
GREEN PAGES

A newsletter for people interested in horticulture and natural resources in Western Wisconsin
February 2009 No.9

Think Spring

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The good news is the days are getting longer, but we still can't garden. Darn! Visit your local greenhouses to get a taste of spring, attend the Winter Garden Seminar "Ready, Set, Grow" or pullout the catalogs and start planning your garden.

If you don't have a plot to grow a garden think about renting a plot at the Jeffers Roads Community Gardens. The plots are 20 X 50 feet and cost around \$32 (this years cost has not yet been determined). Contact me at 715-839-4712 or erin.lafaive@co.eau-claire.wi.us to be put on a mailing list. Around March letters will be sent out announcing that registration is open. Then it's a first come first serve basis by bringing the payment to the Extension Office or mailing it. A water hydrant is available to hook up hoses to water your garden.

When planning your garden think about growing a row for your local food pantry. Tomatoes, zucchini, carrots, green beans, squash, potatoes, radishes, sugar snap peas, melons, herbs, etc. are appreciated at St. Francis Food Pantry in Eau Claire. They provide food for 700 families per week.

Grab a cup of warm beverage, get cozy, and open this issue for information on invasive species, AAS winners, herb of the year, borer update, upcoming events, and more.



-Erin LaFaiwe

About this newsletter

This monthly newsletter's purpose is to disseminate research based information on topics of horticultural and natural resources in Western WI. In addition, it's purpose is to connect the public with local events of similar topics.

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Green Pages on the Web



Current and back issues of Green Pages are posted online. These copies are **FREE!** and have **color**.

Send your email address to erin.lafaive@co.eau-claire.wi.us to receive monthly email notifications when

the new edition is posted to the Eau Claire UW-Extension website. If you would like a yearly subscription to receive a printed copy send a check for \$16 made out to "Eau Claire County Treasurer" to Eau Claire County Extension, 227 1st. St. W., Altoona, WI, 54720.

Invasive Species: Buckthorn & Honeysuckle

Throughout Wisconsin, several species of plants that are not native to our state are becoming serious threats to our precious natural areas. Even our backyards and vacant lots are being invaded by these aggressive exotics.

The balance of nature is fragile so when any species so successfully out competes all others it diminishes diversity of all species - plant and animal. They do so by changing the habitat so that it is no longer suitable to native species and by robbing them of nutrients and light.

Two such plants are buckthorn and honeysuckle. They are successful competitors mostly because of their effective methods of reproduction. Both produce huge quantities of seeds that are borne in fleshy fruits attractive to birds and dispersed widely by them. They also sprout readily from extensive root systems as well as from stumps cut in efforts to control them.

Two species of buckthorn are problematic - the Common and the Glossy buckthorns. These tall shrubs or small trees reach 20 - 25 feet, have gray to brown bark with elongated, lighter-colored horizontal ridges that resembles cherry bark. Leaves are glossy, oval, come to an abrupt point, and have minute teeth along the margins. The veins are parallel to the margins. Glossy buckthorn has one tiny thorn at the tip of each branch.

Because of the longer season in their native habitat, Buckthorns are often the earliest plants to leaf-out and the last to turn color and drop in the fall. In winter, the stems are covered with clusters of black berries which are relished by the birds.

Control is through hand pulling or digging of small seedlings. Those with stems one inch in diameter or larger will need to be sprayed with herbicide

either before or after cutting. Cut stumps can produce up to ten new sprouts below the cut. Garlon 4 could be used in winter on standing plants as a trunk application. Spraying foliage is easiest and most effective in the fall. Few other plants have leaves at that time and are therefore less likely to be affected by the spray plus it is a time when the buckthorn will translocate the herbicide sprayed on its leaves downward into the root system. Or the cut stumps can be painted with herbicide.

The nonnative honeysuckles are upright, deciduous shrubs that reach 3 - 10 feet. They have oval, dull green leaves that are rough and opposite each other on the light tan, stems which have peeling, shredding bark. Flowers appear in June and are pink or creamy yellow. These are followed by clear red or yellow -orange berries which attract birds. Like Buckthorn, these exotics leaf-out early and hold their leaves longer in the fall.

Because of their shallow root system, young seedlings can be easily hand pulled or dug in the spring. Larger plants can be cut in the fall and

the stumps painted with herbicide, or they can be sprayed while the honeysuckle is still green but other species are leafless.

Every effort should be made to control these and other invasive exotic species on your own property. To volunteer to help with control efforts on public lands, contact local and state environmental organizations or your county Extension office.



Common buckthorn, USDA NRCS

Sharon Morrissey
UW Extension
Consumer Horticulture Agent
Milwaukee County



Herb of the Year: Sweet Bay

The Herb Society of America has named the plant *Laurus nobilis* (family Lauraceae) as the herb of the year for 2009.

