

North Country Gardeners

Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Co.

UW-Extension Cooperative Extension

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**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**

Greetings!

The garden season is in full swing, tomatoes are beginning to ripen, vine crop growth is exploding, and with each passing day we get to enjoy more fruits of our labors. All in all it has been a great year for gardens, and a great year to be a Master Gardener Volunteer.

Like our gardens, Master Gardener Volunteers are having a very fruitful year helping and assisting with volunteer projects in their communities and carrying out the mission of being a Master Gardener Volunteer. That mission: *To Encourage, Foster, Support and Promote Horticulture Education in Our Communities* was adopted in 2000, when the North Country Master Gardeners Association formed. This newsletter and all the various activities MGV do, whether as a group or individually, are examples of that mission.

As you tend to your gardens, think of ways you can assist others in the context of horticulture education. You don't have to be part of an organized group to be an active Master Gardener Volunteer. While volunteering as part of a larger group has benefits, there are many opportunities to volunteer as an individual. Writing an article to this newsletter or to a local paper is one, being a resource to friends and neighbor with gardening questions or volunteering at a school garden are others. No matter your age or years of experience with gardening, we all have talents with which to help teach, foster and encourage others. Gardening is a lifelong skill that can be practiced and appreciated nearly anywhere.

It is our hope that this newsletter and on-going email communications help keep Master Gardener Volunteers and other interested community members informed and connected. There are plenty of projects and opportunities to share our interest in gardening with others.

Happy Gardening,

Kevin Schoessow
UW-Extension Ag Development Agent
kevin.schoessow@ces.uwex.edu

Sandy Hoecherl
President
North Country Master Gardeners Association

Annual Garden Twilight Tour Tuesday, August 23

*Kevin Schoessow
Area Ag Development Agent*

North Country Master Gardeners, UW-Extension and the Spooner Agriculture Research Station invite you, your friends and neighbors to attend the 13th annual Twilight Garden Tour on Tuesday August 23. The event officially starts at 4 p.m. and goes until dusk.

UW-Extension Plant Pathologist Brian Hudelson from UW-Madison and UW-Extension Fruit and Vegetable Specialist Brian Smith from UW-River Falls are invited guests. These specialists along with myself and 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.

There are over 350 plant selections in the garden this year, both annual and perennial. Highlighted this year will be annual flower varieties selections, cold hardy wine grapes, and heirloom tomatoes. In addition, enjoy the All America Selections Display featuring award winning annual flowers and vegetables from 2006-2011. There is also a landscaped perennial display featuring roses, flowering shrubs, ornamental grasses and other flowering perennials.

There will be demonstration and displays on composting, drip irrigation, adaptive gardening, food preservation, raised bed gardening and beekeeping. Tasting of vegetables, fresh salsa, and grilled vegetables will also be offered.

Participants can also see the newly installed “off the grid” drip irrigation and a hoophouse.

Be sure to bring your plant and insect questions to the specialists and area Master Gardeners. Bring samples in plastic baggies, clearly labeled so that if they need to get back to you with an answer, they have your name and contact information.

The demonstration garden is a joint effort between the 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 weekdays from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

There is no cost to attend this event; however, participants are asked to bring a **non-perishable food item** to support local food shelves.

The garden is located approximately 1/2 mile north of Hwy. 70 on Orchard Lane, across from the Sheep Research Facilities at the Spooner Ag Research Station. The research station is located approximately 1 mile east of Spooner on Hwy 70. Watch for garden meeting signs.

Remember the Little Things

Megan Smith

Student Garden Intern

Spooner Agricultural Research Station



The display garden is looking nice again this year. Despite the slow start of the year with cool temperatures, we are quickly gaining ground because of the rain and sun taking equal turns. All plants seem to be getting the proper sun and rain requirements and many of the vine crops are beginning to send out flowers and fruit. There are little pumpkins and even smaller melons that are now growing. The All-America Selections are really starting to become full and colorful which gives a great burst of color to that corner of the garden.

