



Wood County Wisconsin

January-February2026

Wood County Master Gardener Association

President's Message



The calendar turns to another year and we reflect on the past and look forward to the future. As Chris alluded to in our last newsletter, we had a busy and successful 2025. As your new president, I face the future with a little bit of trepidation and a lot of hopefulness. As I embark on new endeavors, there's always the fear and concern of being successful. Here, it's not personal success but success of the organization and its members. My hopefulness is buoyed by very passionate, resourceful and knowledgeable members who believe in what we do and what we represent.

As we navigate into 2026, our organization will be looking at and hopefully adopting a strategic plan. Our mission, vision and core values need to be

defined to better position us for success as we move into the future. Our mission statement really is our purpose. Our vision is how we achieve our purpose. Our core values are the pillars that align with our purpose and vision. Part of strategic planning is defining our weaknesses, strengths and opportunities. Like Rome, our strategic plan won't be built in a day but will be an ongoing process.

So, as we forge ahead, I look forward to working with all of you. Have a blessed and peaceful year and Happy Gardening!

Terrie

Dues survey feedback p. 2

Ed. Opportunities for C.E. Credit p. 3-4

Salt Damage p. 5

Plant Dormancy p. 6

PDDC Update p. 7-8

Tidbits and Reminders p. 8

Portage County Garden Seminar p. 9

Garden Walk Update p.10

January Garden Guide p. 11

February Garden Guide p. 12

Final Reminders p. 13

**Following up on Terrie's message here is
come feedback and suggestions from fel-
low MGs from the Dues Survey to get us
thinking about strategic planning.**

In your volunteer activities this past year, what new experiences did you have and/or of which accomplishments are you most proud?

- Q&A wheel at the CW state fair.
- The fall sale had one of the highest profits since Covid. We should nurture an opportunity to work with Lindsey Madsens and her greenhouse regarding Plant Sales.
- Our mature SWC Historical Museum; some gardens first need a complete refresh and upgrades (new handicap ramp) and will create new opportunities for new designs and installations.
- Nothing new this year but I love meeting and volunteering with other MG at the plant sale
- NTC tour was very informative.
- Working with the Children's Imaginarium in Wausau—“Seedling Science” classes. Designing the kitchen gardens at Monk Botanical Gardens
- I really enjoyed volunteering at the garden walk and the county fair
- The Edgewater Garden is doing well after many years of moving/assessing needs of plants. We continue to move plants for most appropriate locations (sun/shade, perennials/annuals)
- Integrating the Girl Scouts into the Garden Walk. I think getting youth involved is important
- We continued to offer monthly garden chats to area residents and any others who wanted to attend. Sessions were held at the Lester Public Library of Rome.
- Working with a new library person who has a different perspective on gardening as an apartment dweller.
- Much increased interest in native plants at fall plant sale.



I would like to make these suggestions to be considered for improvement of the WCMGs in the future:

- Amplify our social media efforts (Facebook, Instagram) for new member recruitment.
- Spend our money-give back to the communities and people we serve.
- Encouraging more people to share their knowledge in educating others. To facilitate this, make a list of topics that they have experience with. Examples: growing a specific plant(s), different gardening methods, etc. The second reason for this is to know whom to ask when someone has a gardening question.

Education Opportunities for C. E. Hours

From UW Extension Horticulture

UW Extension Horticulture [Wisconsin Horticulture – Division of Extension](#) This site has a plethora of resources to explore. It is a great source for getting Continuing Ed credits. It has print and video resources for free use. Sign up to receive their monthly newsletter with pertinent topics: [Sign up](#) If you need Continuing Education Hours, go to [Online Program Archive – Wisconsin Horticulture](#) to view many of the recorded programs This is a good way to get your Ed hours before you get too busy gardening this spring..

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 [2025 PDDC Monthly Disease Talk Registration Form | Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic](#)

Top Ten Plant Diseases of 2025 January 28 6:30 – 8:30pm

Learn about 10 plant diseases that made a splash at the UW-Madison Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic in 2025. Diseases include both those that were submitted the most commonly to the clinic and those that potentially had the biggest impact from an economic or regulatory standpoint.