Sweet bay is a medium-sized tree, whose aromatic leaves are used as a culinary herb (bay leaf). Bay is an evergreen plant that can be grown as a single-trunked tree or a multi-trunked shrub. It also adapts well to pruning and shaping, so can be used for topiary or grown as a standard. Because it is relatively slow-growing, it does well in containers. The glossy, dark green, leathery leaves are 3-4 inches long, lanceolate, with a strong midrib

and wavy, finely serrated edges. The smooth bark is olive green to gray in color. The plants are dioecious, with star-shaped male and female flowers on separate plants. Inconspicuous but fragrant, pale yellow-green flowers in spring are followed by small, purplish-black, egg-shaped berries, each with a single seed, on established female trees. Trees are self-infertile, so a male tree is needed to set seed. Bees pollinate the flowers.

L. nobilis is widely grown as an ornamental plant in mild climates (zones 7-10), but can be grown as a long-lived houseplant or outdoor container plant in cold climates. Although it prefers well-drained soil and

regular moisture, it is fairly tolerant of most conditions, but can never be allowed to dry out completely. In its native areas it grows amid damp rocky ravines, thickets and old walls. Indoor plants can be moved outdoors in the spring and back inside in the fall when temperatures are consistently above freezing. If kept in a cool room (35-60°F), the tree will stay dormant and does not need much light and very little water (just enough to keep the soil barely moist).

In a warmer room provide regular watering like any houseplant and as much sun as possible. In the Midwest, container-grown bay trees thrive in full sun (after being acclimated from the darker indoors), but in warmer climates they may benefit from light

(Continued on page 6)

Emerald Ash Borer Update

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is known to exist in Ozaukee and Washington counties. A quarantine is currently in those counties and in Fond du Lac and Sheboygan counties. The quarantine prohibits the movement of any ash product – including all hardwood firewood – that could transport a life stage of EAB. Exceptions to the quarantine may be granted with approval by either WI DATCP or USDA APHIS PPQ.

An ICS (Incident Command System) team has been designated to oversee and guide multi-agency activities in the quarantine area.

Currently, cutting and peeling survey work is complete. No additional EAB larvae were discovered in Wisconsin outside of the generally infested area surrounding the Village of Newburg.

Visual assessments of the area are now underway. An intensive, grid-based survey is being conducted within a two mile radius of the Village. From two



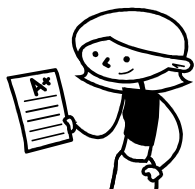
miles to 10 miles, a “rapid visual assessment of ash trees visible from roadways is underway. Work on these surveys is expected to wrap up in March.

Since the discovery of EAB in the Newburg area, 15 regulatory compliance agreements have been issued for companies established within the quarantine area or who receive ash material from the area. Ten of those agreements are with the federal government; five are with the state.

Information Resources:

www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov

1-800-462-2803



Horticulture Quiz

Test your knowledge of plant term or simply look at the answers and learn some terms!
 Match the answers to the question. Answers are on the bottom of the page

Questions

1. Terminal or apical meristems are found at the _____ and are responsible for increase in _____.
2. Axillary meristems are found in the _____.
3. Cambium is found under _____ and is responsible for _____.
4. Xylem transports _____.
5. Phloem transports _____.
6. Xylem and phloem are part of the _____.
7. _____ fruits are those that develop from a single ovary.
8. _____ fruit comes from a single flower that has m any ovaries.
9. _____ fruits are derived from a cluster of separate, independent flowers born on a single structure.

Answers

- A. length
- B. multiple
- C. vascular system
- D. bark or stems and roots
- E. water
- F. simple
- G. tips of shoots and roots
- H. leaf axils
- I. aggregate
- J. nutrients
- K. increase in width

From the answers found for questions 7-9, what type of fruits are these?

Information obtained from the Wisconsin Master Gardener Volunteer Program Training Manual.



Are Your Houseplants Getting the Right Light?		
Problem <i>Not Enough Light</i>	Problem <i>Perfect Light</i>	Problem <i>Too Much Light</i>
No growth	New growth	New growth different
Leaves yellowing	Dark green leaves	Pale, near white leaves
Leaves dropping	Few leaves dropping	Leaves dropping
Loss of variegation	Strong variegation	Scorched leaves
Soil stays wet	Regular water needed	Soil stays dry

Answers. 1) G & A 2) H 3) D & K 4) E 5) J 6) C 7) F 8) I 9) B

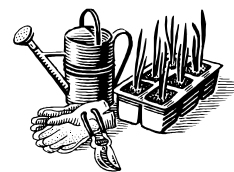
1) Aggregate 2) Simple 3) Multiple

February Gardening Tips

- ♦ When forced bulbs have bloomed and tops have dried, store, then plant in garden in fall.
- ♦ Prune dormant trees and summer-flowering shrubs
- ♦ If renovating old apple trees, prune no more than one-third of old growth each year.
- ♦ Remove and destroy mummified fruits, galls, or egg clusters on trees or shrubs
- ♦ This is a great time to take the lawn mower to the shop to avoid the spring rush.
- ♦ Clean and inventory garden tools. Use a wire

brush to remove built up soil and sharpen cutting edges.

