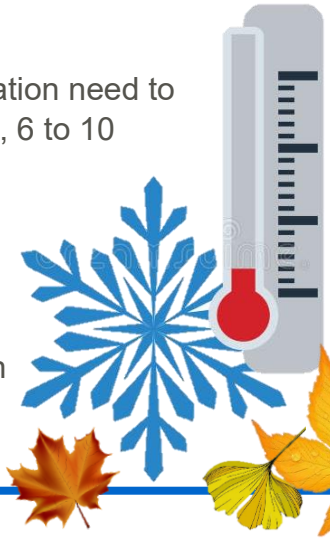
Botanical Term

Vernalization

Some plants require a cold winter in order to be able to grow well and bloom the following year.

Vernalization is the process by which a plant goes dormant and dies back for the winter, and is exposed to temperatures below 45°F for a number of weeks.

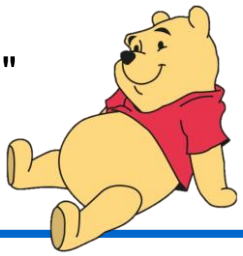
Plants that require vernalization need to experience, on the average, 6 to 10 continuous weeks of cold.
It won’t hurt the plant to be dormant for even longer than that. In fact, that often helps plants bounce back quicker when it warms up in the spring.



"It's the
first day
of autumn,

a time of
hot chocolatey
mornings,
and toasty
marshmallow
evenings,

and,
best of all,
leaping
into leaves!"



Winnie
the Pooh

Milwaukee District

Kerry Krokos, Awards Chair

Kerry Krokos, the Milwaukee District Awards Chair, encourages members and clubs to submit entries for district and state awards. Kerry stresses the importance of recognizing the great work club members do, and with the Milwaukee District hosting the WGCF 2024 Convention, she wants to showcase our District's achievements. Awards are clearly listed on the MDGC website and easy to find. Review these pages for a description of each award and directions on how to enter. Listed below are highlights and due dates.

Club Yearbooks, District and State, **due November 1.** A $25 award for first place in each club category.

Garden Club of the Year, District and State. Send the book of evidence to Doris Weber, the State Awards Chair, 920-467-3266 and doris@johngweber.com, **by December 1.** The book of evidence will be returned to the MDGC Awards Chair and judged. There is a $125 award.

The . . . **and Then Some State Award**. The entry write up is sent to Kerry, the MDGC Awards Chair. The MDGC Awards Chair and District Director choose the best entry and send it to the State by December 1st. **Due date is November 30.**

Doris Swartz District Award. A one-of-a-kind sculpture is made by Ken Swartz, Doris 's son, and is presented to an outstanding member of MDGC. **Due date is April 15.**

The District VIP Award was not mentioned as the due date of September 1 was prior to publication of this Wisconsin Gardens newsletter.

Questions, please contact Kerry Krokos, krokos.l4030@sbcglobal.net
Our District rocks and we should let all members know!

IN MEMORIAM

Members of the Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee were saddened to learn of the passing in July of our beloved friend, Phyllis Scharner.

An avid gardener, she entered into eternal life at age 94.

Phyllis co-founded Art in Bloom at the Milwaukee Art Museum, and served as President of the Garden Club. Above all, Phyllis was a teacher, in the community, with her friends, and in the classroom as an English teacher.

Her smile will be missed by all who knew her, and until we meet again, my dearest friend, may God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

Phyllis was the best of the best.

Looking for maximum exposure for your club's upcoming special event?

PLACE AN AD IN WISCONSIN GARDENS!

Send your copy to
Advertising Director Laura Skoff
at lauraskoff@gmail.com

Rates can be found on page two of every Wisconsin Gardens.

If you need assistance let Laura know, and Editor Jan Blooming will use her creative magic to design an outstanding ad and fine tune your copy.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?
Please contact Laura, 414-641-6489.

Christmas Cactus

CHRISTMAS CACTUS

Christmas cactus is a popular houseplant that can live for years. It is a true cactus, but a tropical variety, as it is native to the rain forests in Brazil. Like other cacti, these plants have beautiful blossoms in a variety of jewel tones. The intricate flowers are orchid-like, with petals most often pink and purple.

CARE OF YOUR CHRISTMAS CACTUS

A Christmas cactus does not like to dry out. Plant it in a small container, as it does not mind being pot-bound and may not thrive in a container that is too large. Use general purpose potting mix, and water regularly, allowing it to dry slightly between waterings. Keep it evenly moist during flowering. From spring until flowering in fall, the Christmas cactus needs fertilizer on a regular basis.

When growing indoors, the Christmas cactus requires as much light as you can give it. During the summer avoid direct light, as the fleshy leaves can burn. In too little sun, plants will become thin and spindly, and the blossoms, if they bloom at all, will be sparse. Christmas cactus appreciates humidity, so place it on a tray of pebbles and fill the tray with water to just below the top of the rocks. As the water evaporates, it increases humidity around the plant. During warm summer months, you can grow your Christmas cactus outdoors in a sheltered, part-shade location.

GETTING YOUR CHRISTMAS CACTUS TO BLOOM

A Christmas Cactus needs uninterrupted nights to start the growth of flower buds. Count back eight weeks from the date you want blossoms, and provide the plant a night of 13-15 hours of uninterrupted darkness. This means no light. One way to do this is to keep the plant in a basement or dark room with a grow-light on a timer for eight weeks. Once buds have begun to set at the tips of the leaves, place the plant back in its usual spot.

A common problem with getting a Christmas cactus to bloom is bud drop, where flower buds suddenly drop off before blooming. To prevent this, make sure the plant has high humidity and even soil moisture. It is best to avoid moving a plant during this time, as movement from one room to another can stress it out and cause the flower buds to drop.

PROPAGATING CHRISTMAS CACTUS

Twist off several stems from a plant not in bloom. Each stem cutting can be three to five segments long. The break should be between leaf segments. Do not cut across or break through the middle of a leaf. Allow cuttings to dry for several days until the broken end dries and a callous forms to protect the end from rotting. This is optional.

Plant the broken end of the stems about an inch deep in potting mix. If planting several, place an inch apart. Water well. To encourage rooting, create a humid environment by covering the plants and container with a clear plastic bag. This is optional, as the segments root easily. Remove the plastic bag once rooting has started. Place in bright, indirect light at room temperature and water as needed. The best evidence of good rooting is new leaf or stem growth.

Mound Vue Garden Club

Carolyn White, *No Mow May* Committee Chair, Madison District

The Mound Vue Garden Club didn't just encourage No Mow May, we organized and made it happen. We were inspired by a January program presented by a group from Fort Atkinson. Our club responded by proposing a similar effort here in Mount Horeb.

Committee, Larry Kruckman, Carolyn White, Barb Case and Mary Jane Hull

We started with the village administrator. He was in favor and directed us to the Village Sustainability and Natural Resource Committee, and they voted unanimously in favor of supporting No Mow May! Our next stop was a presentation to the Mount Horeb Village Board of Trustees where we also received unanimous support. The village government's embrace of our project greatly helped to promote our cause!

