



The Best Dirt

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To serve the needs of gardeners in Ozaukee County by providing university research-based horticulture information and educational opportunities designed to supplement programs of the University of Wisconsin - Extension (UWEX).

To promote understanding of responsible gardening practices and provide a link between the community and UWEX.

To develop and increase horticulture knowledge for all Master Gardeners, thereby providing effective horticultural resources and expertise for Ozaukee County residents.

2018 Budget Approved; Supports Startup of New 4H Project

The Ozaukee Master Gardener Executive Board approved an operating budget for 2018 at its meeting in Port Washington on December 11.

The Board annually reviews the goals submitted by project leaders in the fall, and then decides how much to allot for the various gardens and committees.

Project funding will not significantly change in the coming year. The Board continued its commitment to its existing gardens, its annual plant sale fundraiser, its presence at County Fair and various events and programs for members and the public. The Board also set aside funding for a Level 1 Training Class, to be conducted in September 2018.

New for 2018 is a commitment by the Executive Board to provide \$1500 to its newest approved project: a county wide horticultural project for young people ages eight to 19. Space is to be provided at the Ozaukee County Fairgrounds for a teaching garden that will be the focus of the project. The garden will be located east of the gazebo on the fairgrounds. The \$1500 that was budgeted by OMG's board represents a one-time startup cost, taking into consideration the need to erect a fence around the perimeter of the garden. The 4H Foundation has also set aside funding for the project in 2018.

Members wishing to volunteer their time in support of the new OMG horticultural project should contact its chair, Cindy Behlen.

Save the Date; Pass the word New Level 1 Training Class Planned

A new Level 1 Ozaukee Master Gardener Training Class has been scheduled to begin in September 2018.

Level 1 Training is the gateway to becoming certified as a Master Gardener. Classes are held once a week for 14 weeks and cover a host of topics, including vegetable and perennial gardening, plant diseases, lawn care and much more.

Class capacity will likely be capped at 30 students to assure a quality experience. The Ozaukee Master Gardeners Executive Board has yet to determine if the cost per student will remain the same as in 2017 (\$150).

Interest in Level 1 Training is high. There are already 15 names on a waiting list. Call our office at (262) 284-8288 to be added to the list, which assures first consideration for registration. Public announcement of the class will likely be made in June on the OMG website and in local media.

If you'd like to help with planning, teaching or mentoring, watch your email for details soon.



MGs - Don't miss the Annual Meeting and Potluck January 25 at the American Legion Post in Saukville. See Page 3 for details.

Ozaukee Master Gardeners 2017 Officers and Executive Board Members

President Jim Layton
President Elect Roseann St. Aubin
Past President Jerry Nelson
VP Operations Committee Erin Schanen
VP Project Committees Cindy Behlen
Community Garden Resources Mary Reilly-Kliss
Treasurer Joy Schultz
Secretary Kay Krier
Members at Large Marion Kanack, Mary Ingles, Stan Suring



Ozaukee Master Gardener Committees

Advocates Shelter - Kuhefuss House - Lasata - 4H Horticulture -
 Ozaukee County Fair - Pioneer Village - Heirloom Plant and Herb
 Sale - Port Washington Triangle Garden - Tendick Park -
 USS Liberty Memorial Public Library - Washington County Community
 Gardens - Webster School - Membership - Newsletter- Education -
 Publicity - Website - Yard & Garden Line

Read more on our website <http://ozaukeemastergardeners.org/>
 Once online, click on “Our committees” to get the full descriptions, as well
 as email addresses for the committee chairs.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements. Please make requests for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to educational programs as early as possible preceding the scheduled program, service or activity.

**Master Gardener
 Volunteers who work at
 our Advocates project
 garden spent a recent cold
 and windy day (right)
 creating grapevine
 sculptures to be enjoyed
 by workers and clients
 alike throughout winter.**

**They harvested branches,
 vines and old tomato
 cages from their own
 home gardens, and added
 a few strands of solar
 lights for a charming
 effect.**

**This artistic crew included
 Ozaukee Master Gardeners
 Nancy Inda, Kathleen**



President's Message

It has been a great year for the Ozaukee County master gardeners. Let's celebrate with food and fun at our Annual Meeting, January 25, where we reward all those fantastic volunteer efforts.

