



October 2015

Calumet County Master Gardeners Association Newsletter

Master Gardener Banquet

Our annual Fall Banquet will be held at Hickory Hills Country Club, Hickory Hills Road, Chilton, on **Wednesday, October 21**. Cocktails – Dutch Treat at 5:30 pm and Dinner at 6:00 pm. Menu will be stuffed pork chops, baked potato, vegetables, and all the other goodies. Members in good-standing are free and the charge for guests is \$15.00. If you have not registered to attend, please let someone on the Banquet Committee know ASAP.

Cedar Wreath Class

We will be doing a Cedar Wreath Class on Thursday, November 12, at 6:00 pm in the Basement Lounge at the Courthouse. The cost for members is \$15.00 and \$20.00 for non-members.

Please bring a pruning shears to cut the cedar with and items to decorate your finished wreath. We will have some pine cones available to use as decorations, but bring the ribbon, etc. that you want to decorate with. The straw wreath and cedar will be provided.

Please let Judy Hacker know if you plan to attend and if you are bringing guests along. 849-2654. If no one is home, please leave a message or feel free to email at plantdr47@gmail.com.

Level 2 Training Flowers and Landscapes

The UW-Extension Master Gardener Program "Level 2 Training" started on March 16 and needed to be completed by October 15. The cost was \$30. The lectures were all recorded so you could watch them as a video on your computer at your leisure. Documents were also included that you could download or print. There was also an area for "comments" after each section so you could type out questions or respond on the presented material if you wanted to. Everyone registered could see all the comments and responses. This added a little extra flavor to the assignments. The first session was on Botanical Gardens. This one was a little different since you had to pick one of the articles and write a few sentences on something that caught your interest in the article you read. Other sessions presented were on: Wildflower Gardens-woodland, meadow and home gardens; Cottage Gardens; Sensory Gardens (touch, taste, smell); Edible Landscaping; Sustainable Gardens--Meadows & Gravel Gardens; and Rain Gardens. These usually described the history of each one plus designing them, materials needed and flower suggestions. The last presentation was on Pollinators with photos of many varieties of them, threats they face and what we need to do to sustain and encourage their existence. The final quiz was just a few questions, mostly on what you learned and liked the most. It was a great presentation and worth the cost for all the material that was covered.

Master Gardener Calendar

- **Oct. 1** - Hours were due to Byron. If not turned in, please do so asap.
- **Oct. 21** - Master Gardener Banquet, Hickory Hills Country Club, Chilton
- **Nov. 1** - Daylight Savings time ends; turn your clock back 1 hour
- **Nov. 12** - Cedar Wreath Class, 6:00 pm, Courthouse, Room #020
- **Nov. 18** - Master Gardener Meeting, 6:30 pm
- **Nov. 26** - Happy Thanksgiving
- **Dec. 16** - Wine Tasting, 6:00 pm, Seven Angels, Chilton
- **Dec. 25** - Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays
- **Jan. 1** - Happy New Year—2016
- No January Meeting

Christmas Get Together – Wine Tasting

by Byron Hacker

This year we will be doing something different for our Christmas Get Together. Joan is “Off the Hook” for entertainment.

We will be doing a Wine Tasting Event at Seven Angels Restaurant on Wednesday, December 16, at 6:00 pm.

Cost for the event is \$10.00 for members and \$15.00 for guests. You must register to attend by December 1 so we can plan for the wine and food. Please call Byron or Judy to register: 849-2654 or email at plantdr47@gmail.com.

We will be sampling four different wines – have different cheeses, sausage, crackers, and desserts to compliment the wines. We will have different raffles for wines, etc. Different wines will be available for you to purchase that evening as well. Come to have fun that night and enjoy the good company while sampling different wines.



Fair Wrap Up

by Byron Hacker

A BIG thank you to everyone who helped at the Fair this year. Without all of you, we could not have made everything go the way it did. Judging went well on Thursday and Friday in the entire building. Pat and Byron are very grateful for how all of you pitched in and helped.

Antiques, Beer, and Wines were judged on Saturday and that also went on without any difficulties. The heat and humidity then set in and it was nearly unbearable in some parts of the building.

