

# North Country Gardeners

Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Co.

UW-Extension Cooperative Extension

Issue 21, August 2010

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## Greetings!

It has been a while since we have seen gardens, flowers, and lawns as green and lush as they are this year. Overall it's been a great gardening year; however, it's also been a great year for leaf diseases. You name it, blights, spots, specks, mildews, or rots. The rain and humidity have challenged even the veteran gardeners. Just another reminder that we have to be vigilant with our gardening techniques and that there is always something to learn.

Speaking of learning, we would like to remind everyone about our annual twilight garden tour at the Spooner Ag Research Station Display Gardens on Tues. Aug 24. As usual there will be a full slate of speakers, displays and demonstrations, all made possible by the efforts of UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. The gardens look wonderful and we look forward to another great evening of education and socializing.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter. Thanks to all who contributed and helped put it together.

Happy Gardening,

Kevin Schoessow  
UW-Extension Ag Development Agent  
[kevin.schoessow@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:kevin.schoessow@ces.uwex.edu)

Russ Parker  
President  
North Country Master Gardeners Association

## Annual Twilight Garden Tour Tuesday, August 24

The public is invited to attend the annual twilight garden tour at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station on Tuesday, August 24 from 4:00 p.m. until dusk.

Speakers at this year's event include Judy Reith-Rozelle, from UW-Madison West Madison Research Station; Rebecca Harbut, UW-Extension Fruit Crop Specialist; and UW-Extension Horticulture Specialist Brian Smith. These specialists along with other local UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteers will be on hand to lead discussions and answer questions on a wide range of horticulture and gardening topics.

Several demonstration and displays are being planned. There will be demonstrations on composting, pepper grilling, and fresh salsa making. Also featured will be a demonstration of the new high tunnel hoophouse under construction at the display garden. UW-Extension Master Food Preservers will be on hand to answer questions on canning and preserving fruits and vegetables. In addition to the speakers there will be a tasting table of all available ripe vegetable varieties.

The demonstration garden is a joint effort between the UW-Madison Spooner Agricultural Research Station, UW-Extension and North Country Master Gardeners Association. The garden is free and open to the public August through September for self-guided tours. Guided tours are available M-F 8a.m.-4:30 p.m. by appointment.

**University of Wisconsin-Extension  
Area Agricultural Agents Office  
Spooner Ag Research Station  
W6646 Highway 70  
Spooner, Wisconsin 54801  
(715) 635-3506 or  
Toll Free 800-528-1914**

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## Master Gardener Volunteer Timesheets Due September 15, 2010

*Sue Reinardy*

*Master Gardener Volunteer*

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered this gardening season. There is one more clean-up activity for all Master Gardener Volunteers to complete: fill out your 2010 timesheet and send it to the Spooner office.

Here are the steps:

1. Download a copy of the current timesheet from: <http://wimastergardener.org/?q=Timesheets>
2. List your volunteer activities and continuing education hours. Master Gardeners will be recertified who have completed at least 24 hours of youth education, adult education or community service and 10 hours of continuing education. Even if you miss a year, you can recertify if you complete the hours the next year. The volunteer year is October 1 through September 30. However, since we need to submit reports before September 30 – you can either anticipate or report them the following year.
3. Send the completed timesheet by September 15 to:

Kevin Schoessow  
Area Agriculture Development Agent  
Spooner Area UW-Extension  
Spooner Agriculture Research Station  
W6646 Hwy 70 Spooner, WI 54801

Our contributions are important to our communities and as government resources continue to be stretched, accounting for these services helps the Master Gardener Program be accountable to decision makers. According to the Wisconsin Master Garden Program Coordinator Susan Mahr: “This is a government-funded program, with UW-Extension, and as with any other public-funded program we have to show taxpayers how their money is being spent and any returns on their investment. All of the contributions of MGVs throughout the state are compiled annually in an annual accomplishment report that documents the contributions of MGVs in their communities and the value of that service to the public. The more accurately we can portray the program, the better.”

