

Winnebago County Master Gardeners

Newsletter

September 2019

Mission Statement

Our purpose is to provide horticultural education, community service and environmental stewardship for our community in affiliation with the University of Wisconsin Extension Program.

***Be like a caterpillar.
Eat a lot. Sleep
loads. Wake up
beautiful.***

Photo by Kim Willman



What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am a perennial, cool season, clumping grass with foliage that is semi-evergreen to evergreen depending on the climate. I grow in zones 4-9, with a height and width from one to three feet, and prefer full sun to part shade. Moist, well-drained soil is best, but I am drought tolerant once established. My linear evergreen leaves form subtle, attractive tufts which occur in varying shades of yellowish-green, green and blue. I am a low maintenance plant.

Propagation is by division in spring or sowing seeds in spring or fall. I can be used in rock gardens, as a ground cover, in containers, in mixed borders, and in foundation or massed plantings. I attract pollinators and am deer, drought, frost and black walnut tolerant. I have no serious disease or pest problems. My plants should be cut back to the ground in late winter or early spring.

WCMGA Contacts

Check your membership guide for contact information.

Co-Presidents: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz

Vice President: Britton Dake

Secretary: Susan Raasch

Treasurer: Joni Pagel

Advisor: Kimberly Miller

Newsletter Compilation: Anne Murphy



We would love your help! If you are interested in contributing in a future newsletter by writing an article or submitting a photo, please let me know by the 15th of each month by emailing pakster0605@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Letter from your Presidents: Linda Loker & Kathy Schultz



Here we are again in the fall of the year. Leaves have been dropping on the ground since mid-August, but are we ready to pack up summer and move on to cooler temperatures? August really was not too bad this year...and did you notice that there was no pause in lawn mowing?! The grass was green and beautiful!

Projects and committees have been busy this entire season. Thank you to everyone who has participated in some way in either of these areas. Our community is so lucky to have such a talented and skilled group in their midst.

We welcome everyone back to our business meetings on Tuesday, September 10. Our speaker will be Jon Kellermann from Fox Valley Technical College, and he will be talking to us about controlled burns. Thank you **Valerie Stabenow** for seeking him out! We will also share the results of the Golden Trowel committee meetings that were held over the summer. **Stan Meyer** and the current committee will talk about these changes and answer any questions you may have.

Remember to get your membership [renewal form](#) completed and sent in to **Linda Baeten**, along with the fee. The form can be found on our master gardener website; and there is no change in the fee. The form can also be found in this newsletter. You can print it, and bring it to the business meeting September 10, along with your payment. Look for Linda and she will assist you.

We hope that you are getting your hours in using the ORS (On Line Reporting) from our extension website. Once we start using it, we promise that it is an easy way to report your hours. We have had opportunities for members to come into the extension office this past month, to have assistance if needed. There will be time for help before the September business meeting starts.

The Level 1 training orientation meetings for August were cancelled due to less than 10 participants signing up. This means that there will be no Level 1 training sessions this fall.

Election time is here! We will discuss the roles that need to be filled on the board in detail at the next two business meetings. A President(s) and a treasurer will be needed. Both have been occupied for 4 years, which is the maximum term limit for both. We now need members to fill these. We are a strong and active organization in this state because of our leadership and involvement. The hours spent serving in this capacity count as volunteer hours toward certification. Please consider serving in one of these roles.

In this time of the year, we gardeners are still relocating plants in our gardens. We must keep in mind that we have a protocol for digging and replanting any plant material outside of our yards. These [guidelines and](#)

[protocols](#) are found on our website. Members can also contact **Nancy Karuhn** and **Sue Egner** for any questions.

And as musical group The Happenings would croon....See you in September!

Kathy and Linda



Joni Pagel, Donna Kudlas, Linda Loker, Petey Clark and Kathy Schultz at Linda Loker's Garden Walk. *Picture submitted by Cindy Meszaros.*

Ground Cherries are Prolific Producers

By Lawanda Jungwirth

The wet spring, the late June heat wave, the lack of pollinators, and a groundhog have conspired to make this year's vegetable garden my worst ever. I have had spectacular success with one plant though, and it's a new one to my garden.

I planted one [ground cherry plant](#), an inch tall seedling purchased at a local nursery. Today the plant covers about 25 square feet and it's still spreading. My research says that a single ground cherry plant can produce up to 300 fruits, but I think mine will surpass that since they bear fruit from late July until frost.

