



WOOD COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Wood County WI

December 2024

President's Message December 2024

Here we are at the end of another gardening year. That sure went fast! Time for a little reflection on what we accomplished this year. A year ago, we brainstormed about what we were looking for as a WCMGA member and what might make our work together more satisfying. The BOD and various teams and committees have been considering these responses all year and working towards some of the goals we identified. Both the BOD and the membership discussed these in their November meetings. So here is our collective "Report Card" for 2024.



We looked to Increase our knowledge, develop friendship and camaraderie while learning and serving our communities, and enhance problem solving. As always, our project gardens served as a source of education and enjoyment for ourselves and the community. We also hosted an educational social event in Tea & Tulips, sponsored 3 Road Trips for fun and learning, heard topical subjects at our monthly meetings, relaxed at a summer picnic and end of the year party, shared wisdom with each other with Sizzles and Fizzles, garden visits, and articles in our newsletter (e.g. winter sowing and jumping worms), made new associations, and taught/learned new things as we worked together on two Plant Sales and the Garden Walk. Wow, that's a lot!

We looked at ways to enhance our MG experience. Coordination with other gardening groups including surrounding county MG associations was a frequent suggestion, so we invited others to our meetings, programs, and fundraisers. Some of us traveled with another association for a garden tour. We used social media and our website to highlight our activities, spotlighting our projects on Facebook and in our newsletters. With an eye to recruitment, some of us make regular visits to Janell's MG foundations class and we finalized a tuition reimbursement program.

In 2025 we hope to continue with our successes while we endeavor to enhance our mission of education to our communities. During these long winter nights to come, I hope you'll give some thought to how we might best do that and share your ideas with me by email. Then, maybe, Spring will be here before we know it!!

Blessings to you and your family in this wonderful holiday season!
Chris

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November Meeting Minutes

Wood County Master Gardener Association
General Membership Meeting
Nov. 19, 2024 - 6:00 pm
Alexander House – Port Edwards

Program: Horticultural Research – Donna Streiff; Looking Back; Moving Forward Report Card
Total Present: 22 total (19 + 3 online)

Business Meeting: Called to order 7:44 by President Chris Grimes.

Secretary's Report: (Judy) Minutes from October 22, 2024 were reviewed without additions or corrections. Minutes will be put on file.

Treasurer's Report: (Famia) Written report from Famia reviewed without corrections or additions. It will be filed.

WIMGA – No report.

Old Business:

Project Education Signs/WIMGA Grant: (Chris) Project leaders, please respond to Chris, indicating educational content of first and second choice signs. Purchase of more than one sign/project will go thru the WCMGA budget process. WIMGA grant does not cover non-educational expenses. Results naming the grant recipients have not been announced yet.

Community Education Request: Trinity Lutheran (Ann) – on hold for now. Ann met with a representative from Trinity to discuss pros and cons of garden at their chosen site. Our involvement falls under Standard Practice IV, which states that we help facilitate plans. Ann will continue to handle the communication.

Yearly Bylaws Review: Tabled

New Business:

Photo Consent: (Chris) – Forms reviewing WCMGA Photo Release Guidelines/Permission slips were distributed. Questions were clarified. Photo consent is voluntary. All forms must be signed and returned to WCMGA Secretary.

Board Elections for 2025: Nominees for Offices include: Chris Grimes – President (3rd and final term), Terrie Brown – Vice President, Stacy Musch – Secretary, Famia Marx – Treasurer, Carolyn Schulein (beginning of 2nd term) and Bea Kohl (beginning of third term) as Directors-at-Large North and South. M/S/P to accept new officers.

Committee Needs: January Meetings: Audit, Finance (Budget), Project Approval/Funding, and Programs. February Meeting: Standard Practice IV. Revision – Jan Myers volunteered for Audit. Dues survey will be reviewed for further volunteers, with more to be recruited as needed.

Outgoing officers: The MG Association extended thanks and gave gifts to outgoing officers, Lil Schotten, Jill Becker, and Judy Miller

Adjournment: M/S/P to adjourn at 8:10 PM.