At the dinner, we will present 23 new MG badges to members of our 2017 class. Please join us for the meeting, the election of the 2018 Board, and the fantastic potluck dinner!

We will say farewell to five Board members, Jerry Nelson, Cindy Behlen, Erin Schanen, Kay Krier and Mary Ingles. When you see these dedicated volunteers at the annual meeting make sure you thank them for the time they unselfishly gave to make our organization what it is today. Plus – you will get to meet the five new officers jumping in to continue our success with our 109 active members for 2018.

A past Board member, Mary Reilly-Kliss once wrote, “A wise gardener anticipates June in January” And I guess that is why we start receiving all those seed catalogs about that time.

I have learned a lot about our organization and its members over the past two years. I will be on the Board one more year (as the Past-President) but I want to thank all of you now for your support and participation during 2017.

- Jim Layton, OMG President



Important Dates

Jan 25 - Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner. American Legion Post, Saukville 6:00 p.m.

Feb 10 - Garden Expo 2018 - Trip. Pre-Registration required. *See our website.*

Feb 22 - General Monthly Meeting. Topic: Landscaping to Attract Birds, 7:00 p.m.

Mar 22 - General Monthly Meeting. Topic: Urban Coyotes. 7:00 p.m.

Apr 26 - General Monthly Meeting. Topic: TBA. 7:00 p.m.

June 28 - General Monthly Meeting. Topic: TBA 7:00 p.m.

Aug 23 - General Monthly Meeting. Topic: "Bee Aware". 7:00 p.m.

Sept 27 - General Monthly Meeting. Topic: Wisconsin Native Plants. 7:00 p.m.

Oct 25 - General Monthly Meeting. Topic: TBA 7:00 p.m.

All monthly meetings are held in the Auditorium of the Ozaukee County Administration Building in Port Washington.

NOTE: There are no general monthly meetings in May, July or November. We may schedule one for December; please stay tuned!

More events, including work sessions at our project gardens and committee meetings, are listed online on the Ozaukee Master Gardeners' website. <http://ozaukeemastergardeners.org>

Annual Meeting, Potluck Dinner

We all know MGs are not only wonderful gardeners, but exquisite cooks. Please see the event invitation below for your Potluck Dinner assignments.

We appreciate you bringing what your assignment indicates as this helps to ensure we have a balanced offering of food to enjoy.



This meeting is the annual recap of the past year and looks ahead to 2018. Members who have completed milestone levels of volunteering are recognized and the new Master Gardener Trainees "walk" for their diplomas and we celebrate their new Master Gardener status. There is also the balloting for the incoming Executive Board positions.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to Heidi and Jean at Heidi.janous@delta.com.

You're Invited!!

Ozaukee Master Gardeners' ANNUAL MEETING and POTLUCK DINNER

Thursday, January 25, 2018
6:00 pm.

Landt-Thiel American Legion Post 740 Hall
601 W. Dekora Street (Hwy. 33), Saukville

<h3>Evening Activities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potluck (see assignments on right) • Election of Officers for 2018 • Graduation Presentation • Recognition of Accomplishments of OMG's 	<h3>Potluck Assignments</h3> <p>Please bring a dish assigned to the first letter of your LAST name.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A—F Desserts • G—L Salads • M—Z Main Dishes <p>Please remember to bring utensils and hot pads if necessary.</p>
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Tea and coffee will be provided.
The bar will be open for any purchases.

Any questions, please contact Heidi Janous at Heidi.janous@delta.com

An E/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX and ADA requirements. Please make requests for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to educational programs as early as possible preceding the scheduled program, service, or activity.

Please note that a photographer will be taking videos and pictures of the participants at club meetings and events. UW-Extension may use these videos and pictures in a manner consistent with UW-Extension's mission. Your attendance at these events indicates your consent for your image to be recorded and used in this manner.

Processing and storing leaves for mulching

By Stan Suring, Ozaukee Master Gardener Volunteer

We began using leaves that we collected in the fall for use the next spring about three years ago. Our reasons were: A. We had an abundant supply from all the trees in our yard; B. Compared to the use of straw as a source for mulch the leaves were essentially weed free, and, C. Not only did they add minerals to the soil they are truly organic.