## Specialized Master Gardener Training Offered

*Kevin Schoessow*

*Area Ag Development Agent*

*Burnett, Washburn & Sawyer Counties*

The Fall 2010 Advanced Master Gardener Program will be offered starting Tuesday Sept. 28 through Tuesday Nov. 30. The topic is on ornamental trees and shrubs, landscaping and lawns. All sessions will be broadcast live from UW-Madison via distance education to various sites throughout the state. Site locations have not been selected yet. Potential sites for our area have not been determined. Site location(s) will be selected depending on interest. If you are interested in this training we need to know. Sites need to be register with Bob Tomesh by Sept 1. For more information and to acknowledge your interest in a potential site contact Kevin at 1-800-528-1914 or 715-635-3506. Cost for the 10 sessions will be \$100.

## Plant Saver

*Nancy Axelson*

*Master Gardener Volunteer*

How frustrating to walk to your garden to view your beautiful plants, only to discover they are gone or damaged! The deer paid a visit again or was it a rabbit or another unwanted visitor? Several plants are deer resistant but many are not.

There is a commercial product called Plant Saver All Natural Deer Repellent that keeps unwanted visitors away. It is a powdery, organic product that is available in a two pound bag. It has smaller bags included to fill with the repellent. Hang the bags on stakes in your flower and vegetable garden. Place them on your fruit trees at the nose height of a deer.

This method lasts up to 6 months and is not affected by the rain. It can also be sprinkled on the ground around the edge of your garden. This method only lasts 6-8 weeks. We have used this product for several years and it is very reliable. It is made in Arbor Vitae, WI. For more information, their web address is [www.cedarcreekproducts.com](http://www.cedarcreekproducts.com).

## Hoophouse Field Day

*Kevin Schoessow*

*Area Ag Development Agent*

*Burnett, Washburn & Sawyer Counties*

A workshop on constructing and using hoophouses for fruit and vegetable production will be held on Monday August 23 from 4-7 p.m. at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station east of Spooner on Hwy 70. The workshop will cover basic information about growing fruits and vegetables in a hoop house along with information on site selection and tips and challenges of hoop house construction.

Growing and marketing fresh fruits and vegetables is a challenge in our short growing season. Hoop houses, sometimes called a seasonal high tunnel, can extend the grow-

ing and marketing season by allowing produce to start earlier and continue latter in the season.

Rebecca Harbut, UW-Extension Fruit Crop Specialist will discuss the basic cultural practices of growing fruits and vegetables under plastic high tunnels. Participants will see a recently constructed hoophouse at the Research Station and learn important techniques to proper hoophouse construction and design. Information on cost share assistance on hoophouse construction will also be available.

Cost of the workshop is \$5, preregistration is appreciated. This event is sponsored by Burnett, Washburn and Sawyer County UW-Extension and the USDA- Natural Resource Conservation Service. For more information and to register contact Lorraine Toman at the Spooner Area UWEX office at 715-635-3506 or 1-800-528-1914.

## North Country Master Gardener Volunteers Website

*Sue Reinardy*

*Master Gardener Volunteer*

North Country now has its own web address within the Wisconsin State Master Gardener Program website. You will find current events and access to the recent newsletter and a link to the Spooner Research Garden site. Add the site to your favorites: [wimastergardener.org/?q=NorthCountry](http://wimastergardener.org/?q=NorthCountry)

Contact Sue Reinardy at [sreinardy@centurytel.net](mailto:sreinardy@centurytel.net) to add events, pictures or links that will be of interest to our local gardeners.

Also check out the revamped Wisconsin Master Gardener Program website. It is newly designed with easy navigation. The site features University of Wisconsin Extension publications and bulletins, horticultural articles, links to other sites, and Master Gardener program information. The web address is: [wimastergardener.org](http://wimastergardener.org)

## Is This Poisonous?

*Susan Armstrong*

*UWEX Summer Horticulture Assistant*

Over time, I've developed a misconception that the word "organic" when used to describe pesticides, implies safety, or non-toxic. But after a little reading, I'm reminded that organic doesn't necessarily mean safe and synthetic doesn't automatically mean dangerous. Organic pesticides are usually pesticides that come from natural sources, such as plants. The toxicity of a garden pesticide is indicated by its "Signal Word" which is always present on the front of the pesticide label. Signal words relate directly to a product's toxicity using a standardized test called "LD50." This number is determined the same way for all pesticides whether organic or synthetic, and it represents the number of milligrams of pesticide per kilogram of body weight to cause 50% of a population of test animals to die as a result of exposure. LD50 means "Lethal Dose 50%." The higher the LD50 of a pest control product the LESS toxic it is.

