

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News



April 2020

Memory Lane...

While we are confined to home and limited in our ability to go out and attend our usual entertainments and pursuits it may be time to bring out our scrapbooks and go down memory lane. With that in mind, below is a bit of Master Gardener memory lane. Can you remember and identify these events and people? It will take your mind off of COVID19.



Through the years there has been food and fun, fellowship and hard work. We have learned a lot of things along the way and shared our gardens and gardening knowledge with



a lot of people – both young and old. And sometimes, in this usually fast paced world we live in it is just good to sit down and remember some of those things. So, stay home and be safe and remember when.



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!!!

MGV

ECAMGA Board

ECAMGA BOARD MEMBER CONTACT INFO

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Note:

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

IN CASE YOU MISSED THE MESSAGE (LOL)

Attention MGVs.

Due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak and guidelines from Wisconsin Department of Health Services, UW-Madison, and federal agencies: **ALL MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM AND RELATED VOLUNTEER PROJECTS ARE**

SUSPENDED including, but not limited to, meetings, bus trips, and plant sales for April and May. This will continue into the foreseeable future until further notice.

The only exception will be ongoing online educational activities approved by Extension staff. **The 24-volunteer hour requirement is suspended for the year. But the 10-hour continuing education remains.** The situation will continually be assessed, and updates will be provided.

I know this is a disappointing situation for many of you. It is a necessary step for the protection of volunteers, staff, and clientele; and we hope to reduce the stress and burden on volunteers and staff as we work remotely. For the latest information on COVID-19, visit the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](http://www.wisconsin.gov) and your county health department.

Please be safe,
Mike
Amy



ECAMGVA 2020 Calendar

All meetings at 6:30 pm at the Extension Office unless otherwise noted

May: TBA

May 31 ??: Annual Plant Sale??

June: TBA

July: TBA

August: TBA

September: TBA

October: TBA

November: TBA

December 16: Annual Holiday Party

To keep up to date on the latest guidance from UW Extension relative to the COVID19 situation go to:
<https://wimastergardener.org/2020/03/20/halt-to-master-gardener-program-volunteer-activities-2/>



North Riverfront Park Youth Garden

by Mari Jackson



This lovely garden was started by Erin Lafiave and since 2017 is continuing with Judy Mitchel as the coordinator. It is located a few blocks north of the Farmers Market on Forest St. Look for the white picket fence in the park. Over 20 raised beds have been amended annually with compost and has raised some beautiful flowers and vegetables. Best of all is the raising of gardening knowledge and perhaps a lifelong love of growing things for the youth who visit. It is very rewarding to see their enthusiasm and joy in growing and harvesting to eat their own vegetables! This program is serving the Boys and Girls Club of Eau Claire and they are accompanied by their teachers. Two UW Extension nutritionists also come and prepare the vegetables they pick so the kids can enjoy the fruits of their labor. And they do enjoy eating them!

The volunteer opportunities are two-parts: The prepping and the program.

First **the prepping** of the garden and starting the planting before the kids come in June. Of course this year things will be different, but we are going to go ahead with plans as usual with the hope that by midsummer the kids will be able to come. And if that can't happen then the garden will still be there for anyone who would like to visit and reap the harvest. The prepping involves weeding a bit and getting more wood chips to spread between the beds. And we get a load of compost delivered that needs to be spread in the beds. We also get some of the early planting done so it's growing before the kids arrive.

The program for the kids usually starts in early June and is four days a week. It runs for two or three weeks on, then two weeks off through August. There are around twenty kids and they are divided into groups of six to eight at a time in the garden. We have made up our own curriculum and use ideas from elsewhere. If you have any ideas to try, please let us know! There is such a wide variety of things to learn about gardening! Some of the things they learned was just how each vegetable looks growing and what their needs are, about insects good and bad, pollinators and how fruit is set, plant parts, composting, herbs, weeds, when and how to plant and harvest. We even made scarecrows last year.

If you would like to join us in helping grow a new generation of gardeners, please contact Judy at jmitchell@pobox.com

Several volunteers are already on board with this but there's room for more! From a few hours prepping or however much time you'd like with the kids program.



Events

Events and Other Garden Things

Presently, due to the Corona Virus situation public events, such as classes, are on hold. As we near the Spring garden season most of us are also wondering about our ability to purchase our bedding plants and garden perennials. Right now anything that is deemed a non-essential gathering has been put on hold. The best advice is to monitor the websites for the local nurseries as we go forward as well as watching the news for guidelines and directives for safe social interaction relative to the Corona Virus spread.

Also, for Master Gardeners, both for continued education hours as well as improving our own knowledge and garden skills, the Level 2 Plant Plus Series is available and will give 2 hours of continuing education credit for simply watching a gardening video and taking the quiz. To access this training go to:

<https://wimastergardener.org/plants-plus/>.

