

# Master Gardener Update

## April 2020

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## Websites

### For Rock County

#### MGV info:

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

fyi.extension.wisc.edu/  
mgvrockco/rock-prairie-  
association/

#### 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 tulip tree is one of the largest native trees in North America. It is a member of the magnolia family and has distinct tulip-shaped characteristic in its leaves, flowers, and fruit. The showy, goblet-shaped, orange-yellow-green flowers appear in late spring after the leaves; the cone-like seed clusters sit upright on the branches. The golden-yellow fall color of the tulip-tree makes this an excellent choice for large landscapes.

Their late spring flowers and abundant production of nectar and



## Quick Facts, cont.

above with a pale green under-  
side, changing to golden yellow in  
the fall. Distinct, ½" long reddish-  
brown buds are said to resemble  
a duck's bill.

**Flowers:** Attractive, 2" tall, tulip-  
like flowers are yellow-green,  
with an orange band at the base  
of each petal. Often obscured by  
leaves at the tips of branches.

**Fruit:** 2" long, cone-shaped, ag-  
gregate of samaras (winged  
seeds). Seeds sit upright in py-  
ramidal clusters, turning brown in  
October and persisting through  
winter.

pollen are what make tulip trees  
important for pollinators.

Other common names include  
various spellings of tulip tree, tulip  
poplar and yellow poplar.

Foliage is deciduous (seasonally loses  
leaves).

*continues*

### Planting Considerations:

- Highly susceptible to ice damage, marginally hardy, weak wood and branch structure
- Soil Preference: Acid soil, moist, well-drained soil
- Tolerances: Alkaline soil, tolerant of acid soil. Intolerant of drought conditions. Intolerant of poor drainage.
- Ornamental Interest: Fall color, showy flowers
- Wildlife: Insect pollinators, sapsuckers, small mammals, songbirds.

### Care:

- Prefers moist, well-drained, slightly acidic soils. Tolerant of more alkaline soil. Tolerant of black walnut toxicity. Prefers being transplanted in early spring, rather than autumn. A consistent supply of moisture is necessary; tree will suffer from leaf yellowing when planted in a dry site.
- Disease, pests, and problems: Aphids, scales, mildew, canker, and verticillium wilt are possible (though probably minor) problems.
- Fast growth rate causes the tree to be somewhat weak wooded.
- Native throughout most of eastern United States.
- Bark color and texture: Mature trees have a gray-brown trunk with deeply furrowed fissures, young trees have smooth, gray bark with white shallow fissures.

*Mary Kay Thompson*



*Uniquely shaped leaf of the tulip tree (left) and a seed cluster (right)*

## State MG Program Changes Volunteer Hours Required This Year



Here is the current status of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program:

1. To help keep everyone safe in these dangerous times, the MG program has prohibited **all in-person events** (volunteering, education, meetings) at least through the end of May, regardless of the number of people involved. If something MG-related can't be done from home, it's proscribed for now. Don't be surprised if this ban is extended, depending on what happens with the COVID-19 epidemic.
2. Because so few volunteer events can be done safely right now, you will not be required to have 24 volunteer hours to recertify in October. The *volunteer* hours requirement for this year has been dropped completely. Log whatever hours you get. Whatever it is, it'll be enough.
3. Because there are a wealth of on-line resources you can access from home, you do still have to log 10 hours of continuing education between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020 to recertify for next year. (See below.)

Even though the volunteer work we do is vital, it's not worth anyone's life. Let's all stay home and starve the virus of new victims!

## Expanded Online Resources for Continuing Education at [wimastergardener.org](http://wimastergardener.org)

If you're stuck at home and it's cold or raining (and you don't want a visit from the Cat in the Hat!), it's a good time to explore some options for getting your education hours. Since in-person events have been cancelled for the time being, Mike and Amy at the state program office have expanded the number of online offerings available at [wimastergardener.org](http://wimastergardener.org). Expand the drop-down menu of the "Learn" tab on the website to find these options:

### Level 2 Training:

Each of these programs contains a different combination of videos and reading materials. Watch and read, then complete the short "open-book" quiz, and you can claim *two continuing education hours* for that unit. Usually Level 2 offers six topics. Right now, you'll find 17 possibilities:

Shade...and Light  
 Perennial Vegetable Crops  
 Cole Crops  
 Square Foot Gardening  
 Container Design  
 Post-Harvest Handling  
 Root Crops  
 Tree Roots  
 Solanaceae: Growing Tomatoes, Peppers and Eggplants  
 Apples  
 Invasive Plants  
 Houseplants  
 Aggressive Garden Plants  
 Greener Gardens  
 Fragrance in the Garden  
 Pollinators  
 Cover Crops for the Garden  
 Vine Crops



## Articles

Also in the drop-down menu under the "Learn" tab at [wimastergardener.org](http://wimastergardener.org), you'll find a list of articles developed for master gardeners. The list starts with many of the same topics as Level 2 (no videos or quizzes). If you continue down the list, though, you'll find a number of articles that focus on individual plants or insect pests. Most of the topics qualify for a half hour of continuing education. (Articles on botanical gardens and All-America Selections don't count for education credit. They're just for fun.)



## More On-line Options

### Level 1 Training Materials

Hook up with Julie's Level 1 training! For now, her classes are being run through Zoom software from 2-3:30 every *other* Thursday. Topics for this month include Integrated Pest Management on April 2 and Weeds and Wildlife on April 16. (No meeting April 30.) Look for an email from Julie dated March 29 for the access code to the April 2 training. Background information can be found in your MGV training manual, and on the website: [wimastergardener.org/learn/level 1 training](http://wimastergardener.org/learn/level1training), and in emails from Julie.

### Trees – The Right Tree for the Right Site

Milwaukee County is hosting this on-line training event on Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> from 9-3 that will be held using "Zoom" connection software. The first speaker will talk about varieties of trees, the second will discuss what people want from their trees as a way to help find the right choice, and the third speaker will help you analyze any site to be sure the desired tree will get what it needs to thrive. The program will end with a Q&A session. Registration and \$30 fee required. For more information, contact [ann.wied@wisc.edu](mailto:ann.wied@wisc.edu), 262-548-7788.

## What's This "Zoom" Thing?

Zoom is software for online meetings. Though there are other similar programs, Zoom is the software the UW Extension is using for virtual get-togethers, whether they are meetings or training. You can install Zoom on a computer, tablet or phone. It's free to download from [zoom.us](http://zoom.us). The process of downloading to a computer and setting up an account takes about 5 minutes. You'll also get a welcome email with a few quick videos to get you started using the software.



Don't forget Julie Hill is hosting "virtual coffee/tea talks" on Wednesday mornings from 9-10:00 a.m. (April 1 through May 27). You can use the opportunity to keep in touch with her AND to practice using the Zoom software. Look for an email from Julie dated March 29 for the access code to her first chat.

## RPMGA

### Mushroom Recipes for You

Since all in-person MGV events are cancelled for April and May, here are some goodies for you from our March educational program on wild and cultivated mushrooms with speaker Tom Northey.

#### Marvelous Morel Sundae Topping

3 tablespoons butter  
1 cup finely chopped morels  
1 tablespoon honey  
¼ cup chopped pecans  
½ cup butter, melted  
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
¼ cup Frangelico liqueur  
Lemon juice

Saute the morels in the 3 tablespoons of butter until soft. Mix in the honey and pecans and set aside. In a separate bowl, combine the ½ c. melted butter, brown sugar, Frangelico and lemon juice. Mix well, then stir into the mushroom mixture. Serve warm over ice cream. Note on the lemon juice: it helps keep the color from darkening and adds flavor. To your taste: from a few drops up to a tablespoon.

*This recipe appeared on page 81 of A Morel Hunter's Companion: Guide to True and False Morels, by Nancy Smith Weber.*

#### Shiitake Mushroom "Bacon" (vegan)

3 ½ ounces shiitake mushrooms  
½ teaspoon soy sauce  
Salt and pepper to taste  
3 tablespoons olive oil

Preheat the oven to 375°. On a cutting board, remove mushroom stems (save for broth or another purpose), and thinly slice mushroom caps about 1/8" thick. Place the slices on a baking sheet. Drizzle with soy sauce and olive oil, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss together till thoroughly coated. Spread mushrooms out into a single layer and place in oven. Bake 5 minutes. Turn the mushrooms. Bake an additional 5-10 minutes, till mushroom slices are crisp. Serves 2.

*This recipe appeared on the website Tasty.co.*

## Bus Trip to Seed Savers Exchange

We had hoped to open registration for a bus trip to Decorah, Iowa very soon, but as explained above, Extension has put everything—including planning--on hold. We haven't cancelled the trip, but neither can we move forward until we get the OK to proceed.

If health concerns allow us to go this summer, the dates will be Tuesday and Wednesday, July 28 and 29. We'll be visiting Seed Savers' Heritage Farm (a part of which is shown at right), the Plantpeddler (a large commercial grower) and the edible wellness garden at Winneshiek Medical Center in Decorah. Cross your fingers and hope we get the chance celebrate the season with this delightful trip!



## Notes from Rotary Gardens

Rotary is closed till further notice, and no volunteers are working right now.

As of now, the Gardens' Earth Day celebration has been rescheduled for Sunday, June 7, from noon to 4:00 p.m. Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association will have a table at this event. If you'd like to help with planning or with staffing the table on the day of the event, please contact Ruth Flescher ([yafello2@gmail.com](mailto:yafello2@gmail.com)). (Note: If health concerns are still active in June, things may change again. Stay flexible!)

The "Spring" Symposium has been moved to Saturday, July 25. Given the date change, you may have another opportunity to register. We'll let you know!





## Other Things You Can Do While Staying Safer-at-Home

Earlier in this newsletter, we emphasized that you can do a lot of online learning from home. Here are some other things you can do right now, while staying within the guidelines for protecting your health and others'. (Just don't forget that 6 foot distance if you come across neighbors while you're outside.)

1. Prune your trees and shrubs. The best time for pruning most things is between mid-March and mid-April. So sharpen those loppers and get your fruit trees tended and your shrubs thinned. (Exceptions include oak trees, which should be winter-pruned to avoid spreading oak wilt and spring-flowering shrubs, which should be pruned after blooming.)
2. Start seeds indoors. Now is prime time to get seeds started inside. You can get seeds at grocery and hardware stores if you don't already have them. It's hard to know what plants will be available at nurseries and garden centers this spring, so secure your supply yourself. Maybe start some for your friends. Seeds you can start now: tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, broccoli, brussels sprouts and many annual or perennial flowers. By the second or third week of April, you can also start cukes, squash, melons ad pumpkins, plus annual vines like cardinal climber and morning glories.

3. Prep your beds and plant seeds outdoors. It's not too early to put in peas, spinach, lettuce, radishes or parsnips right now. So as soon as your ground is dry enough, put it to work. By the second or third week of April, you can also direct seed carrots, beets and other semi-hardy plants.
4. Clean up the rest of the yard. With so many other things on hold, you may have time to get all the way to the bottom of your "to do" list, and win this year's tidy yard award. Remember: to protect overwintering pollinators, it's best to wait till after April 15 or to place hollow cut stems loosely on the compost pile or edge of a wood until insects that may be inside can emerge.
5. Read a garden book for information or inspiration. Wisconsin's on-line library (<https://wplc.overdrive.com/>) has over 400 gardening titles in its collection for downloading. Check them out for free on your public library card.

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