The Master Gardener Flower Exhibit received a blue ribbon again, but the judge stated she would have liked to see the flowers identified and for us to have a theme for the display. Thanks to Donna for the loaning of the MG T-shirt to have on display – because without that, we would have gotten a red – second placing.

Other than the heat, high humidity, and the cooler not working properly – everything was great. Thank You All Again!! Clean-up and check out on Monday went well. We were done and on the way home by 8:30 pm.

Master Gardener Booth

by Byron Hacker

Thank you to everyone who assisted with manning the Master Gardener Booth at the Fair. As a service to the public, many gardening questions were answered.

We sold a total of 36 cookbooks, not as many as last year. The big sellers were Soups; Casseroles; Desserts For Fall; Tomatoes, and Christmas Cookies/Candy.

We all had fun, but am certain we are all happy it is done for another year.

If you did work and have any suggestions for changes, improvements, etc., please let us know. We always welcome new ideas.

Colorado Potato Beetles Victimize Other Plants

By Ray Mueller

Although they carry “potato” in their name, Colorado potato beetles don't restrict themselves to feeding on potato foliage.

I had a first hand experience with that in mid-summer of 2015. As the potato vines lost most of their greenery and there was a three-week dry period from mid-July to early August, the maturing beetles which will be the egg layers next spring congregated on both tomato and ground cherry plants, stripping a few of them of all foliage.

A number of years ago, I noticed that the beetles fed on the early season growth of raspberries until the nearby potatoes emerged. Perhaps these pests need to be renamed.

With the gardening season rapidly coming to an end, most of our garden produce has been harvested, eaten, or preserved. The same holds true with most of the beds at the Community Garden.

As you are aware, we planted different kinds of beets, carrots, turnips and rutabagas at the garden with the intent of having all the different kinds of these root crops at the Fair for our display. However, with numerous inches of rain right before Fair, we could not get in there to harvest and bring these items to the Fair for the display. So what were we going to do with all of the produce? Answer - Farmers Market

All of the beets, turnips, and rutabagas have been sold for the last four weeks at the Chilton Farmers Market. The cylinder beets were the best seller, but the white and orange beets were a close second. Customers were very impressed with the white and orange beets, stating they were very sweet tasting, in comparison to the regular red beet.

Turnips also sold very well each week as customers who never tried them before came back the following week to buy more after trying them the previous week. Rutabagas were a favorite purchase for one man who came back each week to buy them. He stated that he would cut them up into small pieces, fry them in olive oil with seasoning until tender and then would eat them.

The carrots did not do as well in the Garden as we had hoped. The atomic red variety were very small in size and very few carrots were of any size to be used. The variety pack of multiple colors did much better, but again the carrots were not super sized. Much of this was probably due to the fact that we did not thin them properly, the hard ground, and lack of moisture early in the growing season.

The squash bed started slow with few

blossoms setting fruit, but after our dry spell – squash blossoms became quite productive. Customers at the Market were ordering buttercup and butternut squash. The acorn squash were small in size.

The big hit at the Community Garden was the zinnia bed – thanks to Jeanne Keuler. We plan to harvest seeds this year and the Community Garden Committee is already talking about requesting Master Gardeners to plant two beds of zinnias next year – one on each side of the metal Community Garden sign.

Thanks to everyone who assisted with all of the beds at the Garden. Weeds were a big problem, but it gets better each year. Coming from an old farm field to a garden plot – we have to expect such. Any ideas for planting of beds next year at the Garden, please let one of us know your thoughts.



Pepper Plant Persistence Pays

by Ray Mueller

One thing I like to do, in part because it works some of the time, is to save bell pepper plants at the end of a growing season by putting them into an adequate size container with the hope of having them produce for a second season.

During the winter, they obviously need to be kept inside, preferably in a spot as warm as possible and where there will be light or even direct exposure to the sun during the short days. The plants are likely to shed most of their leaves and not look too healthy.

I've probably tried this six times and it's succeeded three times. Once the new growing season arrives, the plants will

gradually leaf out again on their previous branch structure when they're put outside.

My best situation was 14 years ago when one of the plants that stayed alive during the winter was eventually carrying more than 20 bell peppers at the same time the next summer. I think that plant survived inside for even a second winter.