Next Meeting: March, 2025, Program TBA

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Miller, Secretary

Education Opportunities for C. E. Hours

UW Extension Horticulture [Wisconsin Horticulture – Division of Extension](#)

Programming has wrapped up for 2024. If you need Continuing Education Hours yet, go to [Online Programs Archive – Wisconsin Horticulture](#) to view many of the 2024 programs

From the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic The Clinic will sponsor a Zoom presentation on a plant disease-related topic each month. To register for one or more talks, go to [2024 PDDC Monthly Disease Talk Registration Form | Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic \(wisc.edu\)](#)

Confessions of a Black Thumb:

Evil Twins: Plant Disease Look-Alikes Dec. 18, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Learn about common diseases that have similar symptoms and can be misidentified, but may have very different management strategies

[2024 PDDC Monthly Disease Talk Registration Form | Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic](#)

Ask the Experts 1-2pm Select Mondays

Join our monthly online programs in 2024 for an opportunity to connect with plant health experts from the UW-Madison Division of Extension. Each session, held on Monday afternoons from 1:00-2:00 pm, is your chance to ask questions about your trees and shrubs, garden vegetables and ornamentals, and lawns. December 16 registration link: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

WIMGA Corner

WIMGA Report: The annual statewide WIMGA meeting will be held in January. Continuing education programs will start up again after the holidays.

Karleen

Election Results Congratulations to the following:

Chris Grimes-President
Vice President-Terrie Brown
Secretary-Stacy Much
Treasurer-Famia Marx
Directors-Carolyn Schulein, Bea Kohl

We were unable to recruit two more directors to fulfill our quota as defined in our bylaws. Be reminded you are encouraged to discuss your ideas and concerns with any Board member if the need arises. Thanks for your Support!

Thanks to Outgoing Board Members

Board members Lil Schotten, Judy Miller, and Jill Becker were honored at the November meeting for their leadership over the past few years. Thanks, ladies, for sharing your talents and commitment in the service of WCMGA!

Winter Sowing Refresher

Our hardy native plants do not get their start in a warm, cozy greenhouse somewhere. They brave the elements and take their chances of finding an amenable spot to start their life. Winter sowing is a way to give them a slight advantage over what Mother Nature provides for them. By winter sowing you are upping their chances of survival. You are providing a designated place in a chancy world for them to germinate and grow. Winter sowing is easy to do. Most native plants need some stratification to awaken their seeds and prep them for germination. Cold and moisture are the two big factors for germination success. Scarification is a third requirement for some seeds with exceptionally tough outer coats. The 2 bottles at the left yielded over 20 chamomile plants ready to plant in May.



A few of our members have volunteered to give this a shot and been successful. However we need much greater participation so all the work does not fall on 1 or 2 people.

If you are interested and have true native plants, perennials, or self-seeding plants, and they still have seeds on them, please collect the seeds, to grow yourself and/or sell at the plant sales. If you have no native plants, and you are interested in doing this, seeds will be provided for you or you can order seeds from Prairie Moon Nursery.

Choose a few natives you would like to try in your yard and keep a couple, while donating the rest to the sale.

If you are unsure what the seeds look like, harvest the entire spent flower head and research what the seeds look like. Some are very small and fine, and others are not what you think they are. For example, coneflower seeds are not the spiky things left from the flower. They are actually small light tan seeds lodged between the spikes. Prairie Moon Nursery has pictures of most of the native seeds so you can better ID the parts that are seeds. Store the seeds in paper envelopes or open plastic containers in a cool, dry place for now.

If you are unsure of the germination requirements for your particular plant, use the Internet to find propagation information (again Prairie Moon Nursery has information for native seeds) You can use your research hours for education hours!! We want this to be an educational project for our members. Winter sowing provides stratification for plant seeds and takes the guess work out of just tossing seeds in the ground to be at the mercy of the wind, weather, animals, etc. The following is an article from Penn State on the process of winter sowing of seeds.

Successful Winter Seed Sowing

What is "winter sowing"? Winter sowing is a method gardeners might choose if they want to get a head start on gardening by sowing seeds during the winter. Winter sowing is for gardeners who don't have the space or lighting available to sow seeds indoors. Instead, this method uses recycled containers which act as miniature greenhouses to sow seeds of plants that would normally survive winter either as perennials or as reseeding annuals. The containers protect the seeds so more survive to germinate in the spring. They receive the same weather and temperature as those directly sown in the ground. The uncapped spouts allow rain and melting snow to keep the soil moist. One can begin winter sowing any time after the first day of winter and as long as the nights are still chilly. To deter-

mine which seeds can be winter sown, most plant descriptions will have notations about a seed's germination requirements or will have a few clue-in phrases such as: pre-chill, freeze, refrigerate, stratify, colonizes readily, self-sows. In addition, look for terms like "sow outdoors in early spring or while frosts may still occur", "sow early autumn", "hardy", "withstands frost", "direct sow early", "wildflower" or "weed" in the name. Also search for names indicating a natural environment such as plains, mountain, or an origin in a temperate climate.