This can be a very confusing, so the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a series of "Signal Words" that are incorporated in the labels of pesticides and numerous household products in order to place them in the correct toxicity category. Signal words are an easier way to evaluate the toxicity of a product if you know what they mean. Pesticide signal words relate directly to the LD50 of a product. This chart shows the oral, inhalation, dermal and eye and skin effects for each signal word category. The designation of mg/kg or mg/l is the same as "parts per million."

Signal Word	Caution (Level 1)	Caution	Warning	Danger & Danger Poison
Oral LD50	Over 5000 mg/kg	500-5000 mg/kg	50-500 mg/kg	Less than 50 mg/kg
Inhalation LD50*	Over 20 mg/l	2-20 mg/l	0.2-2 mg/l	Less than 0.2 mg/l
Dermal LD50	Over 5000 mg/kg	2000-5000 mg/kg	200-2000 mg/kg	Less than 200 mg/kg
Eye Effects	No irritation	Reverses in 7 days	More than 7 days	Corrosive
Skin Effects**	Mild irritation	Moderate irritation	Severe irritation	Corrosive

\* Inhalation LD50 is shown in mg/liter of air  
 \*\* skin effects are after 72 hours of exposure

By using the risk calculation, the EPA can decide to limit uses for specific products or to eliminate them entirely from the market. Exposure is the variable component of the calculation while toxicity is the constant. Risk can be reduced by reducing exposure.

Some products including organic and synthetic pest control products don't require an EPA signal word on the label. This list of about 40 products includes many plant based oils, such as pyrethrum (pyrethins), rotenone or ryania (botanical insecticides), and mineral products such as boric acid, cryolite, or diatomaceous earth. The EPA is very clear that it does not endorse these products and that the manufacturers must meet specific requirements to maintain a "Non-Reviewed" status.

Ultimately the choice to use or not use a pesticide is up to the individual. The assumption of safety of organic products or toxicity of synthetics is far less important than understanding and following the product directions carefully, and using common sense when applying products to your house or garden. The opportunity for misapplication and increased risk does not come from the toxicity of a product as much as exposure from a misapplication.

Regardless whether a pesticide is organic or synthetic, there are no safe pesticides. Safety is in the choice of the right product, and *application according to label directions*. A Clemson University article titled "How to Use Homeowner Pesticides Safely" details safe application practices and is available at the following site <http://entweb.clemson.edu/pesticide/saftyed/PIP20hom.pdf>.

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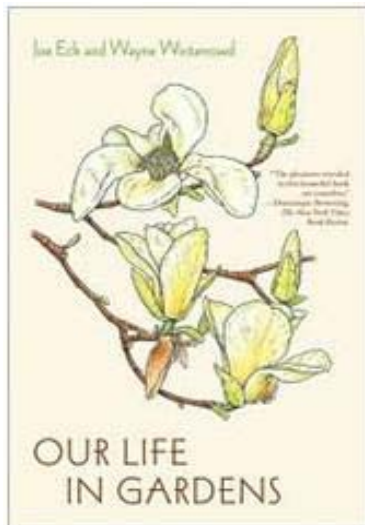
## Book Review

### Our Life in Gardens

*Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd*

*Sue Reinardy*

*Master Gardener Volunteer*



Published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Available in Hardcover \$25-\$30 and in Paperback \$12-15

Used books are also available on-line.

Most garden books give plant profiles organized by type. This book is a series of stories profiling favorite plants of the authors. It is perfect as a bedside book in the winter, each chapter just long enough for a good read before you fall asleep.

