

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News



July 2021

Eli Gottfried Gives ECAMGAVs Low Down on Hydroponics

by Frankie Weinberger

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Hydroponics

Eli Gottfried, soil scientist, gave a presentation on hydroponics at the June 21st meeting of the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Volunteer Association (ECAMGVA). It was an informative and thorough overview of the hydroponic methods of growing plants.



Most plants do best in their natural habitat of soil. However, there are some advantages to growing plants without soil. Plants grow more quickly in water due to increased nutrient availability. Hydroponic growing can also conserve water since it is re-used.

There are seven types of hydroponic growing systems, ranging from the simplest to complex methods are Kratky, wick, water culture, ebb and flow, drip irrigation, clay ball or pellet, and nutrient film technology.

Hydroponic growing requires a nutrient source, which can be adding mineral powder to water or the aquaponic method of using fish excrement.

He noted that the first step in starting a hydroponic system is to have the water tested to determine nutrient and pH levels. This is analogous to having soil tested before planting in a traditional way.

There are a few challenges inherent to hydroponic systems. Root diseases that are commonly found in water. Limestone (calcium carbonate) is a natural buffer against acidity that is found in soil, which is lacking in hydroponics. In addition, the normal symbiosis between roots, bacteria and fungi in soil is not present. This symbiotic relationship is essential in providing minerals to plants.

For more details, see the complete slides on the ECAMGVA website at <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/>.



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The ECAMGV's will be hosting a Mentor-Mentee Mixer on Saturday, July 31, 2021 from 9am - 11 am at River Prairie Park in Altoona, at Pavilion C (by the large flag).

We'll be getting acquainted and potting up houseplants for our fall plant sale/education event. If you're in the area and have a few minutes, stop by, and say hello.



Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) is a lovely zone 4 biennial plant that provides vertical interest in the garden and can be grown in full sun or part to full shade depending on summer heat.

(photo by Dana Cox)



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 or notify her by snail mail at 1908 Hogeboom Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701 (or call her at 715-783-0016 - cell).

ECAMGA Board

ECAMGA BOARD MEMBER CONTACT INFO		
Name	E-mail address	Phone number
Louise White-Roach	White1roach@gmail.com	715-831-3352
Andy Heren	Rcktnut007@aol.com	715-831-9236
Jeannie Chromey	J_chromey@yahoo.com	715-5799607
Chris Southworth	Chris_southworth@yahoo.com	715-514-3358
Barb Huggins	barbahuggins@gmail.com	715-833-0224
Judy Mitchell	jmitchell@pobox.com	715-877-1354



MGV

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



Note:

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

Good Afternoon Gardeners,

Just a quick check in about Farm Technology Days - July 20-22 (<https://www.wifarmtechdays.org/>).

We need additional coverage at the 'Ask a Master Gardener' table. You can still sign up for anytime Tuesday through Thursday (9am-4pm) but we specifically need help on Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning and afternoon. We can also use some help with set up on Monday, July 19.

Please let me know asap to make sure you get a pass for the day(s) that you are at the event.

Also, if you are planning to provide a container to help decorate the space, please coordinate with Jeannie Chromey at j_chromey@yahoo.com. There isn't a specific theme for the containers other than making it educational in some way. I appreciate the effort that will go into this but it's an opportunity for us to show the community how wonderfully creative and innovative Master Gardeners are!

Thank you to all of you who have already signed up 😊

Hope you have a great week.

Margaret

Margaret Murphy
Horticulture Outreach Specialist
(715) 726-7957
margaret.murphy@wisc.edu



ECAMGV

2021 Calendar



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

July 7: 9:00 am Mulch Spreading/
At Teaching Gardens (Ext. Office)

July 19: Member Sharing Program

July 31: Mentor-Mentee Mixer

August 16: Dr. Nora Mitchell on
Native Sunflower research

August 30: tentative date for
summer wrap-up

September 20: Diana Alfuth on
Prairie and Natives

October 7: Deadline for Annual
Photo Contest

October 18: TBA

November 22: Dr. Kristina Beuning
on UWEC Greenhouse (in-
person tour if pandemic
permits)

December: Annual Meeting and
Christmas Party

9th Annual ECAMGVA

Photo Contest Rules:



