

Master Gardener Update

December 2019

<p>In this Issue</p> <p>Trees for Bees: American Linden or Basswood</p> <p>RPMGA/MGV: Annual Potluck</p> <p>Rotary Gardens: Holiday Light Show</p> <p>Other Items of Interest: Orchid Sale in Madison Help Recruit New MGVs Gardening Workshops with Mark Dwyer Earth Day Challenge</p> <p>Volunteer Opportunities</p> <p>Education Calendar</p> <p>Websites</p>	<p>Pollinator Project: Trees for Bees</p> <h3>American Linden or Basswood</h3> <p><i>Tilia americana</i></p>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Quick Facts:</p> <p>Hardiness Zone: 4 to 9</p> <p>Height: 60-125'</p> <p>Spread: Rounded form with a canopy of spreading branches</p> <p>Growth Habit: Single or in some instances even multi-stemmed</p> <p>Bloom Time: Late spring</p> <p>Bloom Color: Creamy white</p> <p>Sun: Full sun</p> <p>Water: Medium</p> <p>Maintenance: Low</p> <p>Flower: Small, creamy-white and fragrant</p> <p>Leaf: Alternate, lop-sided heart-shaped, coarsely saw-toothed, notched at base, as long as 5½" by 3" wide</p> <p>Bark: A furrowed brown-gray</p> </div>
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UW Extension Rock

County:

rock.uwex.edu

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



History

Tilia is a genus within the Linden family (*Tiliaceae*) of about 30 species of trees, native throughout most temperate areas of the northern hemisphere. The greatest species diversity of the linden is found in Asia and the tree is only scattered in pockets throughout Europe and eastern North America. The tree is sometimes called a lime in Britain and a linden in parts of Europe and North America. The most common name for the tree in North

America is American basswood (*Tilia americana*) but there are several varieties with separate names. White basswood (*var. heterophylla*) is found from Missouri to Alabama and eastward. Carolina basswood (*var. caroliniana*) is found from Oklahoma to North Carolina and south to Florida.

The fast-growing American basswood can be one of the largest trees of eastern and central North America. The tree will often support several trunks off its base, will prolifically sprout from stumps and is a great seeder. It is an important timber tree in the Great Lakes states and *Tilia americana* is the northernmost basswood species.

Tree Characteristics and Identification Tips

Tilia blooms in the late spring. The basswood's small greenish flowers are uniquely attached and hang under a pale leaf-like bract. The resulting seeds are in a hard, dry, hairy, nut-like fruit

Quick Facts, continued

- Color: A deep green which in fall alters to a lighter shade of green or faded yellow
- Attracts: Bees, birds, squirrels and other animals
- Fruit: Pea-sized seeds
- Winter interest: Seeds turn reddish-brown





which is quite visible during the fruiting season. Also, take a close look at the twigs and you will see them zigzag between oval buds with one or two bud scales.

During blossom time, honey producers often station their beehives close to these trees. Basswood flowers produce an abundance of nectar from which choice honey is made. In fact, in some parts of its range basswood is known as the bee-tree and can be identified by the honey bee traffic. People who are severely allergic to bees should take care around the tree during bloom time.



The wood from American linden is odorless and so lightweight that such products as hunting decoys, wooden dishware and the frames for fish nets come from it.

Culture, Considerations and Landscape Uses

In the wild, the American linden grows best on floodplains and near wetlands. Conditions that offer full sun will allow the tree to flourish. If you have a site that features deep topsoil with solid drainage, this is where the American linden should go. Keep the tree out of places where soil compaction exists and remember that a basswood is quite sensitive to the effects of drought, meaning you need to monitor the weather and water your seedling.

It would be wise to plant your American Linden tree away from large paved areas. The reflection of the heat from the asphalt tends to damage the leaves.