We used the newspaper and Facebook to educate and promote NMM. Duluth Trading Company sponsorship paid for signs and handouts. A successful run of 100 signs encouraged us to order 50 more! We further raised awareness with opportunities to speak about our conservation efforts and the NMM project.

Our project kicked off the Village Sustainability and Natural Resource Committee's new ordinance on Native Plants and Natural Landscaping. This proposal goes before the Village Board of Trustees in a few weeks. We're looking forward to promoting No Mow May next year, emphasizing the decreased use of herbicides and fertilizers, and increasing native plantings in home landscapes. Our goal is to gather more participants and increase the acreage of pollinator habitat.

LIFE MEMBERS

Lucy Valitchka, Life Membership Chair for **Wisconsin**, **Central Region** and **National**

We have had 12 Wisconsin Life Memberships since 2020, and in the last year, five districts were represented. Please consider purchasing or honoring a club member this year. All three forms are on our WGCF website under FORM.

WISCONSIN LIFE MEMBERSHIP is an honorary designation, demonstrating pride in the organization and support of the Scholarship or Continuing Education Fund. The membership may be purchased by an individual or presented as a gift. Wisconsin Life Members are club members who pay club, district and WGCF dues. Individuals already having a life membership may be honored with a tribute. Please indicate on the form if a tribute is being presented to the recipient. The fee is $50.00 and sent to the WGCF Life Membership Chairman. If sent to our state treasurer first, it would save a step, because a scanned copy could be sent to Lucy Valitchka, the Membership Chair.

CENTRAL REGION LIFE MEMBERSHIP demonstrates pride in the organization and support of the Central Region Scholarship Fund. The $50 membership may be purchased by an individual or presented as a gift. Send it to the Central Region Life Membership Chairman.

NATIONAL LIFE MEMBERSHIP honors individuals for service to clubs, communities, and the objectives of NGC. Membership money supports the NGC Scholarship program and the Permanent Home and Endowment Fund. The $200 membership may be purchased by an individual or presented as a gift, and includes a lifetime subscription to *The National Gardener* if requested. TNG is now published online only. The fee and application is sent directly to National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Questions? Lucy Valitchka proudly has all three memberships, and will do her best to help you.
920-733-0568, Lmvalitchka@gmail.com

Crane Dedication

International Crane Foundation Federation Fields, July 14, 2023

Maureen Wild Gordon, Jan Blooming. Laura Skoff, Chuck McCafferty, Gerianne Holzman, and Nancy Sloan.

The President's Project of Laura Skoff, WGCF President 2021-2023, was prairie restoration and hillside planting overlooking Federation Fields. The project consisted of several rounds of site preparation by the staff, including eradication of invasive species and soil prep until new planting at the site could start.

Past President Laura Skoff with the Sandhill Crane print presented to her from the recent Board of Directors along with a generous donation to the International Crane Foundation in her name.

WGCF members and friends raised over $14,000, and Laura thanks the donors. Chairman Jim Vest did an outstanding job of coordinating and relaying information to our members.

The International Crane Foundation promotes important worldwide breeding and sustainability practices. A visit to the International Crane Foundation makes a lovely day trip. It is user friendly with a spacious parking lot and a new Visitor Center. Walkways are blacktopped, and electric scooters are available. There is a sheltered area where you can relax and watch the whooping cranes on the hillside and wading in the pond.

* * * DATES * * *

October 15-17, 2023, Sunday through Tuesday
CENTRAL REGION CONVENTION
Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines, Iowa

October 20-21, 2023, Friday and Saturday, **WGCF ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOL**
Maywood Environmental Center, Sheboygan. Registration deadline October 6.

November 2, 2023, Thursday, WGCF **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**
bantr Wausau Hotel, 805 Creske Avenue, Rothschild, WI

February 15, 2024, Thursday, WGCF **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**
bantr Wausau Hotel, 805 Creske Avenue, Rothschild, WI

May 19-21, 2024, Sunday through Tuesday
WGCF ANNUAL CONVENTION, Marriot West, Milwaukee, WI

June 2-5, 2024, Sunday through Wednesday,
NGC CONVENTION, Westin Westminster, Denver, Colorado

Sheboygan District

Karen Merlau, District Director

LAKE SHORE GARDEN CLUB Summer Field Trip

Members and friends of Lake Shore Garden Club were treated to gorgeous gardens on a field trip in July to two places, *Conrad Art Glass and Gardens* in Eldorado and *Burdocks and Rust Farm* in Van Dyne, for their popular Art Stroll. Both are west of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Conrad Gardens is owned by Larry and Sarah Conrad. When members were asked what they liked best, they answered the rockeries and hyper tufa pots, as well as the design and placement of the stunning magnolias, the conifers, and the unusual species such as the 30' Sugar Maple. One lady added, “I also loved how Larry uses so many architectural objects in his gardens.”

At Burdock and Rust Farm, the group was treated to a tour of overflowing flowerbeds, shopping for unique artwork handcrafted by eight local artisans and exploring a beautifully restored farmhouse. It was observed that, "floors were outstanding! If one side of a board was in poor shape, they turned it over and used the other side.”

Donations collected for this garden went to the Salvation Army, the Rosendale Historical Society, and the Fond du Lac Historical Society.

Other highlights included cherished family heirlooms, such as the vintage crochet doilies hung as a group, mounted in picture frames, and the kitchen towels hanging on a circle clothesline outside. A member commented, "Just resembled normal farm life. Made me miss the farm I grew up on.”

As always, the shared friendship and camaraderie on our special day is priceless!

IN MEMORIAM

Julie Schoenike

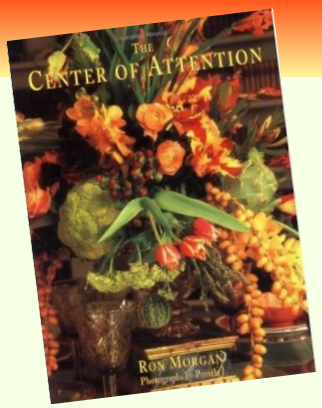
Ivy League Garden Club was saddened by the passing of Rose Marie Hassman in July.

Rose Marie was a life member of the National Garden Club, and she served as Ivy League Garden Club President, Sheboygan District Director and Wisconsin Garden Club Federation Secretary. She supported WGCF officers and projects, and her meticulous record keeping and thrift enabled a strong profit for the Gardening Study Schools. In addition to her accomplishments, she always had the effort and time for a beautiful garden.

Rose Marie was a trusted friend, and many successful projects would not have been completed without her aid. She always understood when a helping hand was needed and her professional nurse's training was evident by her willingness to serve.

It is hoped that her good example of supporting friends and a strong work ethic, will be followed by future garden club members.

Rose Marie will be missed,
but her kindness and support will always be remembered.



The Center of Attention

Karen Thaker, Book Committee Chair

Who doesn't want to be the center of attention once in a while? Ron Morgan, the author of *The Center of Attention*, can help you with floral arranging suggestions, and you will be! I met him at a Garden Club dinner and just had to purchase his book. It features full page arrangements in luxuriously appointed tablescapes.

