



Wood County Master Gardener's Newsletter

UW-Extension

Volume 10 Issue 1

Wood County Events

Ag Day Sunday, March 19 Wisconsin Rapids

The Ag Day Committee has planned a day of fun and learning for all the attendees of Ag Day, which will be held at Lincoln High School in Wisconsin Rapids. This is an annual event where we have a booth and teach children and adults about gardening and the Master Gardeners.

This year's theme is "Birds & Blooms". A raffle will be held again and we need donated

items appropriate to the theme. If you can donate something or better yet, make something, call Donna Rasmussen at 886-3711. If you do make something, remember your time counts for support hours.

Volunteers are needed for set up on Saturday, March 18th. We also need volunteers to work at the booth on the 19th, with different shifts running during the show hours of 8:30 to 3:30. If you would like to volunteer or would like more information, contact Deb Henke at 423-6920.

Around the State

Feb 1 Tree Diseases and Insects Bristol, WI

The first in a series of four classes in the **Landscaping & Grounds Maintenance Short Course**. Includes *Tree Stress and the Diseases That Follow* by Dr. Brian Hudelson and *Tree Stress and the Insects That Follow* by Phil Pellitteri. From 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Kenosha County Center. \$15. For more information or to register contact Barb Larson at (262) 857-1945 or download the registration brochure at:

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/kenosha/hort/documents/2006brochure.pdf>

Feb 1 New and Unusual Perennials Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison

Is your garden ready for some new plants? Join Nancy Nedveck, owner of The Flower Factory, for a slide lecture from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., introducing new and uncommon perennials. Nedveck will cover selection and growing tips to inspire you to add a fresh

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University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating. UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming including Title IX and ADA. Please make requests for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to educational programs as early as possible preceding the scheduled program, service or activity.

The Master Gardener newsletter is designed to inform you about the Master Gardener and University Extension activities as well as educational articles. Please let us know if there are any subjects you would like covered in future newsletters.

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- *Two of our MGs are teaching classes at UW Marshfield, more information on page 3.*
- *Did you register for the state conference yet? Your spouse is invited, see more in the WIMGA update.*
- *As always, Chris has timely information in her column.*



News from the President

New Year Greetings to all Gardeners!!

Those of us in Central Wisconsin have only glimpsed the sun for a sparse few minutes in the past weeks, but I hold out hope for a wonderful new year and bright things for all. As I fill a mug of steamy coffee and grab the newest seed catalog that landed in my mailbox I know in my heart the sun will return for long warm days, the birds will make music and the earth will return to green.

Your Board of Directors is busy making plans for the new Master Gardener year. Meetings for programs, continuing education and project funding allocations are in progress and others are scheduled so we can be prepared to start our Master Gardener season in March.

Garden Dreams plans are complete. It will be great to see everyone at the conference on January 28th. Parking around the University Center is free-of-charge on Saturdays but we strongly encourage you to carpool with friends and fellow MG members. Remember, do

Around the State

(Continued from page 1)

feel to this year's garden. \$13 For more information call Olbrich at (608) 246-4550 or download the registration form at <http://www.olbrich.org/Education/19642.indd.pdf>

Feb 18

Think Spring Gardening Seminar Chippewa Falls

Come and enjoy fascinating presentations, knowledgeable speakers, door prizes, and the good company of fellow gardeners from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This gardening seminar is sponsored by Chippewa Valley Master Gardeners Association and Chippewa County UW-Extension. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Fee includes lunch. At Chippewa Falls Senior Center, 1000 E. Grand Avenue, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. For more information contact Laura Franta or download the Think Spring brochure at <http://www.hort.wisc.edu/>

not park in spaces marked for "permit parking only". Our program is going to be fantastic so get your registration in the mail today.

While we're talking about programs, conferences and projects:

- Don't forget the state MG Conference in Appleton, March 24 & 25. The registration materials were in your January WIMGA newsletter.
- Pat Welch and I volunteered to co-chair the 2006 Garden Walk scheduled for July 8, 2006. The gardens are confirmed and meetings begin the latter part of February.
- Start thinking about a committee to volunteer for.
- Plant sales are in the planning stages and we're off to a great start for 2006.

See you at Garden Dreams!!

Chris Landowski

[mastergardener/](http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener/), (go to upcoming events, then scroll down to Feb 18).

Feb 25

A Day in the Garden Fond du Lac

Offered by the Fond du Lac MGA, this all day session features Dr. Jim Nienhuis speaking as *The Vicar of Veggies* and Dave Wanninger talking on *What's Hot, What's Not: Plantings for the Home Garden*. \$25 includes lunch. For more information contact Gloria Kelroy at (920) 929-3173.