Recommended containers are recycled clear or opaque containers such as plastic milk or water jugs, two-liter soda bottles, deep foil pans with domed clear lids, and quart dairy containers. Any of these can be used keeping in mind two important requirements: if a container is tinted plastic, your hand must be visible through the plastic for sufficient light, and it must be deep enough to allow 3-4" of potting soil plus additional headroom for the seedlings. Do not use green bottles.

Throw away the caps from the jugs and bottles and remove labels. Wash the containers in hot soapy water, rinse and drain.

To convert a two-liter soda bottle or milk jug into a miniature-greenhouse, use a utility knife to cut a horizontal slit half way up the side. Then use scissors to cut the container in half (horizontally), but leave a 1" hinge. (If using a milk jug, I leave the hinge under the handle.) To provide drainage, place the bottle on a cutting board so your work surface isn't marred. Use a pointed object to puncture 3/4-inch diameter holes in the bottom of each container.



Another very important step is labeling. One can use mini blind slats cut into 5-6" lengths, but make sure they are lead-free, or plant markers. Other durable materials that you can write on also work. Using a dark lead pencil write the seed's name on the label or use a china marker (or use a china marker to write directly on the container top and bottom. Beware that permanent marker and paint pens will fade and become unreadable in the sun.

Use packaged seed starting or potting soil marked as "soil-less". Do not use garden soil which is prone to harden, or mixes that state "weed-free", or contain fertilizer or water crystals. Pre-moisten with warm water until the soil is slightly damp so the soil will wick up the water. Fill containers with 3 to 4" of soil, then tamp the container softly on a hard surface to settle the soil and add more if necessary.

Sprinkle seeds directly on top of the soil and gently press down into the soil, making sure there is good seed-to-soil contact. For large seeds, which require a depth of an inch or more, press the seeds into the soil just below the surface. Leave uncovered, or sprinkle soil over the seeds to just cover and lightly press down depending on seed size or if the seed needs light to germinate. Planting too deep is a common cause of germination failure. Insert the label inside the container along the side if using.



If your container (not a bottle or jug) has a clear lid, poke 4 to 5 holes in the lid to provide air transpiration. If the lid is opaque, cut out the inside of the lid at the inside edge of the rim to create a holder for clear plastic or cover with clear plastic and tape the plastic to the sides of the container with duct tape. Puncture 4 to 5 quarter-inch holes in the plastic.

Tape the top (half) of the milk jug or soda bottle to the bottom (half) with duct tape. Because these are miniature greenhouses, it's possible to overheat the seeds if the container is not properly vented. To water your greenhouse, set the container in several inches of water overnight to soak up moisture.

Take the container outside to a protected area such as a deck, uncovered porch, against a fence or in a flowerbed. Don't put the containers against the house or under the eaves. If the area is windy you might want to group the containers in a tub or shallow box to keep them upright. Sunny locations work best so the air inside the containers warms up enough to create condensation. Condensation is the indicator of sufficient moisture. If the containers do not show condensation on a sunny day above 32°F, water the seeds by dripping water slowly down the sides of the container or setting the containers in water. If condensation still does not show, the ventilation holes in the lids may be too big. Try taping over some of the holes. If your containers are holding too much water, the holes in the bottom may be too small, and you will need to enlarge the holes.



The hardest part is waiting. When the weather warms, the containers will thaw and freeze repeatedly as winter gives way to spring. This action of freezing and thawing helps loosen the seed coat. Amazingly, just when winter is about to break and you're still getting nightly freezes, the first signs of germination will appear! The seeds know when it's safe to germinate because it's part of their genetics.

As your seedlings grow and the temperatures rise, make slits in the tops of the soda bottles/jugs or widen the slits in the covers of other containers. When you notice "true" leaves, make the slits a little bigger once every week or two depending on the temperatures until there are more open areas than covered. Or you can remove some of the tape gradually opening the top.