Morgan's arrangements are unique because he includes non-floral objects for additional texture and color. Suggestions include ginger roots on top of green moss as floral mulch; succulents, fern fronds and huge sunflower seed pods with a ceramic frog; and clay pots arranged like flowers, mixed with white hydrangeas and Granny Smith apples. One of my favorites is cucumbers sticking out of clay pots with dozens of toothpick prickles and a few Gerbera daisies. It's absolutely stunning!

While one can simply admire the book for its creativity, in brief text at the end of the book you can browse arrangement recipes, and absorb design advice. Morgan states, for example, "In the beginning less is always more" and "Color rules the choice of elements." He suggests the grouping of like elements makes for a strong, bold arrangement. For a serene feel, balance the quality and quantity of materials.

Center of Attention was published in 2001, and it is still available. Check Amazon and other on-line sellers. Another highly recommended Morgan book is *A Glass Act.*

You will never regret checking these books out from the library; however, I urge to add them to your personal collection.

To the WGCF Executive Committee
August, 2023

I was surprised and honored at the 2023 WGCF Convention by being presented with the Lydia Schafer Award. I was proud and pleased to have my contributions over these past years recognized by this great organization which includes the Madison District and Mound Vue Garden Club.

I enjoyed being a part of the education of gardeners as the former Landscape School Chairman, and I feel education is a valuable part of the WGCF mission. Therefore, I wish to contribute the monetary portion of the Lydia Schafer Award to the Ruth West Education Fund. Please use this money in support of WGCF's Landscape or Environmental Education.

Sincerely, Vern Lowell

Madison District Activities

Janis Dixon, Director

WESTSIDE GARDEN CLUB
WSGC, President, Nancy Mohs, maintains the gardens at the South Madison Police Station and they have never looked better. Several members work once a week at the station weeding and watering after the spring planting and before they put the garden to sleep in the fall.

Left to right, Ann Avery, Marcia Topel, Judy Topitzes, Betty Forest, Jackie Trevino, Karen Thaker, Diana Peterson, Cindy Fillingame, Nancy Mohs, Carol Brewer

Members also help maintain a vegetable garden within the Hammersley Gardens. Starting with the spring program and into the summer programs, they work with an art teacher at Anana Elementary School. They plant, weed, water and harvest the vegetables from that garden. Some of the produce goes home with the families but a large amount goes to Lussier food bank and special groups or individuals in need.

Will Radler

On Aug 22 West Side took a trip to *Rose Innovations* in Greenfield, Wi, the home of Will Radler and his famous Knockout Roses. It's an enchanting garden showing how roses blend in with perennials, shrubs and trees, a moss garden, and a prairie. It was a delightful day with perfect weather and ended with lunch and fun conversation.

* * *

MADISON DISTRICT held a garden walk this summer. Several hundred people enjoyed touring eight gardens, all with a different focus and aesthetic. Four of the gardens belonged to District members. Eugenia Beecher, Dorothea Murphy, Beth Rasmussen, and Karen Lee-Wahl. They generously opened their gardens and their hard work and artistry really showed.

Roger Greathead headed the tour committee.

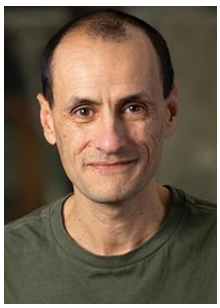
The district was represented in the flower show at the State Fair. Dawn Mozgawa, Diane Powelka, Chuck McCafferty, Gerianne Holzman and Jan Dixon had entries.

Summer may be the season for road repair, but Madison District clubs hit the road for their own tours. **MOUND VUE** visited K&A Garden Center, had a stepping stone workshop and is touring Epic this month.

SUGAR RIVER toured Rotary Gardens and made hypertufas. Hypertufa is a mix of pre-mix Portland cement, peat moss and perlite plus water. Great project, and you'll find good directions on the computer.

SUN PRAIRIE GARDEN CLUB went to Eugster's Market in Stoughton, just 15 minutes south of Madison, to see their acres of sunflowers, and **SUNSET** visited Allen Centennial Garden on the University of Wisconsin campus and the UW Agricultural Research Station.

WGCF President Linda McCafferty and Chuck McCafferty visited the Madison District



OLBRICH GARDEN CLUB invited UW Entomologist Dr. Claudio Gratton to their meeting. Dr. Gratton is a professor at the University of Wisconsin in the Department of Entomology, or bugs! He is known internationally for his research on landscape ecology and conservation of beneficial insects. His topic was *Pollinator Conservation in a Human Dominated World.*

Wisconsin River GC

Marge Hass, Fox River Valley District

Left to right, Nancy Mancusi, Belinda Enkro, Cindy Konietzki, Sharon Wein, Kathy Kopacz, Bert Jagodzinski, Marge Hass, and Loretta Schoechert.

In June, 2022, the Wisconsin River Garden Club, of the Fox River Valley District, made a trip to the Monk Botanical Gardens in Wausau, Wisconsin. The garden had been Judy Pitcher's President's Project in the early stages of its development. The club wanted to return and see what progress had been made.

Everyone was amazed at the expansion. The garden now offered trails, a meditation teahouse, a meadow area, and a children's garden with numerous activity centers and learning classrooms. There was also an outdoor amphitheater available for local summer and fall productions. While enjoying a volunteer led guided tour, we met up with the Wausau Garden Club and shared our lunch space. They told us they were planning a bus trip to Bookworm Gardens in Sheboygan for June 2023, so we gladly accepted their invitation to join in and marked our calendars.

In June of this year, we boarded a bus to experience the world of books in themed garden settings. The idyllic wooded area is on the University of Wisconsin Extension Campus, Sheboygan. It was the dream of Sandy Livermore to provide a whimsical garden experience, bringing children's literature to life while inspiring a love of nature. With over 1000 volunteers, this unique area became a reality, and continues to grow each year. Adults can't help but delight in the over 75 childhood classics represented by plants and flowers. It was a day for us to step back in time and be reminded of all those great little stories we heard and read in our younger years.

Hawthorne Garden Club

Laura Skoff, Milwaukee District

Hawthorne Garden Club members enjoyed a "salad toss" at Club President Laura Skoff's home recently. Everyone brought edibles from their own gardens to share. They presented a custom watercolor of Sandhill Cranes by local artist, Anita Hagen.

Members from left to right, Mary Kozlowski, Delores Schuetz, Judy Strampe, Judi Wisla, Veronica Wallace-Kramer, and Laura Skoff.

The club will celebrate their 100-year anniversary in 2024.

House Plants to Enjoy

With winter approaching, gardeners may turn to shade tolerant indoor plants. There are plenty from which to choose and here are a few.

SPIDER PLANT

This popular houseplants will survive less-than-perfect conditions. You can help by providing warm temperatures and humid air. They also like moist, well-drained soil, and regular watering with rain water or distilled water.

Mature plants send out stems 12 to 18 inches long that develop clusters of slender leaves. The leaf clusters grow their own roots and can be snipped to create new plants. They are so prolific you will want to share them with friends. Mature plants may also be dug up and divided.

