

President's Message

March is right around the corner and with that we herald in the vernal equinox or the first day of Spring. We know from experience that just because the calendar says it's Spring, we still may have snow and sub-zero temperatures. Despite that, the longer days and Daylight Savings Time gives us that "itch to dig in the dirt". The seed catalogs we received and planting supplies stocked in our local stores all help to fuel that "itch".



Our first master Gardeners meeting of the year will be held on March 24th at the Chestnut Center in Marshfield. I am anxious to get the year off to a good start. I think we have some interesting programs coming up and March's program will be Donna Streiff teaching us how to extend our growing season. In our last newsletter, I mentioned our efforts to create a strategic plan. This is ongoing and will be presented to the membership as we finalize the framework. Stay tuned!

As I close this message, it's snowing cats and dogs outside. As Master Gardeners, we may grow natives, houseplants or garden vegetables, but the most important thing we grow is our knowledge about horticulture. We plant the seeds of knowledge and watch them grow within ourselves and in the communities we serve. Happy Planting!

Terrie

March Meeting Information p. 2

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

WIMGA Corner p. 4

Pruning Deciduous Trees p. 5

February Thaw Impact on Plants p. 7

Apple Pruning Workshop p. 8

Projects

Garden Walk Update p. 9-10

Plant Sale Update p. 11-12

March Garden Guide p. 13

Final Reminders p. 14

March Meeting Information



Extending the Growing Season (and other gardening hacks)

March 24 6 pm

Chestnut Center for the Arts
208 S Chestnut Avenue
Marshfield

Please note that in the past, we have had difficulty with internet and zooming at this site. Although they said it is better now, be advised that the zoom presentation may not be good for this meeting. In person attendance is encouraged for the full benefit.

Program will precede the business meeting, with light refreshments to follow the meeting. We do not have to be out of the building early, so we can socialize!

Best route from the south is to take Veterans Parkway (Hwy. 13) from the south side of town and follow it to downtown. Chestnut Avenue is one block past Central Avenue to the west. Turn left on Chestnut and go 3 blocks. Chestnut Center is on your right at Chestnut and Third St. Turn right on Third Street. Parking is past the entrance to the west.

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.

Ask the Experts is back!! Now renamed **Ask Your Gardening Question Live**, it will be on Wednesdays at either 1:30—2:30pm or 6:30—7:30pm, not both in one day. The March session is on March 18 at 1:30. To register for the zoom invite go to: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#).

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 [2026 PDDC Monthly Disease Talk Registration Form | Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic](#)

Fundamentals of Plant Diseases March 25, 2026, 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Learn about disease-causing organisms and the symptoms they cause, as well as information on environmental factors that favor disease development. Also, learn about disease-like disorders caused by non-biological factors such as nutrient imbalances, pesticide exposures, environmental pollutants and adverse environmental conditions.

Marshfield Public Library Garden Guru Programs

March 19 6pm Tree Preparation, Planting, and Pruning

April is prime tree planting time. This month's session will focus on the various ways trees can be purchased, how to plant correctly, and how to care for them for the first few years to get them off to a successful start. A tree can be a major investment in time and energy, and a successful start can make all the difference.

UW-Stevens Point Zoom March 2 12-1pm The Center for Land Use Education is offering a FREE spring webinar series to highlight recent research projects. The March 2nd webinar will provide an analysis of the City of Stevens Point Lawns Gone Native program. We will discuss motivations for participating in No Mow May, opinions on native planting, and barriers to doing so in our community. To register: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Programs at the Pittsville Library

All programs begin at 1pm Taught by Janell Wehr

March 10 Break the Cycle (Disease Management)

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

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.

WIMGA Corner —Karleen Remington, WIMGA Representative

Search for Excellence Awards Program

WIMGA is establishing a program that honors **outstanding activities and projects** that are components of local Master Gardener associations. The plan is to share the recognized activities with all the associations in the state of Wisconsin. It will recognize creative work that can be replicated by other groups.

There will be 3 categories of recognition: (1) Education Outreach, (2) Next Generation Development & Inclusion and (3) Environmental Impact & Sustainability. Awards will be gold (\$100), silver (\$75) and bronze (\$50.) There will be digital awards that can be used on all local communications; press releases about the activities and promotions among all Wisconsin associations. Applicants will compete with organizations of similar size.....under 30 members and 30 members or more.

Local associations may make three applications per year.....one in each category. A Master Gardener in good standing who is working on the activity is responsible for writing the application. Photos are encouraged to support the application.

The timing for this activity in 2026 is as follows: January through December, 2026, work on the project. (Projects are eligible that are already in progress.) January 31, 2027, applications will be due. February & March, 2027, applications will be judged. (A minimum of 75 out of 100 points will be required to be award-winning.) April, 2027, zoom awards presentation.

Materials and detailed information will be posted on the WIMGA website. I'm hoping we can share more details at our March or April meeting.

March Continuing Education Series

A series of three (3) weekly continuing education sessions will begin on March 3rd at 6:30 via zoom. All sessions will center around the theme of **woody plants** and will be conducted by David Garison Stevens, curator of woody plants at the UW-Madison Arboretum. Sub-topics include **native woody trees & shrubs for birds & bees, flowering shrubs and the art & science of pruning**. The tuition cost for the 3 sessions is \$30 for members and \$45 for non-members. The monies raised help support WIMGA activities.

Registration and further details can be found on the WIMGA website. An e-mail from WIMGA dated February 10 also provides information. The series will be recorded for 30 day playback if you miss one of the Tuesday sessions.

Replay of February CE Program

This continuing education program from February (**Edible Gardening in Wisconsin**) is available for you to view through March 5 on the WIMGA website.

Pruning Deciduous Trees

Why prune trees?

Pruning is important for a variety of reasons. Pruning can help control the size of a tree, direct growth, influence flowering or fruiting, or maintain plant health and appearance. Pruning can also increase the safety of a tree by removing broken, diseased, dead, or dying branches. In addition to pruning, selecting plants that are suited to your environment and location are very important. The ultimate height and spread, in addition to location of overhead powerlines, should be taken into account when selecting trees for landscaping.



What should be pruned?

Newly planted trees

Newly planted trees should not be pruned unless a branch is broken, diseased or dead. These trees need foliage to produce carbohydrates (sugars) that are then transported to the root system for initiation of new roots.

Young trees

After a young tree is established for two to five years, the tree can be pruned to encourage a well-branched canopy. Lower branches can be removed to raise the canopy, if desired. Scaffold branches to be maintained in the tree should be selected such that they are 12-18 inches apart, are evenly distributed around the trunk and have wide crotch angles. Remove no more than 1/3 of the total crown of a tree at one time. Young trees also need corrective pruning to remove crossing branches, double leaders, watersprouts, and root suckers.

Older trees

Older, established trees, if properly trained when young, require little pruning. These trees should never be topped as this leads to poor branch structure and increased limb breakage. Use the three-point method of limb removal for pruning large branches (see diagram and description below). This method ensures proper pruning and closure of wounds. Contact a certified arborist to prune larger limbs and remove trees, particularly if the tree is close to power lines or buildings.

The 3-point method of proper pruning of large limbs

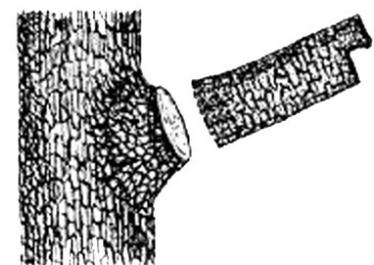
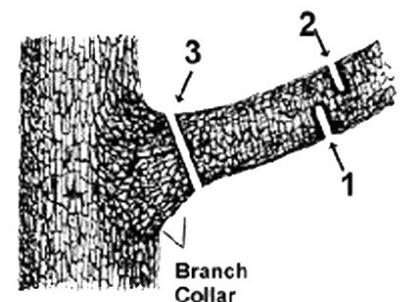
When doing any type of pruning, always use a sharp pruning saw for making pruning cuts. Also, be sure to disinfect your pruning tools with alcohol or a 10% bleach solution after each pruning cut to avoid spreading diseases.

Step one

Select the branch that you want to remove. On large limbs, the first cut should be 12 to 18 inches from the limb's point of attachment. The pruning cut should be an undercut made 1/2 way through the branch (see diagram). This pruning cut is very important because it relieves weight from the branch collar and prevents accidental tearing of bark from the tree's trunk when the limb is removed.

Step two

The second pruning cut should be made on the outside of the first cut (i.e., farther from the trunk). Cut all the way through the limb from the top down, thus removing the weight of the branch.



The three step method of pruning large limbs.

Step three

The final cut should be made next to the tree's trunk outside of the branch collar. Cut from the top down and cut all the way through the remaining branch stub. The branch collar should be left intact. **Do not** cut the branch flush with the tree's trunk. A proper cut avoids large wounds, and allows the tree's wound to close quickly.

Should I use wound treatments?

In general, wound treatments, such as tree paint or wound dressing, are not recommended. These compounds slow down wound closure and promote decay. One exception when wound treatments are recommended, is the case of oak trees that are pruned during the growing season. Using wound treatments on oaks is important to keep out insects that transmit the [oak wilt fungus](#).

When should I prune trees?

Most deciduous trees should be pruned in late fall to winter. At this time of year, you can see the overall branch structure easily, and most insects and disease causing organisms are not active. Late fall/winter pruning is especially important for oak trees to help prevent spread of the fungus that causes [oak wilt](#). Late spring and summer are usually not good times of year to prune because disease pathogens are present and wound closure is slower. If you prune in late winter, some trees may bleed or ooze sap excessively in the early spring. The bleeding may be unsightly, but does not harm the tree. Examples of trees that bleed excessively are maple, willow, birch, walnut, beech, hornbeam, elm, and yellowwood.

Pruning terms and definitions

- **Branch collar:** the ring of trunk tissue that surrounds a lateral branch at the point of attachment to the stem.
- **Double leaders:** two major, terminal growing points located at the top of the tree.
- **Root suckers:** vigorous, upright, adventitious shoots that arise from latent buds below the graft union or at the base of the tree.
- **Scaffold branches:** the large branches that form the main structure of the crown of a tree.
- **Topping:** an improper pruning technique that reduces the height of a tree by removal of large branches back to larger primary branches. This technique is not recommended.
- **Watersprouts:** vigorous, vertical, adventitious shoots that arise from latent buds above the ground or graft union on older wood..

Author: Laura Jull, Woody Ornamental Horticulture Extension Specialist, Associate Professor, UW-Madison Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences

Revised: 8/13/2012

Item number: XHT1014

Plants Not Favored by Deer

If deer visit your property, you've likely already experienced the frustration of having landscape plants destroyed overnight. Before planting (or replanting), check out this list of trees, shrubs, flowers, herbs, and grasses that deer tend to avoid.

Laura G. Jull

Revised: 5/25/2010

Item number: A3727 at the Learning Store [The Learning Store](#)

February Thaw Impact on Plants

Unusually mild weather across Wisconsin gave us a break from what has been a very frigid winter. The warm weather was nice, but winter is not over. Since it is just mid-February, is a thaw such as this a concern for plants in landscapes and yards?

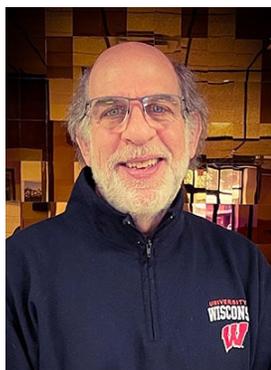
Trees and shrubs should not be negatively impacted as they are still dormant. True dormancy has two requirements to be met before growth resumes in spring. First, trees and shrubs need to be exposed to a minimum temperature for the required time to release buds from dormancy. That requirement has not been met yet, and the fact we saw significant subzero temperatures did not accelerate the process.

The second requirement to break dormancy in spring is an accumulation of warm temperatures measured in heat units called [degree days](#). So even when cold requirements are met, trees and shrubs need to then be exposed to a certain amount of heat units to trigger growth processes allowing buds to break. Degree days accumulate as the average daily temperature goes above 50 degrees. So even though it may have hit daytime highs in the 50s or even sixty last week, nighttime temperatures were back in the 30-degree range. As a result, degree days did not really have a chance to start accumulating as the daily average was not above 50. The net result? Dormancy continues.

Despite warm temperatures, most of far northern and northwest Wisconsin still has plenty of snow cover. For much of southern and eastern Wisconsin, lack of snow cover presents a concern for a variety of herbaceous landscape plantings, such as perennials, groundcovers, and strawberries. If winter mulch was applied last fall, these plantings should be fine. If not, the concern with the mild weather is that the soil surface thaws during the day but freezes again at night. This alternating freezing and thawing can damage crowns and roots. It is not too late to add beneficial mulch such as straw.

Snow melting away may reveal feeding damage from [rabbits](#) or voles on stems of shrubs this winter. Not much can be done for tissue already damaged. However, take steps to prevent further damage this winter and early spring by protecting stems with a chicken wire barrier.

Lawns that are bare of snow should just be left alone. Resist the temptation to start any [lawn care practices](#) until the ground thaws. Once conditions dry out, the only thing that should be done is raking up any leaves or debris. Wait until sometime in May, depending on spring weather and specific location in Wisconsin, before considering fertilization or crabgrass control.



About the Author

[Bruce Spangenberg](#) is a Horticulture Outreach Specialist with UW-Madison Division of Extension. Get answers to your lawn, landscape and garden questions anytime at [“Ask Your Gardening Question.”](#)

APPLE TREE PRUNING DEMO

Learn to Prune Apple Trees for Health and Vigor



Free LIVE Demo!

Saturday

March 14, 2026

10AM

Meet at

**2511 Hickory Dr
Plover, Wi**

~

Outdoor event/rain or shine
Be sure dress for the weather

Presented by WCMGA &

Mark Cournoyer

Auburndale HS Agricultural Science Teacher

Mark will lead a session on proper pruning for better health and fruit quality using real, live apple trees.

You'll learn

- What, when, why, and how to prune your trees
- Proper tools and techniques





Garden Walk 2026

Garden Walk preparations are well underway, and this past month the team has been busy in multiple ways. First, by selecting musicians, artists, and vendors to compliment the gardens - and what a diverse and exciting variety we have planned! New: a wildlife photographer, a metalworks artist, a woodcarver & origami artist and popular local painter returning by popular demand. In the education department, our team is planning to provide composting basics and container gardening education in two different gardens, with an opportunity for guests to win a container garden after demonstrations are held on the even hours of the big day. In the hospitality department and with volunteer assistance, we will celebrate the 30 year anniversary of Wood Co Master Gardener's with an ice cream social at the Edgewater Haven's Sensory Garden, part of this year's tour. Busy hands are also working to research and type up over 400 plant labels for the gardens, cut glass for the host stepping stones, and strain their brains to come up with clever and cost-effective ways to show appreciation to all those who support the garden walk.

We are already a little more than half way to meeting fundraising goals for sponsorships which help to cover garden walk expenses. Promotional publications (posters, save the dates), the garden walk tickets, and advertising plans are also in the works. As you can see, this is a working team that thrives on deadlines, enjoys promoting the community and the stellar gardens that exist here.

But . . . we can't do it alone! **Master Gardeners: we are looking for persons to serve as mentors to each garden host.** A mentor is simply someone the Garden owner can call on for support with questions, gardening help, and reassurance; essentially a "buddy" throughout the process. You will meet and make a connection with the host at our orientation brunch in April, and reconnect with them periodically with support and encouragement up to garden walk day. This can be a powerful and rewarding experience, and we look forward to sharing the opportunity to Master Gardeners outside of our working team. We need 4 more mentors; could it be YOU? contact Lil by March 15th, phone 715-213-7672.

Are you a container garden expert? We are looking for Master Gardeners who love to educate and plant containers. The plant materials and educational handouts will be provided. There will be four different 15 minute demonstrations at the following times: 10am, 12pm, 2pm 3:30pm in Garden 1. Please contact Lil as above if you are interested in covering one or more of the time slots.

Next month: How to support the basket raffle
Did someone say Mariachi band???

SUBMITTED 2/24/26

HELP US WITH THE RAFFLE BASKETS AT GARDEN WALK 2026!

Due to the great success of the Raffle Baskets that were introduced at the Garden Walk two years ago, we would like to offer this to attendees again this year.

But, We Need Your Help!

We will build raffle baskets based on themes with suggested items for each one. Sign up to donate *new items* for any of the featured baskets. You'll be able to sign up at the March meeting. If you're unable to attend, just email Jan Myers NaomiDog79@gmail.com or Barb Herreid bherreid@wctc.net to let us know what you can contribute.

Here are the basket themes and suggested items:

Theme of Basket	Suggested Ideas for Items for Basket
Birds in the Garden Due to their popularity last year, we'd like to offer 2 baskets this year	Birdfeeder, Deck Birdbath, Birdseed, Humming-bird feeder, Suet. birdhouse
Garden (use canvas bag as the basket?) Due to their popularity last year, we'd like to offer 2 baskets this year	Rain Guage, Thermometer, Kneeling pad, Garden Gloves, Hand Tools, Slow-release Fertilizer, Garden Art, Book for inspiration, Watering Can, Flower Pot
Cookbooks Basket	Diane has already provided some cookbooks, but we're looking for complementary items
Italian Due to their popularity last year, we'd like to offer 2 baskets this year	Pasta, Wine, Italian Cookbook
Picnic	Checkered tablecloth, Blanket, Picnic tableware, Wine, Gift certificate at a deli or Sub shop
Wisconsin Badgers Basket	Items to show our pride in the teams!
Green Bay Packers Basket	Items to show our pride in the team!
Coffee Basket	Mug, coffee samples/bags
Spa Basket	Soaps, candle, lotions, etc.
Packers Tailgate Basket	Packers-related picnic items

We are also looking for donated baskets to put the items in – let us know if you can help with this. All items can be turned in at the monthly meetings or to Jan or Barb – we need them no later than the June meeting. Thank you for your support!

Do you have an item of higher value that you'd like to donate for the Silent Auction? Just contact Jan or Barb with your idea.

Status of the 2026 Spring Plant Sale

On Feb 4th the plant sale team met and discussed the May sale. Discussions were held, and unanimously supported, to forgo Spring plant sale for this year, 2026. Key points were: our highly successful garden walk brings in a nice profit, and concern of over taxing our membership with the spring plant sale. By maybe having a spring sale every other year we maintain community contact, obtain funds, etc. There is also the issue of bringing back an educational seminar that benefits both the community, our members and other local master gardeners' associations in the spring.

The Plant Sale Committee

So now you only need to put your efforts towards the fall plant sale, September 19-20th at Maple Fall Fest in Marshfield.

PLANT SALE BUZZ

March

Things To Do Now

- Look for sales on potting soils and let others know.
- Donate 4-, 5- and 6-inch **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. Bring them to the membership meeting to share.
- Check on overwintering plants. With our goofy winter weather, you may need to water them 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** and, if an insulating snow cover is lacking, **add some mulch if needed for that plant.**
- Have you considered incorporating plants with distinctive seed heads suitable for dry arrangements into your garden design this year? If so, it is advisable to begin planning for seed propagation or researching potential plant acquisitions soon. A list of plants that do well in our arrangements is also in this newsletter.
- Continue to propagate houseplants, succulents, etc. so there is a large assortment to purchase at the fall plant sale. Hand off plants to friends, etc. to continue raising while you propagate more. We can also use interesting potted plants at our August fair booth and flower beds.

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

Plant Sale Team's Next meeting is on April 20, 2026, at 12:30 via Zoom to discuss plans for Fall plant sale at Marshfield Maple Fest on September 19-20.



List of Plants we need for Fall dry arrangements

Please consider planting or cultivating any of the plants listed below. These selections are well suited for inclusion in our dry arrangements featured at the fall sale on September 19th and 20th. Every little bit counts!

Amaranthus	Hyssop
Artemesia	Iris seed heads
Bachelor buttons	JoePye Weed (not too mature)
Baptisia seed pods	Lavender Stems
Blackberry lily	Liatris
Black-eyed Susan seed heads	Marigolds the Tall ones
Boneset (not too mature)	ornamental millet
Clover flowers	Ox-Eyed daisy seeds
Celosia	Pampas grass
Cone flowers	Penstemon
Chinese lanterns	Poppy seed heads
Curly willow branches	Rose hips
Everlastings/Straw flowers	Statice
Grasses - wild and domestic, not yet dropping seeds	
Globe amaranth	Sage
Goldenrod (not yet gone to seed)	Sea holly
Hydrangeas of any kind	Wheat & oats sheaves

Calendar of Events*

Mar 3, 10, 17 WIMGA Ed. Series*

Mar 14 Apple Tree Pruning Workshop*

Mar 18 Ask Your Gardening Question Live*

Mar 19 Garden Guru*

Mar 24 Membership meeting*

Mar 25 PDDC Disease Talk*

July 18 Garden Walk

Sept 19-20 Fall Plant Sale

*See other articles in this issue for more details.

March Garden Guide

Taken from Portage County Master Gardener website

- Plant tuberous rooted begonias indoors early in the month.
- Begin regular fertilization of houseplants.
- March is a good month to make cuttings of many houseplants.
- Order perennial plants and specify that they be delivered when the ground is workable.
- Start seeds of slow-growing annuals. Transfer them as appropriate in April to cold frame.
- Start bulbs of calla. They will bloom from June to August.
- Start seedlings of cabbage, celery, cauliflower, head lettuce, and parsley.
- Keep amaryllis foliage growing by watering and feeding.
- Continue to inspect stored vegetables. Anything showing signs of spoilage should be removed immediately and either used or discarded.
- Don't worry if spring-flowering bulbs are sending up green leaves. The foliage can withstand winter weather.
- March is the leanest month for wildlife, so protect shrubs and plants with wire cages or sprinkle ground with cat hair or blood meal.
- Do not remove mulch from perennials too early. Keep light covering of mulch over spring bulbs.
- Rake off last season's mulches on garden soil so it can dry and be warmed by the sun. Remove any plant residue left from last year.
- If the compost pile froze during winter, turn it now, and add fresh manure to help restart the composting process.
- Finish pruning dormant trees.
- Sharpen lawn mower blades and have mower serviced before spring rush.
- If you fertilize, apply to shade trees, fruit trees and shrubs when buds swell, as well as to evergreens and raspberries.
- Prune summer flowering (after end of June) shrubs.
- Finish pruning grapes. Non-dormant pruning will cause excessive bleeding.
- Finish dormant pruning of fruit trees and berry bushes. Remove diseased or infected branches.



2026 WCMGV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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

Log your hours in ORS.

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.

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 a plant sale, please let a member of the plant sale committee or the board know.