The main problem that we encountered was how to store them for use the following spring. The first two years we simply bagged them in garbage bags and stored them in our storage shed in our back yard. However, these bags took up a lot of space that we could have used to store other supplies and equipment. The third year we constructed an eight foot diameter bin outside and dumped the leaves in it and then covered it with a tarp. However, snow and rain still got in and made the leaves a soggy mess and we had to let the leaves dry out in the spring before we could use them to mulch our planting beds. While we were pleased with the results we achieved with using them as mulch we needed a better method of storage.

Researching on the internet, I discovered a method commonly used in the southern states for processing Longleaf Pine needle straw using what is called a "box baler". You can view this information by searching the internet using the terms "box baler" or "pine straw baler". You will get results or articles from Google or You Tube videos or postings on Pinterest

From the information I found I constructed a baler that would make a 16" by 16" by 32" bale. Look to the right for some photos we took as we baled leaves this past fall.

The picture below shows how the plunger compresses the leaves. In the photo immediately to the right, you can see how to add more leaves before compressing them again. And then, on on the right, bottom, is a photo that shows a bale stacked prior to us covering it for later use.

By using the baler we estimate we reduced the leaves to less than 25% of the space they would normally take if we stored them loose. We elected to again store them on a pallet outside and totally covered them with a tarp

This coming spring when we begin to use them for mulching our beds we will experiment with shredding them with our shredder/chipper to see if we can reduce the matting that we typically see using the leaves as they are.



Our December Harvest

By M. Lynn Schmid, Ozaukee Master Gardener Volunteer

By November most gardeners in Southeast Wisconsin have put their gardens to bed for a long winter's nap, but there are many gardeners who choose to bring indoors a few plants to prolong the season. Culinary herbs and hot chili peppers are great specimens to bring indoors, since they perform well as container plants. Typically, I grow these plants in pots throughout the summer season and simply bring them indoors when nights get chilly in autumn. (A brief shower of insecticidal soap before moving indoors is helpful to eliminate tiny hitchhikers.)



water sparingly, no soggy soil permitted! They have been cultivated for thousands of years in The Americas—but in our basement for just the past few years.

I have collected seeds from my dried peppers each year for more than 10 years (must always wear disposable plastic gloves) and they remain true to seed. I allow several to air dry for two months; then the red flesh is finely ground for dry rubs and Mexican cooking. The pith and seeds are separated before grinding; those items are placed in a jar to sprinkle around tender outdoor plants to discourage rabbits and pests—it's an organic approach to critter control!

In early December I took this picture (*above, right*) of our cayenne pepper plants, happily growing in the basement (under fluorescent lights). Most of the peppers had formed while still outdoors, but now they were colorful, shiny and full of capsaicin—ready to harvest!

There were enough peppers on these plants to make one batch of pickled peppers. Below is my favorite pickling recipe.

Enjoy!



Two of my favorite “indoor herbs” are shown here: Rosemary “Madeline Hill” and Spearmint ‘Mojito.’ Oregano and French thyme also handle the transition well from outside to inside. How special it is to roast a chicken on a brisk December day, using freshly cut French thyme as an aromatic, along with some celery and butter inserted in the cavity of the chicken. Your kitchen will smell lovely as it cooks, and your roasted chicken will taste amazing!

But if I had to choose just ONE genus to bring indoors, *Capsicum annuum* (cayenne pepper) would be The Chosen One. These plants require little care while growing indoors; must

Sweet-Hot Pickled Peppers

Take two cups (approximately) of fresh red and green cayennes (can include some jalapeños if desired) and while wearing disposable plastic gloves, slice peppers in cross sections. Discard stems.

Place the chopped peppers in Pyrex® bowl and place outdoors. Pour boiling water over them and allow them to steep 15 minutes. Then drain water and take indoors; much of aroma stays outdoors!

Now combine two cups of white vinegar plus 3/4 cup of white sugar and boil until the sugar crystals are melted. Stir the following seasonings into the hot liquid: 2 tsp. sea salt ; 2 tsp. celery seed; 2 tsp. mustard seed.

Pour the liquid over the peppers and boil two minutes, covered.

Cool the mixture. Place in refrigerator overnight. You can freeze the peppers in small canning jars or store them in the fridge for your use.