Spider plants are often grown atop columns or hung from the ceiling due to the cascading foliage and their long stems with plantlets.

DIEFFENBACHIA, or Dumb Cane

It was called Dumb Cane because the plant contains toxins that can inhibit speech. It is highly toxic.

Dieffenbachia is a tropical perennial. It features pointed, leaves in combinations of green, cream, and white, and three to five feet tall is a common size.

The plant is best grown indoors in bright, indirect sunlight. Plant it in fertile, well-drained potting soil with a high peat content. It will do best in high humidity. Place the pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water. Misting the leaves can help during the dry winter months. Allow the top 2 inches of potting soil to dry out and water thoroughly.

PHILODENDRON

Philodendrons produce heart shaped leaves on long green vines. They are popular houseplants due to their ease of care. Bright indirect sunlight is ideal indoors. Light that is too low may produce leggy vines and sparse foliage. Plants with variegated leaves are quite attractive.

Dust the vines regularly to keep them looking their best. Keep philodendrons away from little children and pets because the plants are toxic.

SPLIT LEAF PHILODENDRON MONSTERA

This philodendron is also known as the Swiss cheese plant, as it has large, perforated, leathery green leaves.

This plant grows naturally in shaded conditions, and does well with bright, indirect light indoors. Too much light can burn the foliage! It will grow to a height of three feet with a two-to-three-foot spread

PARLOR PALM

The Parlor Palm thrives in bright, indirect sun, yet can adapt to less, making it a great option for Wisconsin homes.

Typically grown in small clumps in a single pot to resemble palm like shrubs, the parlor palm likes a well-drained peaty soil-based mix. It is a slow grower but can reach five or six feet in height. It was discovered in Central America and became a popular indoor plant in the United States.

ARROWHEAD VINE

The Arrowhead Plant can be in a regular pot, or a hanging planter, with vines growing four or five feet long. This may be too long for your table top pot, but you can easily snip, root, and repot for another plant. Green leaves have light veining and have an arrowhead shape on the mature plant.

Best if left mostly alone, this plant is an easy option for houseplant novices and experts alike. Bright, direct light can burn and damage this plant easily, so it does best in lower, indirect light.

LUCKY BAMBOO

Grown in either water or soil, bamboo is suitable for offices and homes. They often have braided stalks dotted with little green leaves. An important element of feng shui, bamboo plants are said to bring good luck, especially if the plants were gifts.

Bamboo is nearly indestructible. The plant prefers some light but will thrive in nearly full-shade locations. Just make sure they aren't located near drafty areas in your home, and keep them away from pets because they do have toxic properties.

PEACE LILY or Spathiphyllum

Peace lilies, with their dark green foliage, are popular indoor plants that can tolerate neglect. They are happiest when they are somewhat root bound. Even in low light, they will still reward you with an elegant white flower or two, every now and then.

These plants need ample water or the foliage will wilt. However, watering will quickly perk up wilted leaves. They will grow to three feet high and wide. Keep the plant away from children and pets because they are somewhat toxic, and avoid cold drafts.

The Peace Lily is associated with sympathy, hope and peace. It is often given as a gift to someone who has lost a loved one.

SNAKE PLANT or SANSEVIERIA

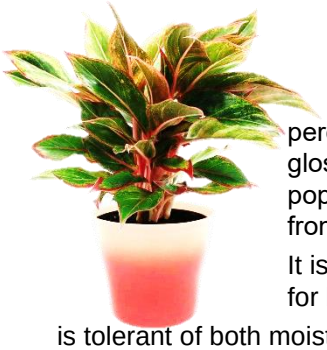
The snake plant, also known as mother-in-law's tongue because of its high and pointed leaves, is one of the most popular houseplants.

Varieties of the snake plant are extremely easy to care for, have few requirements, and are also considered air purifiers. Placing the plants in the bedroom is a good idea. They filter toxic substances from the air and release oxygen.

ALOE VERA

Aloe vera has been widely grown as an ornamental plant, and is popular as a topical medicinal plant. It is a succulent and resistant to most insect pests.

The species requires well-drained, sandy potting soil and bright, sunny conditions. A good-quality commercial succulent mix is recommended, as it allows good drainage. Allow potted plants to completely dry before rewatering. During winter, the plant becomes dormant, and little moisture is required.



CHINESE EVERGREEN

Aglaonema, commonly called Chinese evergreen, is a tropical perennial with large, strikingly patterned glossy leaves on short stems. It is a popular houseplant with color variations from red to dark green and silver.

It is slow-growing, and is a perfect plant for beginners or forgetful plant owners. It is tolerant of both moist and dry conditions, and they will thrive with low light. The Chinese evergreen is also loved by houseplant enthusiasts due to the diversity and beauty of the many cultivars.

ENGLISH IVY

English Ivy tolerates low light, but variegated leaves may lose color if light is too low. The vine may also become leggy, so pinching back will make it look more appealing.

Ivy is easy to propagate. Just snip off a stem near the base and put it in water. In about a month, roots will develop. Transplant in potting soil, and you have a new ivy plant. Thanks to its invasive nature, ivy easily adapts. Just make sure there is good drainage.

Feed indoor ivy once a month during the growing season. Apply fertilizer from early spring and continue monthly feedings until late fall. This air purifying plant also helps in cleaning the indoor air.

PRAYER PLANT

The prayer plant is a tropical distinguished by its decorative leaves. It is called a prayer plant because its leaves fold at night as if in prayer. During the daytime, the plant's leaves lay flat.

It has short, creeping stems, and the leaves arise from the crown of the plant. Each leaf has a mechanism, the pulvinus, for orienting the blade toward or away from the sun.

The Prayer Plant is an easy to grow house plant that prefers bright indirect light. Keep evenly moist, not wet or dry. The plant prefers high humidity and warm temperatures to thrive. Prayer plants are slow growers and generally reach about 12 inches at their tallest.

PRAYER PLANT VARIATIONS

The Tricolor Prayer Plant is a gorgeous variety. It has deep green, velvety, spear shaped leaves with yellow splotches down the midrib and arching red veins traveling to the leaf margins. Leaves grow in an upright clump. The leaf undersides are red and glow brilliantly when backlit.

The Calatheas was introduced in the 1970s, and became popular because of their large and colorful leaves. They are often variegated with pink, orange, red, and white, and the underside is frequently purple.

As expected, the leaves fold up at night. In the morning, the leaves unfurl in search of light. This phenomenon is made possible by a small joint the plant possesses between the stem and leaf.

WAX BEGONIA

Your outdoor wax begonias can be a lovely low maintenance addition to your houseplant collection. They are pretty little plants with glossy bronze, green, or maroon leaves and red, pink, coral or white blooms.

A bright, indirect window is best for optimal flowering, but they also can survive in lower-light locations. In spring, they are ready for your front porch. They are toxic to pets, so keep them out of reach.

PEPEROMIA

Peperomia Obtusifolia is known as the baby rubber plant. There are over 1000 species and cultivars of the Peperomia.

