

# North Country Gardeners

Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Co.

UW-Extension Cooperative Extension

Issue 9 , January 2002

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## Greetings

I realize it has been a while since the last garden newsletter was sent out, but as the old saying goes--better late than never. There are a couple of items I would like to highlight. First I would like to encourage anyone receiving this newsletter to consider joining the newly formed local UW-Extension Master Gardener Association. You do not have to be certified Master Gardener to join--all that is required is that you have an interest in horticulture and that you want to help support and promote horticulture education in Burnett, Sawyer and Washburn Counties. Monthly meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month starting at 7 p.m. at the DNR Fish Hatchery in Spooner.

There are several upcoming educational events mentioned in the newsletter. We still have room for participants in the Specialized Fruit and Vegetable training. Unless the class fills up, we are opening this up to anyone interested. I hope you can attend the meeting of your choice.

Enjoy looking through your seed catalogs. Before you know it, it will be time to start seeds and transplants. As always I welcome your comments, suggestions, or announcements.

Happy Gardening,

Kevin Schoessow  
Area Ag Development Agent

## Congratulations North Country Master Gardeners!

*Kevin Schoessow  
UWEX Area Ag Development Agent*

This past November North Country Master Gardeners of Burnett, Washburn and Sawyer Counties became the 31<sup>st</sup> local association accepted into the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA). The group is already active in planning volunteer projects and is looking into a spring plant sale to raise funds for projects and speakers. They are also helping other local MG associations organize and plan for the State WIMGA Conference to be held in River Falls in spring 2003. Monthly meetings are currently held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Spooner DNR Fish Hatchery. If you would like more information or are interested in joining the North Country Master Gardener Association, contact Sue Donatell at 635-9676, Bob Dries at 635-8193, or Sharon Tarras at 635-3593.

**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**

## Top onion varieties grown in the Spooner ARS demonstration garden

Kevin Schoessow

UWEX Area Ag Development Agent

The following is ranking of onion varieties that were grown. All are long-day or neutral-day length types and were planted as transplants grown from seed. Ranking based on overall quality, size, and appearance.

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1-Candy Hybrid      | 6-Redwing        |
| 2-Sweet Perfection  | 7-Big Daddy      |
| 3-Superstar         | 8-Sweet Sandwich |
| 4-Walla Walla Sweet | 9-Copra          |
| 5-First Addition    |                  |

## Specialized Master Gardener Training

### Fruit and Vegetable Production

We are now taking registrations for the specialized master gardener training in fruits and vegetables. This is the first time this type of in depth training has been offered to Master Gardeners in northwestern Wisconsin. The course is scheduled to begin Tuesday February 5. It will include topics on Tree Fruits (apples, pears, plums, cherries), Strawberries, Raspberries, Grapes and other Minor Small Fruits, The A to Z of Vegetable Crops, Herbs, Specialized Gardening Techniques, Plant Breeding/Propagation/Seed Saving, Insect Pests and Diseases of Fruits and Vegetables and Organic Concepts for Fruit & Vegetable Production.

The programs will be brought to you via fiber-optics videoconferencing with live speakers who will include PowerPoint, slides, overheads and video in their presentations. Sites will have opportunity for interaction (Q/A) with the speakers. Participants will receive a three-ring binder featuring reference information on topics covered during the course.

The training will be held at the Cumberland High School Tuesday evenings (5-8 p.m.) from February 5 to April 23. The cost to attend the 12-week program is \$80 per person. The program is open first to individuals who have previously participated in the General Master Gardener training. **Registrations must be received by January 25<sup>th</sup>.** For more information contact Kevin Schoessow Spooner Area Ag Development Agent at 635-3506 or 1-800-528-1914.



### This 'n That.....

Q. What is the hardy and old fashioned perennial named after the Greek physician Phaeon whom Pluto supposedly changed into flowers?

A. Peony, *Paeonia*

Q. This bulb is used as a food in Asia where it is native. Boiled and then dried, this bulb is a key ingredient in the Japanese "namono" eaten at the Japanese New Year. Pollen of this perennial is eaten or sprinkled over food, being nutritious and with a pleasant taste.

A. Lily, *Lilium*

Q. What are some perennials I can plant that will take drought conditions associated with sandy soil?

A. Some good candidates for dry shade include hostas, ajuga, vinca, and foamflowers. For sun try tickseed or coreopsis, coneflower, sedum (low versions for rock gardens, tall ones such as 'Autumn Joy' for borders), and Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*). Of course, the first few weeks, or season, when planted these should be kept well-watered until they become established--then they can take the drought.