In addition, there are many on-line sources for gardening videos and tips. A few that I have come across are:

- <https://www.skillshare.com/browse/gardening> -
- <https://www.organicauthority.com/live-grow/top-5-online-gardening-courses> - this site gives links to a number of garden learning sites including Cornell University Department of Horticulture and the Oregon State University Master Gardener Online materials.
- And don't forget our local ECAMGAV Facebook site at: <https://www.facebook.com/Eau-Claire-Area-Master-Gardener-Volunteers-341929899171619/>.



Bits & Pieces

Three Rings for the Elven-Kings under the sky,
 Seven for the Dwarf-Lords in their halls of stone,
 Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
 One for the Dark Lord on his Dark Throne
 In the Land of Mordor where the shadows lie.
 One Ring to rule them all,
 One Ring to find them,
 One Ring to bring them all
 and in the darkness bind them
 In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.



Elf Garden courtesy of Nancy Spak



Jeepers Creepers, Where'd You Get Those Eyes...

Maybe this plant has no eyes, but it is an attractive plant for shade that may well attract your eyes with its bold foliage. This is one of the Tiarellas or foam flowers, a perennial noted for its spreading mat of star-shaped green leaves that are heavily marked with black at the centers. In the fall the foliage turns a reddish bronze. This particular variety of foam flower, because of its creeping, spreading tendencies, makes a very useful groundcover in shady, moist areas.

The plant grows 7-12 inches tall with about a 2-foot spread and does best in cool, moist, well-drained and humus rich soil. It likes partial to full shade and works well in woodland gardens. It is generally pest and disease free although slugs may present a problem and keep an eye out for powdery mildews. Another attractive feature of the plant is that deer don't like it. This plant has a hardiness rating of zones 4-9.



Another neat and overlooked plant for the shade is **Epimedium x versicolor**, bicolor barrenwort. It grows 10 - 12" and is one of the earliest of the barrenworts to bloom. It has red and yellow flowers held above the foliage. 'Sulphureum' has yellow flowers. This plant grows in zones 4 - 8.

How to Grow: All Epimedium grow well in average to rich, moist soil in part to full shade. They grow from rhizomes that should be planted just below the surface. Some are dense spreading and others are clumping. They are drought tolerant but grow better with some regular watering. Although they tend to be evergreen it is usually necessary to cut the foliage back on most Epimedium in very early spring, especially E. x versicolor, to clean them up after the winter and enjoy the flowers. Once the flowers have finished the foliage will be replaced quickly with new growth. Plants are easily

divided in late summer to propagate or control their spread.

The only major threat to these plants is infection from Tobacco Rattle Virus. Unfortunately this virus is rampant in Epimedium. If leaves have unusual patterns such as yellow mottling you should throw them in the trash or not purchase them if you see this at a nursery.

Other interesting plants to explore for shade to compliment hosta and other commonly grown shade plants would include variegated Solomon's Seal (this is a much more attractive plant than the taller green variety of Solomon's Seal), Hakone grass (although this is only a zone 5 and may need some protection), hellebore, brunnera, some of the hardy geraniums and the wide variety of ferns (I like to stick with the shorter ferns such as the Japanese Painted Fern since many of the larger ones grow 3 or more feet tall and overwhelm and overgrow most of the hosta and other shade plants) and perhaps the taller cimifugas. In addition, it is always lovely to include primrose and some of the small flowering bulbs in the shade garden.

"They say spring has come when you can put your foot on three daisies."

- Folk Wisdom



Chinese Cabbage

When you see the name "Chinese cabbage" in a it could refer to one of two varieties: napa cabbage or bok choy. Although most likely the reference is to napa cabbage. Most widely grown in China, this oblong, white to pale green cabbage is cultivated worldwide, and is a popular ingredient in authentic Asian cuisines. This vegetable is easy to prepare and has a mild flavor that gets sweeter with cooking.

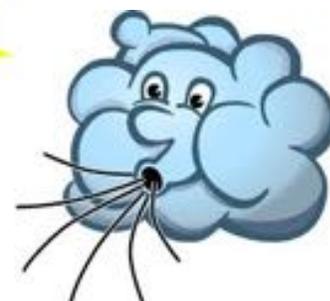
The scientific name is *Brassica rapa*. Napa cabbage, the most common variety, is the subspecies *pekinensis*. Sometimes it may be labeled as Chinese white cabbage, Peking cabbage, or [celery cabbage](#).

This oblong, large-headed cabbage has firmly packed, crinkly, pale green, thickly veined leaves and a white stalk (hence the alternative name "celery cabbage"). Because of the vegetable's resistance to cold, the cabbage has become popular throughout the world, especially in the northern regions of the globe. Napa cabbage is easy to prepare and, due to its increased use, is relatively easy to find. Chinese cabbage is a perfect vegetable choice if you're on a budget or feeding a crowd—it's nutritious, inexpensive when compared to a lot of other vegetables, and it's filling. It's also rated by gardeners as a vegetable that's easy to grow.