Native to South America, Peperomia Obtusifolia is attractive with bushy growth. Leaves are dark green or often variegated with white or a yellow gold. They have a succulent look, and grow close to the stem. Pinch at the tips to direct, stop, and encourage growth.

Garden Club Articles

Jan Blooming, Editor

Preceding the last couple issues of Wisconsin Gardens, Linda Reuss, Assistant Editor of Wisconsin Garden, sent invitations to several garden cubs, asking for submission of an article for this newsletter.

Linda divided the clubs into three groups. 1/3 of the clubs will receive the article request for each newsletter. If your garden club was asked for an article for the summer newsletter, you will be again invited to submit for the 2024 spring issue, and next for the 2025 winter issue. Please be aware of the deadline and send early.

Content suggestions include past or upcoming events, honoring a member, club history, a speaker you enjoyed, workshops, a community outreach project, and even how you have been successful in attracting members. Focus on one or two topics.

It was our mistake to **NOT** say **please limit your article to a half page** with two or three photos. To clarify, we are looking for between 200 and 240 words, maybe less with more or larger photos. I apologize to a couple of you for your efforts in composing two or three pages, as we had not thought to give you guidelines.

There will still be times when a club or district activity is featured on a full page or even two. The Oshkosh Garden Club Scholarship Luncheon comes to mind, as do the Greater Milwaukee Garden Club Garden Conservancy Tours, and the South Shore Garden Club Fashion Show and Lunch.

We look forward to learning lots more about gardeners and having fun!

Sit long, talk much, laugh often,
comfort and be comforted.
Know that the things we share,
stay here,
and that honesty, love, and respect
will always be on display.

This is when
friends become family
and family become friends.

It's officially
"wear a sweater in the morning
and regret it
by afternoon" weather.

Gourds

Jan Blooming, Editor

Gourds are among the oldest cultivated plants and were used by both Egyptians and native Americans as water bottles, utensils, storage containers, and dippers.

These garden novelties can be bird houses, decorative centerpieces on the Thanksgiving table, or luffa sponges for the bath. Gourds can be turned into vases and bowls, musical instruments like maracas and drums, or **digeridoos** like those created by Australian **Aborigines.**

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOURD AND A PUMPKIN

Gourds, squash and pumpkins belong to the family Cucurbitaceae and are all frost tender, meaning they will not make it through chilly temperatures. Gourds refers to the hard shelled non-edible fruits suitable for decorative ornaments or utensils. Squash and pumpkins are soft shelled and won't last long.

TYPES OF GOURDS

There are four types of gourds that you can grow from seed or purchase plants.

ORNAMENTAL GOURDS

Cucurbita gourds are native to America and come in unusual shapes and textures, smooth, warty, plain, patterned, ridged, striped. These are the cute, colorful little ornamental gourds that make great decorations.

BOTTLE GOURDS

Hard-shell gourds include swan gourds, bottle gourds, dipper gourds, and powderhorn gourds. Hard-shelled gourds will last for several years and have been grown for over five thousand years for use as containers and utensils. You may wish to grow them for birdhouses, storage vessels, dippers, or ornaments.

SPONGE OR LUFFA GOURDS

Luffa gourds are the bath sponges, and are related to cucumbers. Left to mature and dry, the outer shell is scraped off and the scratchy inner fiber makes a great scrubby.

SNAKE GOURDS

The snake gourd, a member of the pumpkin family, but has seeds like watermelon. Long and easily shaped, mature snake gourds are tough enough to be turned into didgeridoos. Interestingly, the flower of the snake gourd, opening at night, is pollinated by moths.

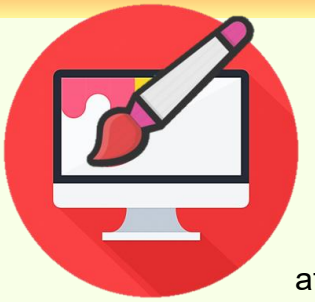
TIPS FOR GROWING GOURDS

You can buy mature gourds for their seeds, dry them out, and plant in the spring. Many take four months to mature, so start the seeds six weeks ahead indoors and transplant. Prepare the soil a few months in advance with compost and use a slow-release fertilizer.

Powdery mildew often settles on leaves. Kill it with a spray of one cup skim milk and five cups water for the first several weeks. Shelter the plants with floating row covers to protect them from the cucumber beetles.

The plants will spread, so give them plenty of room. The vines will want to climb, and you might want to make a trellis with PVC pipe and netting. You can pinch off the growing tip to keep the plant to a manageable size. It will also encourage production of fruit bearing flowers. All gourd vines bear both male and female flowers, and the showy male flowers appear first. You can tell the difference, as the smaller female flower will have the small gourd shape below the bloom.

If you are interested in planting gourds in spring, you'll find lots of information on the internet to help you along!



As Good as You Make It

Jan Blooming, Editor

Take a look at our Wisconsin Garden Club Federation website,
at Wisconsin Garden Club Federation - Home

Webmaster Debby Walters has been doing a terrific job! **SO MUCH INFORMATION IS POSTED!** Go to the website for garden tours and dedications. Find out how to enter a flower show, or plan a flower show and prepare a schedule. Listed are WGCF schools, Environmental, Gardening, Flower Show, and Landscape Design, as well as Symposiums and Refreshers.

There is an overview of WGCF awards, grants and scholarship, both requirements and how to apply. You can read about our history and check the calendar, and the section on Publications has copies of newsletters going back several years.

Clubs you can join throughout the state are listed, with meeting dates and cost, as well as the benefits of a garden club membership. You can also read about President Linda's travels, and how to contact WGCF.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, send Debby updates when you have new officers!

Our Wisconsin Garden Club Federation website is only as good as you make it. Please send webmaster Debby Walters information and photos to make it even more enjoyable! Her email is **vikingms76@gmail.com.**

Oshkosh Garden Club

Debbie Laffin, Fox River Valley

The Oshkosh Garden Club has been in full swing this summer.

Perhaps our biggest news is the adoption of a little-known park within the city limits known as **GARDEN CLUB PARK.** We were excited to realize this little gem, identified by the city with a large labeled rock, needed our attention. We had a dedication ceremony and purchased a bona fide park bench, planted a tree, incorporated some planters and voila! A Garden Club Park.

Left to right, Parliamentarian Mary Ellen Sedlachek, Secretary Ken Friedman, Treasurer Ann Gratton, Vice President Deb Laffin, President Sue Zinth

Our annual plant sale was a huge success, held the same day as the Paine sale. Our sale is across the street at the Oshkosh Public Museum and is always well attended. We also were fortunate our Garden Walk saw record attendance and great weather. Again, a big success with lots of club support, beautiful gardens and great homeowners.

Perhaps because of our fundraisers, we were able to sponsor two new scholarships and we are looking forward to our scholarship luncheon to be held November 11.

We have also welcomed over fifteen new members, adding lots of new energy and ideas to the club. All in all, a pretty great year so far . . .

And we are looking forward to our Scholarship Luncheon!

Habitat for Humanity

PLANT SHARE

Connie Sandell

About twenty-five years ago, Milwaukee District garden club members organized a Plant Share for people who acquired homes through the Habitat for Humanity program. It has been held at Habitat's Milwaukee Headquarters.

