

THE

GREEN THUMB



A publication of the Manitowoc County
Master Gardener Volunteers
March - April 2009

A Day For Trees

Arbor Day, which falls on the fourth Friday in April in Wisconsin, isn't much observed anymore. But planting trees still deserves recognition – an annual day to offset the paving of America. This year Arbor Day will be observed on April 24 in our state. Let us all do our part in recognizing the holiday it is and plant a tree!

Arbor Day was the invention of J. Sterling Morton, an ambitious new graduate of the University of Michigan. Only 22 when he migrated to the Nebraska Territory in 1854, Morton had headed west looking for “agricultural possibilities”, despite warnings that the land ‘wouldn't raise white beans’. In fact, the land was rich and fertile and Morton planted trees as well as corn on his farm which he had claimed by squatter's rights. While serving as president of the Nebraska Board of Agriculture, he proposed an official day for planting trees. Calling the settlement of America “a diary of destruction”, Morton lobbied for an arboreal bureau to “act as a signal station does upon a storm coast, and warn the race...from danger to its very existence which shall come from non-attention to forestry – too much activity in cutting down and too little in planting out trees”. The very first Arbor Day celebration in 1872, 1 million trees were planted in Nebraska alone. By 1887, 600 million trees had been planted nationwide. Today every state and several foreign countries recognize the holiday.

Arbor Day quickly evolved into a patriotic holiday as well as an occasion to set out huge numbers of trees. Towns were encouraged to hold “proper exercises, the recitation of brief passages from English literature relating to trees, songs about trees sung by the children, addresses and plantings of trees to be named for distinguished persons”. By 1890 only communities south of the Mason Dixon line lacked a Lincoln oak. An Arbor Day manual published in 1890 consists of 456 pages of suggested poems, songs, and readings. Despite a warning – “Caution: Do not make the program too long” – one program includes nine musical selections, two prayers, nine recitations, three essays, one address, one declamation, and one dialogue, plus a reading of the Arbor Day Law, a vote for a state tree, the appointment of a tree committee, and the naming and planting of trees. Programs like this one may explain the demise of formal Arbor Day festivities!

Garden Events

March 18, 2009 Fruit Crop Pruning Workshop, Appleton, WI

This program will cover many aspects of fruit tree pruning, canopy management and pest care for backyard fruit growers. At 3:00 p.m. at the Outagamie Co. UW-Extension office. For more information contact Kevin Jarek at (920) 832-5121.

March 18, 2009 Orchard Management and Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop, Appleton, WI

This program will cover the many aspects of fruit tree pruning, training and grafting techniques. Each participant will receive 3 rootstocks and scionwood for grafting with hands-on experience. \$10. At 6:00 p.m. at the Winnebago Co. UW-Extension office. For more information contact Kevin Jarek at (920) 832-5121.

March 21, 2009 A Day in the Garden, Fond du Lac, WI

Sponsored by the MGAs of Fond du Lac and Calumet Counties, this program features three general session speakers, a breakout session with choice of 3 topics, and lunch. \$35, includes lunch. For more information contact Kathy Schneider, Fond du Lac Co. UW-Extension at (920) 929-3171

March 23, 2009 March Master Gardener Monthly Meeting @ County Office Complex 6:30pm
Rosie Bugs to talk about the Costa Rica Trip

March 24, 2009 Ferns, Mosses and Lichens, Sturgeon Bay, WI

The Door Co. MGA presents speakers Roy and Charlotte Lukes at 7:00 p.m. at Crossroads at Big Creek, Sturgeon Bay. For more information contact Tom Kile, tkile1@wildblue.net

March 25, 2009 Love and Glory in the Garden: Up Close and Personal with Bay and Myrtle
Cedarburg, WI

Sponsored by the Ozaukee MGA and Wisconsin Unit of the Herb Society of America with Marcia Carmichael, Historical Gardener at Old World Wisconsin at 7:00 p.m. \$5, includes herbal refreshments. At the 4-H Youth Building at the Ozaukee Co. Fairgrounds. For more information contact Kathleen at (262) 377-3276 or Annie at (262) 238-8610.

March 27, 2009 Brown Bag Wisline Vegetable Garden Planning and Site Prep
12 noon @ County Office Complex

Vegetable gardening is a rewarding opportunity in which the whole family can become involved. Planning is a cold weather task, but a well planned garden provides opportunity to select plant types and varieties, extended seasonal produce, choice of seed versus transplant establishment, and much more. Proper site preparation will result in better soil conditions, fewer weeds and increased production. Join Dr. Robert Tomesh in a review of tactics to increase your gardens production potential.