The Sun Was Warm

by Robert Frost

“The sun was warm but the wind was chill.
You know how it is with an April day.
When the sun is out and the wind is still,
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But if you so much as dare to speak,
a cloud come over the sunlit arch,
And wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back in the middle
of March.”



Check out this neat garden art piece on <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39265827987181736/>.

In addition, there are other interesting garden art things to be viewed there.

Strawberry Salad with Poppy Seed Dressing...

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup sugar
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds
- 1 bunch romaine, torn (about 8 cups)
- 1 small onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 2 cups halved fresh strawberries



Dressing:

- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp sour cream
- 1 tbsp 2% milk
- 2 ¼ tsps. Cider vinegar
- 1 ½ tsps. Poppy seeds



Directions:

1. Place sugar in a small heavy skillet; cook and stir over medium-low heat until melted and caramel-colored, about 10 minutes. Stir in almonds until coated. Spread on foil to cool.
2. Place romaine, onion and strawberries in a large bowl. Whisk together dressing ingredients; toss with salad. Break candied almonds into pieces; sprinkle over salad. Serve immediately.



The Quest

By Judy Mitchell

This is the final Quest article of the season. If you have been following along this winter, you have learned a good deal about Japanese beetles, lilacs, evergreens, landscaping for the birds, and the effects of flooding on woody plants. Now, let's turn to vegetable gardening.

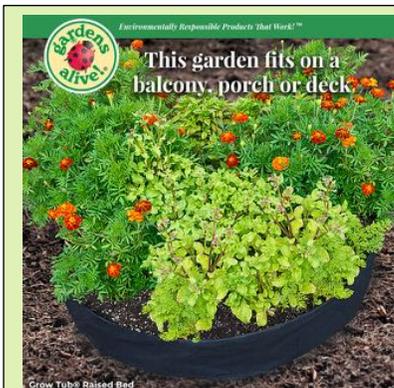
There are a lot of Learning Store publications on growing vegetables. There are publications on growing particular vegetables, growing them in containers, staking & trellising them, growing them for the commercial market and much more. For this month's article, I chose a publication that should be useful to anyone getting into vegetable gardening for the first time:

UWEX Publication A2801, Growing Vegetables at Home: Questions & Answers
(available at <https://learningstore.uwex.edu/>)

This publication covers the what, where, when, why and how of vegetable gardening. It encourages gardeners to have fun with vegetables by growing them in containers, indoors, in a community garden or in an ornamental vegetable garden (schematic included). There are sections on seed starting, the tools you'll need, and the pests and diseases to anticipate. All in all, it presents a pretty balanced picture of the work, frustration and elation associated with vegetable gardening.

The last twenty-three pages are a real bonus. In alphabetical order, you will find the answers to frequently asked questions about individual vegetables, starting with asparagus and questions about how you harvest it and what causes crooked spears. This is not limited just to commonly grown vegetables. There are sections on celeriac, endive, okra, salsify and much more. And if you want to know what causes poor fruit set on pepper plants, it's in there.

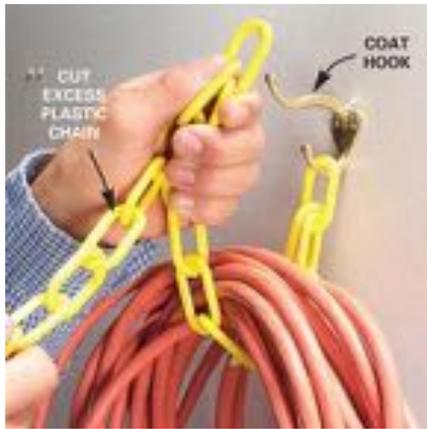
It is enjoyable and informative to page through this publication. If you man an answer booth this summer, you might want to have it close at hand.



Our world right now is in upheaval. Our access to most of the activities we have enjoyed previously are very restricted. However, to quote from an article on the Gardens Alive website, "No one can cancel Spring, and no one can stop us from gardening." So as we look for ideas for our gardens for summer (and, yes, we can go out in our gardens and weed and plant. Just don't hold a garden party there and invite all the neighbors) one variation on the raised bed theme is the container. This picture and idea to the left comes from Gardens Alive website (www.gardensalive.com). If you go there and click on "Tips & Resources" you will find some information that is helpful as we garden (this is an organic products website).

*“I’ve decided
I’m not old.
I’m 25 plus
shipping and
handling.”*

-Anonymous



I love Pinterest. Here are a couple of ideas off of the Pinterest website that look like handy ideas I might use in my garden and garden/workshop storage areas.



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/eaucnaire
Phone: 715-839-4712
Fax: 715-839-6277
M-F 8AM-5PM



Arbor Day

The University of Wisconsin Extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education, programming and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental, arrest or conviction record or veteran status.” If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this program, activity or service, please contact 715-839-4712 as soon as possible preceding the scheduled event so that proper arrangements can be made in a timely fashion

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