When the seedlings have two sets of true leaves and are big enough to handle, you can transplant the seedlings into your garden because they are also hardened off! (At this point, we would pot up the plants and keep them over the summer for

the Fall Plant Sale much like we kept other plants over the summer between sales.) The main requirements for outdoor Winter Sowing are selecting the appropriate seeds for your plant zone, and providing both adequate drainage and air transpiration. Follow these three principles and you will have success. P.S. Some non-native cold tolerant garden plants can also be started this way if you don't have inside growing space, such as brassicas, spinach, lettuce, etc.!

If you need help getting started this winter, watch the Winter Sowing video on the Wood County MG website in the Members Only section or talk to Donna Streiff. If you need seeds, or order from Prairie Moon Nursery. Choose plants that would be useful in your garden and keep a few for your use while growing others for the sale. Or if you want to take a jug of seedlings to transplant and tend for the summer, talk to Donna also. Remember that as of now, we **cannot sell plants dug from our gardens** because of possible jumping worm transfers. Only plants raised from slips or seeds in commercial potting soil may be sold.

This is a great way to get you gardening "fix" in January and February!

Calendar of Events

January 3 Last day to enter 2024 hours into ORS. Closes at 5 pm. Do not enter any 2025 hours you may earn from Jan 1-3, 2025.

January Committee Meetings as scheduled for 2025 planning. Contact Chris for more information.

The next newsletter will be in mid to late January. Watch for the call for articles for it in January.

Let's Get Green and Growing

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, March 22nd, 2025
8:45 am to 2:45 pm
Rio High School
411 Church Street, Rio

- Keynote speaker
- 24 interactive morning and afternoon breakout sessions to appeal to a broad range of gardeners
- Vendor market



Presented by:
Columbia County Master Gardener Association

The following page is an explanation of the tree order form Barb and Diane referred to at the meeting. To access more information about the native flower seed mixes and trees available and the order form go to : [Tree, Shrub and Seed Sale - Wood County Wisconsin](#)



Conservation Connection

LWCD STAFF DIRECTORY

Barb Peeters421-8475
(Conservation Administrative
Specialist & Newsletter Editor)

Emily Salvinski.....421-8536
(Land Conservation Specialist)

Kendra Wilhelm421-8554
(Land Conservation Specialist)

Kyle Andreae.....421-8472
(Engineering Technician)

Rod Mayer 421-8547
(Conservation Program
Coordinator)

Shane Wucherpfenning (County
Conservationist)421-8578

Wood County LWCD Tree/Shrub Sale & Seed Sale

The Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department has held an annual Tree & Shrub Sale for over 25 years. More than 567,775 trees and over 16,000 tree shelters have been sold between the late 1990's through spring of 2024. Thank you for your continued support of the program.

Order forms & descriptions for the 2025 LWCD Tree, Shrub & Seed Sale are on pages 2-6. The deadline to submit order(s) and payment is **FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2025**. Tree distribution typically occurs in mid to late April (on a Thursday & Friday). Notification of pick-up dates will be sent prior to distribution (distribution dates will be set once the nursery sends notification of when the trees will be ready). The specialty packets (*fast-growing species packet* and *bird & butterfly packet*) are being offered again this year for those who don't want 25 of the same species as an option to plant just a few species but still add value to their land.

New items for the seed sale include a couple seed mixes that do well in shade, a pollinator seed bear for a 200-400 square-foot pollinator garden, and additional options for food plot mixes. Please note:

- This is a first come, first serve sale. Quantities are limited, so submit your order early.
- Full payment must accompany order.
- Tree sizes are approximate and depend on each year's climate and growth conditions at the nursery.
- Trees/shrubs are ordered from a nursery that supplies quality stock. Neither the nursery or the Land & Water Conservation Department can guarantee or warranty the survival of any plant due to variables outside our control.
- Sometimes the nursery is unable to fill an order as specified and/or orders may need to be canceled by a situation beyond our control. If such a situation occurs, you will receive a refund.
- Orders not picked up on the distribution dates can not be refunded. If unable to pick up trees on the distribution dates/times, we ask that you have a friend or family member pick up your order.
- All trees/shrubs are shipped bare root and should be planted as soon as possible after pick-up.
- Fillable order forms are available on our website at: <https://www.woodcountywi.gov/Departments/LandConservation/TreeSale.aspx>

Thank you for your continued support of the tree/shrub/seed sale. If you have questions regarding the tree sale, please call (715) 421-8475 or email barb.peeters@woodcountywi.gov.