March 28, 2009 Fruit Tree Pruning, Green Bay, WI

Whether you have an orchard or a single tree, pruning is a vital part of maintaining good health, disease management and better yield of your fruit trees. Pruning stimulates growth, controls the size and shape of the tree and improves the quality of the fruit. Join Tony Dembski, owner of Maple Valley Orchards and Nursery in Gillett, from 9:00 a.m. to noon to learn the proper pruning techniques. See how easy it can be – first by lecture and then hand's on – so please dress for the weather and bring your pruning shears. Hosted by the Northeast WI MGA at the Ag & Extension Service Center, 1150 Bellevue St. Green Bay. \$2 donation; pre-registration required. For more information or to register, contact Debi at (920) 465-8512.

March 28, 2009 2009 Spring Garden Conference, Marinette, WI

Sponsored by the Northern Lights MGA, this conference will feature keynote speaker Douglas Tallamy, Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware. He will speak on Bringing Nature Home and also conduct a workshop on utilizing native plants in the home landscape to save biodiversity. Also includes lunch and breakout sessions in the afternoon. For more information contact Linda Warren at (715) 732-7510.

April 4, 2009 Spring Thaw Symposium Green Bay Botanical Garden, Green Bay, WI

Featuring Scott Ogden and Lauren Springer Ogden on Plant Driven Design; Roy Diblik on Perennial Plant Communities: "The Know Maintenance Approach"; and Brent Gustason on Groundcovers: The What, The Why and The Care. \$70 (\$55 members), includes lunch. For more information, contact the Green Bay Botanical Garden, 2600 Larsen Road, P.O. Box 12644, Green Bay, WI 54307-2644 at (920) 490-9457

April 11, 2009 Fruit Tree Grafting, Green Bay, WI

Tony Dembski, owner of Maple Valley Orchard & Nursery near Gillett, will provide an excellent hands-on experience of grafting an apple twig (scion) to a dwarfing rootstock. Learn different types of grafting techniques in this class from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Scion wood and rootstocks of apple and pear will be available to purchase. Hosted by the Northeast WI MGA at the Ag & Extension Service Center, 1150 Bellevue St. Green Bay. \$2 donation; pre-registration required. For more information or to register, contact Debi at (920) 465-8512.

April 27, 2009 April Master Gardener Monthly Meeting @ County Office Complex 6:30 pm.
Dorothy Bugs to present on Wildflowers

April 24, 2009 Brown Bag Wisline Fruits and Vegetables: Ready, Set, and Preserve
12 noon @ County Office Complex

Nothing is more enjoyable than home preserved food that is safe and of high quality. Beginning with jams and jellies and extending to canned potatoes, there are several basic steps to preparing for a season of preserving the bounty of your garden and orchard. This program will highlight tips and hints on getting ready to preserve safe, high quality fruits and vegetables. Join Dr. Barb Ingham in a review of safe food preservation tactics.

May 7, 2009 A Dinner's Worth of Herbs: Herbal recipes for Salads, Main Dishes, and Desserts
Cedarburg, WI

A panel of HSA and OMGVs will share their favorite herbal recipes for turning ho-hum meals into tastebud-tantalizing and palate-pleasing fare. Sponsored by the Ozaukee MGA and Wisconsin Unit of the Herb Society of America with Ozaukee MGV Kathleen Awe at 7:00 p.m. \$5, includes herbal refreshments, lots of samples and take-home recipes. At the 4-H Youth Building at the Ozaukee Co. Fairgrounds. For more information contact Kathleen at (262) 377-3276 or Annie at (262) 238-8610.

May 9, 2009 5th Annual Northeast Wisconsin HerbFest, Green Bay, WI

Sponsored by the Northeast Wisconsin Unit of the herb Society of America. programs on Garlic-Nature's Gift to Man; Bay - Herb of the Year 2009; Kitchen Herbology; Culinary Herbs; and Nourishing Herbs. At the Green Bay Botanical Garden, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information, contact Jackie at (920) 246-7377.

May 30, 2009 Melinda Meyers at the Holiday Inn, Manitowoc, WI

The Manitowoc Garden Club is hosting Melinda Meyers on Saturday, May 30th, 2009. The event will take place at the Holiday Inn starting at 11 AM. The cost is \$3.00 to attend the event.

