



Digging in Dodge

A Note from our President

Inside this issue:



<i>Upcoming Meetings</i>	2
<i>Events of Interest</i>	3
<i>A Few of our Favorite Things</i>	4
<i>Save the Date</i>	5
<i>Level 2 Training</i>	5
<i>2015 Plants of the Year</i>	6
<i>Colorful Coleus</i>	7
<i>Reminder</i>	7

Volunteerism: (noun) the use or involvement of volunteer labor, especially in community services. According to an annual survey done by the Corporation for National and Community Service, 31.5% of the residents of Wisconsin volunteered in 2013, ranking them 5th among the 50 states and Washington, D.C. That translates to 1.61 million volunteers and 163.8 million hours of service. According to the report, the estimated value of this volunteer service is nearly \$173 billion, based on the Independent Sector’s estimate of the average value of a volunteer hour. And, we had a part in those numbers.

Let’s look at some of this on a personal, local level. In 2014, The Dodge County Master Gardener Association volunteered 2394 hours. According to the recent Ag Visioning meeting, each hour that we volunteer adds \$17.50 worth of value to the county. That adds up to \$41,895 that we contributed to Dodge County. Can you see why it is important to turn in your hours? When we need to justify purchases or getting assistance, we can use our volunteer hours as a basis for achieving those goals. It is important that you document your hours and turn them in every year, even if you do not have enough to be certified.

Aside from the monetary value of volunteering, there is so much more. It is good for your mind and body. Volunteering boosts your self-confidence, combats depression, increases your life satisfaction, and helps you stay physically active, and just plain makes you happier. Not only does it promote mental health, it makes you physically healthier. According to a

study conducted by Carnegie Mellon University, and reported in the Harvard Health Publication, “adults over age 50 who volunteered on a regular basis were less likely to develop high blood pressure than non-volunteers. High blood pressure is an important indicator of health because it contributes to heart disease, stroke, and premature death.” The study author points out that strictly volunteering is likely not responsible for the lowering of blood pressure, but it is the stress reduction that accompanies it. I challenge anyone to come to one of our volunteer events and NOT have fun! Stress reduction, indeed.

We are going to have ample opportunities for people to get involved in 2015, just as we did in 2014. I know our chairperson is already hard at work developing the plan for the Fair booth, the committee is on task planning for the Fall Gardening Symposium, a Junior Master Gardener program is in the works, and we will have two sessions at the 4-H Family Learning Day. We will continue to expand and maintain our educational garden at the Administration Center, the annual plant sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 16th, the Help Line will begin on Tuesday, May 5th and run until Thursday September, 3rd, and there are a multitude of other projects listed on the websites. Choose one and get involved. It’s the healthy thing to do.

Carol



2015 Projects

Master Gardeners will be working on various projects in Dodge County this year. Projects are underway in Beaver Dam, Horicon, Juneau, Mayville, Watertown, and Waupun. Each project has a Master Gardener who coordinates the work. A complete and updated list of projects with contact person information is available from our website or from Carol Shirk (920) 387-5105.

Upcoming Meetings

Anyone with an interest in gardening is welcome to attend the following free programs. Master Gardener meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month. Unless otherwise noted, the meetings are at 6:30 p.m. in the Administration Building, 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau.

January 22 – *Project Year-in-Review by Master Gardener Volunteers* of projects participated in during 2014, complete with photos and discussion.

February 26 – *Tree Diseases and the Emerald Ash Borer by Tim Eilbes*. Tim Eilbes, a Professional Landscape Architect licensed with the State of Wisconsin with more than 12 years of experience in landscape design, construction and maintenance will discuss some invasive tree species and tree diseases common in Dodge County. One focus will be Emerald Ash Borer, its effects on the local Ash tree population, and control of the pest.