My favorite thing about the garden is the color. The colors of the flowers and the colors of the different vegetables are always changing making for a little difference in the display every day. It is easy to see the changes of the garden if one visits only once a month or even once a week, but when you are out in the garden every day it becomes easier to remember the little things. I enjoy walking out to the garden to see one new lily open. I love to bend over and smell the phlox while I pull the weeds from the bed. And I am also fond of waiting for the peppers to turn to just the right shade of brilliant red before they can be picked.

Spending a little time in the garden is an easy way to relax and remember how to take care of a plant until it produces fully. This aspect can be tied into our everyday lives. Sometimes it might be wise to slow down, just like nature, and remember the little things—the things that change every day. So next time that you are feeling rushed or stressed, just remember the little things: a walk in the garden, a fresh cut flower on the table, or a perfectly ripe tomato.

Back to School

Sue Reimardy

Master Gardener Volunteer

It's that time of year when parents are thrilled and kids are in denial: they are going back to school. Here's is a brief report on what is happening in the gardens at a few of our area schools.

Hayward Schools:

Master Gardener Volunteer Tom Blumenberg has been involved with Hayward Elementary utilizing micro farms in the second grade classes. This past year he had about 85 students who were taught basic botany and, in particular, how to germinate seeds. The school has a garden, planted by second graders and tended by volunteer families throughout the summer. The students will harvest the produce and donate most of it to the Hayward Food Shelf. They will also do the fall clean-up.

Spooner Schools Garden:

Helping Hands Elementary School Garden-Master Gardener Volunteers Chris Weyh, Nancy Reis, Terrie Strand, and Amy Young taught summer school children grades K-6 all about plants and nature in June. During the school year Spooner's AmeriCorp-Farm to School team with the help of Chris Weyh, Nancy Reis, Russ and Diane Parker teach the 3rd and 4th grade students the ins and outs of planting, harvesting, and caring for their school garden. In addition to helping with basic garden needs, they try to give all grade level children some kind of planting experience through the use of the grow cart and various activities such as Earth/Global Youth Day in the Spring.

Experiences Garden of the Middle-In addition to the fabulous elementary garden Master Gardener Volunteers have expanded their garden efforts to the Middle School. Through an After-School Express Club (Na-



ture Nuggets), AmeriCorps Farm to School, 5th & 6th grade science teachers, and the generous support of the North Country Master Gardeners the Middle School garden has been expanded. There are now six raised beds of various heights and through the donations a compost tumbler has been purchased for use this school year. This garden was enjoyed and maintained during summer school by the crew mentioned above.

Both gardens are maintained throughout the summer by Elementary and Middle School families in addition to Master Gardener Volunteers. During the summer all produce that ripens is donated to ICAA and/or the Washburn County Food Pantry. Indianhead has offered to help with some of the summer care if needed. Once school is in session, the bulk of garden produce is harvested for the school lunch program.

If anyone has questions or is interested in helping with the Experiences Garden, please contact Amy Young 715-635-9551 or aimyoun013@yahoo.com

Winter School Garden:

In Winter Master Gardener Volunteers Peggy Flaws and Michelle LaBarbera worked in the garden this year. They are fortifying the boxes and covering them with plastic to ready them for next spring. They have received funds to purchase greenhouse plastic and are comparison shopping to find the best deal possible.

There are also school garden activities by Master Gardener Volunteers at Shell Lake Middle School and Webster Elementary School.

Fall Gardening: Daffodils

Sherri B. Roman

Gardening Enthusiast

What better welcome is there than the cheerful colors of the daffodils after a long, cold winter? Here in the Northwoods, daffodils show themselves in April with the first signs of spring. These hardy flowers beam with beauty, repel deer, and will grow in a sunny location just about anywhere you desire to plant them. This is a quick guide to help you through the steps to putting down daffodil bulbs from start to finish.

Step 1: Decide where you want to plant. Daffodils need sunshine, so any area will do if it gets half a day's sun. You will have better luck if you find a spot with good drainage, during the dormant period in the summer they prefer a dry spot.

Step 2: Decide what type of daffodil you want. There are many divisions and classification of daffodils. Do your research and choose the type of daffodil that suits you best.

Step 3: Purchase your bulbs. The ideal time to put down daffodil bulbs here in the Northwoods is late September, so do your shopping accordingly.

