

# Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News



January 2021

## And A Zoomy Christmas To You, Too!

The annual Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Volunteer Association (ECAMGVA) Took place on December 7<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. The fellowship was great even though the treats were substandard. Someone did have wine but refused to share!!! Seriously, it was great to get together even if via the internet.

Rita Gundry reported on the elections for the ECAMGVA Board. The members Going off the board are Rita Gundry, Ellen Terwilliger and Nancy Spak. Judy Mitchell and Barb Huggins will be coming on the board as a result of the elections.

There was discussion on the fact that the ECAMGVA will still have a garden Seminar in 2021 but it will be in conjunction with six other western Wisconsin Counties (Pierce, St. Croix, Barron, Chippewa, Polk and Dunn) and will be done via four Saturday over the internet sessions for a flat cost of \$10 per participant. To help cover expenses a sponsor will be involved. More information will be forthcoming.



Photo by Steve Terwilliger



Photo by Ellen Terwilliger

Photo contest winners were announced (see November newsletter for results) and the 2020 Digger Award was presented to Judy Mitchell for all her work with gardening for young people. That was very much deserved. Judy also writes an article for the newsletter on a regular basis.

Then it was time for some fun and games and the results of the Scavenger Hunt were revealed (the directions for participation had been sent out earlier and the point of the Scavenger Hunt was to acquaint members with the treasure trove of information to be found on the ECAMGAV website.

So, congratulations on increasing your awareness of what is on our Master Gardener website (<https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/>). Anne Annis, Rhonda Cooke and Rita Gundry completed the scavenger hunt ahead of our annual meeting and holiday party. Louise White-Roach led the group through the activity that she had created. If you did not take part in the hunt and/or were not at the annual meeting, take some time to look it over. The Photo Contest winners have their photos included on the website as well. The website is monitored by Chris Southward and updated by Ellen Terwilliger.

Another game was also played with those in attendance trying to come up with the names of various plants that can be found in seed catalogs by alphabetical letter in five categories (vegetable, flower, fruit, shrub, tree. For instance for the letter "s" that would be sweet peas, sunflower, strawberry, sumac, spruce.

Educational hours need to be in by December 31 (as well as report any volunteer hours that might have been done even though members do not have to meet any required number of volunteer hours for 2020) and dues are also to be paid for 2021.

Members were also asked to share gardening experiences for the past year with Paula Bonnin talking about her "octopus" sunflower (see article on page 6) and Andy Heren said he had added new raised beds to his garden. Among other additions to their garden in the past year, one member grew cardoon and others dealt with deer and critters as well as the need to thin pears to increase yields.



Photo by Ellen Terwilliger

In the end, a good time was had by all and, hopefully, the treats will improve for the 2021 meetings!



## Local Master Gardener News

### Changing e-mail? Moving?

If you do, please remember to notify the ECAMGA 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](mailto: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).




**MGV**

**Bulletin Board  
Postings Stories  
and  
Opportunities!!!**

### January MG Educational Meeting Will Be For The Bird (Bluebirds, That Is)...

Our January 18 educational meeting will be co-presented by siblings, Larry Liegel and Rita Gundry. Raised with fourteen siblings on a farm in southern Wisconsin having chickens in the coop, bats in the barn and nature all around us, we progressed to bluebirds in our retirement years. Larry was introduced to the hobby of bluebirds about twelve years ago and maintains sixty-five nest boxes in his home county of Sauk and in his county of residence, Eau Claire. If you frequent the dog parks in Eau Claire, the habitat there supports his boxes and they are scattered along the Chippewa River State Trail, as well. He recently completed building his two hundredth nest box. He uses cedar for durability and furnishes them with all the amenities a bluebird would want, with protection from predators being most important.

Rita Gundry serves as Eau Claire County Coordinator for the BLUEBIRD RESTORATION ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN, a non-profit organization responsible for reestablishing an Eastern Bluebird population in Wisconsin. She oversees forty nest boxes spanning four miles near her Fall Creek country home.



Plan to attend this presentation and discover how bluebirds can bring you joy and happiness as we journey through life.