1. One entry per person/member accepted.
2. The photo subject (i.e., main feature of the photo) must be garden related.
3. The one submitting the photo must be a member in good standing of the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Volunteer Association (ECAMGVA) for the 2021 membership year.
4. The photo must have been taken by the contestant during the 2021 calendar year.
5. Each entry must be accompanied by a short description of the photo (the "What," "Where," "When," etc. as applicable).
6. By entering the contestant gives consent for the ECAMGVA to use the photo submitted for the ECAMGVA Newsletter and/or ECAMGVA promotional purposes.
7. First prize will be \$30; second prize \$25; and the third prize \$20. At the judge's discretion an "Honorable Mention" award may also be made (no monetary award).
8. A panel of judges selected by the ECAMGVA Educational Committee will judge the contest and the panel's decision is final. Winners will be announced in the November 2021 issue of the ECAMGVA Newsletter.
9. Submit photos via email (largest size/pixels that your email will allow to be sent) to Carol Cox at c7w6c2200@charter.net by no later than October 8, 2021. Please place "**Photo Contest Entry**" in the email subject line. You will be notified when your entry is received by return email.



RECLAMATION...

by Ellen Terwilliger

Three Master Gardeners have been working on turning a sizeable piece of city land along Menomonie Street from a

bank of invasive false spirea to an area that includes native plants. Pennsylvania, Easter Star, and White Tinged sedges along with Goatsbeard and a Ninebark shrub are all native plants that have been installed.

There are some Taunton Yews and Spirea shrub varieties that will help fill in the large areas. In 2020 Ellen had the false spirea removed. Four large dump trailer loads of mulch were delivered and spread late last fall. During the winter plans were made and plants ordered from Prairie Nursery. Diggers Hotline was contacted so we didn't hit gas or water lines.



Pictures by Jael Wolf and Ellen Terwilliger.

This spring new master gardeners Jael and Aruna worked with Ellen to plant shrubs and sedges. L aura Jull's presentation on the correct way to plant shrubs was so useful. Over the next few years while plants are filling in Aruna, Jael and Ellen will be keeping vigil for the False Spirea and Virginia Creeper that can grow from tiny bits of rhizome. With our dry weather we are working out a watering schedule as well.



It is exciting to see a piece of land transformed. Neighbors, people passing by and roofers have all given us a thumbs up. Way to go new Master Gardeners!

"A life of ease is a difficult pursuit."
-Anonymous



Summer Crush® Hydrangea is a spectacular compact (between 18" and 3'tall and wide) hydrangea that is raspberry red in neutral to alkaline soils and vibrant purple in acid soils. It has an upright and mounded shape and is rated for zone 4 and will bloom in spring through mid-summer on new or old shoots. The shrub is in the Endless Summer series of hydrangeas and will grow in part shade to part sun with average moisture requirements after it is established.



Events

Heads up!

We're planning a fun, wrap up the summer event for this fall.

It's **tentatively scheduled for August 30**, from 6-8 pm, at the Phoenix Park pavilion.



Some highlights:

- bring in your houseplants without bringing along uninvited guests
- save those heirloom tomato seeds
- tips for planting your spring flowering bulbs
- learn more about buckthorn and other invasives

Plan to pot up your favorite weed and bring it to share. Yes, weed.

Watch for an email with more detail as we firm things up.



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

Butterfly House- Opens July 5th!



We are celebrating our NEW Butterfly House with a grand re-opening! The House officially **opens to the public** on Monday, July 5th. To explore the Butterfly House, everyone must check in at the front desk of the Wise Nature Center before entering.

Butterfly House Hours:

(July 5th - Sunday of Labor Day weekend)

Monday-Saturday: 11:00 am-3:00 pm; **Sunday:** Noon-3:00 pm

On **Thursday, July 8th at 3pm** we will have a celebratory ribbon cutting to recognize our new Butterfly House and picnic area. **This event is open to everyone and anyone!**

After the ribbon cutting, there will be brats, hot dogs, and burgers, as well as other snacks and drinks available to celebrate this exciting new addition. If you plan on attending, we will meet at the Butterfly House after the Nature Center closes at 3pm.

