

**October 2016**

**2015 Officers:**

Lila Waldman, President  
Carol Ziehmke, V.P.  
Kelly Tomko, Secretary  
Barb Rothwell, Treasurer  
Lori Nadolski, Reporter

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**Meeting**

**MGV October Meeting & Tour**

**October 25, 2016—4:30 pm**

**Paul Bergum's Wreath Shop, W4690 Bradley Road, Rio**

You may arrive any time after 4:30 pm. Paul will talk about different plants he uses from his yard, gardens and ditches for wreath making and will work one on one with members to make their own wreaths. The amount of material depends on the weather.

**Regular Meeting—6:00 pm**



**Columbia County MGV 2016  
Activities**

Date	Event	Program & Chairperson
Oct 12	All Annual Hours Reports due to George	
Oct 18	LGGG Planning Meeting	5-6pm, Bidwell Room, Portage Public Library
Oct 25	Wreaths with Paul Bergum MGV Meeting (arrive when you can)	(Kelly Tomko)
Nov 22	Pot Luck and Member Activity	(Becky Gutzman)
Nov 24	Thanksgiving	
Dec	No meeting	

**Next LGGG Planning Meeting**

The next LGGG planning meeting has been set for Tuesday, October 18. It will be held at the Bidwell Room of the Portage Public Library. The meeting will begin at 5:00 and run until about 6:30 PM. Please bring ideas of topics and presenters for breakout sessions. If you cannot attend please be sure to call or email Ardyce Piehl or Becky Gutzman with your ideas and offers for help.

Would you like to be a presenter? Do you know of someone who would be a good presenter and have a topic of interest to Master Gardeners? Since Master Gardeners have a wide range of interests, we need to provide a wide range of topics. Please attend this meeting to help plan our LGGG event next spring at Rio High School. If you cannot attend please send you thoughts and ideas to Ardyce or Becky.



# 2016 Conference

Over 200 Master Gardeners gathered in Wisconsin Dells in September for their biennial conference, under the theme Gardeners in the Dells—Helping Nature Thrive. Gardeners came from nearby: Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota (the four states that rotate hosting this conference) and from further away: Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington! It was great to meet and learn how other MGs work and volunteer.

The tours on Thursday Sept 15 were organized by Columbia County MGs Jean Damm, Ardyce Piehl, and Rita Socha, with help on tour day from Paul Bergum, Lila Waldman, Jane Considine, and Suzanne Huber. The tours provided unique experiences that our out-of-state gardeners loved, especially the Aquaponics and Cranberry tours. Thank you so much to these Columbia County members for leading this effort and their great work.

Thursday evening's speaker, Jerry Apps, was well-received and had the audience listening intently as he shared stories from his book "A Naturalist's Memoir." Dr. Stanley Temple of the Aldo Leopold Foundation continued our thinking about how we can help nature thrive with his keynote address on Friday morning: Threatened Species, Private Lands, and Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic. The land ethic highlights the responsibility of private landowners to care for other species that live on their property, not because they are forced to do so by regulations or coerced to do so with subsidies, but because it is simply the right thing to do. Dr. Temple gave really concrete examples of things that can be done both on private lands and on public areas such as right-of-ways to increase habitat for threatened species.

Conference attendees could choose from 24 breakout sessions on Friday and Saturday including topics of horticultural interest and topics related to leadership skills and volunteerism. A great silent auction raised money to help off-set conference costs, and people could also shop for garden-related gifts, foods, tools, and arts/crafts. A super thank you to Barb Rothwell, who served on the overall conference planning committee and achieved "superhero" status in creating items for the silent auction! Thanks also to Linda Haddix for volunteering with the silent auction check-out. If I missed any CCMGs, I apologize and thank you.

I think the conference was a success and I personally learned a great deal from organizing a conference with a committee from around the state (that was hard work—all of our meetings were by teleconference). I also am energized by the four big ideas WI MG Program Director Mike Maddox shared in his closing address:

- ☼ Tell a different story: What is the value of the MG program? (To you, to your community) What are the impacts the MG program is having?
  - ☼ Re-think MG education: we have new tools and new ways to make it more meaningful and relevant to our volunteer work.
  - ☼ Expand our research: How do plants impact health and well-being? Why are plants important to communities and businesses?
  - ☼ Recruit new people! Find out what matters to each generation and to individuals and figure out how the MG program can serve their needs.
- by Becky Gutzman

## NEW Master Gardener Volunteers



(From left to right: Robin Abbott, Lori Richter, Linda Harris, Kathleen Delaney, Marcy Read, and Abigail Smith.)

Please welcome our newest class of Master Gardener Volunteer Graduates. Our final class was September 26th, after 14 weeks of training. Each of the Trainees did a presentation on a topic of their choosing to demonstrate their understanding of a particular aspect of Horticulture or Gardening. Presentation topics from this class included: Apple Trees 101, Designing and Constructing a Memory Garden, Gardening to Support and Attract Wildlife, Container Gardening for Vegetables, Witches Brooms in Trees, and Hoop Houses. We have some new members with amazing talents and interests.