Each fruit is enclosed in a husk, similar to tomatillos. The cherries are ripe when their husks turn a papery tan and they fall to the ground. It's a bit challenging to find all the fallen fruit because the plant grows so densely.

Growing ground cherries in raised beds or even a large container makes for easier harvest. Some people prefer to surround the stem with landscape fabric to make both harvesting and end of season clean-up easier.

Ground cherries prefer rich, light, warm soils with good drainage. They are heavy feeders so be sure to mix in a shovelful of compost and an organic fertilizer before planting.

My ground cherry is only 6" tall but there are varieties that grow to two feet tall. They can be prevented from sprawling with the use of small tomato cages.

You probably won't have to plant ground cherries in subsequent years. Volunteer plants will spring up everywhere from fruits that were missed during harvesting.

Husks are easily removed by peeling them back to reveal the golden yellow fruit about ½ inch in diameter. Ground cherries have an unusual, hard-to-describe taste. In my opinion, their sweet-tart taste is a mix of pineapple, cantaloupe and mild cheddar cheese, if you can imagine that.

Ground cherries are like tomatoes in that they sprout roots along their stems and should be planted deeply leaving a few sets of leaves above the soil line. They can be started from seed indoors, about 6-8 weeks before the last frost, and transplanted outdoors after all danger of frost has passed.

Unlike tomatoes, ground cherries rarely suffer from fungal, bacterial, or viral diseases. Most insects leave them alone as well, although flea beetles and white flies may find them, particularly if they are drought stressed. Water regularly and place a floating row cover over the plant if your garden suffers from these pests.

Along with fresh eating, ground cherries can be made into jam, sauces, chutneys, salsas and preserves, baked into pies or tarts, or mixed into salads or pancake batter.

Ground cherries can be stored in their husks on the counter top for a week or so, but then should be refrigerated. They will keep several weeks. They can be removed from their husks and frozen in zip-top plastic bags for future use.

Three Purple Native Plants

By Lawanda Jungwirth

On these hot days of summer, it's nice to have some cooler colors in the flowerbed instead of bright reds, oranges and yellows. Here are three native plants that bloom in cool, restful purple and are at their peak right now. As a reminder, native plants are those found in a particular area prior to European settlement and usually need less fertilizer, water and maintenance than imported plants.

None of these three are flowers that shout, "Look at me!" You might have to walk right up to them in order to appreciate them properly.

[Blue Vervain](#) grows 2-5 feet tall. Tiny purple flowers form a ruffle around the base of sharp cone-shaped centers from July until October. The plant's form is reminiscent of a chandelier. Bright green leaves are narrow and toothed. Blue Vervain prefers moist or wet soil in a sunny area so plant it in a low wet spot in the yard or next to a pond, bog or wet meadow.

Blue Vervain is host to the Buckeye butterfly and is a nectar plant for many other butterflies as well as hummingbirds. Goldfinches, juncos and other birds enjoy the seeds.

Next up is [Obedient Plant](#), also called False Dragonhead. The name "obedient" comes from the fact that you can gently bend the flowerheads and they will stay where you've bent them. "Dragonhead" comes from the shape of the flower spike which is similar in shape to the head of an imaginary dragon. The spikes of two-lipped light purple or pink flowers bloom from late July until October.

Obedient plant grows 2-5 feet tall in sun or light shade in dry or moist well-drained soil. It is in the mint family, and like most others in that family, it spreads by creeping rhizomes which cover the ground thickly. It attracts hummingbirds and bees but is avoided by deer and rabbits.

The final purple star of the warm weather flowerbed is [Heal-All](#). Also a member of the mint family, Heal-All also as a ground cover. In fact, it can be walked on and mowed repeatedly and it will still produce the same lovely flowers. Just like Blue Vervain, the light purple lipped flowers form a ruffle around a center cone, but the cone of Heal-All is much wider at 1 ¼ inches and is rounded on top. Heal-All blooms from June to October and if left un-mown, can reach 20 inches in height.

Heal-All is so named for the traditional belief that a tea made from the leaves or flowers cured many diseases.

It should be noted that while Heal-All is considered a native plant, some consider it a lawn weed. The DNR rates native plants with a "co-efficient of conservatism" that indicates the probability that a particular plant would be found in an un-degraded natural community. Heal-All rates very low and is most often found in disturbed sites. Sources other than the Wisconsin DNR do not consider Heal-All to be a native plant.