To improve your soil's water holding capacity, amend the soil with organic matter. Small particle organic substances such as shredded leaves, sphagnum peat moss, or compost can be topdressed (applied around) existing plants or worked into new beds. Be sure and use plenty--several inches a year for really sandy soils (just be sure and don't bury existing plants).

*"He who plants a garden, plants happiness"*

# Caring for your poinsettia year 'round

*Dr. Leonard Perry  
Extension Professor  
University of Vermont*

People have different opinions about the poinsettia. Some consider it a holiday plant to be enjoyed during the month of December, then discarded with the Christmas tree. Others like to nurture and coddle their plants, coaxing them into bloom season after season.

Me, I subscribe to the former way of thinking. Although it may seem a shame to discard potted holiday plants, such as poinsettias, if you prorate the cost of the plant over the long period you are able to enjoy it, the cost isn't really much. We often spend many times the cost of a potted plant for a dinner or a movie that can be enjoyed only briefly.

There's also no guarantee that your poinsettia will bloom again next December, even with year-round care. But if you'd like to try, here are a few tips.

First, be sure you choose a plant with small, tightly clustered yellow buds in the center. Look for crisp, brightly colored, undamaged bracts (leaves). Avoid plants that are displayed in drafty areas.

Protect the plant from the elements on its trip from the store to your home. Wrap in layers of newspapers or a double brown paper bag.

Place the plant in a room with plenty of bright, natural light. Keep out of drafts and away from appliances and refrigerators, and never place it on the television set.

Water only when dry; discard excess water that runs through the pot's drainage

holes. If wrapped in foil, make sure the pot doesn't sit in water inside the decorative wrap.

A good way to remember when to provide extra attention to your poinsettia is by tying your care schedule to specific holidays. Here's how:



**NEW YEAR'S DAY**—Fertilize with an all-purpose houseplant fertilizer at recommended rates. Continue to provide adequate light and water for prolonged bloom for several weeks.

**VALENTINE'S DAY**—Check your plant for signs of insects such as white fly. If your plant has become long and leggy, cut back to about five inches tall.

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY**—Remove faded and dried parts of the plant. Add more soil, preferably a commercially available sterile soil mix. Keep the plant in a very bright interior location.

**MEMORIAL DAY**—Trim off two to three inches of branches to promote side branching. Repot to a larger container using a sterile growing mix.

**FATHER'S DAY**—Move the plant outside for the summer; place in indirect light.

**FOURTH OF JULY**—Trim the plant again. Move it into full sun. Continue to water and fertilize but increase the amount to accelerate growth.

**LABOR DAY**—Move indoors to a spot that gets at least six hours of direct light daily, preferably more. As new growth begins, reduce the amount of fertilizer.

**AUTUMNAL EQUINOX**—Starting on or near Sept. 21, give the plant 13 hours of uninterrupted darkness (put the plant in a closet, basement, or under a box) and 11

hours of bright light each day. Maintain night temperatures in the low 60 degree F range. Continue to water and fertilize. Rotate the plant daily to give all sides even light.

**THANKSGIVING**—Discontinue the short day/long night treatment. Put the plant in a sunny area that gets at least six hours of direct light. Reduce water and fertilizer.

**CHRISTMAS**—Enjoy your "new" poinsettia. Start the cycle all over again.



## Tree and Shrub Sale Orders being taken

*Kevin Schoessow  
UWEX Area Ag Development Agent*

Interested in purchasing good quality trees, shrubs or perhaps native perennials to plant on your property this spring? Why not check out the tree and shrub sales offered by your County Land and Water Conservation Department.

Each spring County Land and Water Conservation Departments offer a variety of tree and wildlife shrubs for sale to the general public. These plant materials are bareroot stock. Trees are typically sold in bundles of 10-25 and shrubs in bundles of 5. Burnett County also sells native perennials plants by the tray and wildflower seed by the package/oz.

For more information contact your County Land and Water Conservation Department at the following numbers, Burnett County 1-715-349-2186, Sawyer County 1-715-634-6463, or Washburn County 1-715-635-2453.

## Caring for holiday gift plants

Kevin Schoessow

UWEX Area Ag Development Agent

Many plants can be grown to provide color during the Christmas season, and flourish with proper care. While the poinsettia has become the traditional holiday plant, the cyclamen and the Jerusalem cherry are also beautiful holiday plants. The cyclamen and poinsettia are grown for their colorful flowers, whereas the Jerusalem cherry is grown for its small, red fruit. However, in order to achieve holiday color, these plants must be given proper care throughout the year. Other plants appearing during the holidays and all year round include the amaryllis, azalea, begonia, Christmas pepper, chrysanthemum, cyclamen, gloxinia, holiday cactus, Jerusalem cherry, kalanchoe, and paperwhite narcissus, all of which flourish beautifully as houseplants.