### ECAMGA Board

#### ECAMGA BOARD MEMBER CONTACT INFO

Name	E-mail address	Phone number
Louise White-Roach	<a href="mailto:White1roach@gmail.com">White1roach@gmail.com</a>	715-831-3352
Andy Heren	<a href="mailto:Rcktnut007@aol.com">Rcktnut007@aol.com</a>	715-831-9236
Paula Bonnin	<a href="mailto:paula.d.bonnin@gmail.com">paula.d.bonnin@gmail.com</a>	715-220-6373
Jeannie Chromey	<a href="mailto:J_chromey@yahoo.com">J_chromey@yahoo.com</a>	715-5799607
Chris Southworth	<a href="mailto:Chris_southworth@yahoo.com">Chris_southworth@yahoo.com</a>	715-514-3358
Barb Huggins	<a href="mailto:barbahuggins@gmail.com">barbahuggins@gmail.com</a>	715-833-0224
Judy Mitchell	<a href="mailto:jmitchell@pobox.com">jmitchell@pobox.com</a>	715-877-1354

**Note:**

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



### ECAMGVA

2021 Calendar

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

January 18: Bluebirds  
February: TBA  
March: TBA  
April: TBA  
May: TBA  
June: TBA  
July: TBA  
August: TBA  
September: TBA  
October: TBA  
November: TBA  
December: Annual Meeting and Christmas 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/>

*"If you count all your blessings you'll always be in the black." -anonymous*

# Events



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



## Featured Creature: Getting Batty!

Here at Beaver Creek Reserve, we got a little batty and celebrated Bat Week the last week of October. Our naturalist, Megan Giefer created a fun YouTube video explaining some myths and truths surrounding these mysterious creatures. In this post...

[Read more](#)  
beavercreekconnection.blogs...

## Trailside Treasure Series

Ever wonder what those black lumps are that grow on trees? Well this week with Ruth, we learn about a fungus called black knot and why it only grows on a certain family of trees.

Check out our YouTube page to watch previous Trailside Treasure videos, and to learn more about some of the cool things you may find as you explore the trails at Beaver Creek or your local park. Be on the look-out for new videos each week, watch previous videos [here!](#)

Trailside Treasures:  
Part 16, Black Knot Fungus



## Importance of Trees by Nina Logan

If someone should ask me, "What is your favorite plant?" I would have to say a tree. If they would then ask me what tree, I would have to say a white oak tree, especially the Bur Oak variety. The Bur Oak is long lived, about 100 to 200 years and some can grow to 300 years old if conditions are good. Unlike the red oak, the white oaks are impervious to oak wilt.



*A 300-year-old Bur Oak...*

I like the way the Bur Oak is thick and strong and sends out limbs which are sturdy, thick and twisty. The lower branches grow almost horizontal making the tree appear as though it has been squashed down unlike other oaks that are straight and tall. The leaves are broad with rounded lobe ends. The acorns are large and edible for wildlife and the Bur Oak does not produce tannin which can be toxic in large doses. In winter the Bur Oak is especially beautiful (continued on page 4)

# Growing Together

2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminars



**SAVE THE DATES: Virtual Presentations. Saturdays at 10 am**

**February 20, 2021** Sonya Burke  
*Soil Preparation for Planting Vegetables*

**February 27, 2021** Melinda Myers  
*Creating a Private Space. Brought to you by*  
<https://www.diggershotline.com/>



**March 6, 2021** Laura Jull  
*Planting Trees and Shrubs*

**March 13, 2021** Kelly Povo & Phyllis Root  
*Searching for Wildflowers in Wisconsin and Minnesota*

**Cost: \$10 for all sessions**

Spring Garden Seminars will be presented via You Tube Live. Attendees will receive the link the week prior to each seminar. These seminars are open to the public and we welcome both new and experienced gardeners to attend. Registration information will be coming soon at <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/> Brought to you by Western Wisconsin Master Gardener Associations from the following counties: Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce and St. Croix



*Trees...continued from page 3...*

when a light snow covers the tops of the limbs on thick branches leaving the gray showing on the lower half of the branch.

I have twenty-seven oaks in my yard, all of which are at least 100 years old. I love them all even though they constantly drop small twigs and leave six inches of leaves over the whole yard in fall. But they also provide shade and cooling breezes in summer as a result, I seldom use air conditioning. Also, they are homes to a plethora of birds and animals, and I love the sound of the leaves blowing with the wind. The tree tops sway with the wind until one thinks they may snap, but they always seem to return to their rightful place when the wind subsides. Trees have many purposes. They absorb noise, reduce carbons by filtering the air, (continued on page 7)



## Bits and Pieces



It has been my pleasure and a privilege to serve the association and all of you this past year as president and the previous four on the board. What a year it's been. In spite of living with the pandemic your board has met every month of 2020. Andy Heren, Rita Gundry, Chris Southworth, Jeannie Chromey, Paula Bonnin, Louise Roach-White and Nancy Spak worked to strengthen our association. We developed Standard Operating Procedures now on the board page of our website <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/home>. The by-laws were updated, a board orientation developed and work on projects and standing committees reviewed so that when we meet again things will be stronger for our association. We missed March and April for education, but we've met online for education every month since then. Two of the times you were the presenters sharing your gardens and expertise with our group. And now we are working together with five other counties to plan an online winter conference with a great line up of speakers and topics.