From the autumn of 2014, I saved three plants just before they would have frozen. All three survived the winter but barely.

Two of them leafed out nicely fairly early in the growing season and grew a

few peppers while sitting out on the patio. By early September, two of them were carrying six peppers each with the promise that a few more might set. The third plant lagged in leafing but it finally came around and was growing a few late season peppers.

I haven't done anything special with those. I didn't fertilize but I supply the leftover cooking water from the stove and use rainwater whenever some is available.



Lawn Venture Produces Food

by Ray Mueller

In the summer newsletter, I outlined how we tilled strips into what had been a lawn for probably 80 years or more to grow food there instead.

Here are some of the very pleasing results. Among the approximately 15 Yukon Gold potato plants, we harvested spuds weighing 25 and 23 ounces and a few others between 16 and 20 ounces. We should have entered them at the county fair because they would have won the heaviest potato prize.

They were grown without any fertilizer application but they were irrigated at times. The foliage did not suggest tubers that large but I've heard that potatoes do very well when grown in a new location. Best of all, there were no

Colorado potato beetles at this new site behind a house in downtown Chilton.

Because there is a lot more soil at the site where potatoes have probably never been grown, we're planning to grow many more there next year.

Another successful way that I have found to grow potatoes is in a discarded municipal garbage barrel and an old wash tub. Both are filled with soil and accommodate about 6 to 9 potato plants with total yields of up to 40 useable tubers every year.

I like to use discarded cooking water to nourish them. I haven't applied any basic fertilizer mix but I probably should do that next year.

The green bean plants in the new garden space were very healthy and productive. We had wonderful fresh beans plus lots of ripe seeds.

The 90 pepper plants of several varieties got off to a slow start but by mid to late August they were hanging heavy with fruits. Harvesting a bountiful crop continued into early October.

A cucumber plant fared fairly well and a few watermelon and muskmelon promised a few ripe fruits but they were hit by mildew by early August. As a result, the fruit didn't mature properly.

Double Trouble with Elderberries

by Ray Mueller

The single elderberry plant which survived from an original planting of six in the new backyard lawn garden is very healthy. But of the 25 which were planted this spring at two locations, only three are alive because very few of the seedlings had live roots. I informed the seller – Outagamie County Land and Water Conservation Department, which obtained them from a nursery – and I received a full refund.

Back in 2010, I ordered what were supposed to be elderberries but they turned out to be blueberries. So, trying to obtain elderberries in that way is something I probably should never try again.

Doubly troubling, however, is the fact that all of the diminishing number of elderberries which are surviving in the wild are being snatched by birds well

before they even ripen. This started with the drought of 2012 when the birds were seeking anything with moisture. They've evidently become addicted to elderberries



Radish Suited for Autumn Harvest

by Ray Mueller

For this autumn, I'm counting on getting a good supply of the cross-pollinated radish that I developed over the past several years. As cross-pollinated spring and late season radish, they don't develop bulbs (tubers) in their early season growth but once they blossom from late May to early July they're a tremendous attraction for honeybees.

By mid-August, the radish seeds are ripe. Instead of allowing them to self-plant (too crowded), I'll rub the seeds out of the pods on open soil. Merely a light raking provides enough seed to soil contact for germination as soon as it rains.

For the most part, these will develop as edible radish during October and early November. Fortunately, not all of the season's seeds will germinate in the late summer. Some carry over for enough volunteer plants the next spring. The backup plan is to save some of the podded big branches during the winter and scatter the seed in the spring.

In late August, a customer at the Chilton farmer's market who noticed the autumn Heritage raspberries I had for sale told me how he had cleansed the raspberries he had purchased from someone else earlier in the summer by soaking them in a vinegar to separate the little white worms that were in them.

Another suggestion is to separate the larvae in water that contains some salt. But I can't image doing either of these without making a mess of the raspberries.

He and probably most other customers, and even many grower/sellers, don't realize that they're dealing with the spotted wing drosophila (SWD). It was introduced in the United States from China and quickly spread across the country in about four years.

The pest's small fly has a stinger which lays eggs in raspberries that hatch into white larvae just as the berry ripens. It has also infested blueberries and a number of other sweet fruits. Growers of any significant number of raspberry canes are extremely lucky if they haven't got an infestation – one they might not be aware of.