Some photos from our reclaimed Cottonwood and Buckthorn area, now a rock garden and a planter I made from our old barbecue grill. *Pictures submitted by Valerie Stabenow.*



The volunteers at OAHS bring the memorial garden to life. *Pictures submitted by Britton Dake.*



Hummingbird moth on the phlox at Parkview in August.

Photo submitted by Jane Kuhn.

Golden Trowel Award

WCMGA established this prestigious award in 2003 while Rosemary Eiden was the extension's adviser to the master gardeners. It is an award that is given to a member in good standing for 8 or more years that exemplifies the spirit of the Master Gardener organization by providing horticultural education, community service and environmental stewardship for our community, and leadership to our own organization. This award is from Winnebago County Master Gardeners to recognize the work and achievements of fellow master gardeners.

A committee came together to formalize a selection process. As a result of this committee, guidelines were set as to eligibility for this award; and a nomination form was created. This form can be found on the organization's website.

The current nomination committee chair is **Stanley Meyer**; and the committee members are **Bob Potter, Arlene and Bob Kosanke**. These members are all recipients of a Golden Trowel Award as this is a requirement to be on the committee. The committee will be at the September business meeting to talk about this new process, and to answer any questions you may have. Nomination forms will also be available at the meeting. If you are a past recipient and wish to be on this nomination committee, please contact Stanley Meyer.

Please take some time this fall and consider nominating a member that you think is deserving of this award.



Summer at the Ascend Project by Jane Kuhn

Master Gardeners continue involvement with the community garden project at Ascend in Neenah. At a recent session for residents, we were all involved in learning to identify possible issues such as the squash vine borer, proper watering and diseases in tomatoes, and the need to thin plants. After practicing some of the newly-learned skills, residents had a cooking session using cucumbers from the garden. Weighing produce is required as part of our grant for this project and as of mid-July, over 60 pounds have been harvested. The Master Gardeners rotate to visit the garden weekly and to provide feedback to the Ascend Director who works with the residents on an ongoing basis. Photos are of the recent session in the garden and illustrate the growth of the vegetables as well as work in the garden beds.



Answer to What am I?

By Jane Kuhn

I am Autumn moor grass. Order: Cyperales. Family: Poaceae / Gramineae – Grass family. Genus: Sesleria Scop. Species: Sesleria autumnalis (Scop.) F.W. Schultz. Common name: Autumn moor grass. This grass is native to the moors of Southeastern Europe and puts on its best display in autumn, hence its common name. Genus name honors Leonardo Sesler (d 1785), doctor in Venice, who had a private botanical garden there. It is an excellent, non-invasive grass useful as under planting for trees and shrubs. It can be seen in the rain garden located at the entrance to the Coughlin Center.



References: USDA Plants Database and associated links.

Member Business Meeting Minutes - No August Meeting

Remember to attend the Sept. Business Meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 6 PM!



Did you take some good pictures of your garden this summer? Do you have pictures of other Master Gardeners and the many projects they are involved in? Submit your pictures - whatever you think other members would like to see - to pakster0605@yahoo.com. Don't forget to send along the information about the picture as well. Thank you!

