



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
COLUMBIA COUNTY

January 2021

Master Gardener News



2021 Officers:

Deb Buechner, President
Connie Wilsnack, Vice Pres.
Linda Haddix, Secretary
Ann Marie Fuerst, Treasurer
Kim Leizinger, Reporter
Judi Benade, Reporter



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Columbia County MGV Activities

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Now	Enroll in MGV Program for 2021
1-26	MGV Meeting—6 pm
2-1	LGGG Committee Meeting—4:30 pm
2-6	MGV Statewide Kick Off
2-23	MGV Meeting—6 pm
3-20	LGGG—Virtually

Note from the President ~

2021 -- a new year -- finally. I hope you and yours stayed healthy throughout 2020. There is hope on the horizon with vaccines coming for COVID19. Keep minding the scientists until we've all been vaccinated and this plaque hopefully becomes history. We have made it this far and the end of having to stay home is in sight. We can do this.

You may or may not know that I have pretty bad luck on the gardening front, but I keep trying. My latest effort is for a group working to restore native plantings on the bank of Starkweather Creek in Madison. They sent me some seeds and instructions for cold stratifying them, so the seeds are chilling outside on my terrace. It will be a thrill if they make it through this winter and I can actually transplant the seedlings. As ever, when it has to do with gardening, my fingers are crossed.

There's good news and not so good news about Let's Get Green and Growing. We won't be able to have an in-person event this year, but we will still host the occasion. It will be a safe and informative session where we can all attend all the classes from our computer screens. The LGGG planning committee has been making great progress and is working through the logistics of an all on-line and free LGGG for 2021. You all are welcome to attend the committee meetings, and the next one, via ZOOM, will be February 1 at 4:30 p.m. Or wait for information on how to attend LGGG; it sounds as though we will hear news quite soon. Meantime, stay warm and healthy.

Just a couple months until Spring. And the days are getting longer!

Deb Buechner

Columbia County Master Gardener Volunteers

Minutes - November 24, 2020

Virtual Meeting

The virtual meeting was called to order by President Leah Stark

Introductions: In attendance were : Ann Marie Fuerst, Bill Damm, Jean Damm, Becky Gutzman, Connie Wilsnack, Linda Haddix, Jane Breuer, Deb Buechner, Donna Mc Elroy, Ardyce Piehl, Leah Stark, Judi Benade, Pat Trapp, Terry Socha, Rita Socha and advisor George Koepp.

Secretary's Minutes: corrections to the October minutes were made: the meeting was called to order by Vice President Deb Buechner, and the mention of Women in Agriculture was made by Judy. Becky made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected, with a second by Connie. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: The balance of the checkbook was \$3,998.44 at the start and end of the month, with no transactions occurring. Three outstanding checks will be kept and will be taken off the books. The report will be sent to audit.

Old Business

A report from the Tax Exempt study group gave an update, and all items will be completed before the end of the year. Names of officers will be added to the application. It was mentioned that the application process could take up to six months, but in the meantime, we can consider our group to be tax exempt.

Hour Reporting - the 24 hour volunteer requirement has been suspended for 2020, but the 10 hour continuing education requirement is still intact. George will send a link for the reporting requirements, which is due by December 31st. Please complete the information on the website.

LGGG will be held virtually again this year. The logistics are still in process. A recent survey has given some valuable information, but there was not an overwhelming response. Most people still wanted a keynote speaker.

New Business

Election of officers was held, with the following results: President Deb Buechner, Vice President Connie Wilsnack, Secretary Linda Haddix, Treasurer Ann Marie Fuerst, Reporters Kim Leizinger and Judi Benade. A new officer meeting has been scheduled for December 14th at 5:00 p.m. via zoom.

Other

There will not be a meeting in December.

Judi brought up an idea for an online "coffee klatch" type meeting for us to share ideas for upcoming newsletters. George will send out an informal survey regarding this.

If any members have any updated information, i.e. email, address changes, etc. should be sent to George to update the master email list:

ext-cc-mastgard@g-groups.wisc.edu.

Next Meeting: January 26, 2021 at 6 pm via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Motion by Jean to adjourn meeting, second by Deb at 7:04 pm. Motion passed.

