

Master Gardener Update

April 2021

<p>In this Issue</p> <p>Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens</p> <p>RPMGA Household Hydroponics</p> <p>Master Gardener Volunteer Week</p> <p>Rotary Gardens Spring Plant Sale Earth Day Celebration</p> <p>Volunteers Wanted</p> <p>More Training Coming Up in April and Beyond</p>	<p>Virtual Visit</p> <h3>Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens, Rockford, IL</h3> <p>Situated along the banks of the beautiful Rock River in Sinnissippi Gardens, the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens brings the tropics to the Midwest. It's a part of the Rockford Park District.</p> <p>The conservatory complex is the third largest in Illinois with a total of 22,000 square feet, and at the highest point stands 52 feet. Its tropical setting includes an 11,000 square foot plant exhibition area complete with water features, seating areas, and sculptures. There are changing seasonal floral displays and special events; educational programs where children can learn the importance of plants; special workshops and lecture series for adults. The facility also includes a café and gift shop.</p> <div data-bbox="1115 607 1892 1078" data-label="Image">  </div> <p><i>Sinnissippi Guardian – As you walk toward the entry to the Conservatory you will see this delightful statue. Made of river rock, granite and steel, it represents a figure that is shielding off any obstacles the city may be presented with. The lush and beautiful plants that ring the circle are changed with the season.</i></p>
---	--

Websites

For Rock County

MGV info:

rock.extension.wisc.edu/
upcoming-events-and-
volunteer-opportunities/
OR

fyi.extension.wisc.edu/
mgvrockco/

MGV Hours Reporting:

wimastergardener.org/
report-your-hours/

RPMGA Blog:

rpmga.blogspot.com

RPMGA on Facebook:

Hit control/click on this
link:

[RPMGA on Facebook](#)

Rotary Gardens:

rotarybotanicalgardens.
org

Wisconsin Master Gardener Program:

wimastergardener.org

Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA):

wimga.org

The Eclipse Lagoon

The beauty continues outdoors with the Eclipse Lagoon, complete with two fountains and a waterfall, pedestrian bridge, patio areas, and a walkway connecting the Conservatory to the Sinnissippi Rose Garden.

History: The Eclipse Lagoon is 500 feet long and has been a landmark in the community since the 1920s. Over the years, the lagoon has remained a popular spot for residents to gather. In the summer, many stroll along the lagoon on the way to the Rock River Recreation Path or the Sinnissippi Park rose garden. In the winter, the lagoon often serves as an outdoor skating rink.

Lagoon Restoration Project: The restoration of the lagoon started as part of the park district's 100th anniversary riverfront restoration program. In fall 2011, the Rockford Park District Foundation accepted a donation from William Charles, Ltd., an anonymous donor, and a major donation package from the Eclipse Foundation to cover the renovation costs. In summer 2012, the new lagoon was reopened and officially named Eclipse Lagoon.



Eclipse Lagoon showing off its dramatic evening lighting.

The map of Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens is so large it would be impossible to show here, but you can visit the NCG website and view it there: [NCG MAP](#).

continues on p. 15

RPMGA

Household Hydroponics, Thursday, April 15, 6:00 p.m., via Zoom

It won't be tax day this year, so please plan to join with other master gardeners on April 15 as Patrick Schmidt gives us an introduction to hydroponics and aeroponics. He'll be focusing on systems you can put together with a reasonable amount of space and expense so you can use them at home. He'll talk about different types of set-ups, lights, nutrients, plants and anything else you need to know to make a success of growing without "soil."

Patrick started playing with hydroponics when he was 13 and has been doing it ever since. Professionally, he has spent time overseeing hydroponic greenhouses and running a Brew and Grow store (hydroponics, organic gardening and home brewing). He's been the manager of Paradigm Gardens' Madison location for the past 3 years. Paradigm aims to provide, consult and educate on the best and newest gardening products, including hydro- and aquaponics equipment, lighting, growing media, nutrients and greenhouses.

A Zoom link will be sent via email closer to the 15th.