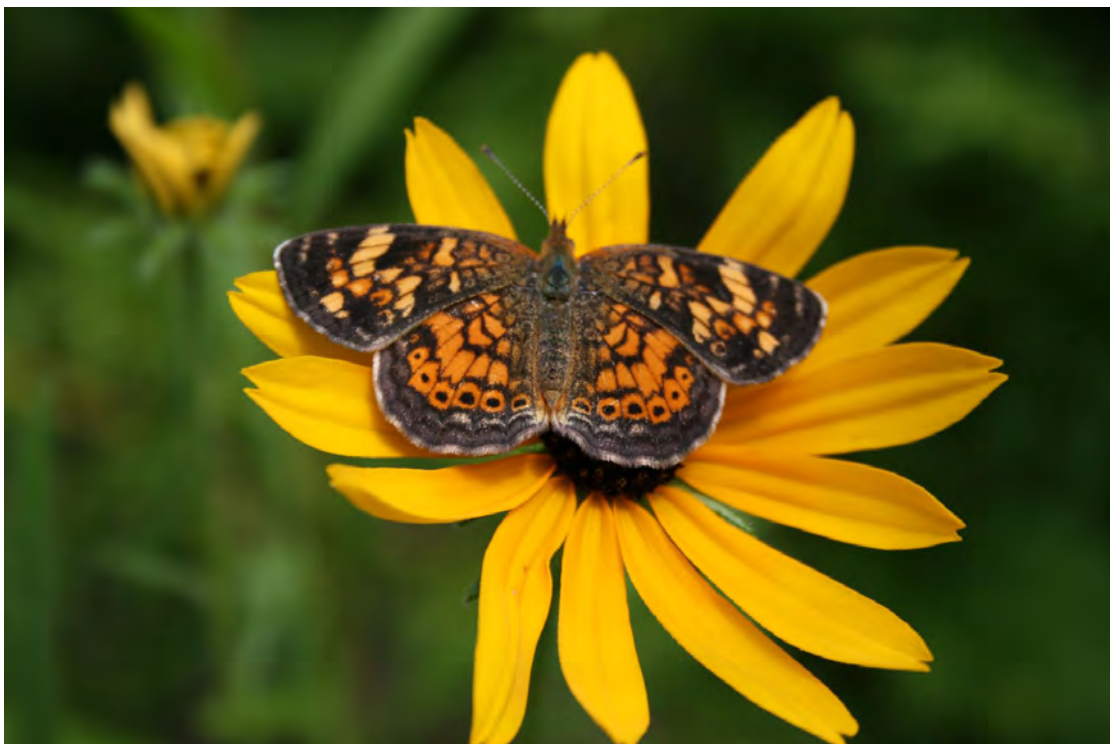


Photo submitted by Kim Willman.

Upcoming Events - See Calendar for September Events

Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM & Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM
Oct. 15 & Nov. 19: Education Committee meeting 5:30 PM at Benvenutos

Looking for Leads!

A few of our Master Gardener Long-Term Projects are looking for Co-Leads and Leads.

Leads and Co-Leads help with many aspects of gardening and community outreach that may include planning, design, maintenance, education and helping the public.

If you are interested in learning more about the opportunity to coordinate a Project, please contact Britton Dake in one of the following ways:

Email: brittonadake@gmail.com

Phone (707) 321-0893 text or call Thank you!



Farmer's Market 2019, Janet Priebe leading the cause.
Pictures submitted by Anne Murphy.



Stop down to the park and Library to see what our volunteers are doing in Neenah. Pictures submitted by Britton Dake.



MASTER GARDENER MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please turn in this form by September 1st

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Amount enclosed: _____ \$30.00 single, _____ \$50.00 couple

Garden Interests: _____

Would you like to work with youth? Yes No

Are you interested in being a project lead or Board Member? Yes No

Please send this form along with your check to:

Linda Baeten
Winnebago County Master Gardeners
1112 Merritt Ave
Oshkosh, WI 54901

Or call 920-379-8377

Visit our website: www.winnebagomastergardeners.org

| WCMGA Projects <i>Check your Member Guide for contact information.</i> | |
|--|---|
| Project | Project Lead(s) |
| Algoma Town Hall | Petey Clark |
| Butterfly Garden Miravida Living Oshkosh | Jane Kuhn |
| Carter Memorial Library, Omro | Pat Behm/Linda Petek |
| Octagon House, Neenah | Jerry Robak |
| Invasive Species | Sue Egner/Valerie Stabenow/Audrey Ruedinger |
| Morgan House | Kathy Schultz |
| Neenah Public Library | Tamara Erickson |
| Oshkosh Area Humane Society | Julie Miller/Matt Miller |
| Paine Gardens & Arboretum | Virginia Slattery |
| Park View Cutting Garden | Bill Weber |
| Park View Prairie Garden | Eric Kropp |
| Park View Flower Arranging | Lil Hansche |
| Park View Vegetable Garden | Tom Weber |
| Farmer's Market | Dorothy Gayhart-Kunz/Janet Priebe/ Synda Jones/Patty Schmitz |
| Plant Health Advisors | Patty Schmitz/Mary Shepard |
| Shattuck Park, Neenah | Diane Iott |
| Sullivan's Woods | Linda Loker |

Project Leads: If you'd like your meetings listed on the calendar, please email information to Anne Murphy pakster0605@yahoo.com.

| September 2019 | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|---|-----------|--|--------|-----|
| Sun | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Sat |
| 1 | 2 | 3 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM Board Mtg. 6 PM | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM Business Meeting 6 PM | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM Education Committee, 5:30 PM Benvenuto's | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 Butterfly Garden 9:00 AM Park View Cutting/Veg. Gardens 12:30 PM | 25 | 26 Urban Forestry Workshop 8:00-3:00 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

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