March 26 – *Heirloom Tomatoes and Tomato Friendly Herbs by Nino Ridgeway*. Nino Ridgeway will introduce some of her favorite heirloom tomatoes and tips for growing tomatoes in Wisconsin. She will include the herbs that are most frequently used with tomatoes and talk about how to grow and pick them. Nino has a PhD in Entomology with a minor in Plant Physiology and Horticulture from UW-Madison. She has been farming since 1988 at Barthel Fruit Farm in Mequon, WI and helps run the orchard and strawberry business as well as owns and operates Herbs & Everlastings.

April 23 – *Annual Business Meeting*. Association business, including presentation of certification cards, updates on all projects, the annual potluck plus finalizing plans for the annual plant sale.



Master Gardener Websites

<http://www.wimastergardener.org/>

<http://www.wimastergardener.org/?q=Dodge>

<http://dodge.uwex.edu/master-gardener/>



Events of Interest

January 31—February 1, 2015

Orchid Quest ~ Marriott West Conference Center, Middleton WI

Annual mid-winter show and sale of the Madison Orchid Growers Guild, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, and until 4 p.m. on Sunday. Educational seminars daily, and many vendors. \$9 one-day entry/\$14 two-day pass. For more information: 608-231-3163 or <http://www.orchidguild.org/orchid-quest.html>

February 18, 2015

So What's the Trouble With Worms? ~ UW Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac WI

7:00 p.m.

Night crawlers and other earthworms and their effect on the diversity of plant and animal relationships. Taught by Bernadette Williams, an invasive species conservation biologist in forest health for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Room UC114, UW-Fond Du Lac. For information: 920-313-0190, or visit their website at: <http://gottfriedprairiearboretum.org>.

Feb 13—15, 2015

WPT's Garden Expo ~ Exhibition Hall, Alliant Energy Center, Madison WI

Sponsored by Wisconsin Public Television, Friends of WHA-TV, and the UW-Extension Horticulture Team. Certified MGVs will assist UW-Extension Specialists and Agents in answering questions in the UW-Extension booth. Numerous educational seminars, demonstrations, and workshops are offered on a variety of horticultural topics. Hours are Friday 3:00 to 9:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. An admission fee is charged to this fundraiser to support WI Public TV programming. For more information visit [WPT's Garden Expo](http://wpt.org/garden-expo) website.

Feb 26, 2015

Beesentation - Bees and Beekeeping Revealed ~ Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison WI

6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Bees play an important role in our food systems. Whether you want to start a dance with bees through beekeeping or just learn about the dance they do to find nectar, this class gets you buzzing. Charlie Koenen, a beekeeper for 15 years and the designer of a beehive he calls Beepods, will introduce you to bees and beekeeping in this class. Discover the difference between bees and wasps, who is inside the hive, and how humans have managed bees for pollination and honey. \$22 (\$17 member). For more information contact [Olbrich Botanical Gardens](http://olbrichbotanicalgardens.org), 3330 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI 53704; phone (608) 246-4550.



March 7, 2015

Spring Symposium Wisconsin Unit of the Herb Society of America ~ Milwaukee WI

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Guest speaker, Carrie Hennessy will give a presentation on winter, summer and lemon savory; gourmet herbal luncheon at noon; vendors, raffle, at the Woman's Club of Wisconsin, 813 E. Kilbourn Ave. Registration deadline: February 28. Ticket: \$65. For more information contact Joan, 262-377-1461 or Denise, 262-376-0482 or visit <http://herb-society-wisconsin.org>.

March 18, 2015

The Magic of Hummingbirds ~ Dodge County Administration Building, Juneau WI

6:00 p.m.

Dodge County HCE invite Dodge County Master Gardeners to their Learning Session "The Magic of Hummingbirds." Learn how to create a sanctuary for the ruby-throated hummingbird in your own backyard through the use of annual and perennial plants, shrubs, trees and hummingbird feeders. Presenters are Michael and Kathi Rock of Madison. Call Deb Struve at 386-3790 on or before March 4th to register.