In reaction, state departments of agriculture, including ours in Wisconsin, are engaged in identifying the presence of the pest and report infestations by county. By mid-August this year, the count of Wisconsin counties with an infestation officially reached 15 but it is likely that a great number of other infestations were never reported to the department for official tabulation.

The raspberries I have on a property in northeastern Fond du Lac County are one of those cases. I submitted infested raspberries two years ago and haven't bothered to do so again because I'm aware of the infestation I have.

But there is some good news – thanks to the efforts of Extension Service entomologists in Wisconsin and Michigan and at Cornell University in New York state. They've come up with a number of strategies to cope with the pest and I carried out one of them this year with some apparent success.

One of the Extension Service suggestions – the option I've chosen – is to drill 3/16 inch round holes in plastic containers such as 32-ounce yogurt cups – about 8 in the upper one-third of the container.

The next step is to put between one and two inches of apple cider vinegar with a dose of unscented dish detergent in the container and cover it. Those containers are then to be set very close to the raspberry patch. The brew is supposed to attract and drown the flies which would otherwise sting their eggs into the raspberries.

How did that work out for me this year? Surprisingly well – for a while. After about a week, the containers had quite a few of the SWD flies in the liquid. What was a great bonus was that a lot of the black picnic beetles were in there too.

The brine is supposed to be changed about once a week. By the end of August, I had made one change in the approximately one dozen containers that I set out. Because they're supposed to be close to where the raspberries are, I put plastic cases or buckets under the containers. Luckily, the wind didn't blow them over and no ground animals interfered either.

Once I got to picking the ripe raspberries in the last two weeks of August, very few of them contained one or more of the little white larvae. And there were no picnic beetles.

A year ago I had to discard a lot of raspberries because they obviously were infested with the SWD larvae. During about five weeks of harvesting the raspberries last autumn, I discarded more than enough berries to fill a 64-ounce container.

But this didn't mean there weren't any pests on the raspberries this year. There were some corn rootworm beetles that migrated from an adjacent corn field, a few large black flies, some very small black flies, and a few ants. Except for the ants, none of these had been a problem in the past.

Because I didn't have or take the time to redo the brine by early September, the infestation of SWD increased. At one point, I thought that all of the raspberries contained eggs. But the larvae hatch only when the berries are fully ripe or beyond (when they become soft).

For a couple of weeks, I was discarding about 15 percent of the raspberries because of the evident presence of SWD larvae or some other insect. But by mid-September degree of the SWD infestation seemed to drop somewhat and larvae were evident only in the berries that were too ripe.

Because the SWD survives the winter, I don't know how this year's apparent cutback in their reproduction will carry into next year. It's possible that the pest will migrate from other raspberry patches in the vicinity.

One preventive practice that the Extension Service advises but that is very difficult to carry out is not to allow any raspberries to fall to the ground. That makes it very easy for any larvae in them to become adults.

Pollinator Populations Face Multiple Stresses

by Ray Mueller

Plant Diversity an Ideal Way to Support Pollinators

As the concern about the fate of hundreds of species of pollinators that are essential for producing a significant part of the human food supply, there are several things that gardeners, farmers, and other property owners and managers can do to enhance and support those insects.

One way to be friendly to pollinators is to provide them with a diversity of flowering plants throughout the growing season, University of Wisconsin – Madison entomologist P J Liesch reminded attendees at a field day sponsored by the Northeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association in cooperation with the Brown County Extension Service office.

Array of Pollinators

Pollinators include bees, wasps, moths, butterflies, beetles, flies, and other insects, Liesch pointed out. He noted that Wisconsin has about 500 species of native bees, including about 10 of bumblebees and many which are characterized as solitary bees.

During less than two hours of checking the flowers and other plants on the grounds of the Brown County Agriculture and Extension Service Center, which was the host site for the field day, Liesch identified 24 pollinator species on the morning in the second week of August. He estimated that up to 100 could be found during a full day of observation.

Populations of bees and other pollinators have been declining due to habitat loss and fragmentation, virus and fungi diseases, parasites such as mites, pesticide applications on many parts of the landscape, and agricultural practices which have gravitated to monoculture on large tracts of land, Liesch explained.