The authors tell their experience in creating gardens on their property in Vermont. You can relate to their trials of gardening in a northern zone much like ours. The book contains sound advice for designing gardens and growing plants in less than ideal conditions. There are chapters on such subjects as arborvitae, daffodils, forcing branches, hardiness, lilacs, poppies, roses, sempervivums, and willows. There are other chapters on their experiments with less hardy plants for their location. Although they have a greenhouse that helps them grow tender perennials.

After reading the chapter on hellebores (also known as Lenten Roses), I decided to give them a try. I had never heard of this plant, but being a zone 4 perennial meant I might have a chance of success. My “test” plant did well last winter and bloomed from mid-April to mid-June. I’ve bought a few more plants. It is fast becoming a favorite of mine.

You may have enjoyed reading the author’s work in [Horticulture](#) magazine under the tag “NorthHill Notes”. This book is very similar to those articles. I might just have it by my bedside again this winter. Now that I have started making hypertufa pots, the chapter on sempervivums will need to be reread.

## Q & A on Spring Bulbs

*Sue Reinardy*

*Master Gardener Volunteer*

- 1. Why plant spring bulbs in the fall?** The life cycle of spring flowering bulbs are very different than other types of plants. The bulbs are dormant all summer and will start to send out roots once the soil temperatures are below 50 degrees. So right before the bulbs start sending out roots is the best time to plant. Be sure to plant approximately six weeks before the ground freezes to allow sufficient time for rooting.
- 2. Why do the best bulbs ship late?** Bulbs in general, and especially daffodils, need to mature after harvesting. Harvest time for most bulbs is the end of July through the beginning of August. The vast majority of spring bulbs come from Holland. The bulbs are dug by machine and dropped on the soil to dry in the open air. The bulbs lose about 20 percent of their water weight by the end of August. If this drying period is cut short, fungus will grow and damage the bulbs. Once dried and boxed, the bulbs are shipped from Holland to the United States, taking another couple of weeks. The earliest you can expect to receive a high quality bulb is late September if the proper harvest is honored.
- 3. Why are tulips short-lived?** A common frustration – you buy high quality tulip bulbs, plant and enjoy the display the next spring. But the following spring, all you get is a smattering of flowers and a bunch of leaves. What happened? Tulips have been cultivated to produce big blooms that take a lot of energy from the bulb resulting in a smaller display each year. If you are interested in a tulip with a longer life try Darwin Hybrids, Fosterians and wild tulip species.
- 4. Are there bulbs suitable for a shade garden?** There are many bulbs that can be planted in a shade garden under deciduous trees. The earlier varieties are best so they can get about six weeks of sun before the tree leaves shade them out and they go into their dormant period. Try Snowdrops, Crocus, Siberian Squill, Winter Aconite, Glory-of-the-Snow, Daffodils, Muscari, Scilla and Alliums.
- 5. What are the best bulbs for forcing this winter?** Try Paperwhite Narcissus, Amaryllis, large-flowering Crocus, Hyacinth, Colchicum, Muscari, or Iris. The easiest are Paperwhite Narcissus and Amaryllis since they need no cooling. You can keep the bulbs dry and at room temperature until planting for up to four weeks. There are many new Paperwhites that have stronger stems to avoid staking and milder fragrance that wouldn’t overpower your indoor spaces. Try ‘Israel’ (‘Omri’), ‘Nazareth’ (‘Yael’), ‘Jerusalem’ (‘Sheleg’), or ‘Bethlehem’ (‘Nony’). Check the instructions that come with the bulbs for the proper cooling time. For example, Crocus, Daffodils, Glory of the Snow, Hyacinths, Irises, Scillas, and Tulips all need about 15 weeks of cooling before planting.



## Life Cycle of Spring Flowering Bulbs

Fall -- Plant when soil temperatures are below 50 degrees – October. Water well. Protect against squirrels.



Summer -- Plants are dormant. Bulbs can remain in place, be divided or removed and stored in a dry, cool location until fall planting time.



Winter--Protect from thaw/freeze cycles and early, warm weather with a mulch. Remove mulch when leaves emerge.

