

In this Issue

Recycled Yard Art

RPMGA Notes:
 Dec. 16 Meeting to
 Plan for 2022

WIMGA Annual Meeting
 Online Dec. 2

MGV Program Notes:
 New Online Training
 Programs
 Changes for 2022

Rotary Gardens:
 Holiday Light Show

Just for Fun

More Training Coming Up
 in December and Beyond

Recycled Yard Art

As a follow-up to the November article on our part in the world of recycling, I have chosen to touch on another facet of the issue – using found objects as garden art.

Using recycled or found objects to add beauty to our yards and gardens has the potential to brighten up our landscapes, save money, and keep objects out of the landfill. What follows are a few suggestions to help us fulfill those objectives.

Just for Fun

While out there in the e-verse looking for ideas on how to recycle things that would otherwise end up in the landfill I ran across some fun ideas.

These hubcaps were repurposed to make delightful flowers.



Websites

MGV Hours Reporting:
mastergardener.
extension.wisc.edu/
report-your-hours/

**Canvas UW Online
Classroom:**
<https://canvas.wisc.edu/>

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:**
mastergardener.
extension.wisc.edu

**Wisconsin Master
Gardener Association
(WIMGA):** wimga.org

A coat of paint, the addition of a slatted wooden top and shelf, and this tired grill becomes a focal point for your patio or next to your garden shed. Not only did this rescue create something useful, it's on wheels! It can be moved from place to place.



Continues on page 12

RPMGA Notes

December Get-Together: Planning for 2022, Thursday, December 16, 5:30 p.m., basement community room of Premier Bank

We aren't doing our usual dinner potluck, but we do want to get together in December to talk about what we'd like to do next year. We'll spend some time just visiting, then try to settle some things for the year to come. Questions on the table:

Do we want to join Walworth and Jefferson Counties to host a statewide WIMGA conference in 2023?

What kind of programs would you like to have in 2022, and how should they be done—in person or online?
(Bring your ideas, please!)

Should we plan for the bus trip to Seed Savers Exchange in 2022 or wait another year?

Introduce the January 6 online program: Plants I've killed and other horticulture disasters

Aside from the conference hosting, are there other things we want to do together with Walworth and Jefferson County MGVs?

Confirm our new status as RPMGA, Inc., and reintroduce the board/officers that were elected.

Treasurers report on RPMGA's financial position

Should RPMGA buy liability insurance?

We encourage you to bring and wear a mask for most of the meeting. We're hearing more about breakthrough infections of the vaccinated and new, more transmissible variants of the Covid virus. We don't want anyone to get sick—or worse!

Feel free to bring a snack or dessert to share. We'll have coffee/tea/water. You're also welcome to bring a guest if you wish!

Location: Premier Bank, 1400 Black Bridge Road, Janesville, WI (behind the McDonalds on Milton Ave)

RPMGA/WIMGA Renewal Time

No, you haven't missed the renewal letter we promised for late November; we're just running a little late. We expect letters to go out by December 6, so watch your mailbox for information about renewing your membership in the Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Inc. and the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA).

New Look for the Master Gardener Update

In keeping with the changes announced recently, you'll no longer see us using the green "leaf" logo for the MGV program. In fact, this newsletter is now a publication of the Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Inc., though it is still for the benefit of all MGVs who call Rock County their "home" county. We've updated the contact and mailing information at the end of the newsletter to reflect these changes.