Proper care varies with species, but there are some general recommendations to follow when caring for these plants. Most species do best in a location where as much natural light as possible is available. Optimal temperatures include a daytime temperature of 65 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit (F), and temperatures around 50 to 55 degrees F during the night. However, there are some exceptions; the cyclamen and paperwhite narcissus would hold up better at 60 to 65 degrees F during the daytime and 50 degrees F at night. African violets, poinsettias, and begonias should be kept even warmer at night, at temperatures around 60 degrees F. Because most homes are extremely dry compared to the greenhouse environment where they were grown, it is recommended that the plants be placed in groups or on trays with water. To help prolong the flowering period, plants can be placed in rooms with higher humidity, such as the bathroom or kitchen. Usually, however, the plants should be kept in a COOLER room, away from warm air currents. The plants should be checked

daily and watered as needed. If the pot has a drainage hole, enough water should be applied so some will drain out the bottom, but the plants should NOT stand in water for extended periods of time. Most of these plants do not need any fertilizer during their blooming time. Reblooming is usually not recommended except for amaryllis and holiday cactus.



## Fall 2001 Master Gardener training complete

Kevin Schoessow

UWEX Area Ag Development Agent

This fall 20 people participated in the Master Gardener General Training. This training was offered to folks in Burnett, Washburn and Sawyer Counties. All classes were held at the Spooner Ag Research Station on Tuesday nights from 6 – 9 pm. We utilized videos, the Internet, teleconferences, and speakers included in class demonstrations. The last time this training was held was in fall of 1999, the next Master Gardener general training is tentatively scheduled for fall of 2002. Special thanks to MG volunteers Sheri Snowbank, and Bob Dries who helped with this year's classes.

Class participants were Tom Beard, Linda Berg, Dorothy Brabec, Elaine Bullens, Kara Carlson, Mary Emerson, Mary Haessly, Julie Hustvet, Mary Koessel, Anita Merchant, Daniel Moga, Diane Noe, Carla Phillips, Paul Rynning, Candance Schminsky, Joan Smith, Damian Vraniak, Susan Wallace, Densie Weatherhead and Peter Weatherhead.

To become certified UW-Extension Master Gardeners, participants must also pass a multiple-choice exam, and complete 36 hours of horticulture volunteering. Best of luck to the MG class of 2001!!

## Calendar of Events

**January 25-27, 2002** Orchid Society of MN Winter Carnival Show, St. Paul, MN.

**January 31-February 2, 2002** Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference, St. Cloud Civic Center. For info, call (736) 434-0400.

**February 1-2, 2002** Value-Added Small Farms Conference, Eau Claire. For Info, call (715) 635-3506 or (800) 528-1914.

**March 1-2, 2002** Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference, LaCrosse. For info, call (715) 772-3153.

**March 9, 2002** Barron County Garden Expo, Barron Co. Courthouse. For info, call (715) 537-6250.

**March 16, 2002** Northwoods Garden Seminar, Minong. For info, call Northwoods Community Education, (715) 466-4692 Ext. 501.

**Spooner Garden Club** meets 4th Thursday of every month. Merle Klug (715) 635-6239.

**Hayward Garden Club** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month. Carol Alcoe (715) 462-3213.

**Burnett Garden Club** meets 2nd Thursday of each month. Kris Henning (715) 463-5247.

**North Country Master Gardeners** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month. Spooner DNR Fish Hatchery. Sue Donatell (715) 635-9676.

**Brown Bag ETNs** (Noon to 1 p.m.) *Contact your local Extension Office*

January 25 - Your Pride and Color in Your Community Through Blooms

February 22 - The Urban Forest...From Milwaukee to Mason

March 22 - Drupes: Fruit for the Backyard

**Wisconsin Gardener TV** (5:30 p.m.)

January 24 - Landscaping for Birds

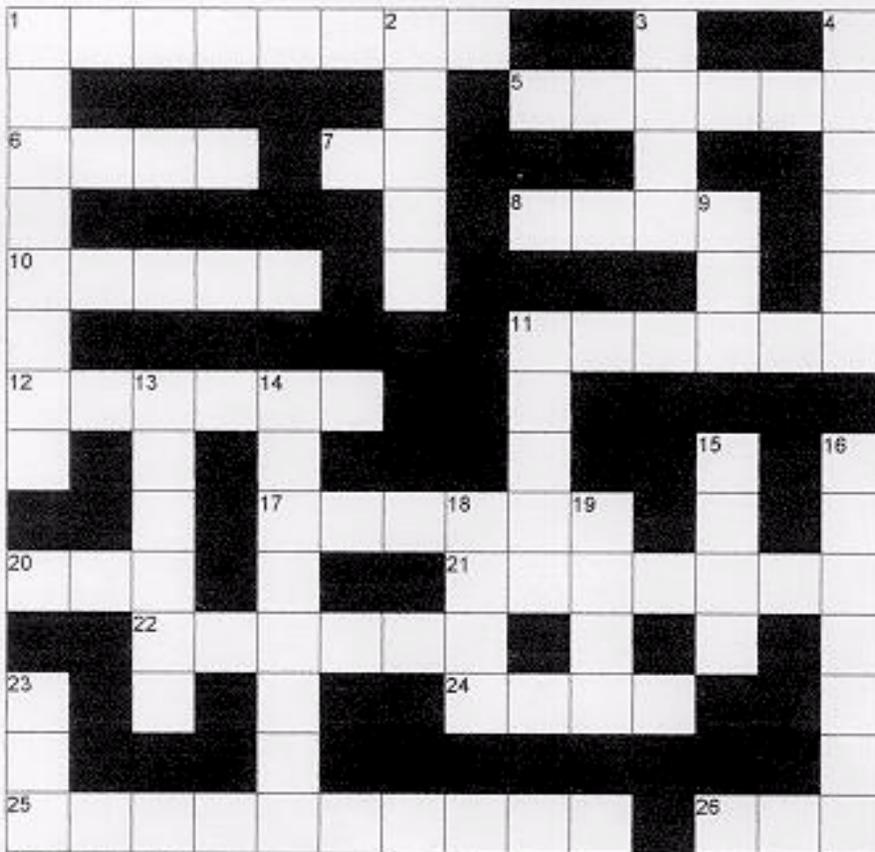
February 24 - Landscaping with Wisconsin Wildflowers

March 3 & March 24 - Uncommon Gardens

April 28 - Organic Gardening

## Perennial Plant Culture Crossword--1

Created by Dr. Leonard Perry



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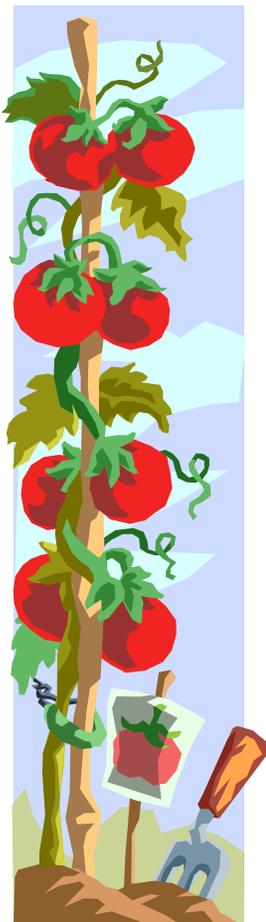
### ACROSS

1. Blooms after two years generally, then dies
5. Used to lower soil pH, makes it more acid
6. Where leaf joins a stem
7. Designation for soil acidity or alkalinity, on a 1-14 scale
8. Overwintering structure for gladiolus, crocus
10. Applied to soil after planting to conserve moisture, control weeds
11. Non-hardy
12. Regions high in mountains, or plants growing there
17. Tool for planting small plants
20. A common rooting hormone active ingredient indolebutyric acid
21. Low rock or alpine genus, common name of Heron's Bill
22. Tool for planting large plants, moving soil

24. Used to raise soil pH, makes it more alkaline
25. Structure for protected cultivation
26. Container

### DOWN

1. Source of organic phosphorus
2. Common insect pest
3. Prefix in descriptions meaning "flower"
4. Tool for cutting stems, making cuttings
9. When soil gets very wet this is formed
11. Overwintering structure for dahlias
13. Third main ingredient shown on fertilizer analysis
14. First main ingredient shown on fertilizer analysis
15. Remove or prune tips or ends of stems
16. Good use for non-meat kitchen wastes, leaves; conditions soil
18. Water often comes from these, drilled in the ground
19. Designation for a good soil type
23. Wet area, marsh, source of peat



# North Country Gardeners Newsletter

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



*EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER*

Cooperative Extension  
**United States Department of Agriculture**  
University of Wisconsin Extension  
432 N. Lake St.  
Madison, WI 53706

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Official Business

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.uwex.edu/ces/sars/index.htm>