On **Friday, July 2nd (next Friday!)** from **12-3pm**, **BCR members** can come visit the house before it opens to the public. For this event, members don't need to register in advance, we just ask that you stop into the Nature Center to check-in and receive an entrance sticker before entering the Butterfly House. Explore the house and see what butterflies have made it their home before it opens to the public on July 5th. **Again, this is a Beaver Creek member's-only event.**



Ever think you would see Buckthorn sold in nurseries, much less the better nurseries? Well, this one, Rhamnus frangula, Fine Line® Buckthorn, is and grows 60 to 84 inches tall and 24 to 36 inches wide. It has "ferny" foliage and grows in zones 2 to 7 in part sun to sun. This cultivar is said to produce very few fruit and among those only 2% are viable. With that zone rating it would also be a possibility for a permanent container plant.



Bits and Pieces

Expanding Your Perennial Vegetable Gardening

by Frankie Weinberger

The advantages of growing perennials are numerous. Their deep roots result in higher mineral content and stable, symbiotic benefits to soil microbes. They grow in early spring and provide fresh produce earlier than many garden edibles. Perennials are economical since seeds and seedlings do not need to be purchased annually. Pests and diseases are very uncommon among perennial vegetables. Five additional perennial vegetables – Caucasian Mountain Spinach, Good King Henry, Lovage, Perennial Arugula, and Salad Burnet will be introduced here - all edibles that can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in soup or stews.

Caucasian Mountain Spinach (*Hablitzia tamnoides*) grows in zones 3-6, an amazing vine that grows 6-9 feet long. It can be grown in full sun or partial shade like its native habitat as the understory of temperate forests. It is one of the first early spring plants to appear. Heart-shaped leaves and young shoots have a mild flavor and can be added to salads or cooked like spinach. It does well with a trellis or as a lovely vine on stone houses.



Good King Henry (*Blitum Bonus-Henricus*) is a prolific perennial hardy to zones 3-9 that prefers partial shade. It grows to 2 ½ feet tall and has low maintenance. Leaves, and flowers can all be eaten. Although it can be eaten raw, it is best to cook it and limit to small quantities since it is high in oxalic acid which can increase risk of kidney stones in susceptible people.

Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) is a gigantic perennial plant resembling celery. It grows in zone 4-8 and tolerates full sun to partial shade. It can grow to 6 feet tall. Leaves and stalks are best eaten cooked, since they have an intense flavor. Its seeds can be used for flavoring like celery seeds, and roots are also edible. Legend has it that Bloody Mary drinks were originally served through hollow lovage stalks. It also serves as a wonderful pollinator with its large yellow flowers.

Perennial arugula (*Diplotaxis tenuifolia*) is a short-lived perennial that self-seeds easily if left to flower. Although it is officially hardy to zone 5b, it does very well in my Eau Claire city garden. It does best in full sun and is drought tolerant. It will give you two annual crops in spring and again in fall. Leaves have an intense, spicy flavor and are added to salads. Flowers are also edible.



Salad burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*) is an evergreen perennial in zones 4-8. It grows in full sun or partial shade. It spreads by rhizomes. Its small leaves have a mild cucumber flavor and can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in hot dishes. Its flavor is best before flowering.

These five perennial vegetables make a wonderful addition to your vegetable garden. With the numerous benefits of growing perennials, it is a worthwhile to expand your collection!

Sources:

www.gardeningknowhow.com, www.harvesttotable.com, en.wikipedia.org, [Perennial Vegetables](#) by Eric Toensmeier.



“To prune or not to prune, that is the question.”

by Carol Cox

We all, I think, love clematis. There are so many lovely varieties and striking colors. Sometimes, though, we are confused about some simple maintenance items. One of these can be described as “to prune or not to prune, that is the question.” There are some basic categories that clematis vines fit into and which one your specific vine belongs to will determine how it is to be pruned. These categories are:

Group 1. Clematis vines that bloom in spring grow on old wood. Blooms of this clematis developed during last year’s growing season. This clematis pruning group should be pruned **before the end of July** to allow blooms for next year.