WIMGA Annual Meeting

Thursday, December 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m., via Zoom

The Wisconsin Master Gardener Association's annual member meeting is taking place online this year, so everyone can attend. In addition to WIMGA news, you'll get the latest updates from the state MG program office. Plus a special guest speaker: Larry Meiller, host of Wisconsin Public Radio's *Garden Talk*. If you haven't already done so, register for the free program at https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMpceugpzopHteINUGeonBwHUa_ngy1GKqY

Statewide MG Program Notes

Reminder: Record 2021 Hours in the Online Reporting System by the end of THIS month. Questions about the process? Ask a fellow master gardener or contact our MG coordinator, Julie Hill (julie.hill@wisc.edu)



Advanced Training: Plant Diagnostics:

The Step By Step Approach to Identifying Plant Problems

This new, advanced course for MGVs will help you improve your trouble-shooting skills and make you a better gardener. If you volunteer answering garden questions, this course will help make that process faster and easier. Plant Diagnostics will be available February 1 to April 30, but you retain access until the end of 2022. The course is completely on-line (in Canvas), so you can work completely at your own convenience. When you finish, you earn 10 CEUs. Fee is \$49 and you can register right up until January 31. For more details, see the course web page at <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/articles/plant-diagnostics-course/>

Mid-level Training: Three New(ish) Plants Plus Modules If you just want a quick refresher on *Plant Diagnostics*, there's a Plants Plus module on that. There are also two new modules on *Gardening and Climate Change* to help you adapt your plantings and processes so your garden will thrive even during more extreme weather. All Plants Plus modules are available in Extension's online classroom software, Canvas. Sign in with your Net ID at <https://canvas.wisc.edu/>

MG Program Changes for 2022—What I got from the Q&A Video released in November

After watching the 45 minute video about changes to the MG program going into effect January 1, I mostly came away with good feelings about those changes. Below are some of the key things I got from the video. This is NOT comprehensive coverage—just things I noted and think are important for us all at this time. I encourage you to watch the entire video. The WIMGA annual meeting update on December 2

will likely have more/newer information. But for what it's worth, here are my take-aways from the video. *Ruth Flescher*

What Doesn't Change: The work we do as volunteers—gardening, answering questions, giving talks, helping people—remains much the same. Changes are on the administrative side of things. But individual MGVs will still record hours annually in the Online Reporting System, and we're still asked for a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer time and 10 hours of continuing education each year.

Training Requirement: To be sure everyone is up to date on program changes, **we will all be required to take the new Onboarding course in 2022** (even if you took Onboarding Lite in 2021). It will include the new "code of ethics" that replaces some of the paperwork we had previously. You'll be able to count Onboarding toward your continuing education requirement and there will be no cost for current MGVs. (Details to come.)

When life happens: If you can't get 24 volunteer and 10 continuing education hours in a given year, as long as you get at least one hour of each, you can remain in the MG program. (Note: Exact details are still being worked out.)

More Focus on the Program as a Whole: Staffing challenges will mean changes in local Extension staff priorities (less time for the MG program most likely). As a result, there will be more of a focus on MGVs as part of the statewide program, rather than serving individual counties. As part of that, you should **start to introduce yourself** as "a certified Extension Master Gardener volunteering for (organization name)" or something similar. You can still wear your name badge.

Preapproval of projects: No longer required. As long as a project is horticulture-related and the organization meets two criteria, you will be able to claim MGV hours for the volunteer work you do for them. The two criteria are: 1. the organization must offer some public good, and 2. it must be able to support volunteers. Public good includes government groups, municipal groups, schools, parks, non-profits, libraries, etc. (but not organizations promoting a specific political agenda).

Relationship to Your Host Organization(s): We will have to follow the rules and meet the volunteer requirements of whatever organizations we're volunteering for. Extension will no longer automatically require a Criminal Background Check or Mandated Reporter Training, but an organization you volunteer for might. Also, ask that organization first for any supplies, copies, etc. that you may need. Ask them if and how their liability coverage applies to you in your volunteer role. Note: Extension will be one of the organizations we can volunteer for. (More info to come on this.)

Logo Retired: The MG Program's green "leaf" logo has been discontinued. Stop using it.

MG Program changes are still evolving. Decisions are still being made. Details are still being worked out. In short, more changes to come!