Initially, the event was a part of a National Garden Club effort to partner regional garden clubs with Habitat for Humanity.

Garden club members shared plants from their own gardens, while money earned from the National Garden Club Convention Walks for Habitat plus donations from individuals, funded the purchase of flowering annuals and vegetables.

The Plant Share, usually held the first Saturday in June, has expanded, and now includes sun and shade perennials, flowering annuals, vegetables, hostas, herbs, native plants, trees, shrubs, grasses and bulbs, as well as books, magazines, seed packets, gardening tools and accessories.

Garden club members dug up and divided plants in May. During the week leading up to June 3, the Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity parking lot slowly began to fill with plants which were potted, watered and organized. Dozens of types of vegetables and flowers took over a large part of the lot waiting to be planted in the yard of a Habitat homeowner.

In the past, plants left over from the Master Gardener's State Fair Park plant sale, as well plants not sold that had been grown by students at Milwaukee Area Technical College, have added to the number of plants available to the homeowners. For several years a Girl Scout Troop also donated many baskets planted with flowering annuals as their service project.

At times, growers and nurseries donated plants, and individual and club cash donations have been helpful to supplement specific needs.

In recent years, members of the Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee have supplied material, and helped individual homeowners create a flower, herb, or vegetable container garden to take home.

On Saturday morning, June 3, Habitat homeowners lined up outside the parking lot and waited for the gates to open. It was a time to gather and pick out plants and garden accessories to create or expand their gardens and landscapes.

All of the plants are free to Habitat homeowners. To ensure that there are hostas, flowering annuals and vegetables for everyone, homeowners receive a packet of coupons. Volunteer garden club members help with the selection of plants, answer questions, and give advice.

Habitat for Humanity homeowners also earn sweat-equity hours for helping with the organizing and transporting plants to participant's cars. After the Plant Share, homeowners are given the opportunity to select plants the following week at the site. Leftover plants are distributed to organizations or wintered over until the next spring.

Some years, Educational Sessions have been sponsored by the District and held on a separate date at Habitat Headquarters to help the people increase their knowledge of basic gardening and landscape, vegetable gardening, low maintenance perennials, and so on.

Other years, a few members visit gardens of homeowners to give suggestions and to better understand the challenges and needs of the homeowners.

This past June, 120 family units were served at Plant Share, and Habitat personnel told us that this is a favorite event. The homeowners are grateful for the opportunity to enhance their homes and add to their food supply. It is rewarding for us to see the joy on homeowner's and children's faces, to feel the appreciation, and to see the homeowners gain knowledge and confidence regarding various aspects of gardening.

. . . and no one can deny the camaraderie at the Plant Share!

Does your community participate Habitat for Humanity?

Could your garden club have fun with such a project?

Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee

Helen Dahms, GCGM Coordinator

The Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee participated in the dedication ceremony of the Lake Shore State Park *Seating Oasis,* designed by member James Steiner, Landscape Architect, Helianthus LLC. The National Garden Club had awarded a $1000 Plant America Grant to GCGM for plants surrounding the benches and rock formations.

Funds purchased native witch hazel, dogwood and chokeberry shrubs, native grasses, and broad-leaved forbs. They were planted by the GCGM team of Prairie Pal Volunteers, coordinated by Helen Dahms. These plants will provide habitat for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife in the park. Improving this area has created a beautiful rest area for the 250,000 plus people from the community and the Greater Milwaukee area who visit Lakeshore State Park each year.

Left to right, Linda McCafferty, Helen Dahms, GCGM Past President Debra Koenig, GCGM President Nancy Cody, James Steiner, David Robson, and Erick Shambarger.

Guests attending the dedication on September 8 included David Robson, NGC Chairperson of the Plant America Grant Committee, Linda McCafferty, WGCF President, and Erick Shambarger, Director of the City of Milwaukee's Environmental Collaboration Committee.

Milwaukee District Fall Meeting

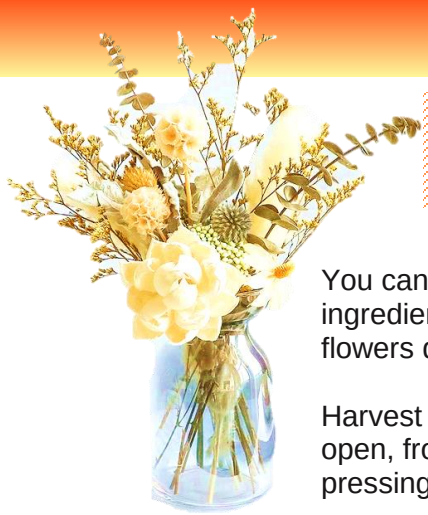
Marsha Caporaso, 1st Vice Director

Lake front by the Tap House

The meeting will be in Kenosha at the Kenosha Tap House on October 24. The Tap House is east of downtown Kenosha and poised on the shore of the boat harbor which can be viewed from inside the venue. The meeting will feature Pam Holy, President of the Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund, Inc., who will speak about the preservation of prairie. Although devastating financially, The Great Depression of the 1930's aided the preservation of this virgin prairie by arresting planned development along the Lake Michigan shore.

The prairie is ecologically important because it is home to rare plants, birds, and insects Stunning wildflowers grow there during spring and summer. As Ms. Holy will convey, preservation of this prairie south of Kenosha has been a long but rewarding process.

A buffet style lunch of chef's salad with a choice of flatbreads and beverages will be served. All garden club members are welcome to attend if registered prior to the meeting. For registration details please visit Milwaukeedistrictgardenclubs.org.



Drying Flowers

Jan Blooming, Editor

You can create lovely projects with dried flowers . . . wreaths, bouquets, jewelry, potpourri, soap ingredients, shadow boxes, greeting cards, seasonal décor and more. Once you learn what flowers dry well your imagination is free to roam.

Harvest flowers in the morning when they are completely dry. Look for flowers not completely open, from healthy, insect free plants, and gently remove leaves. Preserve your flowers by pressing, microwaving, placing in silica gel, or by hanging to dry.

PRESSING FLOWERS is one of the oldest ways to preserve your flowers, using heavy books or a fancy flower press. Both methods work well, but with a book you may need to protect the pages from stain or wrinkling, so use paper to absorb moisture. Paper from brown bags works well. Leave space between multiple flowers. Apply enough weight to squeeze out the moisture. Check periodically and sometimes change the paper.

* * *

DRYING IN THE MICROWAVE speeds the drying process, and results in dry, flat blooms similar to pressing. Lay the flowers flat between non-patterned paper towel or coffee filter, and place it all in the microwave. Set a heavy-weight, microwave-safe dish on the top to weigh them down. Turn the microwave on defrost or your lowest setting for 1 minute, and check your blooms. Some thin flowers will dry out much faster than others, but most flowers will dry in 1 to 4 minutes

* * *

The **SILICA GEL PROCESS** keeps the colors more vibrant than microwaving, and the flowers retain their shape versus being pressed. Cover the bottom of a small container with 1 to 2 inches of silica gel crystals. Place the flowers face side down. Cover completely and secure the container's cover. Most blooms dry within two to seven days. Silica gel crystals are pricey, but are reusable.