Honeybee Buzz

Although much of the buzz about concern for bees pertains to honeybees, they are native to Europe, not North America, Liesch observed. Nonetheless, they were imported centuries ago and are integral to the production of many fruits and nuts, including melons, strawberries, and almonds in the United States and coffee and chocolate in other parts of the world, he pointed out.

Honeybees are susceptible to more than 20 viruses, a number of bacterial and fungal diseases, and both varroa and tracheal mites, Liesch stated. Nutrition and beekeeping practices also contribute to the survival problems of honeybees, he added.

Although the number of honeybee colonies in the United States has stabilized at about 2.5 million in the past decade, that number is down from approximately 5.6 million colonies in 1950. A special concern, because of the possibility of the spreading of disease or pests, that Liesch has is that 60 percent of today's commercial honeybee stock is taken to California every year to pollinate almonds.

Pesticide Concerns

While there is no doubt that several pesticides are toxic and fatal to honeybees, just how much of an impact they and other chemicals are having on the populations is not fully known or understood, Liesch remarked. The neonicotinoid class of insecticide has been targeted as a culprit but its effect could be reduced with lower application rates, he suggested.

Much research, including some at Harvard University, is being conducted on that possible linkage but no scientifically valid conclusions have been drawn, Liesch stated. He noted that that Harvard study was based on a neonicotinoid application at 500 times the recommended rate.

Solitary Bee Differences

Secondary or delayed effects are also possible but there is evidence that honeybees are able to detoxify an exposure to the imidacloprid class of insecticide, Liesch indicated. But that observation does not necessarily extrapolate to the fate of the wild solitary and bumblebees, he commented.

Populations of solitary bees and small bumblebee colonies are more vulnerable to pesticides and insecticides both because the loss of a single member has a much greater impact and because many of those native species depend on a narrow range of flowers for their sustenance, Liesch explained. He added that identifying the interactive effect of parasites, pesticides, and lack of certain types of flowers continues to “be murky” even for insect specialists.

Bee Friendly Practices

Regarding the availability of flowers, property owners can help native bees by establishing a collection of flowering plants that bloom at different times, Liesch advised. He suggested that a diversity is a great improvement over a landscape dominated by turf grass and pointed out that bees like flowers of the mint family species such as oregano and basil.

The space on the side of highways, especially interstates, could be populated with perennial prairie plants rather than having to be mowed, Liesch proposed. He suggested that persons concerned about the fate of bees talk about that with government officials.

Another bee friendly practice, Liesch continued, is to collect the hollow dried stems of prairie plants, raspberries, or roses, cut them into pieces of one or two feet, and group them in an open-ended container as a nesting site for the small native bees such as Mason bees. He noted that kits can be purchased for the same purpose.

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Pollinator Prospects

Liesch surmises that societal use of pesticides that probably affect one or more bee species will never be eliminated but urges everyone who uses them to have a valid reason for doing so. He also prescribes educating the public about what to do to enhance the habitat for pollinators.

When applying pesticides, choose a product that's the least toxic to bees, follow the directions, apply early or late in the day, don't apply to flowering plants, be aware that many weeds also are food sources for pollinators, and minimize drift, Liesch advised.

For more information, check the pollinator.org website or refer to the Xerces Society on an online search engine. Liesch can be reached by e-mail to pliesch@wisc.edu or on Twitter @WiBugGuy.text

Preventing Vegetable Plant Diseases a Multi-Step Venture

by Ray Mueller

By mid-August, it was too late now to deal with any diseases affecting vegetable plants this summer but it's not too early to limit the likelihood of similar outbreaks next year, University of Wisconsin Extension Service plant pathologist Brian Hudelson told attendees at a field day sponsored by the Northeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association.

Anyone who has diseased plants should remove and dispose of them for municipal composting, by deep burial, or, where allowed, by burning, Hudelson advised. The worst practice is to leave them in the vicinity of where similar vegetables are going to be grown the next year, he stated.

REPEAT Acronym

As a reference on what steps to take, Hudelson suggests the acronym REPEAT. He pointed out that what he already described is the first E – for Eradication.