25th Holiday Light Show Continues through December

Rotary Gardens Holiday Light Show has begun! Hours are 4:30-9:00 p.m., Thursdays thru Sundays, with slightly different days the weeks immediately before and after Christmas. All tickets must be purchased online (<https://rbgholidaylightshow.com/>), and for a specific day and time. Because on-site parking is limited, Rotary recommends aiming for the slower times if you can: weeknights instead of weekends, early in December rather than later, and after 8:00 p.m. (show remains open till 9:00 p.m., with last entry at 8:30 p.m.).

Light Show Volunteers Still Needed!

Though it doesn't count for MGV volunteer hours, helping out at Rotary's Holiday Light Show is a wonderful way to support the Gardens. If you can spare an evening, or several, please go to <https://signup.com/go/zCDsinf> to choose your shifts.

Just for Fun—Things to Do During the Holiday Season and Beyond

Aside from Rotary's **Holiday Light Show**—always spectacular!—there are many other garden-related things you can do in the coming weeks and months. They don't count for MGV education hours, but they will make the cold months go by more quickly! Be sure to check on any COVID restrictions such as tickets for timed entry or mask requirements before you go.

Correction: Holiday Express: Olbrich Botanical Gardens (Madison) Olbrich IS hosting a garden railway show this holiday season (not the flower show announced in last month's newsletter). Dates are December 4 through 31. Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily (closes at 2 p.m. on Dec. 24, closed Dec. 25). Enjoy large-scale model trains churning through a festive scene overflowing with hundreds of poinsettias and fresh evergreens. This year's show theme is Trains, Planes, and Automobiles – so reserve your timed-entry tickets and pack your masks. Depending on the day, you might see a bullet train, steam train, Santa train, circus train, or freight train. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$3 for children 6-18, and free for Olbrich members and children 5 and under (but advance ticket reservations are still required). Reserve/purchase tickets here: <https://olbrich.doubleknot.com/openrosters/availableevents.aspx?orgkey=4403>



Full Moon Hike at Welty Nature Center, Beloit A 1-2 mile guided hike in the forest under the full moon. Dress warm! \$10/members \$12/non-members. December 19, January 17, February 16 or March 18. Registration required: <https://weltycenter.org/programs-events/> Click on the first full moon hike you see listed, then click on the “read more” icon to register for any date.



Photo by Tom Doherty

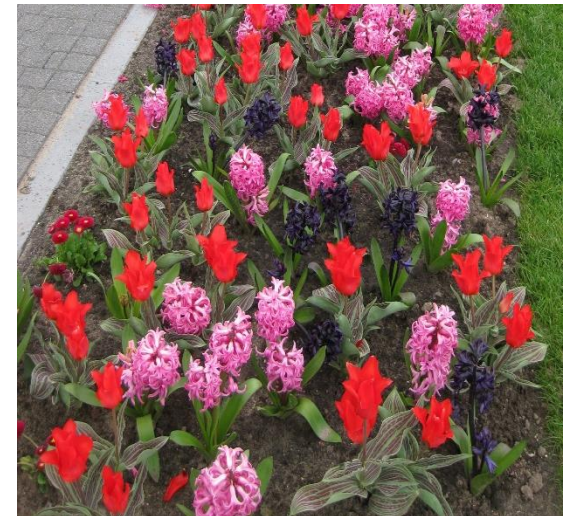
All Aglow Lights Display, Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens (Rockford) Enjoy sparkling lights throughout the outdoor gardens from 4:30-10 p.m. daily, November 27 to January 9. Free, but online donations appreciated.

Sinissippi Station Garden Railway Display, Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens (Rockford) Be transported to a magical miniature world as six G-scale trains and trolleys run down, around, and above you - all in the lush tropical setting of the Nicholas Conservatory. December 3 to January 30. Closed Mondays. Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weekends 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Entry \$ varies, but the highest amount is \$9/person. Timed-entry tickets recommended, especially for weekends.