For more events, visit the Wisconsin Master Gardener website at <http://wimastergardener.org/?q=EventsList>

A Few of our Favorite Things

Magazines:

Wisconsin Gardening

"I think it is the best one out there for an all-around publication. It has a wide range of very practical articles. I like the fact that it is region specific. It also covers up-and-coming trends and gives me great ideas for what to watch for when I am helping other people." Carol Shirk

"I love the magazine because it is just Wisconsin ideas, and helpful hints. It goes by the four seasons on what to do when. It has a calendar of events around Wisconsin. New plants for the up coming year, and just a great magazine full of ideas." Pat Cunderman

Subscribe at <http://www.statebystategardening.com/wi/> or 1-888-265-3600. You also get a free e-newsletter with additional information every month! \$19.95 for a year subscription (6 issues)



Books:

What's Wrong With My Plant? (And How Do I Fix It?)

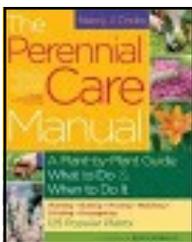
Author: David Deardorff Hardcover 2009

"This book is a super easy reference book to diagnose everything us gardeners run across, from A-Z just by looking up the visual symptoms. It is so educational, with good pictures, that it is on my next -plant -book -to -buy list (& I have a list). This book is so easy & fun to learn from, the MGV Helpline would LOVE IT!" Sondra Olsen \$31.82. Used books available.

Gardening: The Complete Guide to Growing America's Favorite Fruits and Vegetables

National Gardening Association - 1985

"It is just what it says: a complete guide and I have used it extensively over the years. Each vegetable/fruit is covered individually with an overview, planning, preparation, planting, care, and harvesting. Varieties are recommended and the sections all have boxes of tips for different subjects. Unbelievably, this book is still available!!!! That tells you how good it is." Carol Shirk New \$50, Gently Used Available



The Perennial Care Manual by Nancy J Ondra

"It is a plant-by-plant guide of what to do and when to do it for 125 popular plants. It covers among other things: planting, staking, pruning, mulching, dividing, and propagating. I have used this book several times already when doing research for newspaper articles and have found it to be well laid out and very informative. It also has great photos which is very helpful for someone like me who maybe isn't as familiar with things of the flower variety." Carol Shirk Paperback \$20

These new and gently used books can be purchased at www.amazon.com

Aps

Landscape Alternative for Invasive Plants of the Midwest

"It lists the invasive plant with photo and then lists alternatives. Or, it has an alphabetical listing of ornamentals and classifies each as exotic invasive, exotic non-invasive, native, and native cultivars. I know that there are a lot of good aps available for planning, etc. but I have not investigated them. This is one that I have used extensively when helping people who are inadvertently planning on including an invasive in their landscape." Carol Shirk Free (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bugwood.landscapealternatives>)

Thank you Pat Cunderman, Carol Shirk, and Sondra Olson

Save the Dates

May 5

DCMGA Help Line begins~ Administration Building, Juneau WI

May 16

DCMGA Annual Plant Sale ~ Administration Building, Juneau WI

July 31—August 1

WIMGA Annual Conference

The Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA) is holding their 2015 Annual Conference in La Crosse, WI. The Bluff Country Master Gardener Association is hosting this event. They welcome all Master Gardener Volunteers and anyone who wants to learn more about gardening.

<http://www.bluffcountrymastergardeners.org/wimga-2015.html>

November 7

DCMGA Gardening for Gold Symposium ~ Horicon Marsh Education Center



Level 2 Training ~ Flowers & Landscapes

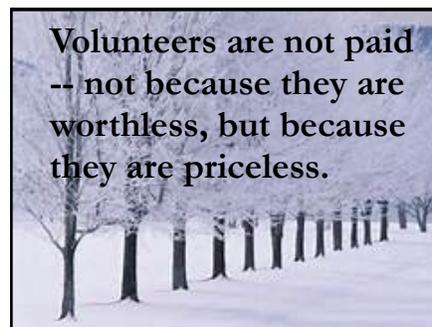
Level 2 Training is available to Certified Master Gardener Volunteers and meets continuing education requirements.

