



Digging in Dodge

Dodge County Master Gardener Association

Issue 31

A Note from our President

We did it! We survived the Summer of 2012. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this was the 3rd hottest summer on record for the lower 48 states of the U.S. Wisconsin communities broke 1345 records this year with the new records averaging 4.5 degrees warmer than the old ones. According to Climate Central, Wisconsin ranked first in terms of extreme heat. I wonder when the T-shirts will hit the market?

And, then there was the drought. Severe to extreme drought conditions cause Dodge County to be included in the Governor's State of Emergency declaration in July which allowed farmers more latitude in finding relief for their operations. Conditions have improved somewhat and the drought level has been lowered to moderate/severe for Dodge County as of September 27, 2012.

But, now we can put this all behind us and begin planning for the next season. That is the beauty of gardening; there is always next season. Although we battled hordes of insects, sweat our socks off, and dealt with debilitating drought, we can think ahead to next year and be hopeful.

And, speaking of next year, we have an All-Star line up for our meetings. We are going to look at prairie history with a DNR ecologist, learn about small fruit management with a UW

horticultural specialist, find out how to grow orchids from an orchid shop owner, learn about lawn and garden safety from one of our very own knowledgeable Master Gardeners, take an on-farm tour of a local garden/poultry operation, learn how to turn our garden treasures into works of art from a local artist, and learn how to adapt gardens for people with disabilities from a Horticulture Educator.

Plus, we have our 4th annual Photo Contest, a Field Trip, multiple events and projects.

Just makes you want to rush right through the end of the year and get into 2013, doesn't it? But, first we have to enjoy our 3rd annual Photo Contest. It is Saturday, October 20th and promises to be an outstanding presentation. Don't miss it!

Happy Gardening.

Carol

2012 Projects

Master Gardeners will be working on various projects in Dodge County this year. Projects are underway in Beaver Dam, Horicon, Juneau, Mayville, Neosho, 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.

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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, WI 53039.

October 20

Photo Contest

Gail Nampel-coordinator

The 3rd annual Garden Photography Contest is at 1:30 p.m. \$10 admission fee is payable at the door. Ribbons will be awarded during the social hour after Open Judging. "Best of Show" wins a \$50 prize.

See the Dodge County Master Gardener Website for Photo Contest Rules and Entry Form.

<http://dodge.uwex.edu/files/2011/12/2012-Photo-Contest-Entry-Forms-Rules.pdf>

This Saturday event will replace the usual Thursday meeting.

November

Board Meeting Only

December

No Meeting



January 24, 2013

Project Review

Master Gardener Volunteers

A review of the projects that the Dodge County Master Gardener Association Volunteers participated in during 2012, complete with photos and discussion.

February 28, 2013

Prairie Ecology and History in Wisconsin

Rich Henderson

Rich will introduce us to the origins of Midwest prairie and the plants and animals that constitute the prairie ecosystem and how those species interact. Rich is an ecologist for WDNR Bureau of Science Services with thirty-five years of experience in natural area inventory, assessment, and management of prairie, sedge, meadow, oak savanna, and oak woodland.

March 28, 2013

Small Fruit Production for the Wisconsin Home Gardener

Lisa Wasko DeVetter

Lisa Wasko DeVetter, a graduate student in the Department of Horticulture at UW-Madison, earned her B.S. and M.S. at Iowa State University (ISU). At ISU, she worked extensively with grapes and strawberries, as well as a multitude of other fruit crops. She will speak to us about the management of grapes, strawberries, and bramble crops for home gardeners.

Upcoming Events

- **UW-Madison Arboretum Classes** Saturday, October 13, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.: Fungi Foray, \$18. Saturday, November 3, 1–3 p.m. All About Owls, \$13.50. Both are held at the Visitor Center, 1207 Seminole Highway, Madison. For registration see:

<http://uwarboretum.org/events/>

- **Discover Hidden Treasures Garden Walk** Melinda Meyer conducts end of growing season walks to uncover lots of color, textures, and surprises to help us through the long winter. Held at Boerner Botanical Gardens, 9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners. Saturday, October 20, Adult walk 10 a.m. \$25 (\$20 members). Family Fun Walk 1 p.m., \$22 per family (up to 5 people) if registered before 10/1; \$30 after. Register by calling 414-525-5659. For more information see:

<http://www.melindamyers.com/Apppearances/learn-from-melinda/appearances.html>

- **Horicon National Wildlife Refuge Birding** Saturday October 27, 9–10:30 a.m. Guided opportunity to view birds in an area of the refuge that is only open seasonally. Bring your own binoculars or borrow ours. Meet at the Egret Trail boardwalk parking lot off of the refuge auto tour off of Hwy 49.

Upcoming Events

- **Gottfried Arboretum Classes** Create a Winter Wreath and Swag. Tuesday, November 8, 1:00–3:30 p.m. and 6:00–8:30 p.m. at the Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest Ice Age Center near Dundee and Wednesday, November 14, 6:00–8:30 p.m. at Lakeside Park Pavilion in Fond du lac. A variety of natural materials will be provided. \$15 fee.

