

Master Gardener Update

November 2021

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Master Gardeners and Recycling Single Use Plastics

According to Country Living author, Natalie Cornish, in an article published on November, 19, 2018 (just three short years ago), literally millions of plant pots and flats (non-biodegradable) end up in the landfill every planting season, contributing to a problem that is rapidly rampaging out of control – single use plastic pollution.

As master gardeners, this fact should be a call to action – recycling those single use containers by proper disposal into raw materials from which new items can be made should be a goal. Actually, recycling all our gardening waste should be a goal. Bags of compost and potting soil are plastic. Containers of fertilizer are plastic. The bags we bring garden amendments home in are plastic. Buckets are plastic. Jugs are plastic. Hoses are plastic. Garden carts are plastic. And when we



<p>Websites</p> <p>MGV Hours Reporting: mastergardener. extension.wisc.edu/ report-your-hours/</p> <p>Canvas UW Online Classroom: https://canvas.wisc.edu/</p> <p>RPMGA Blog: rpmga.blogspot.com</p> <p>RPMGA on Facebook: Hit control/click on this link: RPMGA on Facebook</p> <p>Rotary Gardens: rotarybotanicalgardens.org</p> <p>Wisconsin Master Gardener Program: mastergardener. extension.wisc.edu</p> <p>Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA): wimga.org</p>	<p>dispose of any one of these things, if we don't do it carefully and thoughtfully, we become part of the problem that is filling our landfills with materials that do not degrade. A hundred years from now a pot that your tomato set came in when you bought it in 2021, except for perhaps a bit of crushing, will be essentially the same as it was when it was dumped into the landfill. It had one duty. To be a receptacle for a tomato plant. Once. A hundred years ago.</p> <p>But there is hope. Our sisters and brothers all over the country are working to eliminate plastic pollution from their own little corner of the landscape. What follows are a few of these efforts.</p> <p>Washington State Washington State has combined two different areas of resource management by instituting a Master Composter/Recycler program. These individuals are stewards of energy transformation who educate the community about recycling local resources, building soil, and growing food. As volunteers, they are trained by and work in partnership with WSU Whatcom County Extension.</p> <p>The Master Composter/Recyclers work in classrooms, in community gardens, and at special events to demonstrate sustainable approaches towards resource management using research-based composting and recycling education. Local partners include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Washington State University Master Gardener Program – Toward Zero Waste – Bellingham Food Bank – Community Gardens <p>California UC Marin County Master Gardeners work to encourage practical hardscaping maintenance through their mission - Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose. According to their tenets, hardscape is an aspect of the garden that gives master gardeners the license to use reactivity and support sustainability at the same time.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continues on page 12</i></p>
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RPMGA Notes

Welcome the New Kids: Online Open House with Prospective MGVs Monday, Nov. 8, noon OR Thursday, November 11, 4 p.m.

Current MGVs are invited to log into one or both open houses designed to help those taking Foundations in Horticulture training right now decide if they want to go on to become MGVs--and what kinds of projects they might want to become involved in! Your input about what you do, who you do it for, what you like about it (and how much fun it is) would really help them.



The format of the Open House is that Julie Hill will go through some of the logistics new volunteers need to know (i.e. what happens after FIH, Onboarding, who to contact, etc.), and then start an open discussion and Q&A time. If you would like to be an ambassador for the program or try to recruit some new helpers, you will have a few minutes to do so (Julie will call on you or it will be open sharing time). The goal is to have informal but informative conversations with incoming volunteers. You'll find links to the two Zoom sessions in an email from Julie Hill dated October 25.

RPMGA/WIMGA Renewal Time Is Coming Up

Watch your mailbox later this month for information about renewing your membership in the Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Inc. and the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA). We're switching to a calendar year membership to match the master gardener certification year. We should see a letter in your mailbox sometime late this month.

Annual Potluck Deferred Due to Covid

At this time of year we'd usually be announcing the date and time of our annual potluck and general membership meeting. But Covid strikes again. With even more transmissible strains and breakthrough infections of people who are fully vaccinated, we decided it would be best to put off any in-person, indoor meetings that require removal of masks. Stay safe and healthy, everyone!

Thank you to everyone for the support, kind words, hugs, cards and generous donations during my family's recent loss of my son, Scott. It has been a very difficult time for us, but it helps to know so many people care. Thanks again,

Deb Grams and family



Statewide MGV Program Notes

Big Changes for 2022--Video Coming Soon!