I'm excited that we have four new Master Gardener Volunteers who are in the works and have gone through the training. Margaret Murphy is setting up dates for mentoring training in January for all of us interested in welcoming this new group to our association as they complete the onboarding process into Master Gardeners. I know them all personally - they are a great group.

While I will be going off the board I will continue working to coordinate education with the board of 2021. I came to the board as your WIMGA rep - newly certified as a Master Gardener Volunteer. During the five years I've met and gotten to know most of you. Consider serving on the board in the future - there is no better way to get to know your fellow volunteers, develop leadership skills and strengthen gardening in our county.

Till we meet and garden together again,

Ellen Terwilliger



### The Quest

By Judy Mitchell

This Quest article is dedicated to encouraging you to read UWEX Publication A1827, Identifying Grasses in Wisconsin Turf (available at <https://learningstore.uwex.edu>). There are at least three good reasons to study this publication in the middle of winter:

1. It contains lots of words you can use in a game of Scrabble.
2. It contains a list of equipment for an indoor Scavenger Hunt; and
3. It contains instructions for planning a spring Field Trip.

And besides, what else do you have to do this Winter? You may even be like a friend of mine who used his extra time at home last summer to manicure his lawn like a professional. If so, once you have studied Publication A1827, you will be ready to spend next summer making an inventory of the grasses that make up your lawn.

There is a lot of information in this publication. Page 1 has a schematic showing the parts of a stem of grass and a list of equipment needed to identify a grass. On the last page, there is a very good glossary. I had some fun guessing what “culm” and “ligule” meant and then using the glossary to correct my guesses.

The recommended technique for grass identification involves studying a young shoot, digging up some roots and cutting a stem. Then you are ready to work your way through a key, answering questions until you identify the grass. The key starts with “hairs present on half or more of the ligule length” and goes on to ask questions containing terms such as papillose, glabrous and keel. Keep the glossary handy.

On pages 6 & 7, there are diagrams showing the cross-sections of specific grasses. I am looking forward to trying to match up an actual cross section to a diagram. That may be one of the more interesting and challenging aspects of grass identification. On pages 5, 8, 9 and 10, there are species descriptions. It is interesting to work backwards, choosing a familiar grass, reading the species description and then working through the key.

Now that I’ve studied Publication A1827, I am ready to start hunting for my hand lens, metric ruler and other equipment needed to identify grasses. With those, I will be ready to do my field work this spring.



## Octopi and Sunflowers, Oh My...

by Paula Bonnin

This Spring, when flowers were starting to emerge after a long Winter, I found gifts from the critters. No, not the bad kind of gifts, but flowers that they planted JUST for me.

As I was cleaning away the old mulch, I noticed a number of strange plants emerging from around my garden. Instead of pulling them, I let them grow.

In June, I had what I would call, octopus sunflowers, growing in four different areas of my garden. The sunflowers in June, were over five feet tall, and had numerous limbs with small yellow sunflowers on them. At their peak in August, they had grown to over eight feet tall and had up to ten limbs with flowers on them. With 2020 being the year that it was, these little gifts helped me to get through the summer with much more brightness and happiness.

(See page 7 for more pictures of the different sunflowers Paula has grown in her garden.)



## EYE CANDY

### Trees

by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see  
a poem as lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is  
prest  
against the earth's sweet flowing  
breast.

A tree that looks at God all day  
and lifts her leafy arm to pray.

A tree that may in summer wear  
a nest of robins in her hair.

Upon whose bosom snow has lain  
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.



**Paula's  
Sunflowers  
(continued  
from  
page 6)**



*Trees...continued from page 4...*

provide attractive views and cover unattractive views. As our human population increases, our native population of trees and forests are sacrificed. Trees which took over 100 years to reach maturity are bulldozed down in an hour's time, making room for growing population needs, and creating barren land for subdivisions and shopping malls. These newcomers soon realize no trees mean no cool breezes, no wildlife and no green beauty. The natural beauty that was destroyed will not be replaced in their lifetime or in the lifetime of their children.

As the remaining mature trees become even more vulnerable to loss, city planners have begun to advise developers to adjust construction practices to protect those mature trees which are left. Concern for trees can sometimes shrink in importance when considered in relation to world problems today. Here is where we as Master Gardeners can come into play. By providing more education about the problems facing our remaining mature forests, we can perhaps make a difference to the future of these magnificent wonders of nature.



*Bur Oak Tree Seeds*



To the left is Rhonda Cooke's Photo Contest submission entitled "Busy Bee."



Another Photo Contest submission, again, to the left, this one by Mikel Reise entitled "Ohio Spiderwort." And Mari Jackson's submission, "Glowing Morning" on the right.



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/eauclore](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/eauclore)  
Phone: 715-839-4712  
Fax: 715-839-6277  
M-F 8AM-5PM



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

**Extension Office**  
**227 First Street West**  
**Altoona, WI 54720**