Learning to Think Like a Bluebird. Wednesday, December 12, 7 p.m. Room UC114 University Center. Dr Kent Hall, aka Dr. Bluebird, will show colorful photographs of the different nest box species. Learn about nest box styles that attract bluebirds, tree swallows, chickadees and wrens, and where and how to place them for success in your own yard. For more information:

<http://gottfriedprairiearboretum.org/documents/2012-education-brochure.pdf>

- **Four Season Perennial Garden Workshop** Saturday, November 10, 9-noon, Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison. Learn how to reap seasons of interest from your garden by choosing species and varieties carefully, and placing and maintaining the plants and other garden features from Professional Gardener and Author Janet Macunovich. \$40 (\$32 member) For more information see:

<http://www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm>

Did You Know....?

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has an arboretum at 1207 Seminole Highway, Madison that covers 1200 acres bordering the southern half of Lake Wingra. The trails and the Visitor Center parking lot are open year-round from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Other Arboretum parking lots are open from sunrise to sunset. The Visitor Center is open weekdays from 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m. and weekends from 12:30–4 p.m. (excluding holidays).

You can explore on your own, or take a guided tour. You will find many ecological communities, including various types of prairies, savannahs, forests, and wetlands. In addition, there are several horticultural collections, effigy mounds, historic artifacts, and more than 20 miles of trails including footpaths, boardwalks and fire lanes.

Free public walks take place each Sunday that offer a basic introduction to the Arboretum, and include some identification of plants and animals as well as brief scientific explanations for various ecological concepts.

On the fourth Sunday of most months there is a kid-friendly program that uses nature hikes, stories, crafts and activities to explore animals, plants and natural phenomena. On the second Sunday of every month, there is a family walk with topics that are especially appealing to youngsters.

Classes are offered routinely and provide more in-depth coverage of various topics.

For more information, see: <http://uwarboretum.org/>

2013 Calendar

A very capable group of Dodge County Master Gardener Volunteers has put together a drop-dead gorgeous 2013 wall calendar. This calendar is made up of prize winning photos from the 2010 and 2011 Master Gardener Photo Contest. It would be a lovely addition to any home or office and would make a great gift for those hard-to-buy-for friends and relatives, not to mention, a wonderful treat for yourself! These beauties are available through the UW-Extension Office at 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau for \$15. You can also have them mailed to you for a \$3 shipping fee (\$1 for every additional calendar). Be sure to get yours before the supply runs out.

November Board Meeting

The Dodge County Master Gardener Association will conduct the annual Board Meeting in November. If you have any topics you would like the Board to consider, please have your suggestions to a member by November 1st. A list of the Board members can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

“A woodland in full color is awesome as a forest fire, in magnitude at least, but a single tree is like a dancing tongue of flame to warm the heart.”
~Hal Borland

Drought Stress Response

The summer of 2012 saw extreme drought conditions in most of Southern Wisconsin. However, some rain has fallen, lawns are showing signs of recovery and shrubs are still alive. Are we out of the woods? Not necessarily. Much of the damage has been done and the full effects will not be known until the spring. During previous drought years, the trees and shrubs did not die until a year or even two later.

To minimize the loss, there are a few steps that the home gardener can take. First, cut back any perennials that show damage. Remove dead branches and leaves and allow the plant to use all energy for restoring root health.

Second, do not fertilize or prune shrubs this fall. Both will cause new growth at a time when the plant needs to focus on restoring health to existing vegetation and roots.

Third, remove all competition for water around trees and shrubs. Take care to keep weeds and even grass away from the roots of these plants. Then, generously mulch in this area. Mulch will help retain the moisture after watering. However, do not pile the mulch up around the trunk of trees or base of shrubs.

Last, continue to water the plants until the ground freezes. This is especially important with conifers because they continue to lose moisture through their needles. Water effectively by watering slowly and regularly at the rate of one inch per week. Don't water trees just along the base, but go out one half to two thirds under the canopy.

Time to Replant?

If some plants have died due to the drought, it is a good time to re-design your landscape. Fall is an excellent time for soil testing. Take the sample into the UW-Extension Office so that you will be ready for any planting.

Perhaps the plants in the area that died weren't really suitable for the area. Now is a good time to re-evaluate that plan. Match the plants to the soil and light conditions rather than trying to fit a favorite plant into an unsuitable area.

Consider using native plants. Although we did suffer through a drought this year, next year we could just as easily be talking about flooding conditions. However, selecting native plants always improves rate of survivability. Some options of perennials might include various coneflowers, rudbeckia, butterfly weed, native ornamental grasses (Little Bluestem, Switch grass, Indian grass).