- ♦ Monitor indoor houseplants and herbs for nutrient deficiencies.
- ♦ Monitor houseplants for mites as these pests thrive in warm and dry conditions.
- ♦ Watch for damage to shrubs from wildlife. If using traps, cover them in such a way to keep children and pets from hurting themselves.



AAS Winners for 2009

All-America Selections (AAS) has announced their winners for 2009, with one bedding plants and three vegetables.

Look for the red, white, and blue logo of **All-America Selections** on seed packets in retail stores, plant tags in bedding plants in garden centers or nurseries, or in mail-order catalogs this spring. Success is almost guaranteed with these varieties of reliable new flower and vegetable varieties

The non-profit All-America Selections (AAS) organization was founded in 1932 to foster the development, production, and distribution of new and better horticultural and agricultural varieties, species, strains and kinds in and for North America. AAS winners are superior new annual flower and vegetable plants recognized for significant achievements – a promise of gardening success. Only the very best varieties receive this prestigious award. All AAS winners have been tested for home garden performance in more than 30 independent test sites, each under the responsibility of an AAS judge, all over the United States and Canada. Gardeners can rely on AAS Winners to perform in their garden because of these unbiased, independent tests. Most of the time only one to three flower varieties and the same number of vegetables get this award each year, and sometimes none qualifies.

AAS Vegetable Award Winner: Eggplant ‘Gretel’

The earliest white eggplant perfectly describes ‘Gretel.’ Any gardener will agree, the earlier the better; since waiting for the best tasting, most nutritious food from our gardens is not easy. The glossy white mini-fruit are produced in clusters and can be harvested in 55 days depending upon growing conditions. Like all eggplants, ‘Gretel’ will grow rapidly under warm temperatures, over 55 degrees day and night temperature. The pure white fruit are sweet with tender skin even if they mature beyond the ideal fruit size of 3 to 4 inches. This trait means gardeners have a longer timeline to harvest fruit. ‘Gretel’ plants are relatively small, about 3 feet wide and tall. Since the plant is small it is adaptable to the popular trend of growing edibles in containers. It is recommended to use a rather large container about 16 inches deep. This AAS® Winner was bred by Seminis Vegetable Seeds, Oxnard, CA.

Unique qualities: Earliest white eggplant, non-bitter fruit, tender skin, few seeds

Fruit shape: Elongated-teardrop

Plant habit: Small compact plant adaptable to containers

Garden spacing: 2 feet apart

Closest comparison(s) on market: ‘Little Fingers,’ ‘Fairy Tale,’ ‘Snowy’

Another AAS winner will be featured in the next Green Pages.

Herb of the Year *(Continued from page 3)*

shade.

Once established, prune the bay tree annually to keep it growing vigorously – also providing supply of bay leaves for cooking. Pruning is best done when the tree is not actively growing to maximize growth, but to maximize flavor, harvest leaves in the mid summer. Container-grown plants should be repotted to maintain a balance between the size of the roots and that of the top. Prune the roots by cutting off all the roots where they had touched the surface of the old pot whenever the plant is repotted. The roots should be pruned at least every two years (even if the plant is to stay in the same pot) and add fresh compost-soil mix to replace that removed with the roots. Bay is difficult to propagate, but this can be done from fresh seed (germination is rather erratic and the seed bed needs to be kept warm), half-ripe cuttings taken in summer (which may take several months), or by air-layering. This plant has few pests, but scales can be a problem, particularly indoors. The bump-like insects can occur on both the leaves and woody parts.

The mature leaves can be used fresh, but when dried, the oils are more concentrated. Hang the leaves in bunches in a warm, dry place to dry. They should retain their flavor for about a year in storage. Bay leaves are an essential ingredient of the herb mix 'Bouquet Garni'. The somewhat fennel-like sweet, spicy flavor is released slowly, so the whole leaves should be added to dishes that cook over a period of hours – unlike most herbs which give off their flavor in a short cooking time and should be added at the

end of cooking. The leaves are also quite tough and should be removed before the dish is served – and therefore are normally not chopped up. This herb is typically used in stews, roasts, casseroles, and soups with a relatively long cooking time, and also for pickling and in marinades. The dried leaves can also be used to make an herbal tea.