On October 11, the MGV program sent an email detailing changes for the future that should make it easier and less burdensome to volunteer on garden-related projects that are important to you. They've scrapped the pre-approval process for most projects, and switched from the need to meet most requirements set by the MGV program to meeting the requirements of the organizations you're volunteering for. No more criminal background check or mandatory reporter training unless your organization requires them. And there's a more forgiving approach to dealing with those times when something prevents you from getting your full quota of volunteer or education hours for the following year's recertification. Local associations will have more leeway as well. The hope is that this increased flexibility will also mean stronger community connections overall for Extension. Changes go into effect January 1.

Big changes mean big questions, of course. We were invited to submit questions about what will be different and what will stay the same to the state office. They're producing a virtual program/video to answer as many of those questions as they can. They expect to get it to us in the first half of this month.

December 31 ORS Deadline Is Approaching: To recertify as an MGV for 2022, you're asked to log a minimum of 10 continuing education hours in the Online Reporting System by the end of the year. Please log whatever volunteer hours you have for the year by December 31 as well. Then plan to confirm your intention to be an MGV for 2022 by completing the sign-up process online by March 31. Note: 24 hours of volunteer time will once again be requested for 2022, along with 10 continuing education hours.

Advanced Training Course Coming in 2022: *Plant Diagnostics-The Step by Step Approach to Identifying Plant Problems* is the title of the newest in-depth MGV training course. You'll be able to complete the course entirely on your own schedule—no specific dates or times are scheduled. Sign-up instructions, starting date, CEUs, and fee information for the class will be released soon. (Note: If you just want a quick refresher, a short class on the same topic is already available in Canvas: Extension's online classroom software—see the web access information in the sidebar box on page 2, above.)



Saturday, November 6, Online Only, 9:00 a.m. -12:45 p.m.

Hurry! **November 1** is the deadline for you to sign up for Rotary Botanical Gardens' Fall Symposium online. Topics and speakers for this Fall's symposium include:

- Flowering Shrubs for All Seasons; David Stevens, Curator of Longenecker Horticultural Gardens at the UW Arboretum
- More Than Turf; Kelly D. Norris, author and plantsman
- Have Plants, Will Travel; Michael Jesiolowski, Rotary Botanical Gardens Director of Horticulture

\$36 for RBG members or \$45 for non-members. Zoom links for the Virtual Symposium will be sent out Friday, Nov. 5.

For more details on the topics, go to <https://rotarybotanicalgardens.org/education/symposia/> Please call (608) 752-3885 to register over the phone with a credit card.

25th Holiday Light Show Begins This Month—Volunteers Needed!

Though it doesn't count for MGV volunteer hours, helping out at the Holiday Light Show is a wonderful way to support Rotary Gardens. It takes 18 volunteers per night to run this event, with 25 nights on the schedule. The members-only preview is Tuesday, November 23. The show opens to the general public on Friday, November 26. If you can spare an evening, or several, please go to <https://signup.com/go/zCDsinf> to sign up.

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.

Holiday in the Tropics, Olbrich Botanical Gardens (Madison) Olbrich's Bolz Conservatory will be made festive for the holidays this year. The show begins Nov. 20, and continues through December 28, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily (closed Dec. 25). Entry: \$6 nonmembers/Free for members and children under 5.



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.

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.

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 November 19, 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.

Nature Walk or Hike, UW Arboretum (Madison) Take a nature walk or hike during the day or even at 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.

November 2 - Gardens of England
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 November and Beyond

Looking for Level 2 MGV 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!

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/>

Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison, WI

Classes are in person at the Gardens unless otherwise noted. Fees listed are for Olbrich Members/General Public. For more info, copy and paste this address: <http://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

November 6, Let’s Be Salt Wise, 1-2:30 p.m., \$7/\$9. Registration deadline: October 27.

November 9, Landscape Your Way to a Dry Basement, 6:30-8 p.m., \$12/\$15. Registration deadline: October 31.

Registration is now open for these classes. If a class is shown as “filled,” see if you can get on a waiting list. Cancellations do occur.

November 16, Color, Texture, Shape, and Form (in Plant Names), 6-7 p.m., \$12/\$15, *online*. Registration deadline: November 11.

November 23, People and Places (in Plant Names), 6-7 p.m., \$12/\$15, *online*. Registration deadline: November 18.

Palmatum, Jackmani, Atropurpureum, Canadensis, Palustrus

Community Gardens: How to Plan for Success, Wednesday, November 3, Noon – 1 p.m., online

Are you or your organization starting or maintaining a community garden (such as gardens for school, youth, food pantries, rental plots, etc.)? Join us for this free online webinar to learn how you should plan for your community garden before a shovel hits the dirt. In this webinar we will:

- Provide a planning checklist for you to use to successfully set up and sustain your community garden.
- Examine the environmental impact of your garden's rules and guidelines.
- Discuss potential challenges that your community garden may face.
- Share additional resources to help you and your community garden.