* * *

AIR DRYING is an easy and efficient way to dry large numbers of flowers. Cut the flowers, strip the leaves, and gather the stems into small bundles using a rubber band to hold them together. Hang the bundles where there is air circulation and no direct sunlight. A basement works, but add a fan to ensure air flow. They'll be ready in two or three weeks.

FLOWERS THAT DRY WELL

STRAWFLOWERS

Strawflowers are small blossoms that come in a variety of colors, pink, red, yellow and white. Start from seed six to eight weeks before the last average frost date. Press seeds lightly into moist soil, but don't cover them, as light hastens germination. Seedlings will appear in seven to ten days. Give seedlings plenty of light, and harden them off. Transplant into full sun.

Tall varieties may need staking, but new cultivars are bred to be stocky and early blooming and need no support. Harvest throughout the season and your plant will stay in bloom. Pick strawflowers for drying that are not fully open. They'll open the rest of the way as they dry. Cut off the stem about one inch below the base of the flower.

Replace the stems with floral wire. Poke the end of the wire up through the stub of the stem and through the center of the strawflower. Bend the top of the wire over like a candy cane, forming a hook. Push the end of the hook back down through the strawflower. Press the hook wire close to the stem wire.

Cover the wire tightly with floral tape, stretching it slightly as you wrap. Tear off the end of the tape, and press in place. Group into a small bunches, and hang upside down in a dry, dark spot that gets good air circulation. They'll be ready to use in two or three weeks.

AMARANTH
This easy-to-grow annual has brightly colored upright plumes or long dangling ropes of tiny flowers that will retain color when dried.

ARTEMISIA
Artemisia cultivated for our gardens are grown for their lacey foliage. Leaves are often lobed and covered with whitish hairs that give them a silvery, grayish look.

BABY'S BREATH
Gypsophila, commonly known as baby's breath, is easy to dry because the flowers are so small. It offers a delicate white balance to larger flowers.

BUNNY TAIL GRASS
The creamy puffs add softness to any everlasting bouquet, and will last for years. Gather in bunches and hang in a cool, dark, and dry place.

CHINESE LANTERNS
The spring flowers are pretty, but the real delight of a Chinese lantern plant is using the large, red-orange, inflated seed pods in dried flower arrangements.

CELOSIA
This is an excellent focal point for a dried arrangement with the striking flower heads that bloom from summer to fall. Varieties come in bright shades of orange, red, purple, yellow, and cream.

EUCALYPTUS
Drying eucalyptus takes a hearty plant and makes it last longer in your craft projects, and the perfume stays with you!

FLOSS FLOWER OR AGERATUM
Grow this annual in your cutting garden. Its clusters of fuzzy little blue, pink, or white flowers are used to fill gaps in a dried arrangement.

GOMPHRENA
Add color to arrangements with gomphrena. Its rounded flowerheads have a stiff, straw-like texture and look like clover flowers dipped in Easter egg dye.

HYDRANGEA
The large round blooms of hydrangeas are wonderful for creating dried floral arrangements. They dry well when white, lime green, or when they have turned brown.

LAVENDER
Start harvesting in spring because the more that you pick, the more will grow, resulting in bushy plants. Hang in small bunches upside down in a dark, warm place with good air circulation.

LUNARIA.
Lunaria, the silver dollar plant, is valued for its dried seed pods. They start out green, shed the seeds, and a shiny see-through membrane remains, off-white in color. These "silver dollars" are papery and not perfectly round but flat and oblong.

SAGE
Give your dried flower arrangement a vertical elements with spikes of purple sage. Flower spikes are about ten inches long and have soft green foliage with a silvery tint.

SEA HOLLY
Sea holly with electric blue flowers is gorgeous dried. Retain that color by flash-drying them in a hot car, or the blue fades with time to almost a gray.

STATICE
Statice is composed of multiple branches of tiny funnel-shaped papery flowers, and is available year-round in shades of blue, purple, yellow, white, pink and salmon.

THISTLE
The many varieties of thistle are known for beautiful blooms that range in color form dark pink through vibrant lavender. Gather in mid-summer just before they are in full bloom.

YARROW
The flat-topped clusters of yarrow make for ideal dried flowers. Harvest for drying when 80 percent of the flowers are open on a stem.

Creating dried flower arrangements is easy and fun but buying dried flowers can be expensive. Try growing these flowers yourself next spring! They will look gorgeous in your garden and you will create long-lasting dried arrangements at this time next year with your own flowers!.

St. Croix District Update

Debby Walters, District Director

BOTANY BELLES AND BEAUS

The Windmill Park Garden first planted in 1987 was completely revamped, and they are waiting to see how the plantings mature. Club members continue to maintain this garden, Creamery Park, and the Woodville Retention Pond project.

In June, the group toured Parker Creek Hosta Farm near River Falls and a small group visited the Mill City Farmers Market. In July, Mary Jo Fleming spoke to them about creating a kinder and friendlier garden.

Their community garden tour was held on Saturday, July 15, and featured four local gardens. It was well-attended and a free will offering was taken. The first ever fundraiser was held at Nilssen's Grocery store, a brat stand which did well.

WILLOW RIVER GARDEN CLUB

Willow River Garden Club hosted the spring district meeting at the Carpenter Nature Visitors Center in River Falls. WGCF President Linda McCafferty and her husband Chuck were our guests. The program featured Alex Bouthilet, manager of the Star Prairie Seed Farm, and his enthusiasm for native plants and prairie restoration were inspiring.

St. Croix County asked WRGC to plant three additional containers on the St. Croix River Crossing Trail. Members currently maintain the Blue Star Memorial and two large planters at the trailhead.

Members continue to weed and take care of the Reflection Garden at the Deerfield Senior Living Community. Residents enjoy the garden and especially appreciate the cherry tomatoes from the raised bed tomato plants!

Deerfield Senior Living Community

Gridded and ready to plant.

LAKE WISSOTA GARDEN CLUB

Lake Wissota Garden Club received a $1660 Community Foundation Grant from Chippewa County for 275 additional native plants for their ½ acre Sanctuary. Clearing, eight layers of newspaper, two mulch coverings, and planting with once weekly watering was completed this summer.

Lake Wissota Garden Club is celebrating their record 38 members including four who joined this year. They installed new officers in September, with one returning officer and three members who have not held office before. Two are current project or committee chairs and the incoming Vice President will assume the position assistant to our incoming president.

Mission accomplished

Environmental School

Friday and Saturday

OCTOBER 20 AND 21

Maywood Environmental Park

3615 Mueller Road, Sheboygan, WI 53083

REGISTER NOW

Speakers include the Maywood Environmental Park Director and retired Director, the Woodland Dunes Nature Center Executive Director, a Master Naturalist from Sargento Foods, a Professor of Biology, and a member of the Sustainable Sheboygan Task Force.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER is OCTOBER 6

Info call Karen Merlau at 920-838-1277 or email at kmerlau@tds.net

Complete information in Summer Newsletter.

