



# Master Gardener Update

## May 2021

<p><b>In this Issue</b></p> <p>Virtual Visit Riverside International Friendship Gardens</p> <p>RPMGA May 6 Online Meeting Household Hydroponics Virtual Coffee/Tea</p> <p>WI MG Program Citizen Science Volunteer Opportunities</p> <p>Rotary Gardens Spring Plant Sale Tours, Talks and Walks</p> <p>Volunteers Wanted</p> <p>More Training Coming Up in May and Beyond</p>	<p><b>Virtual Visit:</b></p> <p><b>Riverside International Friendship Gardens, Lacrosse, WI</b></p> <p><i>One of the joys of researching area botanical gardens to introduce to you has been finding the hidden gems that we might not otherwise have been aware of. This issue of the newsletter I'm happy to present this charming collection of gardens. –Mary Kay Thompson</i></p> <p>You can find these lovely gardens next to the La Crosse Convention and Visitors Bureau, on Veterans Memorial Drive, in an especially beautiful setting – where the Mississippi, Black and La Crosse rivers converge.</p> <p>The gardens came about as the result of a unique, public/private partnership. Partners are the City of</p> 
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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/

#### 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

La Crosse Parks Department, the Bluff County Master Gardeners and the non-profit Riverside International Friendship Board of Directors.

- The City of La Crosse provides the land, technical resources and park maintenance.
- The Master Gardeners provide design, education and weekly maintenance.
- The International Friendship Garden's board of directors provides direction and fundraising.

There are seven (7) sister gardens. Each has a unique story as to its design and its history.



### China

Two, striking stone dragons greet you at the entrance to the Chinese gardens, celebrating sister-city Luoyang, China. This walled garden echoes the walled noblemen's gardens of ancient China. An intimate space, it symbolizes the whole world represented in one small garden. Design principles of Feng Shui were used to bring

good fortune, while creating a free-flowing movement. Rocks, water, architecture, and unique plant forms are highlighted. Luoyang, an ancient city, is the Peony Capitol of China. Thus, peonies are highlighted here, and are in full show in early June.

*Continues on page 14*

## **RPMGA**

### **Let's Get Together for a Short Meeting Online**

**Thursday, May 6, 5:30 – 6:10 p.m.**

It's been fun meeting with other master gardener volunteers, but it's been a while since the Rock Prairie Master Gardeners Association had a get-together. So let's do that—virtually, of course! Aside from the chance to say hello, we'd like to know how you feel about what we should be doing for programming, a directory, and some structural changes that the MGV program wants us to make before the end of the year. We'll keep it short: we're using the free Zoom platform, so we'll have about 40 minutes or so. We'll schedule another meeting if there's more to talk about. A link to the meeting will be sent via email. Please join us and let us know what you think!

### **Household Hydroponics Talk Will Be Available Soon**

If you missed the hydroponics talk on April 15—or if the information went by too fast for it all to sink in properly--here's good news: We recorded the session. Julie Hill wants to remove some excess minutes at the beginning (we started recording before the talk began), but once it's ready, she'll send out a link to the program. You'll be able to watch at your own time and your own speed.



### **Next MGV Virtual Coffee/Tea Chat**

Join your fellow Rock and Walworth County Master Gardener Volunteers on Tuesday, May 11 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.

### **Did You Know...**

**May 1** is World Naked Gardening Day this year. Time to shock your neighbors?!? Begun in 2005, the event takes place annually on the first Saturday in May.

**May 19** is World Plant a Vegetable Garden Day. A day to plant your own first vegetable garden, or to encourage others to plant theirs.