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Wisconsin Master Gardener Website

<http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener/>

Wood County Extension Website

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/wood/>

Newsletter Submissions:

Articles for the newsletter should be submitted by the 10th of the month for publication that month. Submit articles to Joan Korger or Chris Landowski, e-mail addresses are included in the board member list above. Mail articles to 1323 Cty Rd AA, Nekoosa WI 54457.

Carpool locations:

- **Wisconsin Rapids-Courthouse** parking lot on the corner of Market and Avon Streets.
- **Marshfield-Best Western**, Clearwaters Hotel and Convention Center, park in the front, at the NE corner of the lot on Roddis and 26th St.

WIMGA Update

The following business was conducted at the January 12th meeting.

1. Susan's *Coordinator Report* included a reminder that dues need to be in by January 31st to the treasurer. \$5 of your local dues are submitted to the state for your state membership. Payment of your dues assures you will get the state newsletter.
2. The 2006 Conference committee will be mailing raffle tickets to the

local associations next week. More and more silent auction items are being accumulated, including books, a signed Packer football and more. A reminder was given, you may register a spouse, friend or family member at the MG fee as long as you submit the registration along with your own.

3. The Procedures Committee is working on a document to provide guidelines to local associations for writing or revising their by-laws.

4. Bill Wright of Brown County has received the grant for the "Got Dirt" program. He will provide more information to the counties who previously expressed interest in participating.
5. The display for the Annual Conference is being planned.

Submitted by Joan Korger

"Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year. For gardening begins in January with the dream."
-Josephine Nuese

Classes at UW Marshfield/Wood County

Starting Plants from Seeds

Date: March 21 & 23

Time: 7:30-9 pm **Rm:** 135 **Course:** S622 **Fee:** \$15 **CEUs:** .3

Instructor: Maria Edelstein

Learn how to grow hard-to-find annuals, perennials or heirloom tomatoes from seed. The basics of seed starting are discussed from germination to transplanting the seedlings outdoors. Students are invited to plant seeds in class.

Growing Orchids

Date: Tuesdays, Jan 31 & Feb 7

Time: 6-7 pm **Rm:** 405 **Course:** S624 **Fee:** \$15 **CEUs:** .2

Instructor: Maria Edelstein

Learn to grow exotic orchid plants in your home for year 'round beauty. A history and background of orchids will be discussed, as well as specific cultural information to ensure success as a grower.

Yard & Garden Maintenance

Date: Thursdays, March 6 & 16

Time: 6-9 pm **Rm:** 126 **Course:** S623 **Fee:** \$29 **CEUs:** .6

Instructor: Joyce Fischer

Basic yard and garden maintenance from the ground up. This class will cover tree and shrub pruning, fruit trees, fertilizing, mulching and more. Learn how to prepare your soil before planting this spring.

Registration Information

To register for any of these classes you can phone 715-389-6520, register in person at the office in the W.W. Clark Administration Building on campus, between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. You can also register online at www.marshfield.uwc.edu/ce.

Goodies From the Garden Recipe

Pronto Pasta Bake

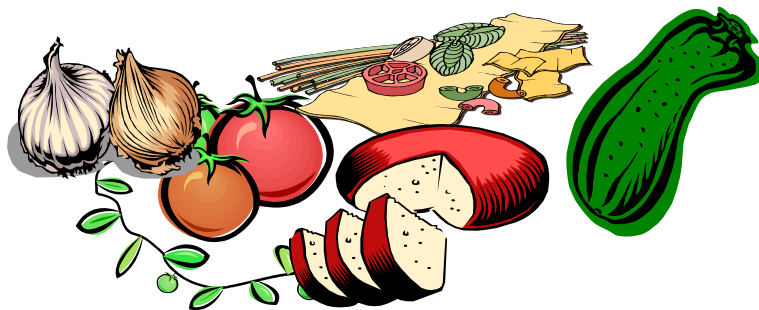
Preheat oven to 375 Degrees

Ingredients

- 12 ounces rotini pasta, uncooked
- 2 med. zucchini, coarsely chopped (about 2 cups)
- 2 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 jar (48 ounces) spaghetti sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves
- 2 ounces (1/2 cup) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella

Directions

Cook pasta according to directions, drain. Chop zucchini with food chopper. In 2-quart bowl, blend pressed garlic, spaghetti sauce, garlic and basil.



Layer 1/3 of the sauce mixture, half the pasta, and half each of the cheeses. Repeat layers and cover with aluminum foil. Bake for 45 minutes. Uncover and continue baking 5 minutes. Serve with crusty garlic bread. For variations add mushrooms, chopped onion or other fresh chopped garden vegetables as preferred.