A simple deep water culture (DWC) set-up: Plants are grown in net pots that sit in a styrofoam lid, and the roots hang down into a bucket of water. University of MN Extension



Next MGV Virtual Coffee/Tea Chat

Join your fellow Rock and Walworth County Master Gardener Volunteers on Tuesday, April 13 at 9 a.m. for a social visit and to catch up on the latest MGV news. Our Horticulture Outreach Specialist, Julie Hill, will send out the Zoom link shortly.

First Ever Master Gardener Volunteer Week: April 5-9, 2021

Next week marks the Division of Extension's first ever Master Gardener Volunteer Week—a statewide celebration and appreciation of the people who work hard to expand Extension's reach in the area of horticulture education. The schedule for the week includes some continuing education, the rollout of a new statewide project and recognition from both staff and your fellow volunteers.

Daily Shoutouts will be emailed each day recognizing Master Gardener Volunteers from around Wisconsin! Shoutouts are video messages of gratitude created for our ten door prize winners from February 2nd's Elevate!

Monday, April 5 is the Statewide Project Announcement! Watch your email for details.

Tuesday, April 6 Continuing Education Webinar on Pollinator Gardens: Plant Selection and Garden Care by Susan Carpenter of the UW Arboretum. For details on the time and registration information, see the listing on page 10.

Wednesday, April 7 Thank a Master Gardener Volunteer Day! Make some time today to contact some of your fellow MGVs and tell them how much you appreciate and enjoy them. And check out rpmga.blogspot.com to read and add your own comments to a tribute to our own Deb Grams!

Thursday, April 8 Webinar Continuing Education Opportunity! Join WiBee: an app-driven community-science project to count and learn about bees! 1:30-2:30p.m. Read more on page 11.

Friday, April 9 Watch for a final email from us with one last Shoutout and thank you!



Your Chance to Take the New Onboarding Training

Onboarding is a NEW online course created to provide incoming volunteers all they need to know about becoming a representative of the UW-Extension through the Master Gardener Program. It's always good to keep up with new MGV training, and it's good for us all to be on the same page. So as of April 1, you've been automatically enrolled in the "Lite" version of the course (the version that doesn't include the background checks, etc., since you've already done that paperwork.) You're strongly encouraged to complete the course, which will count for 10 hours of CE. Watch your email for more information.



Spring Plant Sales

Rotary is excited to be offering two purchasing options this year for their annual Spring Plant Sale!

Online Spring Plant Sale

- They are offering a selection of perennial and annual plants that will not be available at the in-person Spring Plant Sale.
- **The online sale will run through Sunday, April 18.**
- If an item is sold out, they will contact you to see if you would like to have an item substituted in its place.
- Online plant orders will be available for pickup during our Annual Spring Plant Sale (hours below).
- For plant listing and to order, go to <https://rotarybotanicalgardens.org/spring-plant-sale/>

In-Person Spring Plant Sale

- Choose from a great selection of tomatoes, peppers, herbs, perennials, woody plants and compost.
- Thursday, April 29, 4 pm to 7pm (RBG members only!)
- Friday, April 30, 9 am to 5 pm
- Saturday, May 1, 9 am to 5 pm
- Sunday, May 2, 9 am to 3 pm

Plant Sale Volunteers Needed: Go to <https://signup.com/go/FNBADzy> to see what shifts are available and to put your name down. Rotary is an approved location for MGV volunteering during Covid, but only for some types of activities. Contact julie.hill@wisc.edu for questions on MGV volunteer hours.



Thursday, April 22: Earth Day Celebration!

Engage with local organizations and enjoy activities for children spread out throughout the gardens. Food trucks will be available for food purchase. This is an outdoor event and face masks are required.

The Gardens will be open extended hours on the 22nd, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Children's Activities take place from 10:00 a.m. to noon and again from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Admission: \$5 adults/free for RBG Members and children age 12 and under. *All Earth Day admissions will be used to implement and advance our green initiative.*

Earth Day Volunteers Needed: Several MGVs will be participating in the children's activities with making seed tapes and a seed give-away. While this is not an official RPMGA Master Gardener activity, and does not count for MGV volunteer hours, we could use some more people! If you're willing to help, contact Mary Kay Thompson: mastergardenermary@gmail.com

Rotary will likely also need additional volunteers. To inquire, contact Accounting and Volunteer Coordinator Carla Edgar at 608-314-8409, or email volunteer@rotarygardens.org.