Step 4: Prepare the area where you want to plant. You can plant daffodils as a border, in a bed, in containers, or simply naturalize them (scatter them for a natural look). Add a layer of organic material if your soil is poor and let the area settle for a week before planting.

Step 5: Put in your bulbs. Daffodil bulbs need a depth of about 3X their height, so a 2 inch high bulb will need to go down 6 inches deep. The spacing should be at least 2 inches apart and be sure to set it in the ground with the pointed tip up. Cover your bulbs carefully with soil and water thoroughly.

A little bit of work and modest investment will give you a return that you can enjoy for years to come!

Moving Wall Replica Displayed Near Spooner

Katie Childs

Larry and Nancy Axelson

Master Gardener Volunteers

Through the efforts of Brian Sengbusch, a “career soldier” from Springbrook and many veteran volunteers in the greater area, The Moving Wall, which is the half-size replica of the Washington, D. C. Vietnam Veterans Memorial, was on display from July 28 to August 1 at the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spooner. The replica has been touring the country for 20 years, giving citizens around the country an opportunity to experience the positive power of The Wall. As visitors walked up to view The Moving Wall, the pathway was lined with crosses and pots of red, white and blue flowers were interspersed on the grounds.

The North Country Master Gardener Volunteers were asked to assist with the potted flowers surrounding the display. A volunteer opportunity for a great cause, we—Larry, Nancy and Katie—were eager to attend the May 24 Committee Meeting at the Cemetery to learn more about the expectations and challenge of providing flowers in containers! Following the meeting we began prepping for the project. Twenty-two 13" foam containers were donated by Spooner Ace Hardware which were perfect to get us started! Next, our visit with Linda Degner, co-owner of Bashaw Valley Farm and Greenhouse, was most productive as we selected the flowers to be planted. Rocky Mountain Dark Red Geraniums, Giant Snowflake Bacopa along with Victoria Blue Salvia and Blue Moon Lobelia gave us the color, line, form and fillers needed to carry out the patriotic theme.

On June 1st we filled the containers with WonderBlend Professional Planting Mix and positioned the plants according to the model pot developed with Linda at the



Greenhouse. The countdown began until delivery on July 27th for the set up at the event. The next 56 days entailed deadheading, watering and fertilizing with Gro-Fine Bloom Boost (10-54-10) with numerous other unique problems interspersed. At the Axelson's the neighbors (free-range) horses were a possible threat so the plants were moved into their greenhouse every night. At the Childs, the devastating storm on July 1st and it's straight line winds of 110 mph nearly wiped out the fruits of her labor. Also, July was the fourth warmest ever recorded, hence the heat and humidity were also a huge negative factor. We did our best to keep ahead of the challenges and relied heavily on “Plant Doctor” Linda, whose support and coaching was invaluable when several issues arose, such as when the Bacopa became stressed with botrytis, a grey mold. The best solution was to strip or remove the stems effected and ensure the plant had better air circulation.

On behalf of the NCMGV, it was an honor and a privilege to volunteer for this project. Many thanks to Tom Spelbring with Ace Hardware for the pots; to Linda Degner for her knowledge, expertise and material donations and to the North Country Master Gardener Volunteers for their financial contribution in making this project successful. Brian

Sengbusch, Vietnam The Moving Wall Committee Chair said, “the flower pots were really beautiful and we had just the right number.” The pots were given to veterans on the final day of the event.

We all learned more about container gardening, especially due to this unique and special project with a theme, that would be on display with a high volume of traffic. No pressure at all...well, maybe.

Important Website Resources

Wisconsin Master Gardener Program

<http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener/>

Wisconsin Urban Horticulture

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort/>

American Community Gardening Association

www.communitygarden.org

Memorial Park Arboretum & Gardens

www.memorialparkarb.org

Dividing Iris for Maximum Blooms

Sandy Hoecherl
Master Gardener Volunteer

Two types of iris are common in northern Wisconsin. Siberian iris has a grass like foliage that looks nice all summer. It can be divided early in spring or in the fall. When the plant grows in a circle with a bare area in the middle, it is time to divide.

Dig out the plant and separate into four to six plants. It can be planted in a sunny or partially shaded location. It likes more moisture than the bearded iris. In fact, it grows well near the water's edge.

The bearded iris is more susceptible to rot unless it is in a well drained location. Even so, it is an easy care perennial and will continue to dress the garden with a wide range of color as long as it is divided every three or four years.

The nutrition in the bearded iris is stored in its rhizomes. The rhizomes increase in size each season until they eventually become overcrowded and starved for nutrients. The old rhizomes lose their energy and the plant blooms from its younger side rhizomes. One sign that the plant needs division is a tumble of rhizomes lifting out of the ground. Another sign is decreased blooming or circular growth with an empty area in the middle.

Division should be done after the plant has finished blooming. In this part of the country, that means July into September. The soil should still be warm but the air should be starting to cool down.

Lift the plant out of the ground with a pitchfork. If the ground is very dry, water thoroughly the day before. Begin digging about a foot away from the outer edge. Gently lift the plant out of the soil shaking off any loose dirt. Rinse off any remaining soil using a garden hose and separate into individual rhizomes. If they can't be separated



by pulling apart cut in natural places such as where the rhizome has forked. Each cutting should include a rhizome at least 3 or 4 inches long with healthy roots and at least one fan of leaves. Cut the leaves back to about six inches. That makes it easy to examine the rhizomes for possible iris borer damage or rot.

The iris borer is a caterpillar that chews on the rhizomes, often causing them to rot. The moths lay their eggs on the foliage in late summer and early fall. The eggs overwinter on the old foliage and emerge in the spring as tiny caterpillars that tunnel into the plant and begin eating. You probably won't notice them until you divide the plants.

When examining the divisions, discard the old rhizomes and use the younger ones. If there are soft spots, small to medium holes or dark streaks in the rhizome, cut these out. If you notice infected areas, disinfect your knife or pruners by dipping it in denatured alcohol between cuts. The rot is easily spread.

If you find damaged tissue, soak the rhizomes for about thirty minutes in a 10% solution of household bleach followed by a dusting of powdered sugar. Then lay the trimmed plants in a shady place for several hours to dry.

It is best to replant the divisions the same day they have been divided. If replanting in the same area, remove some of the old soil and replace with a generous amount of compost. Bone meal can be dug into the soil or a 5-10-10 fertilizer can be applied at this time.

Dig a shallow hole about 3-5 inches deep, but wide enough to spread out the roots. Place a mound in the center of the hole and set the rhizome on the mound with the roots hanging over the sides. The rhizome should

only be covered with 1-2 inches of soil. Place the rhizomes in a triangle about 12 to 18 inches apart and water well to settle the soil. Remember, the soil will probably settle a bit lower. If too deep, the iris will not bloom and may rot.

You may now relax for the next three or four years, (except for keeping the grass out of the bed) and enjoy the show.

Hayward State Nursery to Close

Sandy Hoecherl
Master Gardener Volunteer

The Wisconsin forest nursery program was established in 1911 to encourage reforestation. Currently there are three state nurseries — one in Boscobel, another in Wisconsin Rapids and a third in Hayward. The Hayward nursery was established in 1944 when it took over from a federal tree nursery.

Unfortunately in the middle of celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the state program, Hayward officials have announced that it will stop tree and shrub seedling production. It will continue to sell seedlings until the current stock is gone. It may possibly be selling available stock until 2013.

More than 1.5 billion seedlings have been sold in the past 100 years but sales have dropped considerably in recent years. Three or four years ago, they were selling 12 million seedlings per year, whereas current figures are nearer 7 million.

The equipment and the nursery will not be sold. If demand should increase, the nursery could quickly be put back into production.

Unfortunately, seasonal employment will be affected by this closing.

There will be a tour of the State Nursery at Hayward on August 28 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. If interested in attending, contact Gordie Christians at 715-634-2717 and let him know that you will be attending the tour.

New Nutritional Initiatives

Stress Fruits and Vegetables

Sandy Hoecherl
Master Gardener Volunteer

The new US FDA nutritional guidelines show a plate where half the plate is covered with vegetables and fruit. Visually more attractive and easier to follow than the old food pyramid, the myplate symbol illustrates what we gardeners already know--vegetables should form the basis of our diet.

Gardeners naturally eat more fruits and vegetables than non-gardeners and understand that the food you grow is the freshest food you can eat. Gardening also keeps you limber, relieves stress, and helps you relax.

Michelle Obama began a White House kitchen garden in 2010 to promote gardening and better nutrition. This year over 55 fruits and vegetables are being used by the White House for the family and for state dinners. Local school children are included in the effort as a way of encouraging school gardens that have become popular in our area. Another White House initiative is the Chefs Move to Schools Program where chefs are helping schools use more fruits and vegetables and less processed foods.

The problem of obesity in America is becoming such a concern that even some politicians are taking up the cause. Advocates are promoting policies to encourage local foods, and to tax what they consider "bad foods" like sweetened drinks. They want to cut subsidies for growing corn and soybeans and instead subsidize unprocessed fruits and vegetables.

Part of the problem of obesity is caused by what are known as food deserts – communities where fresh produce is unavailable or too expensive for low income families. For the cost of a couple of peaches, a person can get a full meal on the dollar menu at a



fast food restaurant. And to add insult to injury, the produce in the low income neighborhoods are often of inferior quality.

This month Wal-Mart announced that it will open 300 stores in areas labeled as food deserts by the US Department of Agriculture. Wal-Mart says it will hire 16,000 workers in these areas by 2016.

We gardeners are already committed to using fresh fruits and vegetables, but for specific details check out the website choosemyplate.gov.

Emerald Ash Borer Update

Sue Reimardy
Master Gardener Volunteer

What are those large purple boxes tied onto ash trees? The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) put up roughly 5,900 survey traps this spring for the Emerald Ash Borer. Many of them are concentrated in the north-western part of the state. The traps are designed to attract beetles through color, scent, size and location. They are coated with a sticky substance that traps the beetle if it lands on the device.

Wisconsin DATCP reported in May that twenty-two seasonal workers set traps by early June in time to catch the emerging adult beetles. The traps will be monitored periodi-

cally during the summer then taken down in September. Wisconsin's survey effort is part of a national survey with more than 61,000 traps deployed in 48 states.

Infested areas in Wisconsin include the Village of Newburg along the Ozaukee-Washington county border, Victory in the southwest near the Mississippi River, and the communities of Cudahy, Franklin and Oak Creek in Milwaukee County. Adult beetles have also been caught in Green Bay and Kenosha, but infested trees have yet to be confirmed. Because of these infestations and the presence of beetles, 11 counties are under a quarantine that restricts the movement of certain products, such as hardwood firewood, that could give transport to the pest. Those counties are: Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, Washington, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Brown, Vernon and Crawford. Additional counties will be quarantined if new discoveries are made this summer. Infested and quarantined areas also exist just across the border in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The Emerald Ash Borer was discovered near Detroit in 2002 and probably arrived in North America in wooden shipping crates from Asia. They've already destroyed millions of trees and have been found in 14 other states and in two Canadian provinces. The insects kill ash trees when the larvae eat the layer of soft wood that supplies the tree with water and nutrients. Emerald ash borers are not particularly strong fliers, with adults typically flying less than ½ mile from their emergence tree. The natural dispersal of EAB in North America is assumed to be 5 miles or less per year.

The USDA provides these quick facts:

- ◆ It attacks only ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.).
- ◆ Adult Beetles are metallic green and about 1/2-inch long, and this small size makes them difficult to spot.
- ◆ Adults leave a D-shaped exit hole in the bark when they emerge in spring.

- ◆ Woodpeckers like EAB larvae; heavy woodpecker damage on ash trees may be a sign of infestation.

For more information about EAB, including the most current maps of quarantine and survey areas, visit www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov.