Linda Haddix- Secretary

Columbia County Master Gardener Treasurer Report December 2020

Cash Balance on 1 December	\$3998.44
Income:	
Deposit from MGV 2021 Dues - 31 Dec..	\$ 165.00
Expensed:	
For submitting Articles of Incorporation:	\$ 35.00
Check 1709	
For submitting 1023-EZ -	\$ 275.00
Total expenses:	\$ 310.00
Ending balance on 31 December 2020:	\$3853.44

Columbia County Master Gardener Volunteers
January 26, 2021 - Zoom On-line
Meeting Agenda

Call the Meeting to Order (Deb)

Secretary's Report, November 24, 2020 (Linda)

Treasurer's Report (Ann Marie)

Introductions

Old Business

Update on Tax Exempt Status

LGGG

MicroFarms in the Classroom

New Business

2021 MGV Enrollment

Suggestions for 2021 Volunteer opportunities

New MGV Class – will be available statewide in 2022

Statewide MGV Meeting on-line, February 2, 6:30 pm

Other

Next Meeting: February 23, 2021 on Zoom

Adjournment

January Program: "Sweet Potatoes",
presented by Kim Leizinger

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ANNUAL ENROLLMENT OPENED JANUARY 1

LAST YEAR WE INTRODUCED THE ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PROCESS. "ENROLLMENT" LETS US KNOW IF YOU PLAN TO CONTINUE IN THE PROGRAM IN 2021. IT ALSO GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AGREEMENTS. THESE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS REQUIRE YOUR AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO CONTINUE IN THE PROGRAM. THIS IS A REQUIREMENT OF ALL EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS.

A MEDIA RELEASE IS ALSO INCLUDED IN THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS. YOUR AGREEMENT IS OPTIONAL.

ENROLLMENT IS COMPLETED IN THE ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM. YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO REPORT HOURS UNTIL ENROLLMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

FOLLOW THIS LINK TO THE ORS TO REGISTER AND THEN BE ABLE TO BEGIN ENTERING HOURS FOR 2021.

[HTTPS://VOLUNTEERS.WIMASTERGARDENER.ORG/VMS/SEC_LOGIN/](https://volunteers.wimastergardener.org/vms/sec_login/)

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Level 3 Training Delayed Until Spring 2021

The next statewide online advanced MG Training Course will be postponed until spring 2021. In recent years, we have been able to move it earlier in the year to avoid the growing season. Pandemic-related issues have caused this postponement, but there is a big silver lining!

The topic will focus on the diagnostic process and how you can use it in your own garden... so what better time to reinforce what you're learning than by getting to practice it outside for real! (This hands on practice would not be possible in January in Wisconsin. :))

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We will advertise this continuing education opportunity in the Volunteer Vibe with ample time to register beforehand.





Save the Date!!

February 2nd at 6:30-7:30pm

You are invited to an evening with the Master Gardener Program!

As we kickoff 2021, let's all come together across the state and learn what we can look forward to in the coming year. Join the MG Program State Office, Extension staff, and fellow MGVs as we recap a challenging 2020, look ahead to reaching new heights in 2021, and thank you for what you are doing for your communities.

You can look forward to hearing from Program Manager Mike Maddox and *enter to win* a *Master Gardener Program Shoutout* from Larry Meiller this spring!

**What: An Online Statewide Kickoff Event for
Wisconsin Master Gardener Volunteers**
When: Tuesday, February 2, 2021
6:30-7:30 pm

Event is free but registration will be required. Look for an email with the registration link coming soon!
Attendance at this online event will count for one volunteer hour in 2021.



Holiday Plants after the Holidays

By J. Benade

Here's a quick outline you can consult about care of holiday plants.

Poinsettia

These Mexican plants need six hours of indirect sunlight each day, and cool temperatures. They are prone to root rot, so only water when the top 2-3 inches of soil is dry, and don't leave standing water in the catch tray.

The plant will often remain attractive until March or April if you use a 10-10-10 fertilizer every two weeks when the leaves are colorful. When the leaves finally drop off, give the plant a rest by decreasing the water and fertilizer, and cutting the stems back. After a couple of weeks, water and fertilizer again, so the plant can leaf out again in May. For Spring, Summer and Fall keep the plant indoors or move it outside to a shady location after frost.

Put a note on your calendar to give the plant at least 14 hours of complete darkness per day beginning on October 1. This is what signals the leaves to start to gain color in November.



Amaryllis

These lively plants thrive in well drained rich potting soil in a sunny spot at cool room temperatures. The container should be no more than 1 inch larger than the bulb. Half the bulb should remain above the soil, which should be kept barely moist. A bulb will usually bloom 6-8 weeks after planting.