Pests and Diseases

While a variety of insect pests will infest the linden tree, few have any lasting effects on it. A bug called the linden borer will carve out tunnels at the bottom of the trunk, which can be problematic for weak seedlings and older specimens. Insects such as the linden looper, spring cankerworm, gypsy moth caterpillar, tent caterpillar and the basswood leaf miner will all eat the leaves of the American linden. Perhaps the tree's biggest insect nemesis is the Japanese beetle, a bug that can defoliate large areas of the tree. American lindens in Rock County have suffered significant Japanese beetle damage over the past decade. While pests do not kill the trees outright, if infestations continue year after year they can substantially weaken the trees so they become susceptible to fungal infections.



American linden is susceptible to diseases that affect the leaves, but usually the tree withstands any symptoms that result. Any injury to the trunk or branches of a linden tree can allow organisms that bring about decay to enter the wood. This can become serious, as basswood will decay more readily than many other types of trees. Different varieties of fungi, such as yellow cap fungi, are often the culprits in causing wood rot in this species.

Medicinal Uses

The blossoms of the American Linden are used in medicinal preparations to treat colds, cough, fever, infections, inflammation, high blood pressure, headache (particularly migraine), as a diuretic (increases urine production), antispasmodic (reduces smooth muscle spasm along the digestive tract), and sedative. The flowers were added to baths to quell hysteria, and steeped as a tea to relieve anxiety-related indigestion, irregular heartbeat, and vomiting. The leaves are used to promote sweating to reduce fevers. The wood is used for liver and gallbladder disorders and cellulitis (inflammation of the skin and surrounding soft tissue). That wood burned to charcoal is ingested to treat intestinal disorders and used topically to treat edema or infection, such as cellulitis or ulcers of the lower leg.

Note: This tree should not be confused with the non-native urban basswood called Little Leaf Linden or *Tilia cordata*. The leaf of the Little Leaf Linden is much smaller than basswood and it is typically a much smaller tree.

Mary Kay Thompson

Sad and Scary News about Bird Populations

The October 4th issue of *Science Magazine* reported that—like insects—birds are in peril. In the past 48 years, population numbers have dropped by 29 percent overall—in absolute numbers, that’s a decrease of nearly 3 billion birds! And not just species that are on the threatened or endangered list—many kinds of backyard song birds as well as other types of birds have seen significant population declines. Though the experts don’t address the reasons for the decline (loss of habitat? Other?), they do say ecosystems will change more if we do continue to lose our birds.

Year-End Potluck!

Thursday, December 5, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Grab a friend, make a dish to pass and join us to celebrate this year's season of master gardener activity. All Rock County master gardener volunteers are welcome. If you didn't RSVP because you weren't sure you could make it, please don't let that keep you away. There's always enough food and we'd love to see you! Here are the details:

Food:

The Rock Prairie Association will provide meat, buns, bottled water, coffee, tea and hot chocolate, creamer, sugar, butter, salt and pepper and plastic cutlery, plates, bowls, cups, tablecloths and napkins. We will have a table (or two, depending) set up for the food. We are inviting each member to bring a favorite dish to pass. Let us know when you RSVP what you're bringing. We're looking for hot dishes, side dishes, salads, breads, desserts, even soups or stews.



Table Decorations:

In years past guests have brought table decorations for door prizes. If you have the time or the inclination we would welcome table decorations again this year. We'll attach raffle tickets to the bottom of each one and at the end of dinner we'll hold the raffle.

Food Sensitivities:

To help ensure everyone has a great evening we'll have a short check list on hand to fill out about your dish that will show ingredients it contains that could cause allergic reactions. Your check list will be displayed with your dish.

Recipes:

We'd be delighted if you would bring in copies of recipes for your dishes to share.

Program:

After dinner Julie Hill will present a wrap-up of this year's events, and we can talk about what kinds of programs you'd like to see in the coming year, and possible projects to pursue.