Nature Walk or Hike, UW Arboretum (Madison) Take a nature walk or hike on a weekend day or on a full moon night! Free. Check the schedule at <https://arboretum.wisc.edu/visit/events/>

Edgerton Hospital Lunchtime Lecture Series Forget Calgon: Let Mark Dwyer take you away to dream gardens, both national and international. Each slide show will be presented at noon on a Tuesday, on the dates shown below. Just drop in with your mask and follow the signs to the presentation room. Free. No registration required.

December 7 - Gardens of the Netherlands
January 11 - Gardens of Canada
February 8 - Gardens of the Philadelphia Area
March 8 - Gardens of the Midwest
April 12 - Highlights of Other Healing Gardens



More Training Available in December and Beyond

Looking for Level 2 MGVT training--The Plants Plus modules? You can find them in the online classroom, Canvas, which you access with your UW NetID at <https://canvas.wisc.edu/> As of now, Plants Plus modules are ONLY available in Canvas. Check regularly for new modules!

Unique Plants for the Holidays, Wednesday, December 1, 3-4 p.m. online

Are you searching for the perfect holiday gift for that plant lover on your list, but don't want to give them the typical poinsettia or Christmas cactus? Join University of Illinois Extension's Good Growing team to learn about some out-of-the-ordinary plants and how to grow them like plumeria, citrus, tea, coffee, and miracle fruit that can make great gifts for the plant enthusiast in your life, or yourself! Free, but registration required. Go to:

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/default.cfm?RegistrationID=24363>

Care for Common December Plants, Monday, December 6, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., online OR Monday, December 13, 11 a.m. to noon, online

Learn how to keep a poinsettia, Christmas cactus, Norfolk Island Pine and other favor-



ite gift plants thriving. We'll cover requirements including light, watering, fertilizer, and humidity. Also, learn tips for picking out Christmas trees and how to keep them in their best shape over the holiday season. Class will be interactive in nature and held through Zoom. The presenter is Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator Extension Marathon County. Free, but registration required: Questions? Please email janell.wehr@wisc.edu

Registration link for Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. class:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFIXaJeTNCr1w9kdWkq_bX0zfub-mdwGhNHT1Q-zTzvpzsRUA/viewform

Registration link for Dec. 13, 11 a.m. class:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdB12UCvySZ6NWzkuYZeCYbB7kz-bWjHO6MDxj0I6hqjK8IFQ/viewform>



Gardening with Native Plants, Tuesday, December 7, noon, live on Facebook

Susan Carpenter, Senior Outreach Specialist, has been the UW-Madison Arboretum's native gardener for almost 20 years. In this talk, she discusses native plants as the basis of sustainable, diverse, and beautiful gardens that support pollinators, beneficial insects, and wildlife. These gardens thrive without fertilizers, pesticides, mowing, or supplemental watering. She will share garden examples, plant sources, and practical tips for garden care. Free. Connect with this link: [Facebook](#).

Going Nuts Over Tree Nuts, Wednesday, December 8, 3-4 p.m., online

It's just nuts! Yes, through the holiday season it can get a bit hectic but sit back and relax with University of Illinois Extension's Good Growing team to learn about the wonders of growing nuts in your own back yard. The nuts that will be covered fall into the traditional holiday fare of chestnuts, walnuts, pecans, and hazelnuts. Free, but registration required. Go to:

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=24419>



Wonderful Winter Interest, Wednesday, December 15, 3-4 p.m., online

The winter season can be a dreary time for your landscape. Join University of Illinois Extension's Good Growing team to learn what plants to use to add color, texture, and plant architecture to your winter landscape. Some plants we will be discussing include red and yellow twig Dogwood, winterberry, witch hazel, serviceberry, false cypress, and more! Free, but registration required. Go to:

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/default.cfm?RegistrationID=24351>

New and Emerging Plant Diseases, Wednesday, December 15, 6:30-8 p.m., online via Zoom