Midwest Medicinal Plants: Identify, Harvest, and Use 109 Wild Herbs for Health and Wellness

by Susan Kinas, Ozaukee Master Gardener (as presented in the Ozaukee Press)

For gardeners who want to walk on the “wild” side, an excellent new book by Lisa M. Rose, “Midwest Medicinal Plants” is now available. It is a comprehensive guide for foraging and natural medicines that are accessible to everyone, even their own backyards.

This marks Ms. Rose’s newest book, which is a delightful collection of her personal foraging successes for her herbalist community. The book discusses, in depth, 109 wild herbs commonly found throughout the Midwest and how to successfully identify and harvest them. Ms. Rose offers very good information on proper cleaning, storage and preservation techniques unique to each plant.

For rookie gardeners who have interest in foraging and mixing their own medicinals, this book offers clear and easy instructions as well as reliable and responsible advice. The plant photos and plant parts pictures that provide the sources for recipes are well thought out and beautifully taken so readers can quickly identify matching materials on their own. She is very clear throughout the book and is mindful to keep readers aware of dangers of toxic look-alike plants and does an impressive job of walking through differences and similarities.

For those who’ve acquired a herbal passion, this read offers interesting insight into even more plants that most take for granted. While the healing properties of psyllium, the seeds of plantain, are well known, plantain is a great bug bite reliever simply by rubbing the leaf pulp

simply by rubbing the leaf pulp directly on the bite to reduce the body’s histamine reaction.

A few of the Midwest’s famous fungi are also discussed. Turkey Tail, growing in abundance on decaying hardwood logs, has anti-cancer properties and has shown the ability to stimulate the immune system so directions for creating an herbal Turkey Tail tea are included.

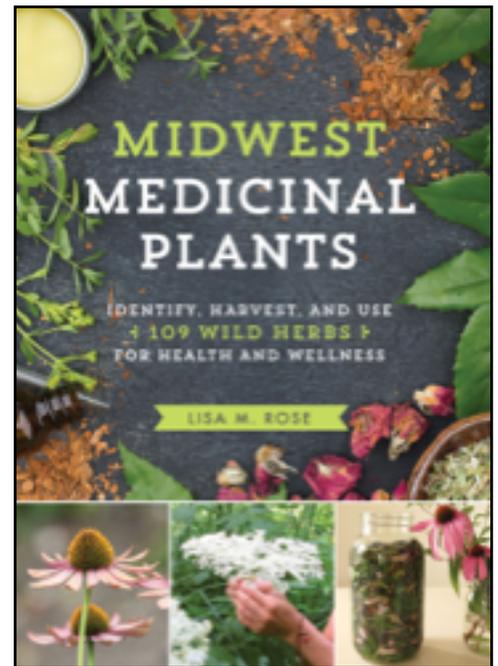
There is an excellent section on Jewelweed, accompanying an article on poison ivy and the affinity the two plants share. Hiking through a patch of poison ivy often includes Jewelweed. By snapping off the succulent stem of Jewelweed and crushing to extract the juices, a very useful salve eases the weepy rash that poison ivy causes.

The book is broken into seasons with lists of plants, their common name, as well as their scientific one and the season where maximum success with harvest happens and how to reap the most benefits of every harvest.

Excellent information on definitions of various deliveries of medicinals is also within. Ms. Rose is careful to explain the differences between tinctures, infusions and decoctions and provides simple to follow recipes. Her directions for creating salves and oils are wonderful and have been well thought out to create the greatest efficiencies for the best results.

Ms. Rose encourages everyone to start with what you know. Go outside. Smell. Taste. Touch. Repeat. Get to know each plant intimately then share the love with everyone you know.

“Midwest Medicinal Plants” is published by Timber Press and is \$27.95.



The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: The Essential Guide to Planting & Pruning Techniques

By Susan Kinas, Ozaukee Master Gardener (as presented in the Ozaukee Press)

With more than 40 years of horticultural design under her belt, Tracy DiSabato-Aust has released a best-selling classic, first published in 1998, completely revised, to include the ever-changing and increasing world of perennials with dozens of new cultivars. “The Well-Tended Perennial Garden” is a book that gardeners of all levels should have as part of their library.

The author provides current, excellent information on proper soil preparation as well as garden bed planning, plant spacing and challenges that our local wildlife presents, thwarting successful gardening.

The chapter describing design and its relationship to maintenance is a wonderful reminder that successful gardening has no boundaries and is limited only by an individual’s time (Continued, Page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

commitment and flair (bravery) for planting and plant care.

Gardeners who are challenged by pest problems like slugs, Japanese beetles, grasshoppers and black blister beetles will smile at descriptions of attacking them and will appreciate the great chemical free solutions offered to combat them as well as many other pests that lurk and surprise when least expected.

There is a great section on grasses, which are among the most gratifying, yet challenging perennials to grow. Success with grasses results from careful site assessment to ensure proper light and water conditions to making sure the choice of grass—whether it will wander or stay put—are discussed in detail with a large list of usual as well as unusual choices for zones 3-9. Notes on expectation of peak and breakdown for each grass is laid out along with instructions on proper cutback and clean up.

Pruning and cutting back can be confusing and scary to all gardeners. Chapters devoted to discussions on proper techniques are well thought out and very clear with directions for different plant types.

The encyclopedia portion of the book offers excellent close-up photography of each perennial discussed with zone information, height, pruning and other maintenance information along with scientific and family names as well as common name.

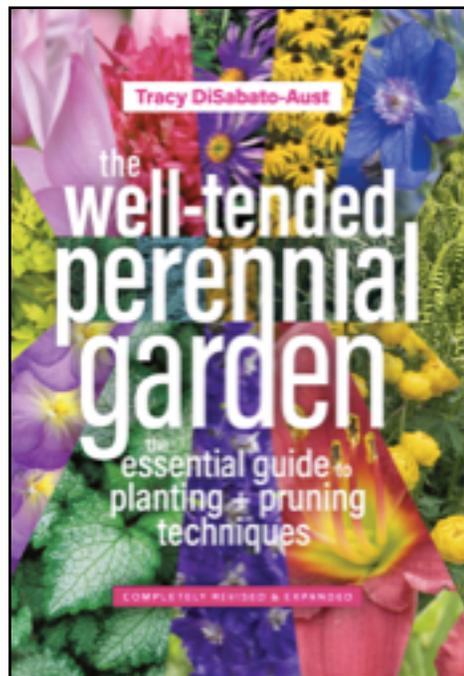
In addition to the perennial encyclopedia, there's a chapter devoted to identifying which perennials are best suited to certain soil types, light conditions,

peak zone, xeriscaping and a multitude of other conditions which can impact the long term success of perennials.

The final chapter does a wonderful job of laying out the yearly expectations of caring for perennial gardens and the timeline of when gardeners can expect to gratefully enjoy the fruits of their labor.

This book makes an excellent gift for both passionate perennialists as well as gardeners just getting started.

The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: The Essential Guide to Planting & Pruning Techniques is published by Timber Press and is \$34.95



Ask a Master Gardener

Ozaukee Master Gardener Volunteers provide support to members of the public who email OMG at mastergardener@co.ozaukee.wi.us

OMG Yard & Garden Online provided these seasonal questions and responses.

Q: I have lived in Mequon about 14 years and have never had a problem with bunnies. Now, I seem to be the place they are coming to consume all my favorite plants.

I have tried liquid fence, but it doesn't deter them. I have also netted some plants which helps, but I can't net my entire yard. I don't want to kill them but would like to get them to move to somebody else's yard.

Is there anything you can recommend that will keep them away? I haven't tried Tabasco. Does that work?

A: Learning to coexist with critters can be a very long and very frustrating adventure. Tabasco may or may not work and you don't want to burn the leaves of your plants.

One thing that may help is pelletized Red Fox urine. You can find it online or at hunting stores and stores that serve the farming community. I personally have had pretty good success with that for keeping woodchucks from consuming every pretty flower in my own yard.

One of the downsides to using fox urine to that is you will need to reapply it pretty often until the critters get the message. The other thing you will probably want to consider is mixing in some anti-rabbit plants very close to those they are feeding on. Here is a link to a website that lists some of the plants that rabbits usually avoid.

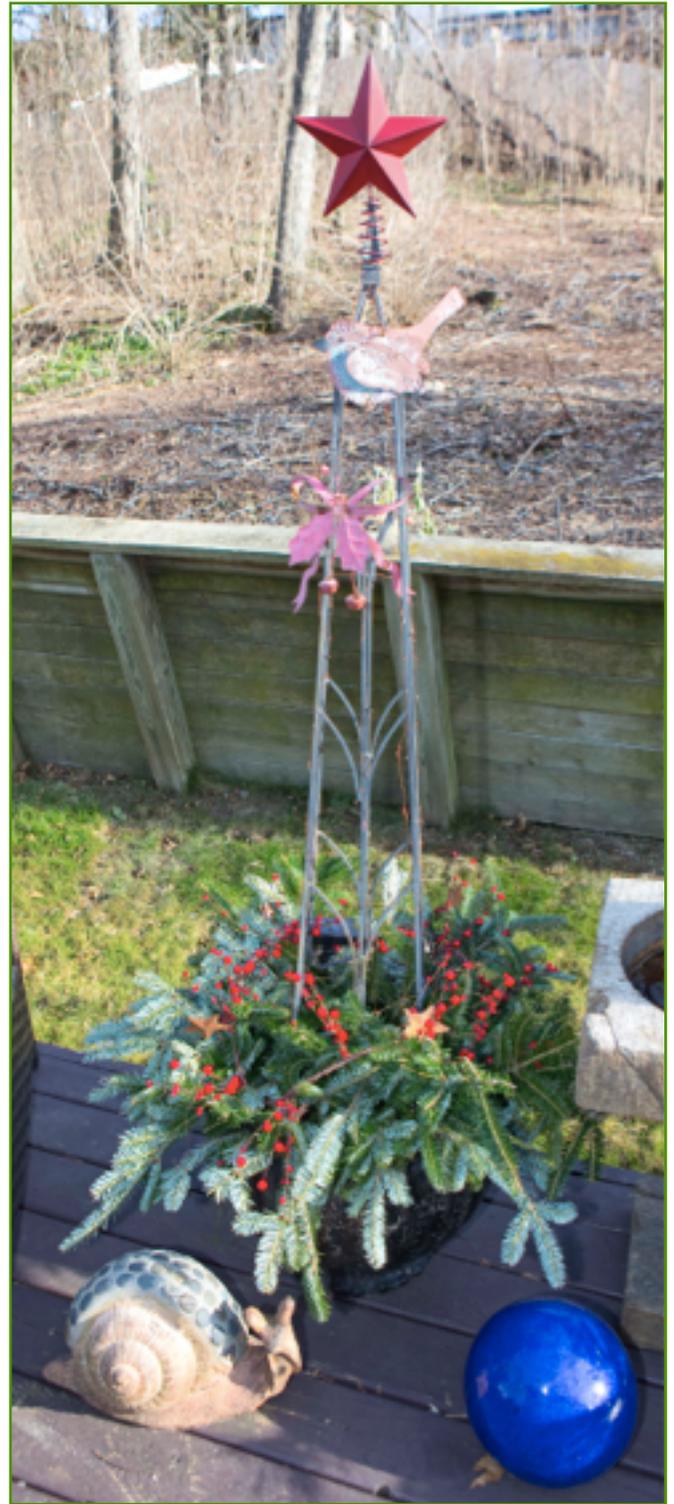
<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/animals/plants-rabbits-dont-like.htm>



Holiday Containers

Making your outdoor containers or window boxes attractive for the holiday season and to break the monotony of winter is as easy as filling them with a few branches of red twig dogwood and some evergreens. You don't have to stop there, however. Use some of your decorative garden orbs or birch branches, add some red berries or lights and let your imagination take over.

- Photos and text contributed by Jean Schanen, Ozaukee Master Gardener Volunteer



Winter solitude

- Matsuo Basho

Winter solitude--
in a world of one color
the sound of wind.



WCCG by the Numbers And The Joys of Beekeeping

By Mary Reilly-Kliss, WCCG Coordinator, Novice Beekeeper

The Washington County Community Garden (WCCG) program has wrapped up a very successful season-again.

Here we are, by the numbers:

- 1:** Bee hive at the WCCG.
- 4:** OMG interns who helped with the program.
- 21:** Gardeners new to the program.
- 30:** Pounds of honey from our first harvest.
- 76:** Plots in production.
- 155:** Approximate number of active gardeners.
- 425:** Approximate number of hours given back to the program by the gardeners and OMG volunteers.
- 10,030:** Pounds of produce recorded. This is the first time that we have passed the 10,000 pound mark.
- \$20,000:** Market value of recorded produce.
- 10,000:** Approximate number of active bees.

I like to say that at the WCCG we “Build community by gardening together”. Each year there are unifying components, things which bring people out of their plots and into the paths to talk with one another. This year, it was the bees.

This was our second attempt at establishing an active hive because in 2016 the bees absconded in mid-July, leaving an empty hive and disappointed gardeners. In mid-May this year, our bees were delivered by Dave Poethke, our “bee whisperer”. The process of putting the bees in the hive drew the first crowd, the most fascinating part being the installation of the queen. She comes in a separate vial to keep her isolated from the rest of the bees and to prevent her from flying away, in which case the other bees would take off as well. The cork which keeps her in the vial is carefully removed, and a marshmallow is put in its place. Then, the entire vial goes into the hive and the

cover goes on. The bees then eat the marshmallow away, eventually releasing the queen. Who knew?

Because proper care of the hive necessitated some extra help, a group of volunteer “bee tenders” was formed. They added sugar water to the feeder as needed, weeded the plot, and planted pollinator-friendly annuals and perennials. One enthusiastic gardener began a journal where the volunteers recorded their observations and task completion. Another new gardener and his wife are native and pollinator experts, and so they planted their plot entirely with bee-friendly plants.

Over the course of the gardening season, gardeners made it a part of their routine to stop by and see what was happening at the hive. They marveled at how docile and busy the bees were, and chatted about which plants they seemed to favor.

In mid-September we removed the honey-laden frames, and took them to person who owned a honey extractor—basically a centrifuge for the frames. Once the machine started to spin, we opened the spigot at the bottom and filled a bucket with 30 pounds of beautiful, sweet, golden honey. I took the bucket home, strained the honey twice to remove debris such as bee wings, and bottled it up for the gardeners, each of whom received a jar of honey.

More than one excited gardener commented on having a role in creating the crop of honey. By growing pollinator-friendly plants and carefully watching or curtailing the use of insecticides, the gardeners of the WCCG surely did have a part in our first honey harvest—and built community while gardening together.

Follow our gardening adventures on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Washington-County-Community-Garden-255693637835023/>.



The UPS and DOWNS of the Triangle Garden

By Jean Schanen, Ozaukee Master Gardener Volunteer

Triangle Garden in Port Washington was put to bed after a very beautiful and rewarding spring, summer and fall of continuous color and plant texture.

In mid-June we were gifted with a trial OSO EASY Sure Fire double red rose bush from Proven Winners. During the course of the summer the rose flourished and bloomed almost continuously and had the most beautiful glossy green leaves completely free of any insect or bug damage. Hopefully the rose will make it through the winter and become a real eye-catcher in the garden next summer. Thank you to Proven Winners.

We got some unfortunate news concerning the garden in late fall. During one of our weeding sessions very active worms were discovered in the garden and as suspected after submitting specimens to the University of Wisconsin, the Entomology department confirmed that we do have *Amyntas* worms (jumping worms). We have notified the Parks Director of the City of Port Washington who in turn notified the DNR. As products to treat jumping worms become available we will be working closely with the city regarding this problem. In the interim we intend to practice extra diligent gardening habits to attempt to halt the spread and infestation of these worms.

Regardless of the discovery of the feared worms, we plan to continue to upgrade the plantings and continue to provide the City of Port with a very beautiful garden at the entrance to the downtown area.



A Perfect Harvest Recipe

Contributed by Laura Herzog, Ozaukee Master Gardener Volunteer

During the busy holiday season, it is nice to have an easy, fast recipe that is both tasty and nutritious.

Every year we grow quite a lot tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, cilantro and onions. After these veggies are harvested, we use them to make a variety of Blue Ball Book of Preserving salsa recipes. This year we made Fiesta Salsa, Jalapeno Salsa, Spicy Tomato Salsa and Zesty Salsa. These salsas have varying degrees of pungency or spicy heat because of the capsaicin concentration of the peppers that we grow and use. Due to this, I increase the amount of sugar in the cornbread to offset the spicy heat of the salsa. In other words, increase the sugar based on your own palate!

Bean and Cornbread Casserole

Serves Four

- 1 15 ounce can of pinto beans rinsed and drained
- 1 15 ounce can of navy beans rinsed and drained
- 1 pint jar of homemade salsa (your choice!)

Heat oven to 425 degrees. Mix all ingredients except Cornbread Topping (see recipe below).

Pour into ungreased baking dish 8 X 8 X 2 inches. Prepare cornbread topping; spoon evenly over bean mixture to within 1 inch of edges. Bake until topping is deep golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes.

Cornbread Topping

Cornbread mix-follow directions on the box (please look at cooking time and temp on the box and readjust this recipe to suit the manufacturers recommendations) or make your own!

- 2/3 cup flour
- 1/3 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 cup milk or half and half
- 2 Tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 - 2 Tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg

Beat all ingredients until smooth.

(Adapted from a Betty Crocker recipe.)

Gardening in Iceland

By Mary Ingles, Ozaukee Master Gardener Volunteer

When Ken and I traveled to Iceland last summer, we visited Botanical Gardens just south of the Arctic Circle in Akureyri and Reykjavik. Although they can grow most annuals, very few perennials can survive Iceland's harsh winters. Some that survive in protected locations bloom much later than in our climate—a peony was still blooming in mid-August near our hotel!

Although Iceland is very green, there aren't many forests, and trees aren't very tall. A joke is that if you get lost in a forest in Iceland, just stand up and you'll easily find your way out. It's not that trees can't grow there, however. Apparently, Vikings found forests when they arrived centuries ago, but cut them for buildings and for fuel. They didn't plant new trees, and their grazing livestock kept trees from growing on their own. Grass grows very well and provides pastureland for the plentiful Icelandic horses and sheep, but grains are not easy to grow. It is almost impossible to grow fruit, and it is very difficult to grow vegetables other than root vegetables. Most produce is imported or grown in greenhouses. Less than 1 percent of the land is cultivated for farming.

Tourism in Iceland is in its infancy, but it's growing rapidly, doubling every few years. It's not for everyone—it's cold (highs in the 40s and 50s in July and August), it rains most days, the roads are very narrow (many are gravel and only one lane wide, especially through tunnels and across bridges—right of way goes to the car that gets there first at 90 kph!). Costs are very high for gas, food, and lodging. But we loved it.

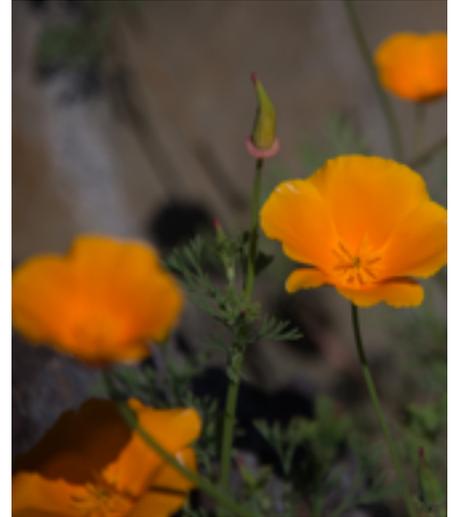
It's a nature lover's paradise. Around every bend are snow-capped mountains, waterfalls (too many to count and some that rival Niagara Falls), fjords, glaciers, icebergs, geysirs (Icelandic spelling—they originated the name), hot springs, steam vents, boiling mud pots, volcanoes, black sand beaches, crashing waves, basalt formations, canyons, sea stacks,

rushing rivers, cliffs, arctic deserts, colorful houses, turf-roofed homes, ancient architecture, ultra-modern architecture, whales, seals, puffins, arctic terns, sheep, and Icelandic horses.

We've traveled to all seven continents of the world, and it's one of the most beautiful countries we've seen. Our trip was a cruise with stops in England, Ireland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, ending with an eight-day self-driving tour of Iceland. We took over 4,000 pictures. If you're interested in seeing more of them, Ken edited those down to only 575 that he posted on his photography site: <https://keiphotography.smugmug.com/Travel/2017-Iceland-Greenland/>

Below: *Very few native flowers grow in Iceland, but Arctic Cotton Grass and other grasses flourish.*

At right: *Arctic Poppies are one of the few perennials that can survive Iceland's harsh winters.*



The Best Dirt

Newsletter of Ozaukee Master Gardeners

www.ozaukeemastergardeners.org/

Holiday 2017

Like us on Facebook!



THE UW EXTENSION—OZAUKEE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS' NEWSLETTER
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PORT WASHINGTON, WI 53074-0994