Spring -- Enjoy the show—protect from rabbits & deer if not resistant. Remove spent flower stem. Leaves should remain until brown and can be pulled easily.

## Stretch Your Garden Budget This Fall

Sue Reimardy

Master Gardener Volunteer

Fall is a great time to stretch your garden budget. Saving money by overwintering your plants is an easy way to multiply what you have already available in your garden. Many tender perennials are grown as annuals in our area; but by properly overwintering them we can have them for many years rather than just one. And often saving tender perennials will result in a larger plant the following year since it has had time to more fully mature. Here's some ways to save what you already have available:

**Cuttings:** About 30 days prior to the first frost date, start taking cuttings. By taking cuttings prior to the end of the growing season, they will have time to become established before the low light of winter. Taking a cutting will reduce the amount of space needed to over winter the plant. There is a

long list of plants that can be propagated from cuttings; try it with coleus, begonias, fuchsia, and geranium to name just a few.

**Saving seeds:** If you have a favorite plant it may be worth it to save some seeds. Self-pollinated plants are the easiest to save and include: beans, endive, lettuce, peas, and tomatoes. You can also save many heirloom flower seeds such as: cleome, foxgloves, hollyhock, nasturtium, sweet pea, and zinnia. Keep the seeds cool and dry in a sealed container. The refrigerator or freezer would be best, but a cool spot in your basement will do okay.

**Over winter tender plants:** Many tropical perennials that we grow as annuals will do well if they are brought indoors in a pot and placed in a southern window. This will give them the best growing conditions since the winter sun is relatively weak. Remember to check for insect pests before you bring them indoors. An insecticide soap wash may help you avoid trouble later. Once you have the plants indoors, give them plenty of

room for good air circulation to avoid diseases like mildew. Some plants that will do well with this method include: hibiscus, impatiens, lantana, and pentas.

**Store tender bulbs:** Many plants that have a bulb, corm or tuber and that are not winter hardy can be stored in the dark of your basement. After the first frost, dig the bulb and trim off the herbaceous growth so just the tuber is left. Allow the bulbs to cure for a few days in a warm, dry location. Some tubers like dahlia and canna do well in a dark, damp location (try some damp peat most inside a storage container). Others like gladiolus and elephant's ear like it dark and dry (try a paper bag or onion sack and hang from the rafters). The ideal temperature is 35-50 degrees which is often difficult to find in our modern homes, so find as cool a spot in your basement or garage that you can as long as it doesn't freeze. Check every month or so for rotten bulbs that need to be discarded.

**Sale plants:** Sometimes you may run across a close-out sale in the fall that is just too good to pass up. As long as the plants look healthy and you can get a good price — you might want to take advantage of the deal. You can place these plants into a garden area and cover the entire plant with lots of mulch. Of course this only works with plants that are close to our zone hardiness. Be prepared to lose a few, so make sure to take some plant loss into consideration before you buy.

If you want to learn more, there are many available resources; try an Internet search using "overwinter tender perennials". You also might want to consult: Seed Savers Exchange [www.seedsavers.org/](http://www.seedsavers.org/) and the book — *Bulbs in the Basement Geraniums on the Windowsill*, by Alice and Brian McGowan.

# A School Garden

Nancy Reis

Master Gardener Volunteer

Have you ever stood in the garden, unwrapped a garlic and felt the burst of a crunchy clove in your mouth (and decided it was delicious?) Or, bitten into a nasturtium, feeling the peppery sting on your tongue, or felt the soothing “cucumbery” effects of a blue borage blossom on your taste buds? If you have then you know what flavors some children have experienced in the Spooner Elementary “Helping Hands Garden.”

This school garden got its wood, fence and soil beginning from donated materials and labor in the spring of 2007. The philosophical ground work began years before that when a handful of NCMGV approached the school system with the “school garden” idea. It grew from that handful to include many more people, and most importantly, children became involved.