Presented by Ann Weid, Community Development Outreach Specialist from Extension in Waukesha County and Julie Hill, Horticulture Outreach Specialist, from Extension in Rock and Walworth Counties. Free, but registration is required. To sign up, go to <https://go.wisc.edu/5s1689>



Gardening with Native Plants, Tuesday, November 9, 6:30-7:15 p.m., online

The Arboretum's Senior Outreach Specialist (and native gardening expert) Susan Carpenter will discuss how native plants are the basis of sustainable, diverse, and beautiful gardens supporting pollinators, beneficial insects, and wildlife. These gardens thrive without fertilizers, pesticides, mowing, or supplemental watering. We will share garden examples, plant sources, and practical tips for garden care. Free. No advance registration required. To attend, go to this site <https://today.wisc.edu/events/view/162900> and click on the blue "online" listed for the location. The link will take you to the meeting on Zoom.

Plant Sciences Symposium: Planting Connections, Friday, November 12, 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. in person or online

This symposium by the UW's Plant Sciences Graduate Student Council will explore the impacts, interconnections, and innovations of plants and society. Join us for talks from five accomplished and dynamic scientists, as well as student lightning talks and a poster session. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we will offer both in-person and online (Zoom) participation. Live event is in Madison at the [Wisconsin Institute for Discovery](#). Sessions are free, Registration deadline is November 9. For more info, go to <https://psgsc.wisc.edu/symposium/> To sign up, go to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfahiWF4PIXnAy94qe9WPO7iwAZNmk_WX2Yd0MHxLuif-1E9w/viewform



The Self-Perpetuating Landscape: Setting a Process in Motion, Tuesday, November 16th, 6:00 p.m., online

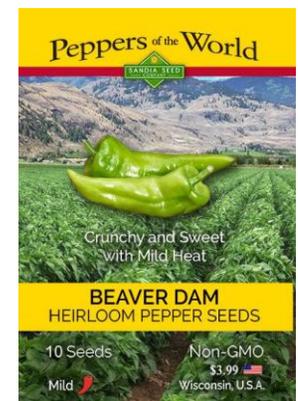
Learn principles and protocols for creating dynamic, ecologically rich landscapes where nature does much of the “planting.” Larry Weaner, FALPD, is the president and founder of Larry Weaner Landscape Associates and founder of New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL). This webinar is free and open to the public, but it will NOT be recorded. It will only be available live on the 16th. Free, but registration required: <https://wildones.org/self-perpetuating-landscape-registration/>

Anderson Japanese Garden: A Year in Review, Thursday, November 18, 7 p.m.

The garden’s curator and Head of Horticulture, Tim Gruner, will look back at the many factors that influenced the garden over the last 12 months. He will share the routine and not so routine, from winter to fall, weather patterns and special projects—they all have an impact on the garden. Gruner joined Anderson Japanese Gardens in 1989 and worked his way up to Curator. He oversees all construction and horticulture activities within the gardens. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the North American Japanese Garden Association. Free, but registration required: <https://52957.blackbaudhosting.com/52957/tickets?tab=2&txobjid=6101b227-a577-422d-9005-ee301a2ba593>

**Heirloom Biographies, Monday, November 22, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., online via Zoom
OR Monday, November 29, 11:00 a.m. to noon, online via Zoom**

In this interactive online program, we will hear the backstory of some of our favorite heirloom varieties, including a local favorite, the Beaver Dam pepper. After learning the cultural and economic significance these plants have served historically, we'll discuss the differences between the terms heirloom, hybrid, open pollinated and GMO. Presenter: Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator Extension Marathon County. The program is free, but registration is required by noon the day before the program. Questions? Please email janell.wehr@wisc.edu
Registration link for November 22, 6:30 p.m. class: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdz72DgyydTn-qjLwyFCREFvPDBeqktKSwKcIMuQP_xfeCVA-Q/viewform
Registration link for November 29, 11 a.m. class: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfn72Y0MYELcdkYI5T35oblWWhm3MAjD9pcvBfRRgdFQbbPQA/viewform>





Tree Root Collar Disorders, Tuesday, November 30, 1:30-2:30 p.m., online via Zoom

A root collar is an important area of a tree where root tissue shifts to trunk tissue. Impacts to this part of the tree can have a variety of symptoms from yellow foliage and early fall color to dieback in the upper canopy, and even tree death. Horticulture Educator Ryan Pankau will explore how to prevent, identify, and treat common tree root collar disorders. Free, but registration is required. Go to <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23882>

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 favorite 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_bX0zfubmdwGhNHT1Q-zTzvpzsRUA/viewform

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

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdB12UCvySZ6NWzkuYZeCYbB7kz-bWjHO6MDxj0l6hqjK8lFQ/viewform>



Master Gardeners and Single Use Plastic Recycling, continued

They pledge to search for nontoxic, sustainable products to build the backbone of their garden. They ask members to survey their gardens and look for recycling opportunities. This is only the beginning of the intensive pursuit of their message. Their many areas of focus are too lengthy to show here. To learn more visit them at: [UC Marin County Master Gardeners](http://UCMarinCountyMasterGardeners.com).