Dried leaves can also be used in potpourri, for wreaths and other craft projects, or to repel pests such as silverfish or stored product insects. The essential oil is used in massage oil.

L. nobilis is widely cultivated in many regions of the world where it is used primarily as a culinary herb now, but in its native Mediterranean it was also used medicinally – externally to treat plagues, muscle sprains, earache and hysteria among other things – and culturally. It had the reputation of protecting against natural disasters, especially lightening strikes, and was used in the laurel wreaths worn by ancient poets, athletes, soldiers and Roman Emperors to symbolize victory or accomplishment. Other common names for this species include Bay, Bay Laurel, Grecian Laurel, Laurel and True Laurel. Other trees commonly called bay include California laurel (*Umbellularia californica*) and bay rum tree (*Pimenta racemosa*), whose leaves and twigs are distilled to produce oil of bay, which is used in perfumery and in the preparation of bay rum (an aftershave or hair tonic, not a beverage). The related *L. canariensis*, native to the Canary Islands and Madeira, is less hardy than sweet bay and has longer, broader, less aromatic leaves.

*Dr. Susan Mahr, University of WI-Madison
Master Gardener Volunteer Program Coordinator*

Looking for Writers



Would you like to write for Green Pages?
Looking for articles about gardening, natural resources, and related events relevant to the Western Wisconsin area.

Tell us your experience with a rare bird sighting, gardening method, favorite park, etc. Articles can range from 250-500 words. Articles chosen will be based on relevant content and available space. Send submis-

sions to the contact information listed to the right. Do you have a particular topic you would like to see written about in the Green Pages?
Send your suggestions to the contact below.

Contact: erin.lafaive@ces.uwex.edu -or- Erin LaFaive 227 1st Street West Altoona, WI 54720

Events

Terry Gips to Speak



Terry Gips will speak at UWEC, March 30th. Terry Gips is a widely published ecologist, agricultural economist, sustainability business consultant, independent Natural Step Framework instructor, speaker, and author with more than 30 years experience in global environmental leadership, government policy, sustainable development, business management and consulting.

Gips wrote the widely-acclaimed *Breaking the Pesticide Habit*, co-authored *The Humane Consumer and Producer Guide*, served as technical editor of *Reviving the Land*, and edited *Manna*.

Midwest Wine Growing Conference



The Minnesota Grape Growers Association (MGGA) invites those interested in cold climate grape growing and winemaking to attend its 5th annual conference Feb. 12-14, 2009 in Bloomington, MN.

The conference theme is "Northern Viticulture: Pursuing Excellence." Beginning grape growing and winemaking sessions will be held Thursday, from 6 to 9 pm followed by two full days of more advanced education sessions with networking and trade show opportunities. A "Midwest Wine Stroll" will be held on Friday evening to showcase the region's best cold climate wines. The weekend concludes Saturday with a gourmet banquet including Midwest wines.

To register or learn more about the conference, visit www.mngrapes.org. Prospective conference sponsors or trade show exhibitors can view the same, or e-mail conference coordinator, Nicole Walsh, at nrwalsh1@yahoo.com.

Winter Gardening Seminar

There's still time to register for the Winter Garden Seminar hosted by the Eau Claire Area Master Gardeners February 7 at the Chippewa Valley Technical College. There will be grand prizes, vendors, food, fellowship, and fun. Cost is \$30/person which includes lunch & snacks. Registration postmarked after January 30th costs \$35/person. Registration at the door is \$35/person.

Speakers include Jeff Gillman "The Truth About Garden Remedies", Darren Lockner "Water Conservation, Rain Gardens & Rain Barrels", Gayle Kleppe & Beau Wold "Prairie Plants", Nancy Skelly "New Perennials on the Market", Dean Carstenson "Annuals", Kristina Beunig "Invasive Species and our Lakes", and Susan Frame "Sustainable Landscaping".

For more information contact Erin LaFaive erin.lafaive@ces.uwec.edu or 715-839-4712



The Potting Shed Events

- ★ Thursday, February 5, 6 p.m.-Healthy houseplants Join us and learn how to care for your houseplants and deal with common problems. Call 831-4000 to register.
- ★ Thursday, February 19, 6 p.m.- Great new perennials for 2009! Start planning your garden now! Take a look at some of these beauties and feel inspired for spring! Call 831-4000 to register.

Think Spring! Garden Seminar

Saturday, February 21- Chippewa Falls Master Gardeners winter gardening seminar! Native plant expert and author Lynn Steiner will be the featured speaker. Call the Chippewa County extension office for registration information. 726-7950



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Unless otherwise noted, articles for this newsletter are submitted and/or written by Eau Claire County UW-Cooperative Extension Horticulture Educator Erin LaFaive. Unless otherwise noted, graphics are from clipart. Newsletter layout by Nikki Jackson.

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