Growing vegetables from seeds is fun and rewarding. It helps you save money in your food budget and promotes a healthy diet. Starting seeds indoors is simple. Here are some basic tips:

1) Selecting the right cultivar and good quality seed is very important for successful gardening. Though good quality seeds are pricey, in long term it can be more rewarding. Also, if possible, select disease resistant cultivars. The University of Wisconsin-Extension publication, "Vegetable Cultivars and Planting Guide for Wisconsin Gardens," can guide you in choosing the right varieties/cultivars for our region. Contact your local county UW-Extension office to obtain a copy of that publication. You can also download it at www.browncountyextension.org

2) The growing medium for seed starting should be loose, light, well drained, and be able to hold moisture. To prepare the growing medium, pasteurize a mixture of peat moss, perlite/vermiculite and sand in equal amounts. Or you can simply get a bag of seed starting mix at the garden store.

3) Use plastic flats, trays, paper pots, or plastic cell packs that are at least two inches deep with drainage holes. Old containers or trays can be recycled for use but they need to be disinfected using a 10% bleach solution and then air dried.

4) Timing is critical when it comes to sowing seeds. Vegetables that have a long maturity period or that have a short growing season need to be given a head start by starting them indoors. These vegetables need to be sown 4-12 week prior to transplanting outdoors. For instance, cool season vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and head lettuce can be sown indoors around middle of March and their seedlings are transplanted outside the first week of May. Warm loving vegetables like tomatoes, peppers and okra need to be sown around middle of April and the seedling are transplanted the last week of May or first week of June after the threat of frost. Pumpkins, watermelon, and beans can be directly seeded outside around second or third week of May.

5) When the time is ready to sow your seeds indoors, fill the trays with the moist growing medium and gently level it. Sow the seeds to the depth recommended on the seed packet. Typically, large seeds are sown in pairs in an individual cell pack or container to a depth of one-half inch. Once the seedlings establish in the container/pack, thin the extra seedling by snapping the shoot at its base. Medium-sized seeds are sown in furrows. Use a pencil or your finger to make a shallow furrow across the surface of the container to a depth of one-quarter inch. Leave a spacing of 1-2 inches between the furrows. Sow the seeds thinly and uniformly in the furrow and cover it lightly with the growing medium. Fine seeds can be broadcast uniformly on the trays and simply press them gently into the surface of the growing medium.

6) After the seeds are sown, keep the medium moist, not wet. You can use a fine mist sprayer or place the container in a tray containing one inch of water. Then cover the container with a transparent lid or plastic bag to contain the moisture. Label the container or the cell pack with variety/cultivar name and the date of sowing.

7) Place the covered container in a warm location that has a constant temperature of 70-75 F. Do not place it in direct sunlight. You can also use a heat pad underneath the tray to enhance faster germination. After the seedlings germinate, remove the transparent lid or plastic bag and the heat pad.

8) Now place the container in a cool, ventilated location with the temperature in the range of 65-70 F. during the day and 55 F. during the night. At this stage, seedlings require bright light. Use two 40-watt fluorescent bulbs (one warm white bulb and the other a cool white bulb) and position the light bulbs to a height of about six inches above the tray. As the seedlings start to grow you may need to adjust the height of the bulbs to maintain six inches above the plants. Using a timer, set the duration of the light bulbs to 16 hours each day.

9) As the seedlings start to grow, check the growing medium for moisture. If the soil starts to dry, water the container from below. This helps keep the medium moist and encourages better root development of the seedlings.

10) Seeds that are not sown in individual containers must be transplanted when the seedlings reach the 1-2 true leaf stage.

COMMUNITY GARDENS HAVE DEEP ROOTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

By: Carolz Curtis

The idea of community gardens not only grows deep into American history, but is enjoying a resurgence of popularity as growing numbers of people embrace the idea of a collaborative greenspace where the participants share in both the maintenance and the rewards.

Interest in developing and being part of community gardens across Wisconsin is high, according to Dr. Robert Tomesh, University of Wisconsin Extension horticulturist. He added 10 phone lines to accommodate the influx of participants for the February Brown Bag on the subject carried over Wisline.

In the Madison area, Tomesh said, the group that organizes community gardens has documented a 27 percent increase in the amount of land utilized over the past five years and a 51 percent increase in the number of participating families.

Looking back over history, guest presenter Mary Reilly-Kliss, Washington County Master Gardener and West Bend Community Gardens Coordinator said the development of community gardens run in direct parallel with social, economic and political events.

During her historical overview, Reilly-Kliss said the nation's first community gardens were planted in the late 1890s as a direct result of the Panic of 1893 and the Depression of 1894, which put 35 percent of the American population out of work and large numbers in need of social assistance.

The idea of gardening in groups on borrowed land struck root in Detroit, Reilly-Kliss said, when Mayor Hazen Pingree asked owners of vacant lots to allow unemployed people to use them to grow vegetables for subsistence. The plots were called Pingree's Potato Patches and allowed the gardeners to supplement their food supply and their income.

The gardens also instilled self respect and independence, and meant a substantial financial savings for the city. Detroit invested \$3,000 in the urban garden program which produced \$12,000 worth of potatoes and vegetables in its first year alone, Reilly-Kliss said, saving the city over \$9,000 in direct relief checks.

Another program benefit was helping immigrants socialize and become more integrated into the United States melting pot. The mayor went so far as to provide brochures in different languages so the immigrants could understand, she added.

The Detroit mayor's model of urban gardening was accepted nationally and instituted in Philadelphia and New York.

At the same time, a school garden movement got underway. It was sparked by the thought that gardening could be used to teach the multitudes of children living in the slums and tenements. It was intended to encourage good behavior, patience and politeness, and teach them some values of American agriculture, Reilly-Kliss said. And, if the kids became very adapt, they might even move out of those inner city tenements and into the country.

Other school programs were integrated into the school gardens, including social studies and science curriculum. By 1918, there were almost 5,000 school gardens in the United States, she noted.

World War I ignited interest in Liberty Gardens, whose goal was to send farm-raised crops overseas to soldiers and allies where war and bad weather had decimated European gardens and brought about a food crisis. (continued next page)

Local food production was seen as helping both international and domestic needs, Reilly-Kliss said. Americans were asked to reduce consumption of goods that could be exported and to grow as much of their own food as possible, while a poster campaign urged all citizens to do their part. The garden furloughs were described as trenches and gardeners were viewed as soldiers of the soil, Reilly-Kliss said.

Women were very active in the war garden movement. They worked and plowed eight to 12 hours a day and six days a week, she said, outfitted in bib overalls commonly called womanalls or freedomalls. By 1918, there were 5 million Liberty Gardens producing \$500 million in produce for the movement.

A period of prosperity followed though the 1920s, ended by the fall of the stock market and the Depression. Unemployment soared and, as in the 1890s, the social assistance program of 1934 got jobless people growing their own food by providing land, materials and a measure of self-respect. By 1934, Reilly-Kliss said, almost 2 million people in 43 states produced almost \$47 million worth of food for themselves and their neighbors.

When Franklin Roosevelt was elected president and created jobs through the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration, there was no longer a need for the federal government to provide garden relief. Gardens were again seen as something only for people who couldn't support themselves, Reilly-Kliss said. They were renamed welfare gardens and support was removed because of the negative social connotations.

That changed during WWII with the Victory Garden program, which differed from the Liberty gardens because it was less about scarcity and more about being efficient, Reilly-Kliss noted. About 75% of the produce went to the civilians and 25% went to the troops, giving people a sense of helping their family members fighting in Europe.

There were challenges to gardening during wartime. Since synthetic chemicals were needed to make bombs for the war effort, manure and composting became more important in vegetable plots. With sugar and rubber for canning in short supply, some Extension departments purchased canners and pressure cookers. You could go there and use their equipment, because you couldn't get canners or water baths because the metal was needed for the war effort, Reilly-Kliss said.

By 1943, there were over 20 million Victory Gardens across America. Over 54% of the nation's households had a garden, Reilly-Kliss reported, and there was even a buyers panic over seed scarcity. When the war ended, the benefits of community gardens was not enough to keep the movement going and we moved into the system where, I think, we are today, Reilly-Kliss said. Starting in the 1950s, it's more a matter of alternative politics, civil rights and ecological activism, where residents took the initiative to improve city lots and create better places in their community for people to grow their own.

In 1973, the Master Gardeners program was instituted in Washington State as a way to help University Extension handle all the horticultural questions being asked by the public.

Dr. Helen Harrison, professor at UW Madison, brought the MG program to Wisconsin, working with UW River Falls professor Bob Tomesh to make the program a reality. It was chartered in 1992 when gardeners from around the state met in Stevens Point for an organizational meeting.

In July 1999, the position of Master Gardener program coordinator was established by the University to address growing needs throughout the state. Susan Mayer was selected to work with the

program and coordinate with the state's six MG districts.

In 1979, the American Community Gardens Association (ACGA) was formed. Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, it is a bi-national nonprofit membership organization devoted to community gardens in America and Canada.

ACGA believes that community gardening improves people's quality of life by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, unifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education.

Social justice remains a prime motivator of the movement today, Reilly-Kliss said, as opposed to paternalistic patterns of the early 20th century. One thing you must remember when looking at the history and as we're working in our community gardens, she said. They are 50 percent gardening and 100 percent local, political organizing. If you don't have your community's support, you just can't really have a garden.

For more information on vegetable producing community gardens, visit the American Community Gardens Association website at communitygarden.org or www.coummunitygarden.org/learn/string-a-community-garden.php#form. The Community Action Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin has a host of downloadable resource brochures and forms, and Reilly-Kliss can be reached at maryrk@charter.net.

Catgrrpillars crawling around snow

I have been receiving many calls from the homeowners in regard to the caterpillar seen on their lawn. This caterpillar is identified as winter cutworm, *Noctua pronuba*. Winter cutworm feeds on alfalfa, corn, rye, wheat, lawn grass and vegetables in fall and stay dormant during winter. They typically have a tendency to migrate in huge mass in seek for vegetative plants. The recent winter thaw might have triggered the caterpillar to emerge from dormancy and started to crawl on the lawn. These caterpillar can survive even under cold conditions because they have anti-freeze like chemical in their body to keeps them warm. They are native to Europe and can grow up to 2.5 inches in length. The larvae are light green in abdomen region with brownish black in the dorsal side with two parallel black dashes running all the way back. Female moth can produce 300-400 larvae. The larvae overwinters and emerge back in April for further feeding and pupate to moth in May or June.

Currently huge population of the winter cutworm caterpillar are seen in Northeast Wisconsin. However there is nothing to be panic about it. They will get back to dormancy as soon as the weather turns out to be cold again. In spring, many predators like birds, mammals might keep the cutworm population under control. But just keep eye on your perennial plants that emerge in early April.

Submitted via email: Vijai Pandian

MASTER GARDENERS OF MANITOWOC COUNTY
MONTHLY MEETING

DATE: February 23, 2009
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Manitowoc County Office Complex
ATTENDANCE: 10
EDUCATION: Proper Tree Planting – John VanElls – 1 hr.

Vice President Pat Hollen called the February meeting to order. The secretary read the minutes of the January meeting which were approved as read. The report from the treasurer will be given at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) The Annual Dinner meeting in January went well with 35 people in attendance, 21 of which were Master Gardeners.
- 2) The bus trip to the WPTV Garden Expo also was very good with great seminars and many vendors. Thirty-one people went on the bus.
- 3) Dorothy had badges to distribute to the new members. She also stated that Faye Malik will have an Extension staff meeting on the first Thursday of each month. Rosie will attend the March meeting as a representative of the Manitowoc Master Gardeners.
- 4) Dorothy will be setting up a display board in the front entrance with information on the Master Gardener program as well as on the gypsy moth and the emerald ash borer. She said she will need to have some pictures enlarged for the display.
- 5) It was decided that the minutes should be posted on the MG website, and Pat will ask Renee to email everyone with the address for this website. A discussion also took place as to whether the newsletter should be sent via email or hardcopy. This was brought up at the September meeting and will be discussed again at the March meeting and voted upon at that time.
- 6) Members were asked to consider whether we should continue our annual membership of \$100 for Woodland Dunes. A motion was made and seconded that we continue this membership. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Earth Day Celebrations will be taking place on April 18th at the University of Wisconsin Manitowoc County Campus. It was brought up that we might want to have a table there which would give us more exposure in the community.
- 2) The Outagamie Co. MGA is sponsoring “Garden Expectations” on March 7 with Melinda Myers as the featured presenter.
- 3) Pat asked that if anyone had anything of interest for the newsletter that it be sent to Renee or one of the officers.
- 4) The next meeting will be held on March 23 at the County Office Complex, and Rosie Bugs will give a presentation on her trip to Costa Rica.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Tisler, Secretary

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- English Poetry from the Middle Ages

“Spring has come,
Loudly sing cuckoo !
Groweth seed and blooms mead
And springs the wood now.
Sing cuckoo!”

“April hath put a spirit of youth in everything.”
- William Shakespeare