Group 2. Repeat bloomers. Large flowering hybrid clematis may produce a second set of blooms. Deadhead spent flowers for another series of blooms, though they will likely be smaller than the first, as these appear on new growth. When deadheading the first blooms, as much as 12 to 18 inches of stem can be removed. This rejuvenates the plant and is often the best means of pruning clematis vines.

Group 3. Clematis vines that flower in summer or fall should be **done in early spring**, as these flowers are produced on the current year’s growth.

In addition, dead or damaged stems may be removed at any time when pruning clematis vines. Damaged plant parts will never be productive, so get rid of them as soon as they are noticed.

You may want to wait until the second year to prune clematis, especially if it is the large flowering variety. Always prune clematis when flowering is finished.

If you know the name of your specific clematis vine you can go to <https://www.finegardening.com/article/what-group-is-my-clematis> to find out what group it falls into (or you can look on the tag that came with the plant or simply watch as to when it flowers).

If you prune clematis immediately after bloom time is finished, you won’t have to worry about removing next year’s flowers. Prune clematis for shape at this time, removing up to one third of the plant, if needed.

Avoid removing woody stems, if possible. Clematis pruning groups include those that flower on new growth and those that bloom on last year’s woody stem. Once you’re familiar with the bloom time of your clematis, you will be able to prune the vine before buds begin to develop.

When deciding how and when to trim clematis, don’t remove a developing bud. If you see buds developing when pruning clematis vines, you may be pruning at the wrong time.

I know that I lose the tags that come with my plants and then wonder about when to prune but, as per above, prune after bloom and, then you may want to put some type of colored ribbon or tag (one that will not fade or deteriorate over winter and time) on the plant or trellis it is growing on that gives you the heads up as to the pruning category that specific vine is in.

“You can make your world so much larger simply by acknowledging everyone else’s.”

- Marie Laskas



EYE CANDY

I can't understand why, instead of sucking out blood, a mosquito could not have been designed to such fat!!
-anonymous



Sedums are such versatile groundcovers and come in so many colors they brighten up the garden or rock garden areas.



Strange birds flock to some people's gardens! Even in this climate.

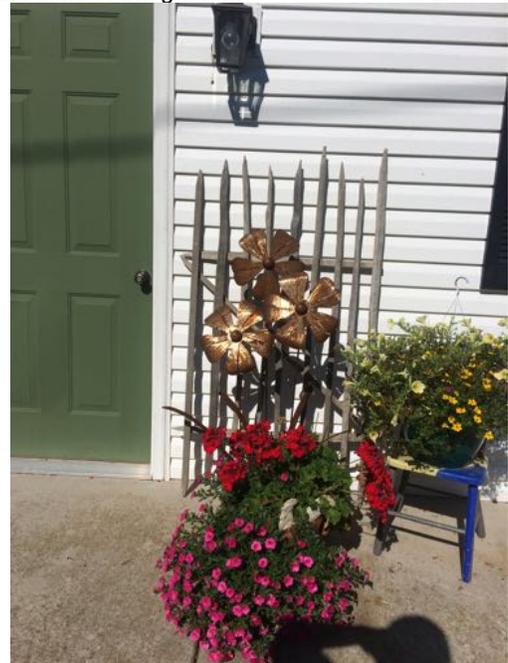


Martagons are such delightful lilies and like the shade (although with proper watering they can take some sun also). They also come in a range of colors and sizes. Once planted they do not like to be disturbed.



(photo by Carol Cox)

There seem to be thousands of daylily varieties. From the old "ditch lily" to the latest triploid hybrids and rebloomers, these plants offer beautiful form and color to the garden.



(photo by Carol Cox)

A colorful display at the Sturgeon Bay home of Marilyn McCallister.



(photo by Carol Cox)

An interesting use of old ladders and bird cages at the Sturgeon Bay home of Marilyn McCallister..



(photo by Dana Cox)

Some years are the "year of the hosta," some the year for roses and some are the "year of the iris." This year was the year of the iris in this garden.

Containers to garden in can be almost anything. Below and to the right are some interesting combo and/or container gardening ideas.



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

Phone: 715-839-4712

Fax: 715-839-6277

M-F 8AM-5PM



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Extension Office
227 First Street West
Altoona, WI 54720