Fun and Games at the PDDC! February 25 6:30—8:30pm

Learn about the UW-Madison Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic and the services and activities that it sponsors. This presentation will include information on both the diagnostic services and outreach efforts provided by the PDDC, as well as information on new and (hopefully) fun and exciting projects that have recently debuted or are currently in the works.

Ask the Experts has been cancelled for this year.

Marshfield Public Library Garden Guru Programs

February 19 6pm Indoor Seed Starting

It is not too early to think about seed starting for spring plantings. Come learn from the Wood County Master Gardeners about the materials needed for successful indoor seed starting so you can begin planning to grow your own plants. Starting plants from seed gives you a greater choice of varieties to better match the growing conditions in your yard. It's also a great way to economically grow those transplants. Tips will be offered for growing plants on the cheap.

WIMGA Educational programs

The recording of the annual meeting and the speaker that followed is available on the WIMGA website. Log into the WIMGA website members only tab for the link.

The next program will be **Monday, February 2** with Courtney Greve, titled Edible Gardening in Wisconsin: Annuals, Natives, & Fruiting Shrubs.

Continued on next page

March Speaker Series David Garrison Stevens

- Tuesday, March 3 Native Shrubs and Trees for Birds & Bees
- Tuesday, March 10 Flowering Shrubs for All Seasons
- Tuesday, March 17 The Art & Science of Pruning to Maintain Tree & Shrub Health

The Speaker Series will be a fee-based event. Members (\$30) and Non-members (\$45) and proceeds help support WIMGA programs.

Earn C.E. Hours in On-boarding Lite

2026 Onboarding-Lite Requirements

The Onboarding-Lite module in the Canvas Classroom has been updated for the new year. All Master Gardeners are required to review this content annually to stay current on program policies and guidelines.

- **Annual Review:** Please log in to review the updated materials at your convenience. You do not need to retake the entire course, but you should focus on any new or revised content (marked in the course).
- **Continuing Education:** You may claim **up to 5** hours of Continuing Education (CE) for the time you spend reviewing these 2026 materials depending on the time you spend there.
- **ORS Yearly Terms Acceptance (Newly Updated):** When the ORS reopens, you will be asked at your first log in if you have reviewed and are familiar with the content, guidelines, and policies in 2026 Onboarding-Lite.

You can access the updated materials in the [Master Gardener Program: Canvas Classroom](#) while the ORS is offline. Thank you for staying up to date with the program!

Onboarding-Lite 2026 Highlights:

- Welcome Survey section is new! Please take some time and tell us a little about yourself for our reporting requirements.
- Who's Who (Module 2) has been updated and contains new information.
- As a Master Gardener (Module 3) contains a new Let's Practice activity in the "Conclusion: Bias Awareness in Your Master Gardener Journey" section.
- Making the Most of your Participation (Module 5) has been updated and contains new information.
- Quizzes have been updated throughout.

Programs at the Pittsville Library

All programs begin at 1pm Taught by Janell Wehr

Register at 715-884-6500

February 10 Bug Off! (Insect Management)

March 10 Break the Cycle (Disease Management)

April 14 Weed Wise! (Practical Strategies for a Cleaner Garden)

Reducing Deicing Salt Damage This Winter

Early snowfall across portions of Wisconsin last week reminds us that cleaning snow off streets, driveways, and sidewalks will be expected during the winter months ahead. Deicing salts are part of the snow removal process and make travel safer, but keep in mind they also can damage landscape plantings and the environment.

Sodium chloride, an inexpensive commonly used deicing salt material, can damage vegetation in two ways. First, root uptake of chloride accumulating in soils leads to dieback and decline of above-ground plant parts. Sodium can also destroy soil structure conditions, causing numerous plant problems. Plant damage typically occurs within thirty feet of roads, driveways, or parking lots where salts are applied. Second, salt spray drift from roads may drift onto vegetation, causing conspicuous clusters of twigs called "witches' brooms" on deciduous trees or browning of evergreen foliage.

In residential areas most salt damage to trees, shrubs, lawns, and other plantings is due to salt accumulating in soils. Deicing salts can be deposited directly from plowing or through runoff as snow melts. Damage becomes a chronic issue for plants growing in these soils and is often confused with other causes. If declining plants are located near sidewalks, roadways, or parking lots, consider deicing salts as one potential cause.

Plant damage from deicing salts depends on a variety of factors, including type and amount of salt, timing of application and plant species. Although more expensive, consider deicing salt alternatives to sodium chloride, including calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, or calcium magnesium acetate. Only apply the amount of salt needed to do the job. Salt should be scattered so there is space between the grains. A 12-ounce coffee mug of salt can be enough to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares. Consider mixing salt with sand for traction, thus reducing the amount of salt used. Shovel or plow as much snow as possible prior to applying deicing salts. Finally, consider where snowmelt goes and vegetation that may be affected when deciding where to pile snow that contains salts.

Along highways or roads where salt spray is likely, temporary screening may help prevent damage to trees and shrubs. Burlap is one material that can be used. Applying gypsum to lawns or soil is sometimes suggested to counteract the salt, but good soil drainage is needed. Often areas near roads, sidewalks, and parking lots have poor soil drainage, limiting the effectiveness of the gypsum.

Looking ahead to future growing seasons, be aware of areas prone to both salt accumulating in the soil and salt spray for new or replacement plantings. Choose plant material with tolerance to salt and be sure to avoid salt-sensitive species. Consult [**Winter Salt Injury and Salt-Tolerant Landscape Plants**](#) for plant lists and more details on this topic.

By Bruce Spangenberg

Check out this YouTube video on how to effectively use salt [**Winter Salting Guide**](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct04luWopIM>



Plant Dormancy a Dependable Process

Every fall we see trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants go dormant as winter approaches and wait for them to resume growth when spring arrives. Overall, the dormancy process is very dependable, as both existing plants and seeds in the soil survive to resume growth after winter fades away.

True plant dormancy requires exposure to a cold period to resume active growth. This ensures winter survival and avoids growth starting during mid-winter mild weather. Numerous processes are involved, but a key plant hormone is abscisic acid. Often called the dormancy hormone, it inhibits any growth processes from starting at incorrect times.

In late fall, dormant buds in trees and shrubs have elevated levels of abscisic acid to keep them dormant. Bud dormancy is broken by exposure to a certain minimum temperature over a required period. Extreme cold is not required, and an unusually cold spell in winter does not accelerate the process. As winter advances, abscisic acid levels slowly drop until reaching a level that can be overcome by growth promoting hormones. Increasing light and accumulating warmer days of spring raise growth hormone levels, thus plant growth resumes.



Seeds have internal or physiological dormancy to remain dormant until favorable conditions are present for germination, growth, and development. Dormant seeds use minimum energy to survive, and abscisic acid keeps them dormant. After exposure to a certain length of winter cold, abscisic acid levels dissipate in seeds. Once favorable temperatures return and adequate moisture levels exist, seeds germinate. Without meeting the cold period requirement, however, they cannot germinate even if soils are warm.

We “fool” seeds to germinate without sitting outside all winter through stratification, or exposure to artificial cold, such as in refrigerators. The required cold period length can be found when researching propagating native plant seeds. Typically, minimum temperatures range from upper thirties to 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Seeds often have a second mechanism inhibiting germination called physical dormancy. A tough seed coat prevents water uptake and seed germination. The abrasive action of freezing and thawing soil may crack or scratch seed coats. Some seeds require exposure to acid, such as found in digestive tracts of birds or animals, to dissolve tough seed coats. This allows seeds to be dispersed as birds carry them off a distance away from parent plants.

This process of roughening or dissolving outer seed coats is called scarification. Seeds collected from native plants are often recommended to be mixed with abrasive sand or even roughened with a file; this breaks physical dormancy. This also explains why seeds of certain plants may need to be treated with acid or boiled in water.

About the Author

[Bruce Spangenberg](#) is a Horticulture Outreach Specialist with UW-Madison Division of Extension

January 2026: What's Cooking at the PDDC?



It's the start of a new year, and I thought it might be nice to provide an update on on-going and new outreach projects that I've been working on at the PDDC. For the past few years, I've been focusing at least some of my efforts on developing educational resources that might be of interest to a youth audience (and quite frankly the child that still resides in all of us).

Limerick Books

My initial attempt in this area was the publication of my plant disease-themed limerick book (*"Limerickettsia: A Plant Pathologist's Book of Verse"*) back in 2023. This book contains 52 plant disease-themed limericks, accompanying prose descriptions and photos of the diseases, and original custom artwork. I'm currently working (albeit somewhat sporadically) on a sequel (tentatively titled "Sublimerick" that will include limericks and other information on plant disease management. I have about half of the limericks (and artwork) completed, but that leaves another 26 limericks to go. I also need to track down and get permission for photos to use in the book. That will definitely take some time and makes when the book might be published a bit difficult to predict.

Plant Disease Medallions

Another of my youth-oriented projects had been my "UW Plant Disease Facts Medallion Project". I have almost 140 fact sheets in the "UW Plant Disease Facts" fact sheet series, and for each of those fact sheets, I have written a quiz, and once you earn 100% on the quiz, you are emailed the corresponding medallion. I know of some folks who have collected all 130+ medallions. A new, exciting development with this project is that it looks like my department's introductory plant pathology class will begin using the quizzes (and having students earn medallions) as part of its curriculum this fall.

Building Block Plant Diseases

My building block plant disease models have been fun to develop and offer to the public. I currently have 10 building block plant disease kits, including kits for powdery mildew, apple scab, and black knot. Information on the kits is available free of charge and downloadable from my clinic website. Kits include instruction manuals (with a list of parts that you can purchase on your own), adult-friendly and kid-friendly fact sheets, and a word search puzzle for each disease. Blossom end rot kits have been provided to every Extension office in Wisconsin and were used back in 2024 as part of a University of Wisconsin Division of Extension 4-H outreach program to teach youth and their families about tomatoes and their uses. In addition, "What's Eating My Plants (WEMP)", the graduate student outreach group in my department (Plant Pathology) at the UW-Madison has used this kit for youth outreach and education at local libraries. WEMO+P's work was highlighted in the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences "Grow" magazine (with a photo of the blossom end rot model on the cover). I have other models (E>G>, aster yellows, black rot, brown rot, downy mildew) in development. I just need to order parts (to make sure my designed models are buildable) and put together the supplemental written materials to complete the kits.

Phytopath-opoly

My most recent youth-oriented outreach project (started in late 2025 and continuing into 2026) is a plant-themed homage to Hasbro's Monopoly. The game, dubbed "Phytopath-opoly", is designed to teach people about plant diseases and their management. The gameboard has spaces covering 24

plant diseases, spaces representing the major groups of disease-causing organisms (bacteria, fungi, nematodes, and viruses), and spaces for abiotic disorders, and non-disease oddities. For diseases, you can apply control measures and eventually have a disease (really the affected plant) designated as "HEALTHY". There are "Diagnosis" and "Environment" spaces where, when you land on these spaces, you pick a card, learn a fun fact about a disease, and then earn a reward or are assessed a penalty. There is also a special bonus component to the game, where after completing certain goals, there are building block minikits that players can build. Vegetable seed packets representing different numbers of seeds are used as a substitute for money. The game will include a binder of fact sheets describing the various diseases included in the game for players who want to learn more. I have completed all of the graphic design elements, and I'm now working on written materials (e.g., rules, fact sheets, instruction manuals for the building block minikits). I hope to have everything ready by the end of the year. As with my building block plant disease kits, everything will be available for download (for free) from my clinic website.

Want to See or Learn More?

If you are interested in seeing any of my youth-oriented work "in the flesh" I encourage you to come visit the PDDC booth at the upcoming PBS Wisconsin Garden and Green Living Expo (February 13-15, 2026) in Madison. I will have displays/information on all of my youth outreach projects (including a printout of my Phytopath-opoly gameboard) at the booth. Also, I will be providing updates (as they become available) on my Facebook, Twitter (X) and Bluesky accounts (search for "UWPDDC" on all three platforms) and via my clinic listserv (UWPDDCLearn). Email me at pddc@wisc.edu to subscribe to the listserv. Finally, you can always contact me directly for information by email or by phone at (608) 262-2863.

Happy New Year! And, keep on learning!

Tidbits and Reminders

ORS should open in February. Keep track of hours until then.

Updated Master Gardener Guidelines are available in Canvas. You should have received emails about this and links to Canvas in a January 23 email and subsequent emails about updated sections from the Master Gardener office.

Garden Expo is Feb. 13-15 in Madison. Special reception for MGs on Feb. 14

Spring Hands-on Pruning Workshops are available at 5 sites in the state. Go to [Making the Cut: Apple & Grape Pruning Workshops – Wisconsin Horticulture](#) for details.

Let Stacy or Donna know if you need seeds for sowing native plants. List of plants was in November newsletter. See page 10 for winter sowing instructions. Donna can answer any questions you may have about the process. More information will follow in spring newsletters to guide your planting process.



Saturday, February 28, 2026
8:30 am-noon

Location:



*Community Engagement Room 634/635
1001 Centerpoint Dr
Stevens Point, WI 54481*

8:00 - 8:30 AM DOORS OPEN FOR IN PERSON REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

8:30 - 9:30 **Ready, Set, Grow: Spring Preparation for Healthy Landscapes --**
Practical steps for spring yard care, including weed prevention,
soil management, pruning, and sustainable practices
with **Janell Wehr**, Horticulture Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison
Division of Extension -- Wood and Marathon Counties



9:30 - 9:45 Break

9:45 -10:45 **What's New in Gardening for 2026** – Showcasing all of the new plants, garden trends and more for the new year.
with **Rob Zimmer**: nature and gardening author, radio host, photographer, columnist and public speaker



10:45 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – noon **Hosta Heaven** – Get a sneak peek at all the newest hostas of the year and great tips for combining and designing with these amazing plants
also with Rob Zimmer

Cost: \$15.00, including light refreshments at break time

Seminar will be offered in person and virtual

Registration information will be available soon!



Garden Walk 2026

The garden walk team assembled for their first meeting on January 20th, and as the ideas flowed over coffee and breakfast it was clear to see that this group is committed to bringing our community another lively event filled with joy and inspiration to all who attend! Saturday, July 18th is the big day, and with fingers crossed we hope to have another sunny summer day serve as a backdrop for this fundraising event.

Six uniquely beautiful gardens have been selected for Garden Walk 2026. This year's tour begins in the southern end of Wisconsin Rapids, then brings us along the Wisconsin River to Port Edwards and finally traveling alongside the railroad tracks to the quaint little village of Rudolph. We are excited to work with these new garden hosts and share the beauty of their gardening efforts.

During these winter months a lot of background work will be accomplished. Garden owners are working on plant lists so that we can create labels for their garden plants. We will seek sponsorships to help cover the expenses of putting on the Garden Walk. Posters, save-the-dates and Garden Walk tickets must all be designed and ready for Spring. We will be researching and selecting vendors, artists, musical talent and possibly a chef to compliment the gardens. The beautiful hand-crafted stepping stone gifts for our garden hosts – certainly a labor of love – take time; and a dedicated work team has already gotten started!

We decided to keep ticket prices the same: \$10 in advance and \$12 on the day of walk, aligned with neighboring counties and garden clubs. We will be increasing the number of tickets printed as last year's attendance nearly doubled from the year before! We credit much of this to multi-media advertising and our Master Gardener group sharing by word of mouth and Facebook groups, by circulating posters or other written materials. THANK YOU, we hope we can count on your support again this year.

If you have suggestions to share or want to become more involved in Garden Walk 2026 please reach out! We'd love to have you.

Contact: Lil Schotten

Biron River Walk Project

This fall, the Wood Co Master Gardeners were asked to work with Dan Muleski and the Biron Village Board on design development and plant selection for an area of land along the Wisconsin River bike trail in Biron, designated to become "Sunset Park". Currently, a handicap-accessible fishing dock and parking area are in place. Barb Herreid, Micky Erickson, Lil Schotten and retired master gardener Connie Stout offered their help and advice for soil enrichment, shoreline restoration, plantings, path development and fencing design between the park and a neighboring home. We proposed adding a picnic table or bench for relaxation and picnicking enjoyment. Research materials, contacts, and catalogs for materials suggested were shared with the village. With an established budget set aside for the park and an eager volunteer group from their community they hope to get started in the Spring. In addition, we identified free resources within the village to help them with their plan – mulch, soil, and decorative stone. There's no telling what you'll come up with when you put a few "master-minding gardeners" together. Working with this diverse group was fun and a wonderful learning experience.



So, if you're up for a bike ride or enjoyable walk along the Wisconsin River this summer, be sure to stroll on by and watch this park develop.

January Garden Guide

Taken from Melinda Myers website

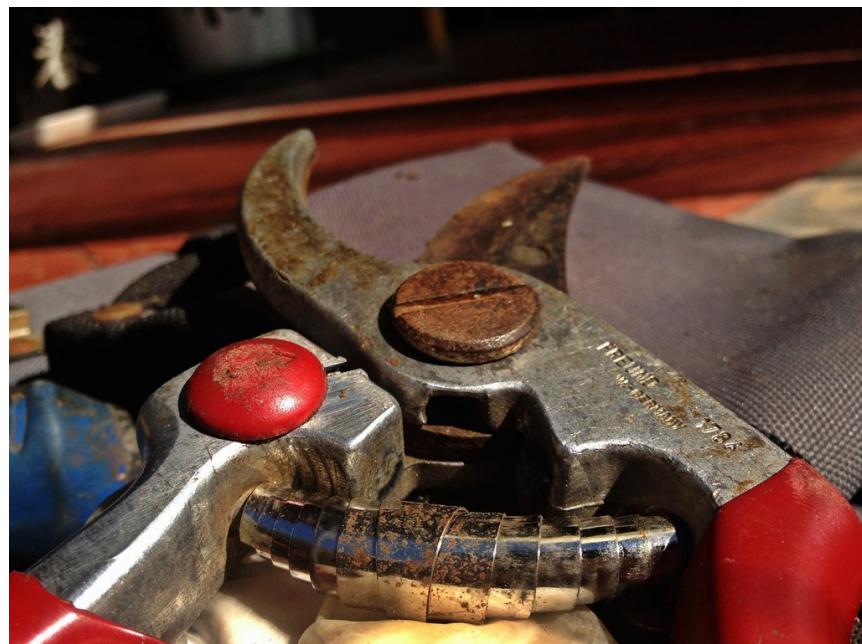
- Start a garden journal to record new plants added to the landscape, successes, challenges and extreme weather conditions. Include any other information that will help in future planning and maintenance of your landscape.
- Water containers overwintered in an unheated garage or mulched in above ground whenever the soil is thawed and dry. Or shovel a scoop of salt-free snow on the pot to water the soil as it melts.
- Start planning for new additions to your flowerbeds. Review pictures of your garden and notes in your journal to help with planning.
- Inventory leftover seeds, create a list of additional seeds you want to purchase, and place your order early for the greatest selection.
- Gather then purchase any containers, sterile seed starting mix, seeds, lights and other equipment needed for starting your own plants from seeds indoors.
- Create a seeding chart for recording plant names, starting dates and other important information. This will help you stay on schedule for planting indoors and out.
- Eliminate the need for lights and daily watering with winter sowing. Start seeds of cool weather annual flowers and vegetables as well as hardy perennials with this method.
- Check on dahlias, cannas and any other bulbs overwintering indoors. Discard any soft, discolored or rotting bulbs. Move sprouted bulbs to a cooler, dark location.
- Continue to minimize salt damage to plants by shoveling first and then applying a plant-friendly deicing salt to walks and drives.
- Recycle your Christmas tree and greens in your landscape. Prune branches off the tree and use the greens for a winter mulch.
- Check for tracks and other signs of vole damage in your perennial gardens and mixed borders. These critters, also called meadow mice, may start nibbling on fleshy roots of perennials like daylily, Siberian iris, and hosta.
- Check the upper and lower leaf surfaces and along the stem of indoor plants for signs of mites, aphids, mealy bugs and scale.
- Fungus gnats, often mistaken for fruit flies, are occasionally found flitting throughout the house in the winter months. They don't hurt your houseplants, but can be a nuisance.
- Identify areas in the landscape that would benefit from some vertical interest. Look for vines that provide multiple seasons of interest and are suited to the space and growing conditions.
- Check vines, trellises, and arbors and make sure they are securely mounted despite wind, heavy snow or ice.



February Garden Guide

Taken from Portage County Master Gardener website

- Inspect gladiolus corms, dahlia tubers, begonia tubers and other fleshy rooted plants for rot and desiccation.
- Before ordering vegetable seeds, check last year's seed for viability by placing seeds between moist paper towels for several days.
- To keep your houseplants growing evenly, give the containers a half turn every two days.
- Start seed for impatiens, vinca, pansies, geranium and begonias in mid month.
- Continue to inspect stored vegetables.
- Check for over wintering fire blight cankers on susceptible varieties of apples and pears; remove by pruning.
- Spray dormant oil to control scale and other over wintering pests. Spray on any day above 40 degrees F and when forecast temperatures are to remain above freezing for 24 hours. This may be done until buds swell.
- Prune dormant trees and summer flowering shrubs. Don't prune spring flowering shrubs until after they have flowered.
- When forced bulbs have bloomed and tops have dried, store and then plant in garden in fall.
- Prune roses, fruit trees, and bramble fruits.
- Order catalogues from seed companies you've been meaning to try.
- Check your garden tools and make a list of new tools you will need or want.
- Sharpen garden tools.



- Give houseplants a monthly shower with tepid water.
- Check young trees and shrubs for rodent injury on lower trunks. Prevent rodent injury with hardware cloth or protective collars.
- Try growing some perennials from seed.
- Start seeds for leeks and onions.
- Don't use seeds with poor germination rates; seedlings may be more prone to insect and disease problems.
- Use a sterile soil-less medium for starting seeds to avoid dampening off.
- Winter sow perennial plant seeds.

2026 WCMGV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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

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 Garden-

er Association Website:

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

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

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.

Reminders

Keep track of your hours somewhere until ORS opens in February.

Review the changes to the Master Gardener program in Canvas classroom while the weather is too cold to do anything outside.

Make your plans for growing plants or other materials for the plant sales.

Email Donna or Stacy to let her know what seeds you may want to start by winter sowing. Starting many other plants besides native plants can also be done by winter sowing. Perennials work particularly well.

If you know of someone who is able to grow plants for sale, please let a member of the plant sale committee or the board know.

There were major problems getting the formatted newsletter to send this month. Many hours were spent troubleshooting the issue. The following articles were submitted after the deadline and are provided for your information but not included in the newsletter as formatted at the time of the deadline. —Editor

2026 first six months (Jan-June) Plant Sale Buzz

Jan/Feb/ March

Things To Do Now

- Look for sales on potting soils and let others know.
- Donate 4-, 5- and 6-inch **CLEAN** - clean pots. Members doing winter sowing and propagations can always use them. We are trying to use uniform size pots to make sale pricing easier.
- Check on overwintering plants. With our goofy winter weather, you may need to water during warm dry spells to keep the soil from drying out. (Yes, watering in February/March may be necessary this year!!) **Also check your mulch layer** if the insulating snow cover is lacking> **add some mulch if needed for that plant.**
- Have you planned to add plants that have interesting seed heads for dry arrangements to your garden design this year? If so, start to think about starting seeds or shopping around for possible plants purchases soon. See the 2023 September newsletter for a list of possible choices.
- Continue to propagate houseplants now so sufficient growth is reached by the spring for the plant sale in May.

Winter Sowers – Let Donna know what seed jugs you have prepared. We understand that not all of them will make [it to](#) market. She is willing to provide advice or answer questions you have about the process.

Plant Sale Team (First quarter Jan, Feb & March)

Determine what plants will be purchased for BOTH the SPRING & FALL SALES prior to March 1st.

Determine marketing materials for use at each sale as well as throughout the year.

Assign the many types of media/ads & marketing tasks to multiple members and ask each member to update the team on their progress or challenges.

Review logistical tasks and plan their execution.

Above all, share the workload.

April

- Confirm if you will be helping at the fall plant sale at Maple Fall Fest, Marshfield (Set up on the Fri)

We encourage MG and friends of MG to plant seeds, so we have marketable annual flowers and vegetables for sale.

- We can accept divided and replanted houseplants in a sterilized potting mix.
- We can accept tender bulbs, washed, and then planted in a sterilized potting mix. Starting them in late April or early May will give customers a visual of the type of plant grown.
- Collect native seeds or package them up for sale. A sealed envelope with seed/plant information. Also, if you have a stash of viable seeds in their original packages, we will sell the packages. You are also welcome to seek out free seeds from accredited sources that we can hand out at events.

May

Houseplant propagation for both sales, if they are not ready for the spring sale, sell them in Sept.

Care for starter plants for flowers and vegetables spring sale

Plant specific plants for fall sale dried arrangements. A very popular booth.

Potting winter sowing for natives and perennials for fall sale

Collect seeds, dried arrangement materials, bulbs for fall sale

June

- Check your list of plants and their location that can be harvested for seeds and dry materials.

Then start collecting seeds and dried flowers for the fall sale starting in June. For seeds, these are just a few early bloomers to get you started. **Bleeding Hearts, Chives and other alliums, Lupines, Violas & Violets. Hydrangeas are especially needed for dried arrangements.**

Set up a durable goods donation box at home for plant sale. Hint – Add reminder notes of other locations/items for sale.

Continue or start growing perennials, house plants and succulents.

Put on your calendar reminders to harvest bulbs, seeds, and plants.

Winter sowing update: Especially for newbie growers!

Make sure the soil in the jugs remains moist.

Check for the start of new growth.

As the weather warms, begin to vent the jugs more by removing some of the tape, if you have plants growing in the jug.

Don't be discouraged if you don't see growth right away. Some natives are slow to start growing.

If you are growing mostly shade plants, move them to a shady location if the weather suddenly turns hot. Shade loving plants should be grown in a shaded area.

When plants have two sets of true leaves, transplant them into individual pots.

If plants are growing thickly, take a chunk of them and transplant, then CUT off extras after they are established, rather than trying to separate them.

It would be appreciated if members who did not winter sow would volunteer to foster the seedlings of others who did.

Let Donna or other growers know if you could do this. Share the workload.

2026 Plant Sales

The following members signed up to be on the planning team: Becker J, Kohl B, Mader J (fall), Meier R, Myers J, Remington K (fall), Schutz C and Streiff D.

Our first zoom meeting is on February 4th from 12:30pm to 2pm.

Spring – In the past the spring sale is always the third weekend in May. Which would be the week of May 11th Monday – 16th Saturday, Spring sale as TBD per committee decision.

Fall – The week of September 14th Monday to Sunday the 20th. Sale dates are 19th/20th.

Peak workers during these sales are Team members and Erickson M, Grimes C, Kilinski L, Marx F (fall), Rokke D, Schotten L, and Shirek K. Sign up for the role you would like to fill now. We need members to price plants, prep plants, work with customers, cashiers, ask the master gardener booth, and assign me where needed.

We also need members to transport canopies and tables, transport donations, set up and take down equipment.

Members doing winter-sowing are Coordinator Streiff D. TEAM Becker J, Musch S and Remington K. PEAK helpers are Erickson M, Grimes C, Kilinks L, Marx F and Rokke D.

Many members start and/or propagate other plants to sell.

You can foster winter-sown seedlings to raise or start your own using this method or an indoor growing technique.

Do you know where your donation box is? If not, create one or start a list where you can easily update it.

WIMGA Corner

The proceedings of the WIMGA annual meeting are now available for your review on the WIMGA website.

You are automatically a member of WIMGA as \$5 of your annual dues is forwarded to WIMGA on your behalf by the WCMGA treasurer.

In the Members Only Section, a recording of the continuing education component of the annual meeting is available for 1 hour of CE credit through February 14, 2026. It features Dr. Jeff Gillman of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte botanical gardens in a talk titled, ***Backyard Bullies, Plant Porn and the Search for a Meaningful Garden.***

On Monday, February 2, at 6:30, there will be a Zoom presentation by Courtney Greve titled, ***Edible Gardening in Wisconsin: Annuals, Natives & Fruiting Shrubs.*** You can find a link to register for this talk in an e-mail dated January 11. It will be recorded for a 30 day run in the Members Only Section. beginning sometime after February 2. Watch for an e-mail announcement.

Karleen Remington, WIMGA Representative