Please note **ALL Wood County offices are closed** for the holidays on:
Thursday & Friday, Nov. 28 & 29, 2024; Tuesday & Wednesday, Dec. 24 & 25,
2024; and Tuesday & Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2024 & Jan. 1, 2025.



December Garden Guide

Taken from Melinda Myers website

- Make a wish list of materials needed for starting seeds indoors. Consider giving the some type of gift or a gardening gift certificate to gardeners on your list.
- Check container plants stored in an unheated garage for winter. Water thoroughly whenever the soil is thawed and dry.
- Shred fall leaves with your mower and mulch the soil. The leaves will help protect the soil from erosion, suppress weeds and improve the soil as they break down.
- Continue to water new plantings as needed. Those in colder climates can stop once the ground freezes, then drain and store their garden hoses for winter.
- Leave healthy disease- and insect-free perennials stand for winter to increase their hardiness and vigor and provide food for birds and winter homes for beneficial insects.
- Leave the stems intact, plant bulbs near or place markers by butterfly weed, balloon flower and other late emerging perennials to prevent accidental damage in the spring.
- Continue fall clean up. Ridding the landscape of diseased leaves, fruit and annual plants is the first step in pest control.
- Mulch late planted and borderline hardy perennials and bulbs after the ground freezes with evergreen boughs or straw for added insulation.
- Gather and save leftover seeds for next year's garden. Leave them in their original packets, place in an airtight container and store in a consistently cool place like the refrigerator.
- Those in cold climates need to empty and store annual, glazed and terra cotta containers for winter. Clean pots now and you'll save time during the busy planting season next spring.
- Monitor and secure fencing and animal barriers or reapply repellents as needed throughout the winter.
- Reduce deicing salt damage by shoveling before applying plant friendly deicing material. You'll use less product and eliminate salt-laden snow from ending up on your garden beds or in our streams, rivers, and lakes.
- Collect, store, and clean garden tools. Organize now for a seamless start to next season.
- Gather, inventory, and store fertilizers and pesticides in a secure location away from pets and children. Keep liquids out of direct sun and in a frost-free location. Move granules to a secure, dry space for storage.
- Take a soil test if the ground is not frozen and has not been recently fertilized. You will have some necessary and valuable information for next year's gardening season.
- Shred leaves as you mow and leave them on the lawn. These also add nutrients and organic matter to the soil. As long as you can see the grass blades through the leaf pieces, the lawn will be fine.
- Once the mowing season is over, clean, sharpen blades and properly prepare your mower for storage.
- Create wind, sun and deicing salt screens to protect new plantings and sensitive plants from damage.
- Prevent snow load damage to upright arborvitae and junipers. Wrap the plants with bird netting or loosely tie the branches together with strips of cotton cloth. Drape, don't wrap, holiday lights over tree and shrub branches. Loosely secure the lights to the stems or use lighted netting. Remove lights in spring to avoid damaging fast growing trees and shrubs.



2024 WCMGV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President—Chris Grimes
715-424-2878

Vice President—OPEN

Secretary—Judy Miller
715-572-4798

Treasurer—Famia Marx
715-652-2405

Director—Jill Becker
715-387-8040

Director—Lil Schotten
715-213-7672

Director—Bea Kohl
715-423-8908

Director—Carolyn Schulein
715-389-9027

Communications Rep.—
Chris Grimes
715-424-2878

WIMGA Rep—
Karleen Remington
715-387-1863

Newsletter Editor—Donna
Streiff
715-207-6218

Wood County Extension Horticultural Agent
Janell Wehr janell.wehr@wisc.edu

The Wood County Master Gardener Association is a non-profit organization with a mission to educate and share information with its members and the community alike. In addition, it is our charge to promote the UW Extension from which we are founded. We are a diverse group interested in the latest research-based horticultural information.

Future Article Submissions

Please send items for inclusion in the newsletter by the 25th of the previous month to: streiffonclay@tds.net

Wisconsin Master Gardener Website:

<https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/>

Wood County Extension Website:

<https://wood.extension.wisc.edu/>

Wood County Master Gardener Association Website:

<https://wood-county-master-gardeners.org/>

WIMGA Website:
<https://www.wimga.org>

Reminders

- **Many thanks for all your support at MG events in 2024!!**
- If you need continuing education hours, see page 4.
- Think about overwintering plants for 2025 plant sales.
- Start slips of houseplants for 2025 plant sales.
- Plan to start winter sown plants; collect, or order, seeds soon.
- Collect and dry material for dried arrangements for fall plant sale.