Brian Hudelson, Director of Diagnostic Services at the UW-Madison Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, will share information about plant diseases that have recently arrived in Wisconsin and have potential economic and/or regulatory impact. He'll also discuss more established diseases that have the potential to significantly impact the state in the near future. Free, but registration required. Go to this link to sign up: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYpduorjMsGtISxt1EZA12r3LTJ-WoUoo>



**Gardening with Ferns & Mosses, Saturday, January 29, 2022
9-10:30 a.m., online**

Mark Dwyer talks about the wide range of hardy ferns that can add color, texture and form in our gardens. By also utilizing moss as a groundcover in select areas, your shaded spaces will be magically transformed! We'll discuss the best ferns for our area and examine ways of establishing and caring for moss in the garden. Fee: \$25. To register, go to:

<https://www.uww.edu/ce/gardenlandscape/onlineworkshop>

The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees, presented by Wild Ones, any time, online

Drawing from his book, *The Nature of Oaks* (2021), renowned entomologist Dr. Doug Tallamy offers a month-by-month guide to observing and identifying the growth of oak trees and the living creatures that depend upon oaks for food and shelter. Oaks perform

critical ecological functions: they support biodiversity, sequester carbon, stabilize soil, produce high-quality persistent leaf litter, and promote healthy watersheds. In this recorded program, Dr. Tallamy presents facts, shares stories, and unpacks myths about oaks, inspiring people to plant and protect these vital, majestic, and long-lived trees. Find the recording at <https://wildones.org/the-nature-of-oaks-2021/>

Wasps by Heather Holm, presented by Wild Ones, anytime, online

In this recorded webinar, Heather Holm shares from her new book, "WASPS," which features approximately 150 species of flower-visiting wasps that occur in eastern North America, and the specific native plants and habitat each species depend upon. "WASPS" delves into how beneficial wasps are to humans, mainly insect pest population control and pollination. "This complex web of many wasp-prey and wasp-plant interactions helps ensure ecosystems remain resilient, diverse and balanced," Holm writes. "If all wasps were to disappear, it would have a catastrophic effect on several trophic levels of the food web." Find the recording at <https://wildones.org/wild-ones-presents-wasps-2021/>





Recycled Yard Art, Continued

A hose with a hole is no longer useful – but a rubber door mat – that’s a different story.

Hose can't just be repurposed into a doormat. It can be made into a striking floral design.





Turn those old bike wheels into jazzy hardscaping that will spice up your landscape.

Even a bowling ball can be repurposed. Here the shimmering colors of a retired ball have become the focal point of a water fountain.



A combination of a clay saucer, a nice rock, a retired pot, and a large bird bath have created a fountain and bird bath that will attract many feathered guests.



A rusty bucket, a used faucet, a little pipe and a beautiful crystal drop from an old chandelier paired together create a whimsical drop in the bucket.



Metal mixing bowls that have gotten rusty or sprung a leak can be fixed to attractive wooden posts and painted to look like mushroom caps.



A small step ladder and a bunch of old cans with interesting labels can create a useful and lovely herb garden right next to the kitchen door.



Although this stock tank looks fairly new, a weathered one that still holds water but has lost its shine could be turned into a tiny little pond. Even retired bathtubs can be sunk into the ground or built into a stone arrangement where they will provide water for bees, passing ducks, song birds, and other critters.