Florida

In Pompano Beach, there is a manufacturing company that (in part) uses recycled plant pots and flats as the raw material used to make their products. Terracast produces decorative light posts, all shapes and sizes of plant pots, picnic tables, bicycle racks, benches and dozens of other items. To learn more about the company visit their website at: <https://www.terracastproducts.com/>

Colorado

Jefferson County master gardener Nancy Shepherd wanted to make a difference by finding a place where her fellow MGVs could safely recycle their spring pots and flats. She had thought it would just be a case of finding a drop-off location, but it turned out to be much more complicated than that.

She explains, "In researching this topic, I had



hoped to find a conclusive answer, but the recycling industry is much more complex than I thought. I used to think I could throw them in with my regular recycling routine but I found out that many recyclers don't want these pots." Her research led her to an unlikely ally – the big box giant, Lowe's, but she couldn't nail down what they did with the pots. She continued to research and eventually found out that Home Depot (who knew?) has a fully-fledged recycling program. (See previous page.)

Virginia

In Newport News, Virginia, Master Gardeners collect, save and recycle flexible plastic of all types to keep thousands of pounds of waste out of landfills and to reuse all kinds as a part of a program created by the TREX Company, Inc. The goal of the company's program is to provide recycled materials for the creation of environmentally responsible outdoor products.

NN volunteers collect, weigh and report collection totals throughout each month. By dropping the collected plastic at a participating store, the organization has qualified for benches that have been donated and/or placed at various locations throughout the city. Each bench represents 500 lbs. or 37,500 plastic bags that have been collected and saved (and therefore kept out of the landfill) by their members.

Not only do the NN master gardeners recycle spring pots, they recycle through the TREX program all year round. Visit TREX for the details. <https://recycle.trex.com/view/educate>



NOTE: The TREX program recycles what is called flexible plastic – much of it plastic bags. When I began research for this article I started separating out all my flex and soon had filled a kitchen trash bin. I called John's in Whitewater – the place where all of Janesville's waste goes, to ask what happens to it. I was told flexible plastic is not recycled because there isn't an effective method to do so. Apparently they haven't heard about TREX.

Michigan

The Macomb County Master Gardener Association is located in Genesee County where there is a voluntary program called Beyond the Bin. On Feb. 8, 2020, the association took to the Internet with a blog post on Facebook where they encouraged members and residents to become involved in Beyond the Bin.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX THINK BEYOND THE BIN



Legislative Actions

Some states are enacting laws banning single use plastics, which does give a glimmer of hope that we can come back from the precipice. Washington state Governor Jay Inslee enacted a ban on all single use plastic bags in the state as of October 1 of this year. Before he enacted this piece of legislation seven other states did the same. California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon and Vermont have also banned single-use plastic bags. Some cities have banned single use plastics as well. Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle have banned plastic bags outright. Cities with plastic bag bans and fees include Boulder, CO; Montgomery County, MD; New York; Portland, ME and Washington, D.C.

And then there is legislation mandating recycling. In 1991, Maine became the first state to enact legislation requiring recycling efforts at

retail stores. The law prevents retailers from supplying plastic bags unless they provide a convenient storefront receptacle where used bags are collected for recycle. Since then, California, Delaware, New York, Rhode Island and the District of Columbia have done the same. In 2019 there were at least 95 bills enacted related to plastic bags. Most would ban or place a fee on plastic bags. Others would preempt local government action or improve bag recycling programs.

The National Council of State Legislatures has tallied all those locales that have enacted regulations to single use plastic bags. For more information visit their website at: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/plastic-bag-legislation.aspx>

It is worth noting that Wisconsin has no legislation banning or restricting single use plastics. Any companies or organizations who are recycling single use plastics are doing so voluntarily.

While I would love for master gardener volunteers in Rock County to become involved in some type of recycling project as a group (and would welcome any suggestions along that line), I also hope that we all, as individuals, take some actions to reduce the amount of single-use plastics in our own lives and to find ways to recycle those that remain.

Mary Kay Thompson



Have a Safe and Joyful Thanksgiving!

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