Sharing:

A couple years ago Bev Feltz brought an array of small houseplants to give away. Her decision to do so was a huge hit. At that same event Mary Berve brought in a stack of gardening magazines which were eagerly picked up as well. As a result we've decided to invite all comers to bring any extra houseplants, cuttings, started sets or seeds to swap with the other guests, as well as gardening magazines, books or even good usable tools or supplies to trade or share.

Clean-up:

We'll provide plastic bags and cleaning supplies. If you want to help break down tables and stack chairs at the end of the evening we'd appreciate any help you could give.

Date: Thursday, December 5, 2019

Time: 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Location: Community Room (downstairs) at Premier Bank, 1400 Black Bridge Ave. Janesville (Behind the Milton Ave. McDonalds)



Looking Ahead to January: Winter Houseplant Care

RPMGA's January program will focus on babying your houseplants through the cold months: what you need to know about light, humidity, fertilizing, pruning, potting up and propagating.

Watch for details in the next newsletter on the date and location.



Rotary Gardens Event: Holiday Light Show

This annual holiday extravaganza is on now, running from Thursdays through Sundays, 4:30 to 9:00 p.m. throughout December. You're encouraged to purchase tickets on-line (they're good for ANY day of the show) and to park at the nearby Pat Dawson Field and take the free shuttle over to the gardens (shuttle service begins at 4:15). Entry is \$10 for anyone 13 or older, \$5 for children ages 3-12, and free for the youngest ones. Because weekends can be tremendously busy, the gardens may go to a timed-entry system those days, so please be patient if there's a short delay getting in. It's for everyone's safety. You can stay up-to-date with event notifications on Rotary's facebook page.

Volunteering at the Holiday Light Show: The link to sign up for volunteer shifts at the light show is <https://signup.com/go/byBNZaz>. Or you can call or email Laura Peterson to get on the schedule (VolunteerMail@volgistics.com, 608.314.8415). Please note: while volunteering is a great way to help support the gardens, it may not meet the qualifications for master gardener volunteer hours. If you have a question about that, please contact Julie Hill, (julie.hill@wisc.edu).



More Holiday Events You May Enjoy

Rotary Gardens is not the only public garden with a holiday event running in December. You and your family might also enjoy these others. Details can be found on each organization's website:

Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison: Olbrich's Holiday Express (Garden-scale trains) December 7 - 31, 2019.

Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens in Rockford, IL: Sinnissippi Station Model Train Exhibit and All Aglow outdoor holiday light show, December 1-31, 2019.

Klehm Arboretum, Rockford, IL: December 21 Solstice Tranquility Walk (evening), New Year's Day Tranquility Walk (morning).

UW Arboretum, Madison: Solstice Sunset/Night Walk (December 21), New Year's Eve Night Walk (December 31)

Other Items of Interest

Orchid Sale The [Horticulture Society of UW-Madison](#) will be having an orchid sale Friday, December 6th, through Sunday, December 8th in the [D.C. Smith Greenhouse](#). They will be selling a wide variety of large and small sized planters, including Dendrobium and Oncidium orchids, as well as pots and media. Forms of payment accepted: cash, card, or venmo.

Help Recruit New MGVs Do you know of good places in your community to promote the upcoming Level 1 training for MGVs? Could you put some posters up in your area? Contact julie.hill@wisc.edu to get some posters or brochures. The Level 1 training classes are scheduled for next year, beginning February 6 and continuing through August 20, 2020. Sessions will meet on the first and third Thursday afternoons

of the month from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the courthouse in downtown Elkhorn.