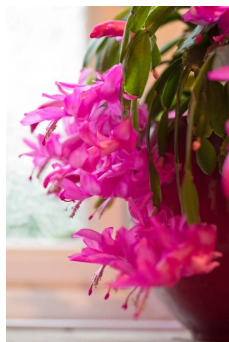
Remove the petals and the seed capsule behind it after the bloom fades but leave the flower stem standing tall. When the stem turns yellow trim that flower stalk, cutting it close to the top of the bulb. Enjoy the leaves and continue to keep the plant in a similar cool sunny environment, fertilized monthly with a 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer. Amaryllis roots are very brittle, so don't repot them until each bulb

Holiday Plants after the Holidays—Con't.

outgrows its container. If you choose to move the pot outdoors after frost, acclimatize the plant by gradually moving it from indirect to full sun. When the leaves die back in the late summer the bulb has entered its dormant stage. This is your signal to bring the pot inside and store it in a cool dark place for several months, removing the leaves after they dry and shrivel. Watch the plant in late October or November, as new growth will appear. This is the time to resume watering and bring the plant into the light, where a flower stalks will soon emerge.

Holiday Cactus (Thanksgiving and Christmas)

A true cactus, this plant prefers to live in bright indirect light and cool indoor temperatures. In well-drained soil they grow well with frequent watering, but if the soil is heavier, let it dry out between waterings. Fertilize with a 10-10-10 fertilizer once a month except during the autumn, when you want to encourage buds rather than green growth.



This cactus will bloom based on the hours of sunlight it receives. There are two ways to encourage your cactus to bloom in November/December. One is to make sure it receives normal Wisconsin sunlight in the early autumn, and provide cool night temperatures (55-60 degrees). If the nighttime temperatures are above 60 degrees, give the plant not more than 10 hours of light per day for about 4 weeks. You can limit daylight by covering the plant with a dark cloth or moving it to a dark closet until buds have set. Temperature and light conditions matter less after the plant has buds, but moving to an extremely different environment can cause the buds to fall off.

Holiday cactus live for years and often become family heirlooms. The roots wither on a very old plant in old soil, and their stems become brittle and difficult to repot, so it is a good idea to repot every 4-5 years, before the soil wears out and becomes toxic. Another option is to take cuttings, as it is fairly easy to propagate new plants. Stem cuttings should be left to dry for a few days, then pushed in damp perlite or soil. The stem nodes usually form roots after a few weeks.

Holiday Plants after the Holidays—Con't.

Norfolk Island Pine

These trees prefer a brightly lit location, 50-70 degrees. The plant will bend toward the light, quickly becoming lopsided unless you rotate it weekly. When the soil surface is dry to the touch, water well, then discard the water that drains out of the pot.

Fertilize with half-strength 10-10-10 fertilizer every 2-4 weeks except during the winter.

The branch tips frequently turn brown in the winter. This may be caused by lack of light or water, but most often the problem is a lack of humidity. Adding a pebble tray or humidifier will help.



Rosemary

This herb flourishes outdoors in the summer if it receives a good amount of sunlight and rain in well-drained soil, but it cannot survive outdoors during the Wisconsin winter. The challenge comes when you bring Rosemary plants indoors for the winter. It needs to be in a bright spot where the temperature does not go above 65 degrees.

The leaves of a rosemary plant need a moist environment, such as a pebble tray, humidifier, or frequent spray of water. The roots, on the other hand, dislike being wet, and need frequent watering in very well drained soil. Don't fertilize Rosemary during the winter, but do turn the plant frequently, as it will grow toward the light.

Repot the plant in fresh soil and move it outdoors again after threat of frost.



2020 Gardening Problems and Pleasures

By: J. Benade

I had to laugh, looking at the list of garden/landscape problems. We sure are a persistent bunch, coping with awfully familiar challenges over and over again. I planned to call this first set of things "normal gardening frustrations," then realized that title could apply to just about everything we said! Pat is engaged in a losing battle trying to knock out the quack grass in flower beds. She wrote, "I weeded a lot but it seems to always come back at same level - have never found a preemergent chemical that actually makes a notable dent." This sure matches the situation at my house! Someone else said, "I got busy at work- so I had no motivation to garden this summer. I thought I would have much motivation but I had NONE. I'm very disappointed in my gardening this summer." Are you like me, thinking "yup, wish I'd done more too!" Jean and Bill complained that they "can't grow carrots bigger than my finger." Their other challenge was planting giant marigolds where they wanted short border plants. The planned solution? "next year- read the seed package better."