### MGV Hours reports!

Thanks to everyone who has turned in their volunteer hour reports to me (25 of you). This helps me immensely. I have to check them over and enter them into a spreadsheet and forward that on to Susan Mahr. If you have not completed this task yet, please take care of it by Wednesday, October 12. That still gives me a couple of days to finish my compilation and send it to the state. Even if you don't have the required 24 hours of volunteer service and 10 hours of continuing education, please send me whatever you have. Each hour you submit adds to our county totals, which should be up substantially because of all the work that went into the Regional Meeting in the Dells last month.

Thanks again to all of you who were able to get your hours to me by October 1. It is very much appreciated.

George





## A Mother Nature Surprise

*By Jane Breuer*.....During the 2015 growing season we planted many varieties of sunflowers in various gardens around our property. We got 80% germination and therefore had a lot of sunflowers, much to the delight of the goldfinches and other birds. When the growing season ended we did not clean out those gardens which contained the sunflowers for winter viewing interest.

In the spring of 2016 when we began our garden clean-up Jeff decided to use a chipper to grind up what was left of the sunflower stalks. Using the chipper he created a fair amount of "sunflower mulch".

Later in the spring we planted canna bulbs. Canna bulbs are slow starters and so we applied the "sunflower mulch" over the area where we planted the canna hoping the mulch would help the soil moisture and get the canna going. After about a week, we noticed many little sunflower plants springing from the mulch. This was most unexpected as we thought there were very few seeds left in the sunflower heads. We assumed that the birds had eaten all of the seeds or they would have been ground up too fine for anything to survive. We decided to let them grow and see what would happen. By the time these sunflowers were about a foot high, the canna started peeking through. The canna plants gradually overtook the sunflowers, but some did survive and we had an interesting mix of exotic canna and old fashioned sunflowers.



After teaching a session on straw bale gardening at this year's LGGG we did straw bale gardening at home to answer a question raised during that session.

Can you reuse straw bales from one year to the next? We had one bale from the 2015 growing season that was still about 70% intact. We did not need to "season" it. Jeff bought two seed potatoes, one red seed potato and one Yukon Gold and on April 24, 2016 planted them in last year's straw bale garden. The potato plants grew very well in the used bale and on September 4, 2016 we harvested the potatoes. The red potatoes did very well, we got a number of potatoes as big as apples and a few as big as grapefruit. And they were delicious. The Yukon Gold produced some potatoes but not nearly as many as the reds. So yes, we used a "used bale" and were successful.

*By Jane Breuer*

## Meeting Minutes—September 27, 2016

Portage Public Library

Substitute Secretary- Lori Naldolski.



- ◆ Carol called the meeting to order.
- ◆ Motion to approve Secretary's notes. Motion passed.
- ◆ Treasure's Report distributed. Review at home. Come with questions next time. Treasurer absent.
- ◆ New class of MGV's graduated. None were present.
- ◆ Old News:
  - ◆ A.) Becky reported on MGV Regional conference at Chula Vista. 200 people attended. 3 tours happened. Thank you to Jean, Ardyce and Rita. Vendors were happy. We should replicate break-out demonstrations at LGGG 2017. All positive feedback!
- ◆ MGV 2016 hours are due by Oct. 1st, along with \$15 annual dues. Carol will be happy to collect and submit on our behalf.
- ◆ Planning for LGGG 2017 is underway. Potential date is April 1st, in Rio.
- ◆ Our November meeting will be a potluck (bring dish to pass) at Wyocena Town Hall, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. (same week). The Wyocena Town Hall has one small bathroom with sink and we will need to bring in tables.
- ◆ Our October meeting will be on the 25th, at Paul Bergum's house. They are awesome hosts. Garden tour at 4:30 and a demo at 6:30. Participants will arrange a wreath to take home.
- ◆ Reviews of the June Field Trip were all positive. Participants may have logged 5.2 miles of walking at EPIC.
- ◆ There is a new head Librarian at the Portage Public Library. Jean Damm is stepping down as outdoor landscaping coordinator. A new volunteer is needed to maintain the gardens, so please step up soon or we will need to take the signs down.
- ◆ Chocolatier Lisa Nelson is seeking volunteers to build a meditation walk at her farm. Contact: 608-963-5319 for more info.

# ***The Report***

## October

Hailing acclaim from the likes of Midwest Living, Tractor Supply Magazine, Brava, and Foodies of Wisconsin, Chocolatier Lisa Nelson is putting Wisconsin Dells on the global map in the name of.... chocolate.

Owner of Roots Chocolates, Lisa has a six year old business on her family farm, of which she is the fourth generation owner. Her farm is located in the neighborhood of Cimaroli's restaurant, and has a hilltop view of the Baraboo bluffs. Lisa currently grows or aims to grow a large array of fruits, nuts, herbs, and honey, all of which she incorporates into her delicious chocolates. One of her summer chocolates "Chocolate Mint Basil," was selected as winner for all United States submissions in a 2014 international food festival.



Although Lisa's chocolates are quickly gaining international attention, she still makes time to vend at markets in Madison, Milwaukee, Reedsburg, and Chicago. One of her long-term goals is to host guests at her farm for what she will call, "Sunset Chocolate Experiences." For the Columbia County Master Gardener Volunteers, Lisa provided an engaging presentation introducing us to herself, her family and their farmlands, her current productions and ambitions, and finally.... samples from her collection of fine chocolates. If you could not attend, learn more at [rootschocolates.com](http://rootschocolates.com), and take my word for it, you want these chocolates.

-by Lori Nadolski



Columbia County

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