Students receive weekly horticulture lessons from the Wisconsin Farm to School Americorps Program Initiative Instructors. In early spring under the guidance of those instructors and NCMGV volunteers, kindergarten, first and second grade students plant lettuce to be grown in the mobile garden cart housed within the school building. Each class will celebrate with a salad tasting event when the lettuce matures.

Third graders plant tomato and pepper seeds. At the appropriate time, they will transplant these seedlings and when they become too large for the mobile garden cart they are adopted by the high school horticulture class and finished off in the greenhouse at the high school. Before school is out for the summer, third grade students plant these same tomato and pepper plants in some of the eight raised beds in the Helping Hands garden. As fourth graders, when school begins in the fall, they will harvest these and other vegetables which will be used in the school food service department. In the 2000-2008 year, for instance, over 110 pounds of produce from the Helping Hands garden found its way to the food service and back to students meals.

After school 4-H and summer school programs have provided volunteers for watering and care of the garden. Some years the produce is donated to the local food shelves when school is not in session.

Along the path of learning to garden, students help turn the compost pile, squash the bugs that damage and help the beneficials to survive. They paint the wood tomato support cages and thin the carrots, pick the beans and just can't wait until its time to pull onions, kohlrabi and potatoes. Most of the happenings in the garden are recorded in the garden journals, one for each raised bed, plus a sign in journal.

To guide the efforts in the garden and related activities, the Got Dirt? Garden Initiative has adopted: “Childhood obesity and its related consequences are increasing in Wisconsin’s youth. Nutrition research supports the role of increased fruit and vegetable consumption for prevention of cancer, heart disease and obesity.” (Got Dirt? Garden ToolKit for Implementing Youth Gardeners. Made possible by funding from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Obesity Prevention Grant-Cooperative Agreement #US8/DPO01494)

The Got Dirt? Garden Initiative has grown among area school districts as well as in our own. Students now enjoy an additional garden created this year at the middle school. Please take time to view and enjoy these gardens in our community.

## Calendar of Events

**August 19, 2010:** Burnett 4-H Youth Garden Tour, for information: contact the Burnett County UWEX Office at 715-349-2151.

**August 19-22, 2010:** Sawyer County Fair.

**August 20, 2010:** NCMG day trip to Winter.

**August 21, 2010:** Spooner Sheep Day, Spooner Ag Research Station.

**August 21-22, 2010:** Renewable Energy and Resource Fair, Polk County Fairgrounds.

**August 23, 2010:** Hoophouse Workshop, Spooner Ag Research Station.

**August 24, 2010:** Twilight Garden Tour, Spooner Ag Research Station Display Garden.

**August 26-29, 2010:** Grantsburg Fair.

**September 14, 2010:** Professional Tree Pruning Workshop, Spooner Ag Research Station.

**September 18, 2010:** Sheep Pasture Walk, Steve Miles Farm, Hayward.

## Wisconsin Gardener TV



**August 26 at 7:03 a.m. and August 28 at 10:30 a.m. - *The End of the Season is Just the Beginning*** - The days may be getting shorter but the growing season is far from over. Host Shelley Ryan travels to Rotary Gardens in Janesville to look at perennials and annuals that do not even reach their peak until fall.

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## Tour of Saffert Gardens

*Mary Burnham*

*Master Gardener Volunteer*

Recently we toured the garden of Marilyn Saffert, a Barron County master gardener and member of the Rice Lake garden club. Marilyn's garden has been chosen from hundreds of applications to be featured (along with two other gardens) in the fall 2011 issue of *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Country Garden* magazine.

Marilyn took two hours of her time to give a tour to the North Country master gardeners (and their guests.) She spent a great deal of time giving us plant information and ideas on planting combinations. The fact that the photographers were coming the very next morning did not deter her from giving a very informational tour. The tour began with a look in the barn, where old tools are displayed and hundreds of deer antlers are stored for future garden art projects. Marilyn's husband Paul is quite an artist in his own right. Marilyn paints on a canvas of plant textures and colors, while Paul uses found materials and repurposes them into garden structures and free-standing structural sculptures.



