

# Gardener's Newsletter

Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Co.

UW-Extension

Issue 2 , August 1999

## In This Issue

*Welcome*

*Twilight Garden Tour*

*Fall Master Gardener Training*

*Fall Gardening Tips*

*Calendar of Events*

*Corn Gluten Meal*

*Volunteer Opportunity*

*Septoria Leaf Spot & Early Blight*



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## Welcome

I hope every one is enjoying the gardening season so far. It has been an interesting season --at least in the weather department. What looked like a repeat of last summer's drought conditions in May soon changed with the rains and storms of July and August.

I got several responses about the start up of a newsletter. Everyone thought it was a great idea and I hope to get more input from gardeners like yourself for the next issue. **Please let me know if you have suggestions for topics or if you would like to add an event or meeting to the calendar.**

As far as a group name, several suggestions were made. They include: Tri-County Gardeners, North Country Gardeners, Far North Gardening, Up North Gardening, and Compost Happens. Cast your vote or add a new name by calling 635-3506 or 1-800-528-1914.

Happy Gardening,

Kevin Schoessow  
Area Ag Development Agent

## Twilight Garden Tour-September 1 Spooner Ag Research Station

The annual twilight garden tour is schedule for Wednesday, September 1 starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Spooner Ag Research Station Display Garden. As in the past this event will allow area gardeners a chance to view some of the different flower and vegetable varieties suitable for northwestern Wisconsin. UW-Extension Horticulture Specialists Dr. Bob Tomesh and Dr. Helen Harrison will be guest speakers and will be available to help answer your horticulture questions. In addition to admiring and learning about this year's varieties we will attempt a tasting of some of the produce in the garden.

This year's display garden has been organized and maintained by several local Master Gardeners. In addition to the vegetable and flower garden there is also several perennial flowers, landscape plants, and fruits for your viewing. Come out and see what's growing and enjoy an evening talking and meeting with fellow gardeners.

The display garden is located on Orchard Lane across from the Sheep Research facility. Orchard Lane is approximately one mile east of Spooner on Highway 70, just before the Historical Marker Park and the Yellow River bridge. Watch for garden tour signs.

# General Master Gardener Training Program offered this fall

Kevin Schoessow

Area Ag Development Agent

UW-Extension for Burnett, Washburn and Sawyer Counties will be sponsoring the General Master Gardener Training Program. There will be 12 consecutive weekly training sessions. The program is scheduled to begin Tuesday evening, September 14 and continue through Tuesday, November 30. One training site will be at the Spooner Ag Research Station. An additional site in either Hayward or Siren will be considered if there is enough participants for those locations.

Many of you may have already gone through the Master Gardener Program, but if you have not, now is your chance to participate. Enclosed is a registration brochure along with the session schedule. If you have taken the training already, share the brochure with a friend or neighbor. The cost of the program is \$70, which includes the Handbook for Wisconsin Gardeners and the student manual. The printed materials alone are worth the \$70.

If you have taken the Master Gardener Training and would like to brush up on a particular topic, just let me know. If there is room, you are more than welcome. **Actually, I could use some help facilitating some of the sessions. I will be out of town for the October 12 and October 19 sessions. If Siren and Hayward are added as sites, I will need additional help at those locations, too. If you would like to help out give me a call 635-3506 or 1-800-528-1914.**



## Fall Gardening Tips

- Clean up vegetable garden.
- Take out annuals.
- Mow or rake up leaves from lawn.
- Rake up diseased leaves from trees and shrubs--destroy or hot compost.
- Fertilize lawn before ground freezes--use at least 35% slow release nitrogen. Be extra careful on waterfront property.
- Start some compost.
- Dig tender bulbs.
- Start spring bulbs.
- Cut back perennials.
- Plant garlic, mulch when ground freezes.
- Water in perennials, trees, and shrubs for winter.
- Fence off shrubs or trees to protect from rabbits, mice, and voles.
- Clean and sharpen tools.
- Put up bird feeders.
- Mulch perennials (ONLY after ground freezes) with marsh hay (fewer weeds) or shredded leaves.

## Calendar of Events



**September 1, 1999** Twilight Garden Tour, 6 p.m. , Spooner Ag Research Station.

**September 14 - November 30, 1999** General Master Gardener Training, Tuesday evenings, 5:15 - 8:30 p.m., Spooner Ag Research Station.

**September 24, 1999** Brown Bag ETN, *Perennials...Info Sites*, Learn to search the web for information on perennials, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. County Extension Offices.

**October 1, 1999** Hybrid Poplar Field Day, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. , Spooner Ag Research Station

**October 29, 1999** Brown Bag ETN, *Initiating Hunger Prevention Projects for the year 2000*, Explore implementation of programs that address hunger needs by sharing garden produce, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. County Extension Offices

**Public Radio Garden Show**, Friday mornings 11:00a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 88.3 on your FM radio dial.

**If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please call 800-528-1914 to request removal from our mailing list.**

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## Corn Gluten Meal—A herbicide/fertilizer or rodent food??

*Kevin Schoessow*  
*Area Ag Development Agent*

Every year there seems to be new weed control or fertilizer products on the market that make claims to be natural, organic, or environmentally friendly. One of these products I have received calls about recently has been corn gluten meal. Corn gluten meal is a by-product of the corn syrup making process. A few years back a researcher at Iowa State discovered corn gluten meal suppressed root growth development in germinating plants. This led to further investigation of using corn gluten meal as an organic weed control product. As a result of this initial research, corn gluten meal is being sold as an all-natural weed control product.

To learn more about this product, I talked with several of my colleagues and did a search on the Internet. What I discovered, of course, were varying opinions on the product. There is research documenting the effectiveness of this product as a weed control product and as a fertilizer. All the research I found was done mainly by one researcher from Iowa and most of this has been in turf. I also learned that it may take repeated yearly applications to get adequate weed control and it may be cost prohibitive. I called a supplier of the product for prices. One 50-lb bag cost \$27.50 plus \$12 shipping. One bag will treat approximately 2500 square feet. This product is a preemergence herbicide and will only control weeds at the time of germination. Since it is 100% corn gluten meal, which is primarily protein, it has a fertilizer analysis of 10-1-0 according to the manufacturer. One potential problem with the product is that it may attract rodents. Since it is a protein by-product, mice, rabbits and other rodents may be attracted to it.

If you are interested in using this product or any other new product in your lawn or garden, make sure you read and understand the claims that are being made. Are they based on testimonials, or do they have unbiased research to support those claims? What application rates are needed? What is the cost per unit? How long will it last? Is it appropriate for northern Wisconsin growing conditions? These are some of the questions I would be asking before I bought a new product. And then to make sure it was the right product for me, I would do a little experiment of my own. A simple, side-by-side comparison is all that is needed. Compare the new product to either an untreated control or to an area treated with a product that you know works.

## Opportunity for volunteer hours

*Sheri Snowbank*  
*UW-Extension Program Assistant*

Last year the Spooner office of the Department of Natural Resources applied for a competitive grant to develop a series of shoreland demonstration sites at the Spooner Fish Hatchery. Of the many proposals submitted statewide, the Hatchery project was one of only six chosen.

When finished, the shoreline along the Hatchery will show a variety of restoration and shoreline protection techniques. Volunteers are invited to join DNR, UWEX., and local and professional experts with the first step of the project—an inventory of native and non-native vegetation on the site and identification of a reference site. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about plant identification and shoreline restoration and to be a part of restoring the Hatchery property to a “shoreland friendly” environment.

A September to early October date has yet to be set. If you are interested in attending or have questions, you may contact Sheri Snowbank at 715-635-2101 or John Haack at 715-635-7406.

## Septoria leaf spot and early blight in tomato

*Kevin Schoessow*  
*Area Ag Development Agent*

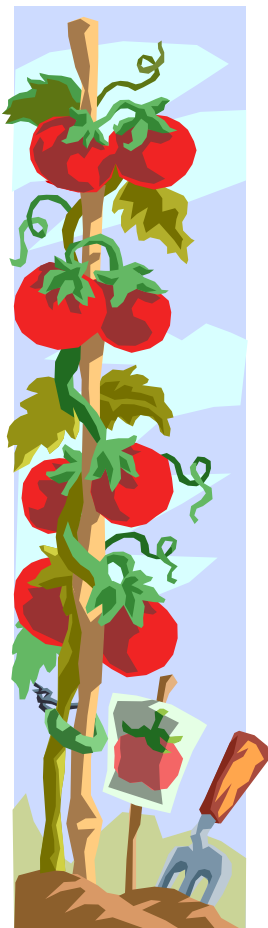
Septoria leaf spot and early blight have been a real problem on tomatoes this summer. Both these fungal diseases cause tan spots on the leaves and eventually cause the leaflets to dry up and drop off. These symptoms start on the lower leaves and work their way up the plant. Early blight is characterized by irregular brown spots that have a target-like pattern and a yellow halo. Septoria has smaller and more numerous tan spots with a dark border. Both diseases overwinter in old tomato debris, and on wild relatives such as horsenettle, ground cherry and nightshade.

Control and prevention of these diseases is best done culturally. Anything we can do to promote drying of foliage after a rain or dew is important. A well drained site with good exposure to the sun, staking or caging, pruning, and placing plants far enough apart can all help increase air movement to keep foliage dry. Removing infected leaves at first sign of the disease may help slow its spread as will mulching around the base of the plant. Fungicide applications every 10-14 days can also be used to control these diseases.

If these diseases have plagued you this summer you may want to consider the following preventative steps. Remove all infected tomato debris from the garden and bury or destroy them. Do not compost the vines. Control weeds in the nightshade family since these weeds harbor the fungi. Never plant your tomatoes in the same spot twice.

Selecting a variety that has resistance or tolerance to a disease is also helpful; unfortunately, there are very few varieties that are tolerant of either early blight or septoria leaf spot.

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

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**Extension**

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<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/sars/index.htm>