The R is rotation of the crops, Hudelson indicated. He conceded that moving particular vegetables or members of a related family a great distance isn't too practical with a small garden space.

At a minimum, however, Hudelson advised keeping records or a chart as a way to plan for moving plants by as little as one foot the next year. For more guidance on rotation, he suggested checking the hort.uwex.edu website.

Sources of Disease

Another benefit of good records is identifying what varieties have weak resistance to disease and selecting different ones the next year, Hudelson stated. But this might also lead to loss of flavor in the produce, as could be the case with tomatoes prone to leaf blight, he observed.

Bacteria on seeds could be the source of one or more plant diseases, Hudelson pointed out. If there is any doubt, the seeds can be treated in hot water, he said. He also advised checking for where the seeds were grown, which should be in arid areas where irrigation is needed.

The plants obtained from a greenhouse or other commercial outlets can already be infected with a disease, Hudelson warned. For that reason, they should be checked before a purchase is made, he said.

Particular Concerns

When setting plants in a garden, be sure not to crowd them, Hudelson remarked. He said this is a particular concern with tomatoes, which need good air flow and should not be wet for long periods in order to avoid foliar blights.

For those practices, Hudelson assigns the acronym's A for Avoidance and an E for Exclusion. The T refers to Therapy, for which he recommended the University of Connecticut website as a good reference.

By therapy, Hudelson means applying water to plant roots with a soak or drip hose rather than by overhead spraying. It also includes paying attention to fertility and making any fungicide or chemical treatments before plants are infected.

For that, Hudelson assigns the P for Protection or Prevention. With plant diseases, timing is crucial because there are very few products for a cure or situations that would allow it, he stressed.

In most cases, there are only 24 to 48 hours to act after an infectious agent appears – well before symptoms are likely to appear, Hudelson pointed out.

Once a disease takes hold and is likely to destroy the produce, he said the best choice might be to patronize a farmer's market rather than to invest money and time in trying to salvage one's own vegetables.

Specific Observations

The fee for getting a plant disease diagnosis at the plant pathology laboratory in Madison is waived if the disease proves to be late blight, which typically strikes tomatoes and potatoes and has been identified in several locations around Wisconsin this summer, Hudelson noted.

There have also been lots of tomato viruses this year which have been traced to sales at big box stores or greenhouses in many cases, Hudelson reported. Among them are spotted wilt virus and others that are spread by thrips, he said.

On the grounds of the Brown County Agriculture and Extension Center, where the field day was held, Hudelson easily found tomatoes with blossom end rot. He explained that this is a virus, not a disease, that is caused by a lack of calcium or an uneven water supply and to which the Roma tomato is probably the most vulnerable.

Hudelson also found zucchini with warts, which indicates the presence of a virus. He also noted that cucumbers are vulnerable to several diseases, some of which are spread by cucumber beetles.

Gardeners should not use bark mulch that's available from municipalities because of the possibility that it could contain the verticillium wilt which infects vegetable plants, Hudelson advised. He would also check to be sure that any lawn grass clippings to be used as mulch had not recently been treated with a herbicide.



**CALUMET COUNTY
MASTER GARDENERS**

Courthouse
206 Court Street
Chilton, WI 53014

Phone: 920-849-1450
<http://calumet.uwex.edu>

Community Health Improvement Planning Meeting

The Healthiest Calumet County Steering Committee cordially invites you to participate in a community health improvement planning meeting.

Meetings will be held on two dates at two locations. You may choose to attend either meeting:

Thursday, October 15
5:30-7:00 pm, Community Room
Calumet Medical Center, Chilton

Tuesday, October 20
5:30-7:00 pm, Rooms A and B
Brillion Community Center

A free dinner will be provided to all participants.

These meetings will bring together community members and leaders interested in improving the health of Calumet County. Attend a meeting to help identify community health priorities and to enhance action plans to make a positive impact on the health status of the county.



Help Calumet County work
toward the vision of:

Everyone Living Better, Longer

Everyone is welcome!

For more information or to RSVP, please call 920-849-1432 or 920-989-2700, ext. 432, or email healthdept@co.calumet.wi.us.

Please RSVP by Monday, October 12.