As you leave the barn, you are faced with a large palladium window in an open courtyard, giving you a peek into other gardens. It was some time before I realized that the window was a mirror reflecting the view behind me! This was so subtly done that it both charmed and surprised me. In this area was also a succulent garden. Plants were “trough” planted in different shaped planters set at different heights. We were treated to the sight of many ornate Victorian-style birdhouses, created by Paul, set in the planting beds on wooden posts. Each house was unique, with a plan to surprise and delight the viewer. We came across an old dog house that had been covered in field stone and shingled with a living roof made of moss roses as a tribute to a much loved pet. The highlight, for many people, was the Fairy Garden. A miniature castle had been created from concrete. The courtyard of the castle was planted with miniature plants made to look as if they were trees and shrubs in a palace garden. The garden was also outfitted with miniature garden furniture.

Next to the Fairy Garden was an old shed that was cleverly decorated with vintage windows, picture frames and mirrors. A beautiful shade garden of ferns, vines and perennials stood in front of this building. Walking forward, we noticed an intricate pergola, shaped with the arching form of an old cathedral and made from limbs and trees from the property. Hardy grape vines climbed one end of this structure. When you entered you noticed a yellow brick road (made of yellow tile) and a pair of mosaic ruby slippers just waiting to be slipped on! All of the Wizard of Oz characters were there too. There are many functional and artistic features that have been created by Paul. There is a usable gazebo, with benches for sitting that was created using 1300 horse-shoes. He has also created a life sized horse sculpture and several benches using this same medium.

An apple tree has been planted in honor of the birth of each grandchild. Only they are allowed to pick apples from those trees. In the open area of the orchard is a medieval sun calendar based on the months of the year. This sundial is made up of stone blocks engraved with the months of the year. To properly tell the time, you must stand on the right portion of the stone to reflect the correct time of the month. We tried it—it's pretty accurate.

Marilyn tells us that her garden is as low maintenance as possible. Due to the size of their property (5 acres) it is impossible to pull a hose around, so the plants are dependent on Mother Nature. She cleans out the garden in both the spring and fall. Make life easier—it's a good motto for us all to live by. Her gardens are quite varied in content. She has many types of grasses and perennials with different foliage colors. She especially likes the chartreuse colored foliage which adds a pop in interest to any area. Marilyn has both Asiatic and Day Lilies which infuse her garden with a riot of color and a waft of perfume. I noticed a tic-tac-toe board, set into a frame and elevated to table height. The board was planted with alternating Scottish/Iris moss to give that variance of color from light to dark. This is very similar to quilting with plants. The old fashioned petunias grew like a living room rug. Marilyn told us that they have been self-seeding for years. Paul rakes around the bed to keep them neat and orderly.

The Safferts have many vignettes that offer a place to sit and smell the flowers and reflect on the beauty of the day. As our day comes to an end, Marilyn points us toward a long springy board that is positioned on legs with a curve. She sits down and tells us that it is a “jiggle board.” Encouraging us to try it, she tells us that it's fun and that gardening should be fun.

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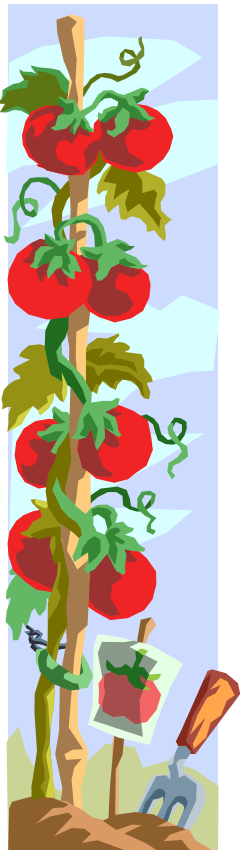
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**UWEX Area Ag Agents Office**  
Spooner Agricultural Research Station  
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Spooner, WI 54801

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Visit us on the web! You may find this newsletter and other useful information by visiting the website of the Spooner Ag Research Station.  
<http://www.cals.wisc.edu/ars/spooner>



# North Country Gardeners Newsletter

A publication for gardening enthusiasts from the  
Tri-County area of Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn