

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News

January 2022



Deck the Halls, Ye Merry Master Gardeners (or Whatever!!)...

by Carol Cox

It was a wonderful night, a wonderful time. Yes, the ECAMGVs actually did gather face to face (or, I guess it was mask to mask) for the annual meeting and holiday get together. There were cookies of every ilk, hot cider, and wassail (whatever that is – don't think we had any, but it sounds good for this article) and conversations and door prizes and some get to know you (or get to know you again) kinds of games. And, for you who were not in attendance, do you know who the patron saint of gardening is? I shouldn't tell you the answer if you weren't there, but, whatever. 'Tis the season to be nice instead of naughty and Santa might still be trying to catch up with me with a couple packages so I won't take a chance. It is St. Fiacre. Okay, but then is rhubarb a fruit or a vegetable? Well, apparently the Master Gardener training that I took 28 years ago neglected to teach me that because I got it wrong. It is considered a vegetable.



Pictures by Ellen Terwilliger and Carol Cox

Enough nonsense. Along with an update on what will be coming down the pike in 2022 for us as Master Gardeners (but I will let you check that out for yourself on the MG website at <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/>) awards were given out for the 2021 Photo contest (Paula Bonnin, 1st place; Carol Losey, 2nd place; Aruna A, 3rd place, and Judy Mitchell with Honorable Mention). In addition, the annual and prestigious "Digger's Award" was given out to Mary Jane Griffin for her dedication to volunteering despite all obstacles. You are a huge example and encouragement, Mary Jane. The award is well deserved.

The evening concluded with more cookies, conversation and some really neat door prizes. If you missed it – be sure to plan to come next year and have a Happy New Year!



Local Master Gardener News

Changing e-mail? Moving?

If you do, please remember to notify the ECAMG and the newsletter editor of your new e-mail address and/or mailing address so you don't miss any Eau Claire Area Master Gardener happenings!



Email your new information to Carol Cox at c7w6c2200@charter.net or notify her by snail mail at 1908 Hogeboom Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701 (or call her at 715-783-0016 - cell).



Bulletin Board Postings Stories and Opportunities!!!



Note:
The ECAMGAV Board minutes may be accessed at <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org>.

ECAMGA Board

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Learn About Mushrooms

On January 17, 2022 at 7 p.m. (via Zoom) Steve Scholtz is giving a presentation on mycology concentrating on the comparisons between wild versus cultivated mushrooms. Steve raises mushrooms for sale at both the Farmers Market and at Just Local Foods in Eau Claire. These are the tastiest mushrooms ever! He has a wealth of information to share with Master Gardeners. Steve's mushroom farm is located near Strum where he and his wife raise vegetables as well.

Eau Claire Master Gardeners will receive a link to the program from Andy Heren a week before the presentation.



ECAMGV
2022
Calendar

All meetings during the COVID19 pandemic will be held by Zoom invitation.

- January 17: Steve Scholtz – mushrooms
- February 21: Evan Croft – Control of Buckthorn
- March 12: tentative – Growing Together Online Conference
- April 18: Nora Mitchell on South African Plants
- May: TBA
- June: TBA
- July: TBA
- August: TBA
- September: TBA
- October 7: Photo Contest deadline
- October: TBA
- November: TBA
- December: Annual Meeting and Christmas Party

Some things are just better left unsaid and I usually realize it right after I say them.
-unknown

Eau Claire County Fair Awards

by Andy Heren

Did you know that every summer our association donates money to sponsor trophies at the Eau Claire County Fair? **Here are some of the thank you notes we have received:**

“Thank you for your trophy sponsorship to the Eau Claire County Fair. We appreciate your continued support.” - Roella

“I wanted to take the time to thank you for sponsoring the trophy I received at the Eau Claire County Fair. I won Grand Champion with my white pumpkin. We grew a lot of pumpkins this year, and I am so excited to have received a trophy to display in my room. Thank you again for supporting the fair.” - Caden

“Thank you for sponsoring the trophy for champion houseplant exhibit this year! It was wonderful to be able to exhibit at the fair again for one of my last years in 4-H. I greatly appreciate your support of the fair and the Eau Claire County 4-H program.” - Rachel



**WHEN I GROW UP I'D LIKE
TO BE A RETIRED
LOTTERY WINNER!
-ANONYMOUS**

Meet a Master Gardener - Andy Heren



(Photo is of Andy is amongst his beloved tomatoes.)

My name is Andy Heren. You may have heard my name. Or you may have gotten what seems like endless emails from me at my work email. Someone said I am an anomaly in our group, and I think she was right. I became a MG in 2010. Since then my areas of volunteering have been serving on the board, heading up the “Ask a MG” table at the Farmers Market, and last summer I took over command of the Teaching Gardens around the Extension office. In 2012 Erin LaFaive told me the Extension office was hiring a temporary Office Associate (Eau Claire Lutheran School, where I had taught for 15 years, closed in 2011, and she knew I was looking for something different). I decided to try it and discovered I loved the job. I did this for 3 months. Then in 2014 the position opened up again, I filled in, and got it permanently. It can be confusing what I do for the MGs. I try to keep my professional position and volunteer position separate, but sometimes they cross each other. My job title is now Administrative Specialist. I assist all the educators in our office. It is mainly 4-H, but also Ag, Horticulture, FOODWise, Human Relationships, and the Community Educator.

I think where my positions get muddled is when Erin Left and there was no one in the office who knew much about the Master Gardeners. Except me. So I did things to help keep us running until Margaret arrived. So, I am a county employee who just happens to be Master Gardener.



The Quest

By Judy Mitchell

Last month, I reported on my quest for an article at the Learning Store (<https://learningstore.uwex.edu/>) and passed on Horticultural Outreach Specialist Margaret Murphy's advice to search the Extension Horticulture website (<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/>) first for user-friendly

information on a particular gardening topic.

This month, I didn't have any ideas for a January-appropriate topic to feature in The Quest so I took Margaret's advice. I went to the Extension Horticulture website and was immediately rewarded. Under Articles, I found a shortcut to "Articles for Winter" (along with Articles for Spring, Summer and Fall). If they make this website any more use friendly, you won't need The Quest!

I chose Publication A3877, Winter Salt Injury and Salt Tolerant Landscape Plants, to feature this month. As it turns out, this publication is available on both the Extension Horticulture and Learning Store websites. It comes right up at the Learning Store but only if you think to search on salt.



Publication A3877 is recommended reading for anyone involved in diagnosing plant diseases. It covers how salt gets on and hurts the soil, the symptoms of salt soil and salt spray damage, and how salt damages plants. There is information on how to prevent salt injury, what plant properties contribute to salt tolerance, and a 3-page list of salt tolerant plants.

Too often, people suspect salt damage and then start searching for confirmatory information. After studying this publication, you will be better equipped to diagnose salt damage based on symptoms and well equipped to discuss solutions.



Events

Virtual
GARDENING
CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the Northcentral Technical College

Saturday
January 29th
8:15 am to Noon

Meet Our Speakers:

Paula Westmoreland is a permaculture designer, agroecologist, teacher, and writer, a leading voice in the regenerative community and owner and lead designer of Ecological Design. Paula is passionate about bringing the land back to life, laying the foundation for abundance, and finding pathways for people to reconnect to the land. Her talk today will be on Designing Plant Communities: focusing on which plants flourish together and also help the environment.

Leigh Presley has a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from UW-Madison and master's in Agriculture

& Integrated Resource Management from Colorado State University and has worked in in the fields of agriculture and horticulture throughout her professional career. As the owner of Clearview Nursery in Weston, WI, Leigh hopes to make gardening approachable to everyone. Her talk today will focus on landscaping with edible and pollinator friendly plants. She will share creative ideas and tips for garden design which **Lisa Johnson** has a bachelor's degree in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin – Madison and a master's degree in Life Sciences Communication. She has 8 years of experience in the horticulture industry and has been a Dane County Horticulture Educator since 2004. She is an engaging and sought-after speaker and a well published writer in addition to a talented folk singer. She will be discussing landscaping with various grasses and sedges that will thrive in our midwestern climate.

Registration Fee - All attendees \$5. To register go to: <https://www.ntc.edu/calendar/2022/01/29/garden-visions-2022-virtual-event>.



Beaver Creek Reserve
S1 County Road K
Fall Creek, WI 54742
715-877-2212

Breakfast and Birds

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM



Join Beaver Creek Reserve to learn about bird species of the Chippewa Valley. Each month we will take a different bird or group of birds and learn everything you want to know about them. Learn about bird identification, bird behavior, what to feed birds and where you might see them. Join us. Feel free to eat your breakfast as you watch and learn!

Registration required by January 11th. This is a **free virtual event**. For more information email bcr@Beavercreekreserve.org.

Intro to eBird Registration

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022
1/13/2022
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM



Join Tully Frain, our Avian Field Technician and learn about the importance of using eBird, an online database used to submit bird observations which provide scientists, researchers and amateur naturalists with real-time data about bird distribution and abundance. Learn how to make an account, submit observations, and explore data that could help you learn more about the birds in the area.

Registration required by January 11, 2022. This is a **free virtual event**. For more information email bcr@Beavercreekreserve.org.



Fantastic Lakes & Where to Find Them Wednesday, February 2, 2022

9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

This **free, virtual** class will be taught by Lia Landowski and will provide an introduction to unique lentic systems across the globe. For more information email maddie@Beavercreekreserve.org. The last day to

1. Which of the following foods is not in the rose family?

- A. Raspberries B. Apples C. Grapes

2. What is the name for the flowering portions of cauliflower?

- A. Curds B. Whey C. Clouds D. Swells



1. c. grapes
2. a. curds



Bits and Pieces

Foliage Begonias

By Carol Cox

As far as houseplants go, some of my favorites are those begonias that are grown mainly for their foliage. While they will bloom in mid-winter to late spring, the flowers are either just above the foliage or on long stems above the leaves and are much smaller than, say, the tuberous begonia bloom. Their main attraction is the interesting foliage patterns found within this group of houseplants. They are also low care houseplants (my favorite kind) and I often even have them situated on the inner wall of my living room. This type of begonia grows from rather thick rhizomes that will grow along the soil or, just below the surface of the soil.



Picture from Google.com/images

The Rex begonia hybrids are the most striking of all foliage begonias with bright and unusual shades of red, green, silver, purple and pink that combine to make bold patterns on the leaves. They make stunning specimen plants. I usually take them outside during the summer and use them in my large containers (that cuts down on the bedding plants I have to buy to fill those large containers) or I will keep a couple of them as single specimens in attractive pots up by my back door or on my patio.

These plants are easy to grow and should be located in a bright spot away from direct sunlight (although, as I said previously, I have even grown some of them on the inner wall of a south facing room. While they don't like to be bone dry, I find that they are fairly forgiving. One thing they do not like is wet, water-logged soil. I usually use the fertilizer sticks in each pot when I bring them in the house in the fall (after I debug them with a systemic insecticide) and, other than that do not use fertilizer on them. However, you may choose to fertilize with a balanced liquid fertilizer at half strength every other watering when they are in a period of growth.

Common insect pests include mealy bugs, whiteflies and spider mites but I have rarely had problems growing them. Nighttime temperatures should not fall below 55 degrees and they like a range of temperature between 65 and 75 degrees although I keep my house at 63 degrees 24/7 and my begonias thrive. This is a delightful houseplant to take cuttings from (cut or break off some of the rhizomes) for a gift to a friend.



Two of my favorite foliage type begonias. The one at the left is particularly prolific and I have enjoyed it through the years.





Ellen Terwilliger submitted this picture for the Photo Contest which she calls "The Surprise Lilly" (Red Heirloom Spider Lilly - Licorus Radiata) which she took when visiting a friend in North Carolina at the end of September.



Eye Candy



Above is Mikel Reise's entry for the photo contest. She entitled it simply "Poppy."



Rhonda Cooke submitted the above picture she calls "My Yucca at Sunset" as her entry for the 2021 Annual Photo Contest.



To the left, what an interesting piece of garden art created out of an old tree trunk and a bit of imagination and whatever was at hand.

Below, an interesting construction for a trellis.

Pictures courtesy of Pinterest.



Editor's note: There are certain things that fascinate me, catching my eye quicker than may other things. One of those things is a birdhouse. Not quite sure why but I see them and want to build one like it or improvise off of that pattern. At left is one spotted on Pinterest.com that is intriguing – a triplex avian apartment complex, no less. Maybe next time you come through my garden there will be one like it somewhere in my yard? Just maybe...

The Snow Storm by Ralph Waldo Emerson
 Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
 Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
 Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
 Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,
 And veils the farmhouse at the garden's end,
 The sled and traveler stopped, the courier's feet
 Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
 Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
 In a tumultuous privacy of Storm."



Now it is January, but we are already gaining minutes of daylight as we have gone past the shortest day of the year. In six weeks, it will be mid-February and then, well, can spring be that far away!! Hunker down, enjoy all the seed catalogs that come your way and look forward to Spring!



Unless otherwise noted, articles for this newsletter are submitted and/or written by ECAMGA members or the newsletter editor, Carol W. Cox. Unless otherwise noted, graphics are from clipart. Newsletter layout by Carol W. Cox



For more Eau Claire County UW Cooperative Extension information go to our website:

www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/EAUCLAIRE

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M-F 8AM-5PM



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