Inspiration and information for Flowers and Landscapes will come from our state's botanical gardens.

Presenters:

- ◆ Mark Konlock, Green Bay Botanical Gardens ~ Traditional English Cottage Garden
- ◆ Jeff Epping, Olbrich Botanical Gardens ~ Gravel Garden
- ◆ Shirley Walczak, Boerner Botanical Garden ~ Rain Garden Design
- ◆ Mark Dwyer, Rotary Botanical Gardens ~ Sensory-Stimulating Smelly Garden
- ◆ Christelle Guédot, UW-Extension Entomology Specialist ~ Preserving Pollinators in our Gardens

The program will be pre-recorded and posted online in mid-March. The comments section of each module will be open for any questions or feedback you'd like to share with the presenter. Because the speakers are dispersed across the state and have busy spring schedules, we'll be unable to host the on-air Q&A as with previous years. The deadline for completing all the materials is October 1, and will qualify as 10 hours continuing education. A certificate of completion will be available upon request for individuals completing the online "exam" at the conclusion of the program. **Registration information will be in the new Volunteer Vibe, due to be emailed to certified and intern MGVs on January 20, 2015.**



2015 Plants of the Year

National Garden Bureau

The National Garden Bureau is a non-profit organization that was founded in the 1920's by James H. Burdett. Their purpose is "to educate, to inspire and motivate people to increase their use of plants in homes, gardens and workplaces by being the marketing arm of the gardening industry." Each year the Bureau selects one annual, perennial, and edible as the "Year of the" crop. Plants are chosen that are popular, easy-to-grow, and widely adaptable.

2015 Annual—Year of the Coleus

"Coleus is a durable plant with very significant gardening potential for a wide range of gardeners and their garden situations."

2015 Perennial—Year of the Gaillardia

"Its daisy flowers usually come in shades of red or orange with fringed rays that look like their tips have been dipped in yellow paint. Plants bloom heavily from summer through fall, don't mind the heat, and prosper with less water than most other high-performance flowers."

2015 Edible—Year of the Sweet Pepper

"Sweet peppers bring a rainbow of colors and a plethora of shapes to the table. It is easy to value them for looks and flavor alone, but the sweet pepper is a nutritional powerhouse as well. Sweet peppers come in many shapes as well; the elongated banana, the blocky bell, the oblong or "half-long" bells, flat "cheese" shapes, and smooth cherry types."

American Hosta Growers Association

The American Hosta Growers Association is a trade organization for nurseries that specialize in the growing and sale of hostas. The American Hosta Growers Association Hosta of the Year was established in 1996. The hosta is selected by a vote of its members. Award winners are good garden plants in all regions of the country, are widely available and in sufficient supply, and retail for about \$15.00 in the year of selection.

2015 Hosta of the Year—'Victory'

"Shiny green center with a margin that changes from greenish yellow to creamy white by early summer. Smooth texture with thick substance. Near white flowers on tall scapes in mid-summer. An outstanding specimen or background plant. Vigorous. Size: Giant (30" height x 70" width). Habitat: upright."

The Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association

Every year, the Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association brings forward top notch but underused plants in an effort to focus the public's attention on plants that they feel should be used more often in the landscape. These are plants that have not been widely recognized or used, but whose characteristics make them fantastic additions to any landscape. Since 2002, the WNLA Plant of the Year program has been bringing beautiful plants to our attention.

2015 Woody Ornamental—*Carpinus caroliniana* (Musclewood)

"Musclewood is a tree that will grow beautifully in full sun, full shade, and everything in between. This small, attractive tree, growing to a height of 20 to 30 feet, gets its name from its muscular-looking branches and smooth bark. With moist, slightly alkaline soil, *Carpinus caroliniana* is tough enough for zone 2 right through zone 9. It is a versatile beauty."

2015 Perennial—*Penstemon* 'Dark Towers' PP20013 (Dark Towers Beardtongue)

"The glossy burgundy leaves set off a profusion of tubular, soft pink flowers which bloom in late summer, attracting hummingbirds. Sunny borders benefit from the color and height of this exceptional plant, which grows to 30" to 36" tall. It's a fast grower and will fill any sunny space with dazzling color and texture, taking all the heat and humidity that Mother Nature dishes out. Plant in well drained soil in zones 3 through 8, and you'll be rewarded with a superior focal point for your landscape."

Colorful Coleus



Coleus (Solenostemon scuttelarioides) are a versatile plant that even people with so-called brown thumbs can grow. Although heat-

loving, they once were considered a shade plant to fill in the bare spots. However, the newer varieties can tolerate more sun and come in a dazzling array of colors.

A member of the mint family with the characteristic square stem, Coleus are the well-behaved member of the family. While most of the mint family is aggressive and invasive, Coleus is not. Some varieties have an upright growth pattern, some are mounding, and some are trailing, making them suitable for hanging baskets.

The foliage is the striking part of this plant. Colors range from light and medium green, red, maroon,

yellow, cream, orange, yellow, peach, pink, white, and purple. In addition, the size and textures of the leaves also vary. They can be less than an inch in the "Thumbelina" varieties to over eight inches in the "Kong" varieties. The leaves can be narrow, wide, round, ovate, smooth, frilled, scalloped, or ruffled.

To get started with coleus, in the spring either begin with seeds, or purchase plants from a reputable greenhouse. Choose the varieties that will fit the landscape location by reading the label and selecting the plants based on the sun/shade needs, the size, and the growth habit. All of these factors vary widely with different cultivars. When starting with seed, begin 6-8 weeks before last spring frost, and cover sparingly as the seeds need light to germinate. Seeds are often sold as a mix since coleus seeds do not produce identical plants. If a specific plant type/color is desired,

either purchase the plant or start plants from cuttings.

Once outside, Coleus are a fuss-free plant. They will do well in average garden soil and prefer moist, well-drained conditions. To keep the plant compact, pinch back the tips regularly. Removing the terminal bud on each shoot as it reaches 3-4 inches will produce more side branching and more beautiful foliage. If a more informal look is preferred, allow the plant to grow unhindered. Depending on the variety, the plants will grow from 12 inches to 2 feet tall.

The colors of Coleus will remain beautiful from spring to first frost. Be aware that they will be the first plants to die when frost hits. If desired, cuttings can be taken to preserve the plant for the next season. Enjoy the beauty of Coleus, but beware! It is hard to own just one.

Carol Shirk
Certified Master Gardener

Reminder!

If you receive Digging in Dodge via the United States Postal service and are not a member of the Dodge County Master Gardener Association it is time to submit your \$5 to continue to receive the newsletter. If you would like to switch to email, the newsletter would be free. Remove the tear strip below and send it to Sheri Lotzer at the UW-Extension, Administration Building, 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau, WI 53039. Make checks payable to: Dodge County Master Gardener Association or DCMGA

PLEASE NOTE: You need to respond, or you WILL be deleted from the mailing list and will NOT receive future issues of this newsletter. Again this is for non members only. Members receive the newsletter as part of their membership dues.

✂

Name: _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____ City _____

Switch to receiving newsletter via e-mail (Free) E-mail address _____

Receive the quarterly paper copy of Digging in Dodge \$5

Board of Directors

Crops and Soils Agent
UW-Extension Office
(920) 386-3790

Carol Shirk
President
(920) 387-5105

Terry Zimmerlee
Vice President
(920) 885-2137

Jan Krause
Secretary
(920) 261-7939

Gail Nampel
Treasurer
(920) 887-2887

Lois Livens
Local Record Keeper
(817) 939-8534

Al Krause
Local Representative to
the WIMGA
(920) 261-7939



Dodge County Master Gardener Association

*UW-Extension, Administration
Building 127 E. Oak Street,
Juneau, WI 53039*

Phone: (920) 386-3790