Short and to the point, Terry wrote "Moles in the lawn . . . nothing worked. . . they're still there!" Many of us had to cope with garden pests and varmints in 2020. Lorraine said, "Hard to keep deer away from the hostas. This has been my biggest challenge for years. Have tried: dryer sheets, soap flakes, Repel, Egg/Garlic/Pepper sprays. All worked for a while but then they lost effectiveness. Some remedies are prohibitively expensive because I care for a LOT of hostas."

Kim had her first year with tobacco hornworms. "They ate the jalapeno and bell pepper plants," she said, "I had thought a deer was snacking in the garden. We found them and dispatched them." George Koepp reports challenges with Japanese Beetles in raspberries again this year. "Have to pick early and often to try to harvest before the beetles took over." Lila wrote, "Used my traditional, fenced garden plot for potatoes, onions, and vine plants. A "visitor" came in and ate all of the small vine plants. I harvested a small amount of potatoes, and the onions did ok. It was also a disappointing year for rhubarb."

Donna reports a challenging year as well. "For some reason my hill of watermelon stopped growing after the vines were only about six inches long. They stayed green but refused to grow and it didn't look like a critter had chewed on them. I didn't come up with an answer. Tomatoes were poor; cracked fruit and the vines had a virus in the middle of production. Also got hailed on. I didn't do anything, nature took its course. The cucumber and muskmelon vines were dined on by deer. I used a little fencing and deer spray to ward them off." Judi said, "Two mama turkeys teamed up and brought their hungry youngsters to my veggie garden. They ate all the sprouting sweet corn but one, and browsed the young green beans plants. I'm willing to share, but I plan to install my snow fence around the garden next Spring, hoping to discouraging them from being so greedy." Carol summed it up for a lot of us: "too much rain, rabbits in garden."

All these normal gardening challenges led to some innovation. Bernardine Wideen said, "I did get my lawn to come back with milorganite and a lot of hand pulling of the weeds and water. Flowers did well." Rita has a new approach: "Due to jumping worms concerns, my leaf mulch sources didn't exist. I am trying pine needles as a ground cover. Will see how the plants adjust." Becky has a garden adventure. She reports, "I am trying to convert to a no-till garden, to preserve the work of the soil microbes. This is the first year, and I have to admit I have a very large weed seed bank in my garden. Where there was mulch from last year, I was able to just scratch a little furrow for small seeds, like lettuce and spinach."

2020 Gardening Problems and Pleasures—Con't.

They did fine. I also was able put in transplants of tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, etc. by just digging a hole in the previously mulched soil. Sweet corn was a challenge, and I usually plant a lot! It was just too difficult to make a furrow/trench deep enough for fertilizer and corn in untilled soil. I tried planting individual seeds with a dibble, which was very time-consuming. So I may go back to rototilling a section for corn. I still believe in the benefits of no-till, and I want to continue, but I need to conquer some of these challenges."

Deb Buechner is another person with big plans. She wrote, "Hired landscaper who wasn't very skilled, but we have a boulder wall, 2 landscape block walls and a nice paver path leading to that flowerbed. To fill in around the boulder steep wall I tossed saved 'every kind' of seed and it came out better than areas I babied! Go figure!" Others working through challenging conditions include "Planted on a slope where a tree used to overshadow the area. Plants not used to the area yet." and Connie's comment, "Drainage around buildings still needs to be dealt with. After many years, it seems slope everywhere needs to be corrected".

The weather is always an unknown factor in our garden plans. Carol wrote, "It was a wet summer so that meant we did not have to water as much but the tomato vines suffered as did any flowers susceptible to power mildew." For me, it was a bad year for trees. Harsh wind storms tore a huge branch from each of two massive sugar maples, and a straight-line wind on a sunny day caused a large white cedar to split and came down, almost squashing me in the garden. That wind also split a main branch off a young American Elm, and limbs tore off a 70 year old Frazier Fir. Later 25 year old White Pine split, an ash succumbed to the emerald ash borer and a mulberry tree toppled into the cow yard when its roots let go. Late last winter an arborist had toured my place and his only suggestion was to think about taking down the ash in a year or two, so I'm feeling this much damage was a bit out of the blue! I'm not the only one with tree troubles as another person reported "One of Callery Pear trees on driveway (planted 3 years ago), broke off half-way up at a weak point knot in late fall due to high winds when foliage was still on tree (top heavy). Need to replace in spring."

Still, we do have successes, which is probably what keeps us coming back for more. Terry reports, "In general, vegetable garden did well, good harvest with minimal pest issues," Judi said, "It was a good year for apples and cabbage family veggies, especially broccoli and cauliflower" and George said, "Mountain Fresh tomatoes did exceptionally well. Tall strong plants that produced well. Ate many as slicers, but canned most as spaghetti sauce, stewed tomatoes and canned tomatoes." Rita wrote, "It was a good growing season for all of my herbs, perennials, and shrubs" and Pat reports, "The hydrangeas had a long, lush and visually delightful season this year," while Marcy said, "Flower beds seemed to have heavy blooms over all, including Japanese iris and coneflowers."

Leah commented the best grower at her house was "The weeds! Work was crazy busy all summer long so because of neglect, the weeds took over!" while Deb had "Zinnias galore! Love em. Else, not very well. I really struggle with clay. My main flowerbed got overrun w bugle weed when it was so so hot. It's somewhat under control now. Next year I'll keep it pulled out". Bernadine wrote, "I basically only have flowers at my time in life. I did a great success with a pot of Black Cherry tomatoes! Just keeping up with my lawn was a full-time job. We had a lot of drought, and I have sandy soil. Working on that." Jean and Bill said "Honey nut squash are great so tasty. The slicer cukes purchased as plants from Link's were exceptional. Improved tomato production over 2019."

2020 Gardening Problems and Pleasures—Con't.

As gardeners, we refine past experience and often push into new territory as well. Here are some of the new ventures: Lorraine wrote, "2020 was my second year in a new vegetable garden plot. I used the straw bale method again, since that gave me my best tomato crop ever in 2019. This year, however, tomatoes showed signs of blight early and never produced. Green beans and cucumbers (grown in last year's straw mulch) did outstandingly well. So it was a typical year in the vegetable garden - some ups, some downs. I also tend ornamental gardens for several customers and generally had a good year there. Fewer Japanese beetles than the year before. Many shrubs recovering from a bad 2019." Lila said she "put in a new raised bed and planted kohlrabi, radishes, and green beans in it. All did very well. I planted tomatoes, green peppers, herbs in pots with similar success." and Kim reports, "First year growing sweet potato slips and sweet potatoes. We did NOT use black plastic and had an awesome yield." Others experimented as well: "I tried mint in hanging pots for the first time. It was interesting - I'll probably do it again. I was going to use the mint for mojitos, but never got motivated to really use it- or make mojitos." Someone else "Established blueberries in containers for 1st year. Planted assorted fruit trees (apples, pear, plum, peach and cherry). Worked with local nursery to landscape back yard." Another person "raised my first heritage tomatoes, Cherokee purple, which did extremely well! Planted more peonies and some scabiosas which did well."

We are sharing our zest for gardening with the next generation. Carol commented, "I had the grandkids living here so it was fun to have them experience the planting, growing, harvesting and then consuming." Becky reports, "My butternut squash grew exceptionally well! My grandchildren planted seed indoors in April, and by the time they were ready to plant out, the regular garden was full. I have a large asparagus bed though that is very old, and has quite a bit of open space where the plants have died out, but it all still gets mulched and fertilized. We set 8 squash plants out there, and did they grow! I think the fertility was great from all the mulch, and they provided a living mulch for the rest of the asparagus bed. We harvested over 100 squash from those 8 plants, and several were over 10 pounds in weight!"

Let's Get Green

Save the date!

Saturday, March 20, 2021

Let's Get Green and Growing 2021 will be held **virtually** this year!

Brought to you by the Columbia County Master Gardener Volunteers, LGGG will be **FREE** this year, and will include four great topics:

- Creating a Garden of Four Season Interest by Zannah Crowe
- Addressing Invasive Species With Citizen Science by Anne Pearce
- Minor Fruits—Major Impacts by Carol Shirk
- Daylilies—the Perfect Perennial by Pat Trapp

Registration information for this Zoom conference will be available after February 10.

Hope to "see" you online!

and Growing!



Master Gardener News
112 E. Edgewater Street
Room 212
Portage, WI 53901
Phone: 608-742-9680
Fax: 608-742-9862
711 for Wisconsin Relay