Update from Susan Mahr

Susan, the State MG Coordinator has the following information to share.

Horticulture Magazine Symposia in our Backyard

Horticulture magazine sponsors only a few symposia every year at only a few locations nationwide, and we are lucky to have two coming to our area.

- *Romancing the Site: Inspired Gardening with Regionally Adapted Plants* at the Chicago Botanic Garden on February 2, 2006. This day of lectures on the art of transforming a less-than-perfect site into an inspired garden will feature Horticulture's director of programs, Nan Sinton; Rosemary Alexander, keynote speaker Page Dickey, Dan Hinkley, and Craig Bergmann.
- *The Color-Rich Garden: Designing with Distinctive Plants* at Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison on February 15, 2006. This lecture series will feature some of gardening's most renowned color experts, including Helen Dillon, Rob Proctor, and Horticulture's director of programs, Nan Sinton. They'll be joined in Madison by Janet Macunovich and Carol Reese.

These symposia are \$119 for *Horticulture* subscribers or members of the co-sponsoring garden (\$129 for non-members) and include lunch. To register call toll free at (877) 436-7764 with credit card information or visit the symposium website at <http://secure.hortmag.com/programs/>.

Iowa MG Forum

Storey County (Iowa) MGs just launched a Zones 4-5 gardening web forum at <http://www.mastergardener.iastate.edu/forum/> and hope you will participate with questions and answers! It is their sincere endeavor to cooperate with as many other MG organizations across the Midwest and even internationally, as the Internet has made everything global and Zones 4-5 girdle the globe!

WI Master Naturalist Program

Extension educators are looking for individuals who would be interested in subscribing to the WI Volunteer Master Naturalist listserv. This list will help Wisconsin educators work on steps to build a Volunteer Master Naturalist program and infrastructure for Wisconsin. If you are interested, you can subscribe at <https://lists.uwex.edu/mailman/listinfo/vol-master-naturalist>

Louisiana MG Programs & Hurricane Relief

The MG Program Coordinator for Louisiana recently sent a letter regarding how MGs in other states can help with the 're-greening' of areas devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Thirteen of their Louisiana MG programs, representing 30 parishes (almost half of the state) were directly impacted; five of the Extension offices were completely destroyed and many extension agent and MG are still displaced and their homes damaged or destroyed. The LSU AgCenter, in cooperation with the Louisiana 4-H Foundation, has developed a Louisiana Master Gardener Hurricane Relief Fund for individual Louisiana MGs and MG programs that were directly impacted by the hurricanes. This fund will help with specific identified needs of those people and programs most affected and will help to rebuild their MG Extension Volunteer Program in Louisiana. While plant materials, supplies and hands-on help is needed, the biggest impact in helping them obtain these items and help their MG programs recover is through monetary donations. Checks should be made out to the "Louisiana 4-H Foundation" with "Hurricane-Master Gardener" in the memo field and can be mailed to:

Louisiana 4-H Foundation
PO Box 25100
Baton Rouge, LA 70894

For more information contact

Robert Souvestre, State MG Coordinator
137 Julian Miller Hall – Horticulture
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
(225) 578-1030
bsouvestre@agcenter.lsu.edu



Thanks from WPT

Shelley Ryan sent a holiday card to me asking me to "share with all MGs how much their support (and yours) is appreciated!" The card was printed:

Thank you from Wisconsin Public Television and warmest wishes for a peaceful new year.

Herb of the Year 2006: Scented Geraniums

The International Herb Association has designated scented geraniums as their Herb of the Year for 2006. Scented geraniums, in the genus *Pelargonium* (which includes over 200 species, some scented and others scentless) are relatives of the common red, pink or white flowered summer annual zonal geraniums (derived from the relatively scentless pelargonium, *P. x hortorum*). They are grown more for the highly aromatic foliage than the flowers. Plants have a wide range of leaf types which are used for making potpourris, sachets, and flavorings. The scent is contained in oil produced in special glands at the base of the leaf hairs. Bruising or crushing the leaves breaks open the glands, releasing the scented oil.