Do You Grow Fruit Trees?

If you do—or you're hoping to—you'll find excellent information and lots of resources on the blog from IPM Specialist Dennis Norton at Royal Oak Farm Orchard in Harvard, IL. We toured the orchard several years ago and learned that Dennis is part of a network of fruit growers and university researchers. His information is science-based and extremely reliable. Check out his latest post (and the resources on the left side of the screen) at <http://royaloakfarmorchard.blogspot.com/>





Mystery Bug Identified: Margined Blister Beetle

I live on the northwest edge of Whitewater. Last summer I found some unfamiliar beetles chewing on my tomato plants and fruits. When I finally sent photos to the Insect Diagnostic Lab, PJ Leisch identified them for me as *Epicauta funebris* (or a close relative). It has a couple common names: margined or ebony blister beetle. Their range is eastern North America, and adults can be found feeding on flowers of *Ranunculus*, *Ceanothus*, *Convolvulus*, eggplant, potato, tomato, clematis, and *Amaranthus*, usually in July and August. PJ says “They're minor pests and usually cause little damage. They have the habit of showing up out of the blue before disappearing on their own within a few days.” If you get them too, and decide to handpick to limit damage, it may be wise to wear gloves since blister beetles can secrete an irritating substance.

Ruth Flescher

Oak Sapling Give Away, Saturday, April 17, 9:00 a.m. till Noon

If you live near the Rock River, **Nature at the Confluence**, South Beloit, IL, is giving free bare-root Bur Oak, Red Oak, or Swamp White Oak saplings to people who will plant them near the Rock River or near the mouth of one of its tributaries. The give-away is part of Rock River Trail's efforts to restore habitat along this 320-mile National Water Trail. (Available while supplies last) For more information you can email to info@natureattheconfluence.com.



Michael Fields Agricultural Institute Brings Back Their Annual Seed Swap, Saturday, April 24, 9:00 a.m. to noon in the Brown Barn

If you're comfortable being out in public, this event may interest you, especially with seeds being such a challenge to get. There's no charge for the event. They have THOUSANDS of seeds to give away! How does it work? Bring your extra seeds. Bring your friends. Go home with your friend's seeds. No seeds to share? No problem! Come anyway. They have plenty and ask only that you take no more than you will plant this year. Covid protocols in place: Masks required, windows and doors will be kept open to ensure good ventilation. Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, Corner of Hwy ES and Townline Rd. in East Troy, WI. Questions contact Allison: apszeliga@michaelfields.org

Volunteers Wanted

All 3 of these requests are for Covid-approved locations, per Julie Hill. Before volunteering anywhere as an MGCV, please verify that both the location and the activity have been approved as meeting the Covid 19 protocols set by the UW. If a volunteer opportunity is not already approved, you may be able to arrange for it through Julie (julie.hill@wisc.edu).

Fourth Ward Community Garden

Did you know there is a small community garden for households in the 4th ward? It's located on Rockport, just east of Wilson School. The garden contains 10 raised beds—two for tomatoes and the remaining eight for families in the area. Their struggle has been to keep folks involved for a full season. To build interest, they're having Ed Hookham, owner of Jack & Dick's Feed and Garden Store present a Gardening Basics session on April 24, 11am, at the garden. They would like a volunteer or two who could come perhaps once a week at a set time to answer questions and help the gardeners stay interested and be successful. To volunteer, contact Kay Deupree at 608-752-8342 or deupreen@charter.net

Edgerton Hospital Healing Garden

April 16th (9 am - 12 noon) is the clean-up day for the Edgerton Hospital Healing Garden. The work will primarily be cutting back perennials, raking, weeding and basic spring clean-up efforts led by Mark Dywer. Rain date would be the following Friday, April 23rd. Mark is currently looking for 12 volunteers to assist that morning. He'll be leading the charge and interested volunteers should RSVP directly to Mark via email at mcdwyer@zoho.com. He will then send more details about COVID precautions, tools and the form required by the hospital.

Rotary Botanical Gardens

It's time for general spring gardening at Rotary. For Covid safety reasons, they're asking for just 10 volunteers per day at this time to make sure everyone can keep safe social distancing. That number will probably increase as summer comes around. For available dates and times, see the link to the general gardening volunteer signup at <https://signup.com/go/PfKXtDt> The times are only for a 1st shift of 8:00am – 11:30am. If you want to work in the afternoons, please let Michael Jesiolowski know at michael.jesiolowski@rotarygardens.org.



More Training Coming Up in April and Beyond

To save space, we're not including many of the programs you can find on the wimastergardener.org website and at hort.extension.wisc.edu. Please check out both of these sites!

Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison, WI

All Classes are on-line unless otherwise noted. For more info, go to www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm

The deadline to register for these classes has passed, but you could call and inquire if space is still available: 608-245-3648

Apr. 1, Gardening 101, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (in person at Olbrich Gardens), \$62/\$76 Register by Mar. 22

Apr. 2, The A-Z of Landscaping Questions You Forgot to Ask, 6-8:00 p.m., \$13/\$16 Register by Mar. 28

Apr. 6, Landscape Your Way to a Dry Basement, 6-7:30 p.m., \$12/\$15 Register by Mar. 28

Apr. 7, Spring into Gardening (in person at Olbrich Gardens), 5:30-7 p.m. \$18/\$22 Register by Mar. 28

Apr. 8, Ground Covers for Sun and Shade, 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$13/\$16 Register by Mar. 29

Registration is still open for these classes. They may already be filled but cancellations do occur...

Apr. 15, Keeping Mosquitoes at Bay, Fact and Fiction, (in person at Olbrich Gardens) 6-8:00 p.m. \$12/\$15 Register by Apr. 5

Apr. 20, Sustainable Landscaping, Beauty Today...and Green Tomorrow, 6-7:30 p.m., \$12/\$15 Register by Apr. 11

Apr. 22, Hardscaping to Enhance Native Gardens, (in person at Olbrich Gardens), 6:30-8 p.m., \$12/\$15 Register by Apr. 12

Apr 27, Perennial Garden Maintenance, (in person at Olbrich Gardens), 6-8:00 p.m. \$16/\$20 Register by Apr. 18

Apr. 29, Edible Landscaping to Kitchen Gardens: Planning, Planting to Harvest, 7-8:30 p.m, \$12/\$15 Register by Apr. 28

Apr. 30, Gardens for Small Spaces with Style and Function, (in person at Olbrich Gardens), 6-8:00 p.m., \$12/\$15 Register by Apr. 20

May 6, Invasive Plants: Threats to Our Woodlands, Prairies and Wetlands, 1-3:00 p.m. \$13/\$16 Register by Apr. 26

Starting Seeds Successfully, Thursday, April 1, 6:30-8 p.m., online

Starting seeds indoors for your vegetable garden can be challenging. You need proper equipment and the right environment to be successful. Each year, there are new varieties in seed catalogs, but most of these depend on you starting them indoors before planting this spring. This class will go through the basics of selecting varieties, using seed starting equipment, and trouble shooting. Grant McCarty, Illinois Extension, Local Food Systems & Small Farms Educator. No charge, but donations welcome. Registration required: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23189>



Cover Crops for Lunch, Friday, April 2, Noon to 1 p.m., online

This session covers highlights of current research on cover crops, conservation and soil health from around the state. Presented by the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute and several organizations at the UW. No charge, but registration is required:

<https://go.wisc.edu/zpuyc2>



The Slowest of the Performing Arts: Breeding Root Vegetables for Wisconsin, Tuesday, April 6, Noon, online

Professor Irwin Goldman, UW Dept. of Horticulture, talks about plant breeding and how he approaches the selection of improved crops for Wisconsinites. He breeds carrots, onions, and beets, though the work is similar to those breeding other crops. He does research on the traits that farmers and consumers want, and use genetics and other tools to accomplish that work. His goal is to make new strains of crops that are better and more useful. No charge. Connect through <https://today.wisc.edu/events/view/156757>

Pollinator Gardening: Plant Selection and Garden Care, Tuesday, April 6, 6:30-7:30 p.m., online

Learn to select and care for plants to attract and support diverse pollinators in your garden all season long. This presentation will emphasize native plants and pollinators and will include sustainable gardening practices. Presented by Susan Carpenter, native plant gardener at the University of Wisconsin–Madison Arboretum. She works with students and community volunteers to manage and monitor a 4-acre garden representing southern Wisconsin plant communities. She also promotes pollinator and bumble bee conservation through outreach, monitoring, and encouraging students and the public to document native bumble bees through the WDNR Bumble Bee Brigade. Register for this free event by April 5 at the following link: <https://go.wisc.edu/842s07> Note: the session will be recorded, in case you can't make it.

On-line Classes at Rotary Gardens

Native Plants That Deserve a Place in Your Garden, Wednesday, April 7, 6:30-7:30 p.m. \$7 members/\$10 general public. Register by 4/5/21

All About Hummingbirds, Thursday, April 15, 6:30-7:45 p.m. \$7 members/\$10 general public. Register by 4/13/21

Pollinator Plants for the Home Garden, Wednesday, April 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m. \$7 members/\$10 general public. Register by 4/26/21

You can register for any of these classes in person at the Cottage Garden Gallery at Rotary, by mail or by phone (608-752-3885). Registration form is available at <https://rotarybotanicalgardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2021-Adult-Education-registration-form.pdf>



Introducing WiBee (Citizen Science Project and Phone App)

Thursday, April 8, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., online

Learn about bees while adding to information on their numbers and behavior. WiBee (pronounced "Wee-bee") is a new educational and community science program that uses an easy-to-use smartphone app developed at UW-Madison to help you identify common pollinators to flowers and collect data on bee activity throughout the state. Your observations will contribute to a better understanding of wild bee abundance and diversity on Wisconsin's fruit and vegetable farms, homes, schools, community gardens, and natural areas. A link to this program will automatically be sent to all MGVs. No registration is necessary. The program will be recorded for those who can't make the Thursday time.

Seed Starting, Part 2: Potting Up, Hardening Off, Transplanting Out, Tuesday, April 13, 6-7:00 p.m., online

As part of its brand new Seed Library, the Aram Public Library in Delevan is offering a talk on starting seeds indoors. This second part covers everything you need to know about moving your seedlings into progressively larger pots, getting them used to outdoor conditions and planting them in their final spot. Presented by Master Gardener Volunteers Sue Leedle and Ruth Flescher. No fee, but registration is required: www.aramlibrary.org/6-pm-march-23-april-13/ Note: Part 1 of the talk is available on the library's Facebook and Youtube pages.

Potager Gardening, Thursday, May 13, 6:00 p.m., online

Trust the French to make a work of art out of a vegetable garden! The dictionary translates the word *potager* as a kitchen garden, but it's really a style of gardening that focuses on the aesthetics of the garden itself as much as the beautiful food plants it contains. Tracey Hankwitz is a previous employee of Burlington Garden Center and has started a business of her own. She will be presenting a program for the Walworth County Master Gardener Volunteer Association, and Rock County MGVs are welcome to attend. Watch your email for a link.



Identification and Management of Herbaceous Invasive Plants,

Wednesday, April 14, 2-3:00 p.m., online

Univ. of IL Extension: Herbaceous invasive plants are a threat to forest health, productivity, and diversity. Learn how to identify common Illinois invasives, tools for controlling these invaders, and new species to keep an eye out for. Presenter: Chris Evans, Extension Forester, University of Illinois. Register at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/default.cfm?RegistrationID=23263>

Mushroom Inoculation Workshop, Friday thru Sunday, April 16-18 and 23-25, SILVERWOOD PARK, Edgerton, WI

Learn about growing mushrooms and how to start shiitake on an oak log. The workshop runs about a half hour, but to accommodate social distancing and Covid safety, you'll rank your preferred days/times, then receive a specific time slot from the park's scheduler, taking your preferences into consideration. (The workshop will be running from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. most of the days.) You'll have the chance to purchase a log and inoculum (\$20) so you can start your own. Or you can purchase and already started log for \$30. For more information or to sign up, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2tmfx88a>



Whole Garden & Farm Planning: Making the Most of Your Space, Saturday, April 17, 2:00-3:30 p.m., online

Presented by Michael Fields Agricultural Institute. Reinvigorate your garden and growing spaces by gaining some knowledge about which crops rotate well year to year, which vegetables grow next to and complement each other well, and how to arrange plants to make sure you get the highest quality fruits and vegetables possible. The presenter is Nicole Tautges, PhD--an expert in crop rotation and ecological plant and soil management. Nicole is eager to help other people expand and optimize their growing spaces to grow food and enhance beauty and biodiversity. Cost \$20/participant. Register by **April 13th** at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/whole-garden-farm-planning-making-the-most-of-your-space-tickets-131349025471>

Jumping Worms: The Impacts of a New Soil Invader, Wednesday, April 21, Noon-1:00 p.m. online

Earthworms are found in a variety of habitats, from our backyard gardens to native forests. However, a new group of non-native, invasive earthworms collectively referred to as jumping worms, are moving into Wisconsin with potentially destructive consequences. Brad Herrick of the UW Arboretum will discuss the impact of jumping worms in gardens, the latest research on their ecology and biology, how to tell them apart from other species of earthworms and what we can do to slow their spread. The event is free, but registration is required. Go to <https://go.wisc.edu/5y045k>

Safe Use of Herbicide in Natural Settings, Wednesday, April 21, 2-3:00 p.m., online

Herbicides are an indispensable tool for woody vegetation managers, but they must be used properly as off-target movement can be very damaging. Learn about common herbicide issues faced by Illinois landowners and applicators, what herbicide injury symptoms look like, and who to contact if herbicide injury is suspected. Leave with tips on herbicide application that prevents and avoids herbicide movement. Michelle Wiesbrook, Extension Specialist, Pesticide Safety Education Program, University of Illinois. No charge but registration is required. Sign up at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/default.cfm?RegistrationID=23263>

Growing Perennial Vegetables (Rhubarb, Asparagus, Horseradish), Thursday, April 22, 6-7:30 p.m., online

Univ. of IL Extension Get Growing Webinar Series: Rhubarb, asparagus, and horseradish are the main perennial vegetables that are the first to yield in the early spring in Northern Illinois. These crops can grow successfully for decades. Topics will include varieties, general management, harvest, and other issues that you might encounter in adding perennial vegetables to your garden. No charge, but a donation is appreciated. Register at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23416>



Vi Bates Woodland Wildflower Walk, Saturday, April 24, 10-11:30 a.m., Klehm Arboretum, Rockford, IL

Come celebrate Spring at our Vi Bates Woodland Wildflower Garden. Enjoy a wide variety of wildflowers in their native setting. Learn which woodland wildflowers you can use in your own shady yard. We will discuss soil, sun, and moisture requirements, unique adaptations, pollinators, and the benefits of using Illinois natives in your yard. An in-person program, masks required. Please come dressed for outdoor weather. The group will meet at the back of the Main Visitor's Center. **Pre-registration and pre-payment is required.** \$3 Klehm members, \$5 senior (62+), \$8 public adult. Sign up link at <http://klehm.org/vi-bates-woodland-wildflower-garden-walk/>

What's that Bug? How to Identify Insects, Tuesday, April 27, 1:30-2:30 p.m., online

Part of the Four Seasons Gardening Webinar Series from the Univ. of IL Extension. Have you ever spotted an insect and wondered what type of insect it was? Insects are all around us and play important roles in our ecosystems. Explore how to identify different groups of insects commonly found in Illinois. Presenter: Horticulture Educator Ken Johnson. Register by clicking on the program's title at extension.illinois.edu/global/four-seasons-gardening-webinar-series

Vegetable Diseases, Thursday, April 29, 6:30-8 p.m., online

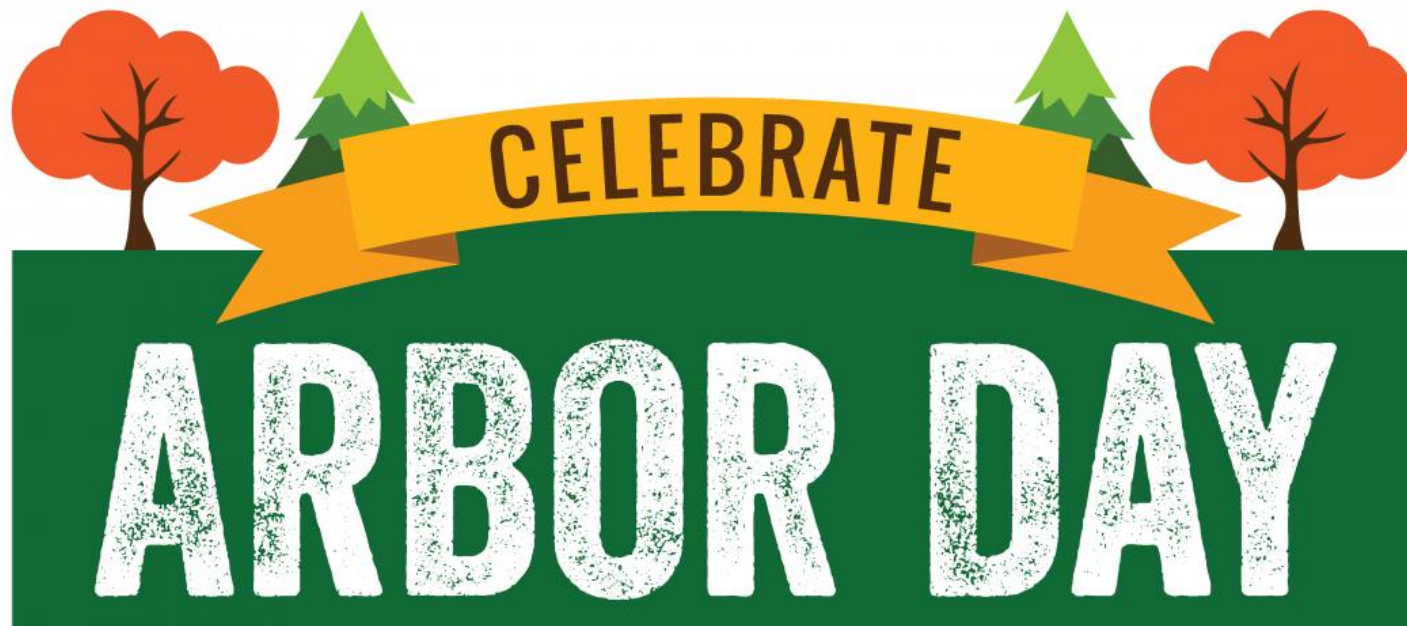
Join the director of the UW-Madison's Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic, Brian Hudelson, as he discusses common diseases of vegetables. Learn how to identify and manage these diseases and help your vegetable garden thrive. No charge, but registration is required. To sign up, go to https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_71H4DrAsURgdzz8.

Raspberry and Blackberry Production for the Backyard, Thursday, April 29, 6-7:30 p.m., online

Univ. of IL Extension Get Growing Webinar Series: When it comes to growing fruit in the backyard vegetable garden, brambles like raspberry and blackberry can fit in well. They consistently yield with few disease issues. However, like all fruits, they do require some needed attention such as pruning and trellising. Variety selection, pruning, insects, and basic management will be covered. Register at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23416>

Arbor Day Celebration, Friday, April 30, 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m., Klehm Arboretum, Rockford, IL

Festivities will include a drive-through tree giveaway (while supplies last), free admission for the day, tree plantings throughout the grounds, and free downloadable Arbor Day materials. The free guided walking tour of Klehm's paved paths is currently full, but you could check for cancellations either in advance or at the event. Walk begins at 10:00 a.m.



Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens, cont.



Eclipse Lagoon Memorial Bricks are available for purchase through the Rockford Park District Foundation. They have a search engine that can help you locate a specific brick: [“Where’s your Brick?”](#)

Colors - One stunning feature that is often employed at the Conservatory is the lighting of the interior in colors keyed to special occasions. A very special and very colorful salute to women, a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women’s right to vote, was marked with a stunning display of purple and gold lights in August, 2020. Winter lighting below.





The Sinnissippi Rose Garden

The rose garden opened in 1924, then as now, free and open to the public. Among the 50 varieties of rose bushes, which are labeled on signs, are the Peach Drift Rose, Glowing Peace (orange and pink), and Malaguena (pink). In 2019 a major renovation saw the removal of overgrown sumac (planted in the 1980s) which had blocked the view of thousands of rose bushes that cover the 2.5 acre gardens.

According to Dan Erwin, manager and curator of the NCG (*below*), the removal of the sumac was the first major improvement in at least 30 years. Money to make the improvements was donated to the Rockford Park District in the form of private dona-

tions—not taxpayer funds.

Erwin oversaw the planting of fine grasses that gracefully “move with even the faintest breeze” to replace the sumac. The renovation added new stone benches, lighting and cast iron planters; replaced safety guard rails; and made a sidewalk handicapped accessible. He estimates that hundreds of thousands of guests visit the Rose Garden each year, most of those visitors being guests who stop by while walking on the Sinnissippi recreation path right next door.



Nicholas Visits: Virtual and In-Person

Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens offers a number of special exhibits throughout the year, and virtual visits and events that are available any time.

Simply Spring: The Butterfly Exhibit

This delightful exhibit began on March 20 this year and will continue until Sunday, June 6 at 3 p.m. Celebrate the arrival of spring as you experience the magical world of butterflies, both native and exotic! Enjoy being surrounded by live butterflies in the tropical conservatory, and see the whole butterfly lifecycle in action as you view butterflies emerging from their chrysalises in the emergence area. Check the NCG website for other exhibits at different times of the year.

Malachite butterfly (siproeta stelenes)



Three Programs Offered Virtual OR Live

Greenhouse Tours: How does the Conservatory maintain all its lovely tropical plants year around? Greenhouses!! Book a virtual or an in-person tour and learn about these climate controlled wonders.

Predatory Plants: These plants eat what?! Discover the amazing world of carnivorous plants! Learn how, and why, these plants have adapted to eating insects!

A Plant's Life: Explore the fascinating life of plants! In this program you will take a closer look at what each part of the plant does and what plants need to grow.

There are three levels of participation available for these exciting programs:

- 30 minute virtual program
- 45 minute virtual program
- An In-Person Field Trip (Includes kit activity)
- Pre-Registration is required
- Fees vary for residents and non-residents. Teachers are FREE!!

Activity Boxes

Creative and fun NCG activities were temporarily halted due to COVID-19 but now they're back. All the supplies you need to create one of these projects are included in an activity box. (Any leftover boxes will be available for purchase at NCG's Garden Gate Gift Store.) Boxes are great for ages 5-105! Check the website for times and dates.

Teacher Resource Center

Besides offering programs and projects for the public, NCG offers a Teacher Resource Center crammed with goodies that educators can use to enrich their lesson plans and share with their students.

The Importance of Volunteers:

NCG, like many botanical gardens, could not run without the hard work of dedicated volunteers. There are a range of areas where volunteers help out:

- **Horticulture** – Some volunteers help with gardening in the indoor tropical exhibition area, outdoor natural areas and gardens, or the Sinnissippi Rose Garden and the Eclipse Lagoon.
- **Docent / Tour Guide** – These volunteers share their knowledge of plants with visitors, conduct tour groups, and answer questions about the plants, artwork and gardens at NCG.
- **Special Events / Exhibits Volunteer**
Volunteers assist in member events, family events, and special traveling exhibits or annual ones such as the butterflies.
- **Education Support**
Education volunteers assist NCG education and program staff in bringing the exciting world of plants, horticulture, and green technology to children, families, and adults. Volunteers may help with school field trips, camps, family activities, adult workshops, and exhibit interpretation.



A summer favorite at NCG - Food Truck Tuesdays.

If You Go...

Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens

1354 N. 2nd St.

Rockford, IL, 61107

(815) 987-8858

nicholasconservatory.com

Hours

Monday: CLOSED

Tuesday- Friday: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Saturday - Sunday: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

COVID-19 Restrictions apply to all activities as NCG. Due to current COVID-19 restrictions, all posed photography must be scheduled for a specific time. To schedule a photo shoot, please contact Leslie at (815) 987-1670 or lesliecrow@rockfordparkdistrict.org

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Mailing Address: UW-Extension Rock County, 51 S. Main Street, Janesville, WI 53545

Physical Address: 3506 North Highway 51, Building A, Janesville, WI 53545

Phone: 608-757-5066 Fax: 608-757-5055