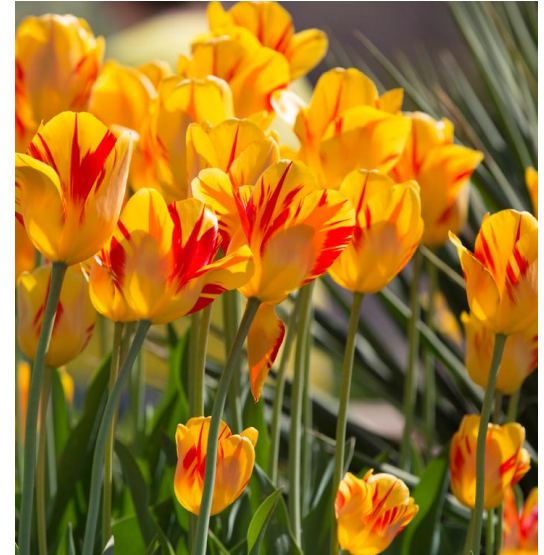
Winter Workshops by Mark Dwyer at the UWW-Rock County Campus in Janesville. Three dates. Three topics per date. Three hours of CEUs per date. The price for each date is \$25 (or \$60 if you sign up for all three). Here's what Mark will cover:

Saturday, January 18: gardening as we age, the sensory garden and container gardening

Saturday, February 1: new introductions in annuals, perennials and woody plants (trees & shrubs)

Saturday, February 15: landscape design basics, color combinations, texture with maintenance in mind

Classes will be held in Hyatt Smith 120, and will run from 8:40 to noon each time. The campus is located at 2909 Kellogg Avenue in Janesville. Registration is required. Go to tinyurl.com/uwwgarden. If you have questions or need more information contact Molly Cook (cookmj24@uww.edu), (608) 758-6549 .



Earth Day Challenge The state MGV program office is challenging us all to come up with special projects for the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, which will take place next April. Let's brainstorm at our potluck on December 5! If you can't make the potluck and have some ideas or even just an inkling, please drop a note to Ruth Flescher (yafello2@gmail.com), Mary Kay Thompson (mastergardenermary@gmail.com) or Julie Hill (julie.hill@wisc.edu).

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Workday, Welty Environmental Center, Beloit, WI Saturday, December 7, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Join Welty and our prairie partners, Rock County Conservationists and Green-Rock Audubon, for a morning of prairie restoration. We are cleaning up weeds, brush and brambles, and seed collecting and spreading. Bring your own hand tools, gloves, safety glasses and hard-toed shoes. All new participants are required to fill out a City of Beloit waiver (available onsite on work day or by email). Age 14 and below must be accompanied by adult. For more information, call 608-362-6212 or email info@weltycenter.org.

Volunteer Workdays at the UW-Madison Arboretum Every Saturday—including all four Saturdays in December—from 9 a.m. to noon, you can spend time helping with ecological restoration of various prairie and woodland areas throughout the Arboretum. For details on where to meet and what to bring, go to <https://arboretum.wisc.edu/visit/events/>.

Write a Book Review Winter is a great time to settle in with a good gardening book. Is there one—new or old—you’ve found especially helpful and would like to share with the rest of us? You can get some volunteer hours by writing up a short review to go in this newsletter. If you’re interested, contact Ruth Flescher (yafello2@gmail.com)

Help Make Great Education Opportunities Happen With input from Rock County MGVs, we’ll be putting together a calendar of programs and tours for our monthly meetings. Once we know what people want, we could use help finding and contacting speakers and making arrangements with tour locations. (This tour was at the Agrecol greenhouse near Edgerton, WI).



December Education Calendar

For details on any of these education opportunities, search the web using the program title and/or organization name.

UWA = UW Arboretum, Madison; DCUWEX = Dane County UW Extension, Madison; RPMGA = Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Janesville;
 OBG = Olbrich Botanical Garden, Madison; UIEX = University of Illinois Extension, Rockford.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Arboretum Sampler Walk UWA	2	3	4 Winter Pruning of Trees, Shrubs and Fruit Trees DCUWEX	5 RPMGA Potluck/ Grow Lights 101 OBG*	6 Intro to Apple Tree Pruning: The Older and Neglected UIEX	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 The Science of Snow OBG
15 Sights, Sounds and Smells of the Arboretum UWA	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <i>Christmas</i>	26	27	28
29 Conifers Walk UWA	30	31				

*Registration deadline has passed, but you may be able to call and register late: 608-245-3648.

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.

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