Name_____

Address_____

City-State-ZIP_____

Club-District_____

Phone_____

Email_____

☐ $65 both days, program only

☐ $40 one day ☐ Oct 20 ☐ Oct 21

☐ $13 Oct 20 lunch ☐ $13 Oct 21 lunch

☐ $5 exam fee, if studying to be a consultant.

☐ $5 refresher fee, current consultants

☐ $10 late fee if postmarked after 10/6/2023

$_____ **TOTAL CHECK**

Make out a check to WGCF Environmental School and send to

Gretchen Vest, Registrar
704 Spring Drive
West Bend, WI, WI 53095

Apply for NATIONAL AWARDS

Garden clubs, districts, states and regions work together to promote love of gardening, floral design, and environmental responsibility, fulfilling the mission of National Garden Clubs, Inc. The NGC Awards Program wishes to recognize the time, effort, and resources expended by you throughout the year.

The NGC hopes you will apply for an award so you can be recognized and provide inspiration to others. Don't know what to apply for or where to start? Go to **NGC Awards | National Garden Clubs, Inc.**

The National Garden Club website has an updated Awards Handbook on the Awards and Grants page that you may download. Go to awards-handbook.pdf (gardenclub.org)

To make it even easier there is electronic submission for applications. When you are ready to complete an application, go to the website and fill it in. award-form-1.pdf (gardenclub.org)

Keep in mind that all applications must come through the State Awards Chair and must include the appropriate NGC Application Cover Sheet. Application Cover Sheets, in fillable format, are in the Forms Library.

2023 Award Winners are listed on the NGC website at ngc-top-award-winners-2023.pdf (gardenclub.org) It is a long list!

The 2024 National Garden Club Convention will be held in Colorado, and garden clubs from around the world will be recognized with national awards. Many awards include a monetary prize. Your state president just might be collecting something special for you in Colorado at the 2024 NGC Convention.

Winter Rose Protection

Jan Blooming, Editor

Most roses can withstand a cold snap of temperatures down to 10 degrees, but it is best to protect them if you expect an extended period when temperatures are under 20 degrees. In the northern areas of the country in Zone 4, winter rose care begins after the first hard frost, usually around mid-October and before the first snowfall.

Roses may need extra care because many are grafted. This means that a branch from one type of rose was attached to the stronger, more disease-resistant base of another type. The joint where the union was made needs extra protection from freezing temperatures, as the grafted-on growth could die completely, leaving you with growth from the roots which won't be as attractive.

To protect bush-type roses, such as grandifloras, floribundas, and hybrid teas, tie the canes together loosely to keep them from whipping around in the wind. Cover the base of the plant with 12 inches of soil. Straw or leaves can be placed over the soil mound for additional insulation.

If you prefer styrofoam cones, prune back so the cone will fit over the plant. Before you cover the bush, mound several inches of soil around the base of the canes then place the cone over the rose. To keep the cone in place, mound soil around the outer base.

To protect climbing roses, after the plants have been exposed to a hard freeze and gone dormant, remove the canes from their support and carefully bend them to the ground. Hold the canes in place with pegs or stakes and cover with several inches of soil.

In Zone five you can protect your roses as above or pile protective material around the base. Another option is to create a chicken wire cage and fill it with leaves. Your main concern is protecting your roses from extended periods of weather below 20 degrees, winter winds, and fluctuating temperatures. All roses will handle winter better if well-watered before the ground freezes.

Remove winter protection when you're sure that warm days will no longer be interrupted by freezing nights.

If cane tips have died, cut back each cane in short segments until you remove all dead wood and reach the green, growing wood. How much old growth you remove will depend on the severity of the winter, but even if you cut back nearly to the level of the root graft, your rose will likely recover. Roses grown in areas that receive freezing winter temperatures should be pruned in April. Once the leaf buds begin to swell on the bush it's safe to prune, and the rose bush will put its full energy into new growth.

Roses enjoy a good feeding in the spring after they've begun actively growing. There are quality rose foods on the market that you can use, but a general all-purpose fertilizer will also suffice. Slow-release fertilizers will need to be applied less frequently than water-soluble fertilizers. Be sure to water well.

Roses tend to have a proclivity for fungal diseases. Preventative spraying in the spring is also something to consider.

PAPERWHITES

Wouldn't some bright, fragrant blossoms perk up your house this winter? Grow paperwhites, a relative of the daffodil. They are easy to grow indoors, and the plant produces small, fragrant flowers on 12- to 18-inch stalks.

Fill a 3 or 4-inch-deep bowl with pebbles. Push your paperwhite bulbs down into the stones so the tips stay upright. Add water until it just covers the bottom of the bulbs.

Keep the bulbs in a cool, dark room for several weeks and then place in a sunny location. In 4-6 weeks, you'll see tiny blossoms on the flower stems. Forcing paperwhites is an wonderful project for beginning gardeners.

To prevent your paperwhites from getting tall and floppy, give them a good stiff drink to slow growth!. My friend swears by Grey Goose Vodka!

GOOD LUCK!

Asking for your help.

Assistant Editor Linda Reuss and I have been asking garden club presidents to contribute half page articles to the newsletter, but we had a couple problems when our request went to the wrong person. The club president listed on the state website had not been updated.

Another problem . . . I put an email address in the newsletter for people to respond to for the Ikebana program. When the registrar checked the page, she came back with, "My email is wrong." Wrong? I got her email from the state website! I checked, and yes, it was missing a letter!

WGCF Webmaster Debby Walters and Membership Secretary Susan Johansen do a masterful job, but state and your district websites are only as good as the information that is provided.

Please be sure your email, phone number, and address is correct at the club, district and state level. Note that the WGCF website identifies board members, committee chairs, and club presidents. If your name and information is listed, please check to see if it is right.

Thanks, *Jan*

Email, Address, and Phone Corrections

Please send updates to Membership Secretary

Susan Johansen

2249 122nd Street,
New Richmond, WI 54017

715-781-6825
h23j19@gmail.com

Editor, Jan Blooming
bloomingj@hotmail.com
5331 S. Cambridge Lane
Greenfield, WI 53221
414-541-8834

Assistant Editor, Linda Reuss
lreuss@att.net

Copy Editor, Karen Thaker

Circulation, Susan Johansen
H23j19@gmail.com
2249 122nd Street
New Richmond, WI 54017

Advertising Manager Laura Skoff
lauraskoff@gmail.com

Contributors: Marge Haas, Joe Powelka, Carol Caitlin, Ginger Wierman, Karen Merlau, Linda McCafferty, Mary Ellen Sedlachek, Lynne Ehnert, Debby Walters, Kerry Krokos, Laura Skoff, Sue Donohoe, Gerianne Holzman, Karen Thaker, Marsha Caporaso, Connie Sandell, Debbie Laffin, Vern Lowell, Janis Dixon, Lynette Rakun, Lucy Valitchka, Carolyn White, Brenda Moore, Lynn Laufenberg, Lynda Curl, Barb Barrickman, Lee Ann Lilly, Julie Schoenike, Nancy Gregory, Wendy Kramer, and Helen Dahms.

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