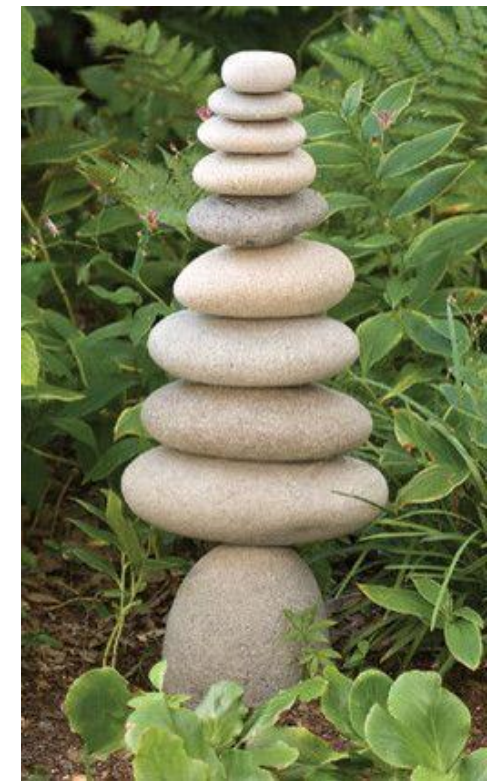
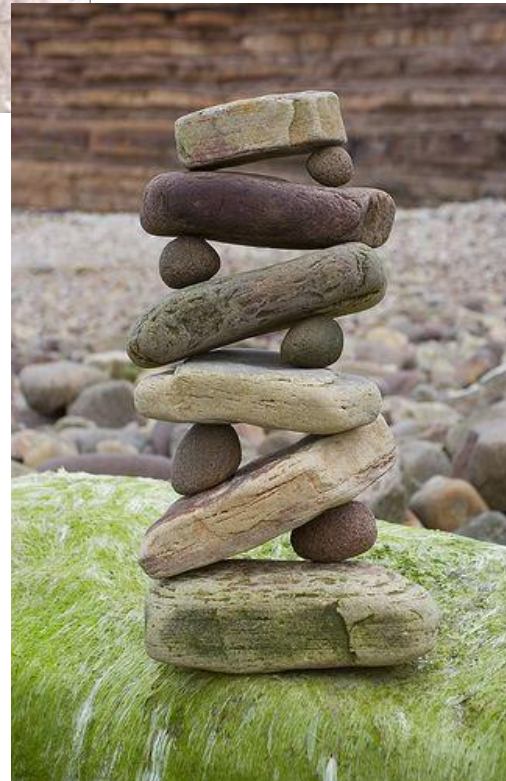
Creating towers of rocks topped with old bird houses could create a striking look to your entryway.





Painting rocks as lady bugs or with whimsical faces can move many of them from your garden or flower beds to point of interest throughout your landscape.

Using your imagination can give you unique statues that can express your artistic talent.





Fallen limbs can be turned into a sculpture.

A packing case can be turned into a trellis.





Spring prunings can be used to create a garden archway, or a trellis.

Paint old picture frames bright colors and fix them to posts so someone passing by will see through them to your blossoms and hopefully regard them as works of art.



The object behind this photo gallery and the projects the pictures suggest is to encourage gardeners to use their imaginations to reuse, recycle and repurpose. The number of things we can do with used or discarded objects is virtually endless.

Instead of going to the store to buy yard art, or hardscaping, look in the trash bin. Repurpose old equipment, tools, cutlery. Use old aluminum pie plates to create wind chimes. Use pieces of an old chandelier to create a sun-catcher over your flower beds. Look for the beauty in an old teapot that you can fill with a trailing vine.

Being a gardener is something of a calling for many of us. It is something we love to do, and want to share with others. Showing others that being responsible members of society who aren't interested in the latest fad, but would rather use what we have to enhance our landscape is something that will carry our message forward and out into the community.

Mary Kay Thompson



Have safe and joyful Holidays!

The **Master Gardener Update** is developed by and distributed online monthly by the Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Incorporated, for master gardener volunteers who consider Rock County, Wisconsin, their "home" county. Current officers of the association include Ruth Flescher, president (yafello2@gail.com); Mary Kay Thompson, vice president (mastergardenermary@gmail.com); Sue Wood, Secretary (woodslibrarymedia@gmail.com) and Deb Grams, treasurer (debgrams@yahoo.com).

Mailing Address: Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, c/o Sue Wood
1616 Holly Drive
Janesville, WI 53546