## Citizen Science Projects: Volunteer Safely



### 1...2...3... WiBee

In your email inbox on May 1, you'll find instructions for a statewide project focused on the health of our native bees and other pollinators. The project is being run by Gratton Labs at the UW-Madison and the MGVP program is encouraging us to participate. Using the smartphone app Gratton Labs developed, they're asking volunteers to take 5 minutes at a time to and count how many pollinators land on the flowers within a 3-square foot area of your choice. If you choose to participate, you can make these observations at your home, an approved project location, or a public green space. You have until October 31 to take a *minimum* of three 5-minute observations. Gratton Labs is also interested in which type of pollinators you see—and they've narrowed the choices to just six, so you won't be overwhelmed. To participate, follow the instructions in the email or go to <https://pollinators.wisc.edu/wibee/> to learn more.

### Get Involved and Help with Jumping Worm Research

Starting in the summer of 2021, the UW-Madison Arboretum will be conducting surveys and holding focus groups to learn about how jumping worms affect native, ornamental, and vegetable plants. The goal is to create a list of plants and/or plant families that are and are not susceptible to negative impacts from jumping worms. We need your input! If you would like to join the study and receive surveys and additional information, please sign-up here: <https://arboretum.wisc.edu/news/arboretum-news/baldwin-seed-project-grant-jumping-worm-outreach/>

For additional Citizen Science projects, check out the UW Arboretum website and the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources.

### Have You Set Up Your UW NetID?

More and more of the Master Gardener Program training coming from the state office is being moved to the online classroom, Canvas. As an MGVP, the UW permits you to have an ID to access the software. The process of setting up a NetID for yourself can be a bit challenging (it took me about 5 tries), and there's the usual lengthy requirements and disclosures to read, but persevere! Once you have it set up, Canvas is easy to access. That's where you'll find the Onboarding Lite training, weekly Wisconsin Horticulture Updates, and more.





# Rotary Gardens Plant Sale This Weekend!

## 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

**If you ordered online**, don't forget to pick up your order during the plant sale hours above.

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

## Garden Volunteers Needed Too!

At this time, Rotary is asking for just 10 volunteers per day to make sure everyone can keep safe social distancing, but volunteers are really needed! Non-contact gardening at Rotary IS fully approved for MGCV volunteer hours. 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](mailto:michael.jesiolowski@rotarygardens.org).

## Tours, Talks and Walks: May Education Events at Rotary Botanical Gardens

### Botanic Talk: Phenology and Degree Days, Wednesday, May 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m. online

Learn about the science of phenology; the study of biological events and how they are related to the development of insects. Phenology can be used to predict the timing of the development of pests like squash bug and Japanese beetles, which helps to stay ahead of them. Aldo Leopold tracked phenological events at 'The Shack' for many years, as did his daughter Nina, and these data are being used today to track differences in timing of events caused by climate change. Presented by Lisa Johnson, Horticulture Educator for UW Division of Extension for Dane County. Lisa has a bachelor's degree in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a master's degree in Life Sciences Communication. Prior to that she spent 8 years working in the horticulture industry.

Fee: \$7/members, \$10/general public. Registration Deadline: May 10

Register online, by phone (608- 752-3885) or at the Gardens. A Zoom Link will be sent prior to the talk.

### What's In Bloom Tour, Wednesday, May 19, 6-7 p.m., live at Rotary Gardens

This monthly tour series runs from May through September and features RBG Director of Horticulture, Michael Jesiolowski. Mike will guide participants around the gardens and describe what is in bloom.

Limited to 20 people, so registration is required. Fee: \$0 for RBG members, \$10 non-members.

Register online, by phone (608- 752-3885) or at the Gardens.

### Wild Edible and Poisonous Plants Hike, Saturday, June 5, 10 a.m. to noon, live at Rotary Gardens

Naturalist Dave Bendlin will lead participants in a walk around the gardens and nearby woodland trails to observe and identify a variety of common wild edible—and inedible!—plants.

Fee: \$7/members, \$10 general public. **Participation is limited to 15 people.** The registration deadline is June 4, but this class is likely to fill early. Don't wait! Register online, by phone (608- 752-3885) or at the Gardens.

Meet at Rotary Botanical Gardens.





## Volunteers Wanted

*Each of these requests are for Covid-approved locations, per Julie Hill. Before volunteering anywhere as an MGV, 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](mailto:julie.hill@wisc.edu)).*

### Edgerton Hospital Healing Garden

Mark Dwyer is working with the Edgerton Hospital to help upgrade and maintain its Healing Garden. He's looking for volunteers to help. Mark has scheduled work Fridays (9 am - 12 noon) on 4/30, 5/21 and 5/28. Mark also says, "I'm there weekdays between 9 am - 1 pm and am glad to guide, encourage, coach, prod and cajole volunteers..." (which probably means he'd be glad of help on any morning.) This is a great opportunity to not only get some approved volunteer hours, but to work directly with a leading horticulturalist. Interested? RSVP directly to Mark via email at [mcdwyer@zoho.com](mailto:mcdwyer@zoho.com). He will then send more details about COVID precautions, tools and the form required by the hospital.



### 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](mailto:deupreen@charter.net)

## More Training Coming Up in May and Beyond

*Looking for Level 2 MGV training--The Plants Plus modules? If you don't find them under the "Learn" tab at [wimastergardener.org](http://wimastergardener.org), look in the online classroom software, Canvas, which you access with your UW NetID.*

### **WI Horticulture Updates, 9:30-10:30 a.m., May 7, 14 and 21, online** (no program on the 28<sup>th</sup>)

The Extension Horticulture Update is a great continuing education opportunity for you to learn more about the emerging pests and problems that occur in our gardens and landscapes across the state. Each week will count as 1 hour of continuing education. Sign into Canvas using your UW NetID for information on the week's topics and speakers, plus connection links. Or go to <https://docs.google.com/document/d/11hrlJi9hsJBWSIOSWjR4aqU2VFRE-Fy4pvlxKD4CyXk/view>

### **Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison, WI**

All Classes are on-line unless otherwise noted. For more info, copy and paste this address: <http://www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm>

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

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

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

May 13, Common Landscape Mistakes, in person at Olbrich Gardens, 6:30-8 p.m., \$12/\$15 Register by May 3

May 20, Orchids for Beginners, 6-8 p.m., \$12/\$15 Register by May 10

May 25, Perennial Perennials, in person at Olbrich Gardens, 6:30-8 p.m., \$16/\$20 Register by May 16

May 27, Answering the Call—Gardening for a Better Life, 7-8:30 p.m. \$12/\$15 Register by May 26





## **UW Family Garden Days, throughout May, online**

Instead of the in-person Family Gardening Day hosted by Allen Centennial Garden, this year's event will be online and will last the entire month! The programs tap the expertise of various groups at the UW including Allen Centennial Garden, the Arboretum, Extension, the DC Smith Greenhouse, the Botany Garden and Greenhouses, the UW Libraries, and more. They're sharing gardening resources, from do-at-home activities to videos to live presentations. No fee for any of the events. Check out their facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/uwfamilygardeningday>

## **Green Thumb Gardening Classes, Dane County UW Extension, Mondays, 6-8 p.m., online**

May 3: Insects in the Garden

May 10: Fruit Tree Care

Diseases in the Garden: Part 1 and 2

📅 May 24: Part 1- Fundamentals of Plant Diseases

📅 May 26: Part 2 – Growing Healthy Plants: Basics In Plant Disease Management (26th)

Fee is \$12/class or \$50 for the entire series (including 2 dates in June). For more information and to register, go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-green-thumb-gardening-late-spring-series-online-talks-tickets-126334240113>



## **Raised Bed and Container Vegetable Gardening, Thursday, May 6, 6-7:30 p.m., online**

Raised beds and containers have become increasingly popular in the last couple of years. Both can work well for growing almost all vegetables with some troubleshooting while also producing vegetables for you if you do not have the space. This class will go into the basics of creating a raised bed, selecting material, and general management. Container vegetable gardening will further be addressed and revisited from last year's Get Growing webinar to include suggestions of varieties that work well in containers, selecting the right size, and weekly management. No fee, but donations welcome. To register, go to this address and click on the orange registration button:

<https://extension.illinois.edu/events/2021-04-22-get-growing-webinar-series-growing-perennial-vegetables-rhubarb-asparagus>



### **Wildflower Walk with Dave Bendlin, Sunday, May 9, 10 a.m. – noon, live at Welty Environmental Center**

For nature lovers, there's no better way to celebrate the arrival of spring than a hike in the forest to observe blooms of spring wildflowers. On this walk, we'll look for the blooms of Dutchman's breeches, hepaticas, violets, spring beauty, wild ginger, and anemones. Depending on the yearly variation in bloom times, there may also be columbine, blue wood phlox, trilliums, and jack in the pulpit. Big Hill Park is the perfect place for this type of hike, because it contains one of the best wildflower displays in Rock County. This is an active program that will require walking on various terrains throughout Big Hill Park. Free but registration required: [https://weltycenter.org/event/mothers-day-wild-flower-walk-5-9-21/?instance\\_id=3390](https://weltycenter.org/event/mothers-day-wild-flower-walk-5-9-21/?instance_id=3390)

### **Mini Meadows, Monday, May 10, 6-8 p.m., online**

The word "meadow" conjures images of wide expanses of land, but a mini meadow — a kind of informal flower garden started with seed sown directly into the soil — can be any size; plus, it's fun, easy to grow, and good for the planet. Mike Lizotte, owner of American Meadows, talks about choosing the right variety of seeds, preparing the soil, sowing evenly, and watering well. You'll learn how to create a miniature meadow that suits your climate, soil, and growing goals, whether planting to beautify a hellstrip, halt erosion, fill a boggy spot, or establish a nesting area for bees and butterflies. The webinar will include a Q & A at the end. Free, but registration required: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YLLtMQAHQHdSxhnF8vpQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YLLtMQAHQHdSxhnF8vpQ) or wait a week and view on Klehm Arboretum's YouTube channel.



### **Green Screens, Fences and Borders, Tuesday, May 11, 1:30-2:30 p.m., online**

The home landscape can be thought of as an extension of our living space and much like the rooms in our homes we can use plants as structural elements in the landscape. If you've visited an arboretum or botanical garden you've likely seen walls created with different plant species such as evergreens and perennial shrubs. Explore these design elements, some good species for creating screening, and design considerations for creating a green fence or screen successfully. Presenter: University of Illinois Horticulture Educator Austin Little. No fee, but registration is required: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23271>



### **Shade Gardens: Native Plants and Ecological Benefits, Thursday, May 13, 1 p.m., online**

You may have heard about the benefits of planting native plants in your home landscape – but what about in that shady spot in your yard? Are there native plants well suited to a shade garden? Join Energy and Environmental Stewardship Extension Educator Erin Garrett to learn the ecological benefits of planting natives underneath trees and to explore your options when it comes to choosing shade tolerant native plants. Learn what steps to take to replace your existing vegetation with natives that are both aesthetically appealing and help support wildlife food webs. No fee, but registration required. Go to: <https://extension.illinois.edu/global/everyday-environment-webinar-series> Click on the program title to register.

### **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.



### **Weed Management in the Vegetable Garden, Thursday, May 13, 6-7:30 p.m., online**

After planting of the spring and summer vegetables, weeds are notorious for moving in. You may have selected an area that already has an established weed problem and are wondering how you need to go about removing them. This class will look at some basic recommendations on weed management, IDing some very common weeds you might be encountering, and preparing your growing area to keep weeds from becoming a problem. No fee, but donations welcome. Registration required: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23416>



**Mike Heim**  
**Unusual Hardy Plants**  
 For Open Sites

MAY 13, 2021  
 6:30PM

Mike Heim has created an incredible plant ark deep in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Bamboo, cacti, rhododendrons, magnolias, and exotic ferns are some of the plants which greet visitors. Mike also teaches natural sciences at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College and guides public field trips through their Extension Program. Mike would like to see people push the limits of what is commonly thought possible to grow in an area. He himself has a serious case of zone denial.



**FREE and open to the public**  
 Register in advance  
<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/2srjkiHdEOCzgSLkGi3P0vFNQRHiUX>

**Extension**  
 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
 BAYFIELD COUNTY

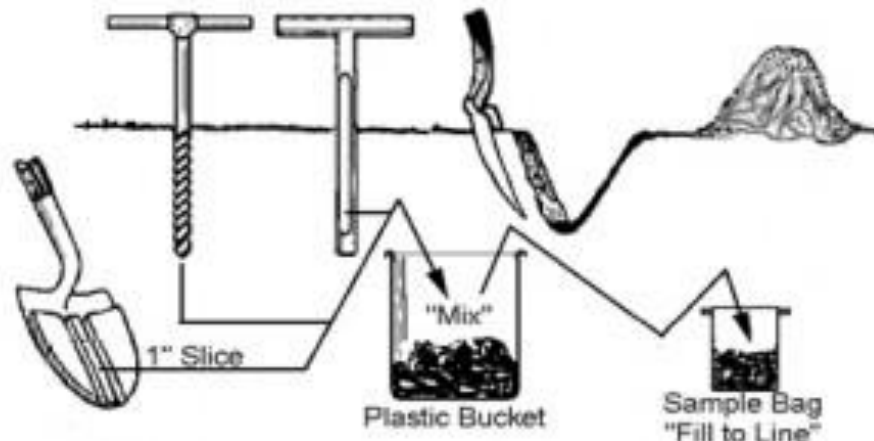
**MASTER GARDENER**  
 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
 BAYFIELD COUNTY

## Unusual Hardy Plants Thursday, May 13, 6:30 – 8:30pm, online

Mike Heim has created an incredible plant ark deep in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Bamboo, cacti, rhododendrons, magnolias, and exotic ferns are some of the plants which greet visitors. Mike also teaches natural sciences at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College and guides public field trips through their Extension Program. Mike would like to see people push the limits of what is commonly thought possible to grow in an area. He himself has a serious case of zone denial. Free program, online via Zoom. Register at <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJld-2srjkiHdEOCzgSLkGi3P0vFNQRHiUX>

## Bumblebee Nests, Saturday, May 15, 9-9:45 a.m. (live at the garden) or 10:30-11:15 a.m. (online via Zoom), Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens, Rockford

Whether you're growing flowers or vegetables, bumblebees are an essential component of any home garden. Learn about the lives of these gentle pollinators and how you can attract them to your yard. Then, build your very own nesting box so you can encourage the bumblebees to stay! Includes admission to Nicholas Conservatory butterfly exhibit after class. Live Class fee: \$10/nest kit + \$4/person. Online class fee: \$10/nest kit to pick up May 12-14. Register at <https://secure.rockfordparkdistrict.org/wbws/webtrac.wsc/search.html?module=TP&fmid=151248786>



### **Testing, Amending, and Managing Gardens for Soil Health, Tuesday, May 18, 6 – 7 p.m., online**

Join Dr. Doug Soldat to learn how you can create and maintain healthy soil in your landscape and gardens. You will learn how to conduct a soil test and interpret the results. We will also discuss various amendments to improve your soils for greater gardening success! Doug Soldat is a turfgrass and urban soil specialist in the Department of Soil Science at UW-Madison where he teaches General Soil Science and other classes on soils and turfgrass management. Doug grew up in Janesville, WI and completed his undergraduate and MS degrees at UW-Madison before earning a Ph.D. at Cornell University in upstate New York. This event is free, but registration is required: [https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3fwPAYnRWlalspM](https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3fwPAYnRWlalspM)

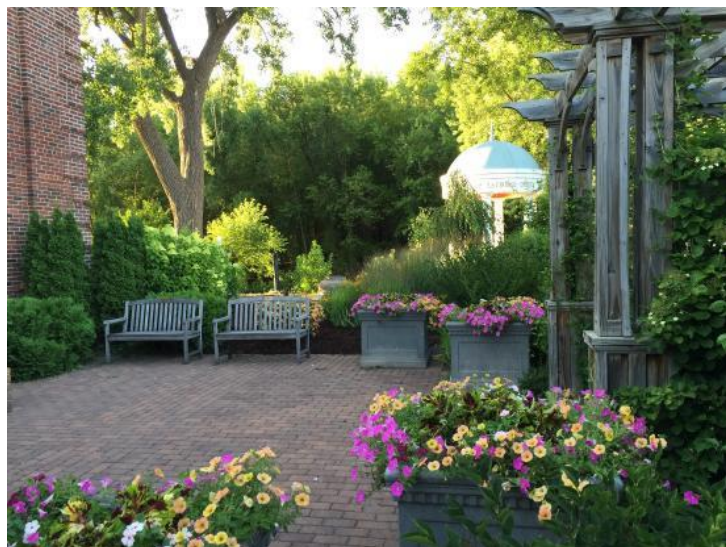
### **The Buzz About Mosquitoes, Monday, May 24, noon to 1 p.m., online**

PJ Leisch, head of the UW's Insect Diagnostic Lab (also known as WI Bug Guy), talks about mosquitos, the threats they pose and how to deal with them in your home environment. Watch your email for a chance to register for this program.

### **How Do Pesticides Affect Pollinators and Songbirds in Your Yard? Tuesday, June 1, Noon – 1:00 p.m., online**

Lynn Markham is a Shoreland and Land Use Specialist for the UW-Madison, Division of Extension. She works out of the Center for Land Use Education at the UW-Stevens Point. Some of her work focuses on sustainable communities, and her recent projects include developing resources for reducing pesticides in your food and drinking water. In this instance, she's focusing on the direct impact of pesticides on the wildlife in your yard. Watch your email for a chance to register for this program.

## Riverside International Friendship Gardens, *continued*



### France

A city of flowers located along the Moselle River, Epinal is the inspiration for this garden. Epinal and La Crosse celebrated 30 years of sister-city status in 2016. This garden features formal design. There is a pavilion looking over a rose garden, plus a knot garden – featuring closely cropped hedges in a geometric pattern, and a parterre – a patterned garden. Topiary – shaped trees, line the walk. Enjoy the statue of Le Pinau – the boy with a thorn in his foot – atop the granite fountain. This statue is a miniature replica of a famous statue in Epinal. You can see a larger replica of this statue on the fountain that runs alongside the Radisson Hotel in La Crosse. Hydrangeas and a daylily collection are featured, as well as roses imported from Epinal.

### Germany

Friedberg, Germany is the sister city that inspired this garden. Summer gardens in southern Germany are filled with hydrangeas, roses and fruiting shrubs, similar to Wisconsin. The rock garden on the hill simulates a dry mountain slope, featuring tough, short plants and dwarf conifers. The wooden pergola supports a climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala*) that bursts into white blooms in late May and June. Walk through the pergola to the Gemeutlichkeitplatz, or friendship square, which features a fountain and a nearly six-foot-high sculpture of a pocket watch by German artist Wolfgang Auer. This artwork commemorates Friedberg's history as a watchmaking center, and was a gift from La Crosse's German sister city. This "outdoor room" is a great place to sit and relax. Look for the garden's "dedication tree" a Blue Beech (*Carpinus carolina*) to the right of the Arbor's entrance. "Karl Foerster" grass and *Sedum matrona* are other German-bred plants here.







## Ireland

Take a seat in the riverside amphitheater! Sister-city Bantry, Ireland is located on the southwestern corner of Ireland, looking out on an important deep-water port to the Atlantic Ocean. This amphitheater looks west to the Mississippi River, the Black River, and the La Crosse River. The anchor is reminiscent of a much larger anchor in Bantry, recovered from the French Armada of 1796. The mill wheel is a replica of a larger wheel in Bantry. The Celtic cross pattern appears in the center of the walkway and is an important symbol of Ireland. Trees to note are the horse chestnut, featuring white flowers in spring followed by fruit covering a brown nut, an aspen grove and the many evergreen shrubs: yews,

arborvitae, and pine. The “mini twist” is an unusual and fun white pine! This garden features plants that suggest the green of Ireland: hydrangeas, hostas, ferns, mosses, wildflowers, sedges (a grasslike plant), St. John’s Wort, and Spanish Bluebells.

## Norway

One of the most spectacular waterfalls near sister-city Forde is called “Huldefossen,” named for the legend of the beautiful woman who lived in the mountain and would entice men into the forest. Look carefully, and you might be able to spot Hulde’s face behind the cascading water of the small waterfall. Various nisse – trolls – can be spotted here and there. Plants you might find on a typical farm in Norway are also here: rhubarb, strawberries, blueberries. Enter the garden through the beautiful “torvtak,” reminiscent of the many sod-roofed structures found throughout Norway. Hardy shrub roses include University of Minnesota introduced types: Ole, Lena, Sven & Sigrud. Complementing those are a notable Norwegian cultivar of spirea, “Grefsheim.” The national flower of Norway (*Digitalis*, or foxglove) adds a splash of color. Pine, Norway spruce (pyramidal, dwarf and weeping), juniper and groupings of birch trees add to the forest.







## Russia

Russian gardens are often informal and casual, with the goal of creating a naturalized setting. Trees appear in groves, as they do here. The lovely structure along the La Crosse River is called besedka, modeled after a beautiful structure placed along the Volga River in Dubna. This besedka is dedicated to all the volunteers who contributed to this sister-city relationship. Dubna is a northern city, and the garden features a variety of plants hardy in the north country.



## Cameroon

This garden honors the Sister City relationship between La Crosse, Wisconsin and Kumbo, Cameroon. The Cameroon Garden honors the rich cultural traditions of Cameroon and provides a gathering place. It features colors found in the Cameroon flag, and artwork specially crafted to honor Cameroon's culture and history. The garden was dedicated at a colorful ceremony in 2019, and is still developing. A plant list is not yet available on the website, but a number of familiar plants can be seen: bright red cosmos, dark maroon coleus, stately cannas, begonias, elephant ears and many others. Much of the garden's hardscaping is crafted to reflect the culture of Cameroon. Two stunning metal palms trees give shade to the garden, raised beds show what the people of Cameroon are likely to use to grow vegetables. Four brightly painted rain barrels echo fabric patterns found in







their native dress (see vegetable beds and rain barrels at right and top center of photo at left). Much of the artwork and hardscaping in the garden is based on Cameroon cultural mores, stories and legends. The focus of this unique garden is to become a sculpture garden filled with brightly colored plants and to promote an understanding of Cameroon culture and history.

### **If You Go**

Riverside International Friendship Gardens is located in Riverside Park, at 345-405 E. Veterans Memorial Dr., La Crosse, WI. (Mailing address: Riverside International Friendship Gardens, Inc., PO Box 3473, La Crosse, WI 54602-3473). The Gardens are easy to get to, wheelchair accessible, and have parking immediately adjacent. Tours are usually available from May through September by appointment only, but have been temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Permits for special events, weddings, etc.

are handled by La Crosse Park & Rec Dept., 608-789-7533 or by email: [info@riversidegardens.org](mailto:info@riversidegardens.org).

Riverside Park hours: 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily

[www.riversidegardens.org](http://www.riversidegardens.org) (lots more info on the gardens)

[www.facebook.com/RiversideInternationalFriendshipGardens/](https://www.facebook.com/RiversideInternationalFriendshipGardens/) (lots more gorgeous photos on their Facebook page)

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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