When considering trees height, form, color, and texture are all determining factors. Some good all-round choices for this area, depending on the specific planting area can be Sugar Maple, Kentucky Coffee-tree, Aspen, or Black Willow. Native bushes would include ninebark, dogwood, and juniper. For a list of native Wisconsin plants, including trees and shrubs, see: http://www.johnsonsnursery.com/Domains/j_nursery/Documents/Native%20Brochure%202008%20%28Final%29.pdf



Great Articles

Have you taken the time to look recently to see what your fellow Master Gardener Volunteers have written? The Dodge County Master Gardener Association has a number of gifted writers that contribute to three area newspapers on a regular basis. However, you can read their articles without subscribing to any newspaper! A longer, more in-depth article is posted each month on the State Master Gardener web site at:

<http://wimastergardener.org/?q=DodgeArticles>

If you have accessed this site recently, you could have read about making your own leaf mold, growing asparagus, gardening for bees, easy annuals, growing Pulmonaria and Clematis, gardening for senior gardeners, and even gardening in Alaska! There are currently 37 articles posted here, but one drops off each month so check them out soon.

You will find shorter, more concise articles posted every other week at: <http://dodge.uwex.edu/category/master-gardener/ask-a-master-gardener/>

The format of these articles has recently changed and are now in "bullet-point" form to aid the handicapped. However, the content remains similar to the original newspaper articles. There you will find articles on growing garlic, drought stress and vegetable gardens, hollyhock rust, hanging basket care, lawn mower safety, proper tree planting, vertical gardening, growing raspberries, and much more.

Avail yourself to the wealth of knowledge at these two sites!

Suggested Activities

Fruit and vegetable production is going to be the focus of the state-wide training for 2013 according to the new Master Gardener Program Director Mike Maddox. However, this emphasis will also include working with community gardens, working with youth, organic gardening, harvesting, getting vegetables to food pantries, and more. Therefore, he has suggested the following as some volunteer activities for local groups:

- Answer fruit and veggie questions at the farm market.
- Do a fruit or veggie presentation at the library.
- Write an article for the newsletter about a community garden project in your county.
- Work with kids at a school garden.
- Create a cover crop display for your county fair.

Flower Bulbs

Fall is the time to plant those lovely spring bulbs such as tulip, daffodil, and crocus. As you plant, the rule of thumb is to plant them at a depth three times the diameter of the bulb. The hard part is remembering where you planted them! Colorful plastic golf tees can be stuck in the ground to mark the location of dormant plants such as spring bulbs or other perennials.

Fall bulbs will also need to be dug. These tender bulbs need to be handled with care and stored properly. For more information, see the article "Storing Tender Flower Bulbs" at: <http://dodge.uwex.edu/2012/09/20/storing-tender-flower-bulbs/>

dodge.uwex.edu/2012/09/20/storing-tender-flower-bulbs/

Techno Gardening

It was bound to happen. Computers are invading our gardens. There are apps for everything and gardening is no exception. One app, Garden Tracker is available for under \$4. It helps you size and plan your garden plot in grids, keeps track of when you watered and fertilized, and records days until harvest. It also includes information on sunrise, moonrise, and the USDA hardiness zones.

Landscapers Companion is available for under \$6 and is a planting reference for trees, shrubs, perennials, vegetables, and anything else you want to plant. It provides growing zone information, size requirements, water and sun needs, bloom time and more. And, if you don't know what you want, it has a catalog of images that you can scroll through until you see something that strikes your fancy and you can research it from there.

Got bugs? There's an app for that too. Bugs in the Garden, for a mere \$1, includes realistic illustrations and photos of both adults and larva (caterpillars and grubs). It also gives advice on management and damage assessment.

Home Outside is an app, available for under \$2, that will help with those odd shaped landscaping problems around your home. You can arrange plants, driveways, patios, gardens, and any other item you have until you have the plan you like. If something doesn't look right, just move it, rotate it, or adjust until you have it the way you like it.



Got Pumpkin?

If you have an abundance of pumpkins in your garden this year, try this tasty recipe. Moist and delicious, your family won't even know they are eating their vegetables and getting lots of Vitamin A in the process!



Pumpkin Bars

Pumpkin Bars:

4 eggs
2 cups sugar
2 cups pumpkin
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 cup vegetable oil
2 cup all-purpose flour

Cream Cheese Frosting:

1 - 8oz pkg. cream cheese
1/2 cup butter
1 tsp. vanilla
2 cups powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Beat eggs until light. Add sugar and then rest of ingredients.

Bake on greased jelly roll pan at 350°F for 25 minutes.

Frosting: Mix ingredients together until smooth. Spread over bars.

Board of Directors

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

Carol Shirk
President
(920) 387-5105

Chuck Meyer
Vice President
(920) 326-2219

Jan Krause
Secretary
(920) 261-7939

Terry Zimmerlee
Treasurer
(920) 885-2137

Berwyn Westra
Local Record Keeper
(920) 326-3885

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

*"The leaves fall, the wind blows,
and the farm country slowly
changes from the summer
cottons into its winter wools."
- Henry Beston*

Dodge County Master Gardener Association

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

Phone: (920) 386-3790

<http://wimastergardener.org/>

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