Scented geraniums were originally brought to Holland and England from South Africa in the mid 1600s. Since then, breeding and hybridization has resulted in hundreds of varieties, in a wide range of shapes, sizes, and color, and in rose, mint, spice, fruit, and pungent fragrances. The scented geraniums are a very large group of plants with many species that are categorized by scent (the names are sometimes confused however, with true species, cultivars, hybrids all mixed together). Some of the more common ones include:

- Apple-scented geranium, *P. odoratissimum*, is a trailing type with heart-shaped, apple-scented, grey-green ruffled leaves and white flowers.
- Coconut-scented geranium, *P. grossularioides*, is more cold hardy than many other species. The low-growing rosette of deep green rounded leaves produces tiny magenta flowers and has a pleasant scent that not everyone describes as coconut.
- Lemon-scented geranium, *P. crispum*, has a clean lemon scent from the small wrinkled, fan-shaped leaves. It bears tiny purple-pink flowers and does well in containers.
- Lime geranium, *P. nervosum*, has ruffled, round, light green leaves and lavender flowers. It flowers freely and self-seeds.
- Nutmeg-scented geranium, *P. fragrans*, is a small plant with grey-green leaves with a nutmeg-pine scent and small whitish flowers with pink veins.
- Oak-leaf geranium, *P. quercifolium*, has lobed, dark green leaves with an almond or incense scent and small rose colored flowers.
- Peppermint geranium, *P. tomentosum*, is a spreading or trailing type with medium- to grey-green, lobed leaves and white flowers with a reddish center. While the leaf has a minty scent, the flavor has other overtones so real mint (*Mentha* spp.) is best used for cooking.
- Rose-scented geranium, *P. graveolens*, has spicy rose-scented foliage with small clusters of pink flowers among the large, lobed, dark green leaves and is well suited to growing in containers. 'Rober's Lemon Rose' is a common variety with a strong lemony rose scent. 'Snowflake' is a variegated form.

Other scents include apricot, chocolate, ginger, orange and pineapple – and at least 50 other according to some lists. Another scented geranium sometimes sold as "the mosquito plant" or "citrosa" (as *P. citrosum* 'van Leenii' or *P. citronella*) is marketed as a mosquito repellent, but researchers at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada found it had no effect on mosquito biting. Supposedly the plants were developed by introducing a gene from the tropical grass *Cymbopogon nardus* (which is used to produce citronella commercially) so citronella oil would be made by the geranium leaf. Chemical analysis of the mosquito plant revealed only trace amounts of citronellol, the main compound in citronella oils, and chemically it was barely distinguishable from the normal rose-scented geranium. Even real citronella isn't an effective repellent sitting in a pot; the leaves must be crushed to release the essential oils. Crushed citrosa leaves rubbed on the body does offer a little short-term repellency, but other plants, such as lemon thyme (*Thymus X citriodorus*) or lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) even better.

Many scented geraniums have soft, finely textured foliage. The individual leaves vary in shape from deeply cut and lacy or frilled to rounded. Plants may have dark green, pale green or green-and-cream variegated leaves that vary in size from ½ to three inches across, depending on the species or variety.

The flowers of scented geraniums are not nearly as showy as their garden annual relatives – often described as small and whimsical. Both kinds have the same type of individual flowers typical of the genus. The petals are arranged with two upper petals and three lower petals, with the upper two generally larger and more richly colored than the others. They range in color from white to various shades of pink and red and usually have no fragrance.

Scented geranium plants can grow from 1' to 5' tall, developing tough, woody stems when older. Since many are frost tender and some will tolerate light freezing but not sustained cold, in the Midwest they are treated as an annual outdoors or can be grown year-round as a houseplant. There are trailing forms that can be used in baskets or as ground covers, while others are good for borders.

When grown outdoors, scented geraniums do best in sun to part shade. They prefer well-drained, fertile, moist soil. Do not overwater; water only when the soil is dry. Grow them as a summer bedding plant or in containers or hanging baskets to bring inside for the winter. Place near a path, so the fragrance is released when someone walks by and brushes against the leaves. Prune as needed to encourage dense growth. Plants grown indoors should be fertilized regularly to encourage leaf growth.

Scented geraniums can be found at most local and herb nurseries. Many types can be grown from seed, but plants grown from seed will not come true to a named cultivar, and the scent will vary. Stem cuttings are the easiest way to propagate scented geraniums. Cuttings can also be taken of garden plants in late summer to overwinter indoors. Some varieties may root in a glass of water, but greater success is obtained by placing the cuttings in damp perlite or other well-draining soilless mixtures.

The leaves can be harvested any time and used fresh or dried. They may be used in cooking, as an infusion of fresh leaves added to jellies, teas, vinegars, or desserts (such as scented sugar used in ices or syrups). Rose-scented geranium leaves are the most frequently used; one classic recipe for pound cake uses a layer of fresh leaves in the bottom of the cake pan. More frequently the leaves are used as an addition to sachets and potpourris, especially to scent clothes and linens. Fresh leaves can be added to bath water. The oils in the leaves are often distilled to make perfume. The essential oil from *P. graveolens* is sold commercially as a food flavoring and additive as geranium oil and rose geranium oil.

– Susan Mahr, University of Wisconsin