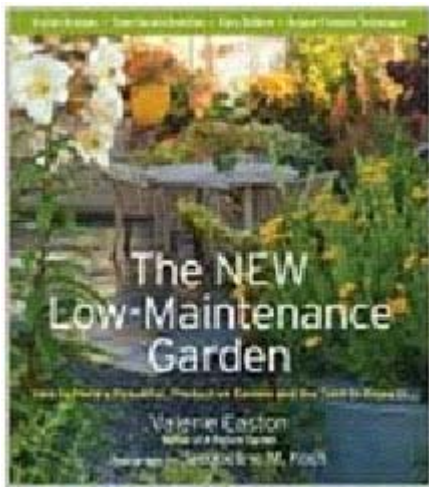
Book Review:

The New Low-Maintenance Garden

By Valerie Easton

Timber Press

Available in paperback and ebook



Sue Reimardy

Master Gardener Volunteer

I found this book in my search for reducing my own gardening chores. The author writes about her experience moving into later middle-age and wanting to reduce the digging, weeding, fussing and working in exchange for peace and relaxation. She defines new low-maintenance gardens as “neither manicured nor scruffy, but maintained at a state somewhere in between that might be called lived-in, relaxed, or better yet, inviting.” The book is full of tips and sensible steps we all can take to grow what we like and have the time to enjoy it.

Top Horticultural Calls for This Summer Season

Susan Armstrong

UW-Extension Summer Horticultural Assistant

1. Tomatoes herbicidal damage:

Damage by herbicides is quite common. Symptoms include distorted thickened leaves and stems. The fruit may also be misshapen. Damaged plants should be destroyed, as the fruit could contain chemical residues. Tomatoes are very sensitive to these chemicals and may be easily damaged by even small amounts drifting in from nearby areas, exposure to contaminated grass clippings, or as a result of volatilization to potted tomato plants sitting on decks constructed of vinyl products.

2. Bristly Locust (*Robinia hispida*):

Considered an ornamental on heavier soils, with pendulous clusters of rosy-pink flowers similar in shape to those of Wisteria, Bristly Locust increases rapidly by underground suckers and is quickly approaching the invasive species list on lighter/sandy soils.

3. Blue Green Algae:

If your pet displays symptoms such as seizures, vomiting, or diarrhea after contact with the water, contact your local veterinarian. For more information: <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/>

4. Pollinators – Mason Bees:

Mason bees (genus *Osmia*) are a type of native bee that's quite common throughout most of the U.S. They're usually a little smaller than a honeybee, and typically metallic blue or blue-black in color. They get their name from their habit of nestbuilding, which is to seal off the cells where they lay their eggs, with a mortar-like application of mud. Mason bees are very effective pollinators. Just two or three females can pollinate a mature apple tree! Mason bees will also work in cool or rainy weather when honeybees are more likely to take the day off.

5. Mycorrhizae:

Mycorrhizae are a group of several different fungi that live symbiotically with plants. These fungi are for the most part microscopic and colonize plant roots. They use plant sugars as a food source and in return help plants more efficiently take up certain nutrients (phosphorus is probably the most commonly mentioned nutrient). Although the mycorrhizal fungi is too small to be seen with the naked eye, the organisms can form large fruiting structures, e.g. mushrooms or masses of “hairy” roots.

6. Horsehair worm:

Horsehair worms are long, slender worms related to nematodes and get their name because of the mistaken belief that they originated from the long thin hairs of a horse's tail or mane that have fallen into a horse trough. Horsehair worms are long, measuring from several inches to over 14 inches. They're quite thin, ranging from 1/25 inch to 1/16 inch wide and are uniform in diameter from front to back. Harmless to people in all stages of their lives - immature are parasitic to a wide variety of insects such as grasshoppers, crickets, cockroaches, beetles, and katydids.



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www.facebook.com/spoonerag

Master Gardener Volunteer Timesheets Due September 15, 2011

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 2011 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> or stop in at the Spooner Area Ag Agents Office to pick up a copy.

This is the standardized individual volunteer hour report sheet provided by the MG Program Office for your convenience. This form is updated annually to reflect any changes in requirements of the program. However, it is NOT necessary to use the standard form. You may use whatever format works best for you as long as the pertinent information (number of volunteer hours in youth education, community education and support services, and continuing education) can be calculated.

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."

North Country Master Gardener Volunteers of Burnett, Washburn and Sawyer Counties

*Mission: To Encourage, Foster, Support and Promote
Horticulture Education in Our Communities.*

Calendar of Events

August 23, 2011: Twilight Garden Tour, Spooner Ag Research Demonstration Garden, 4 p.m. - dusk.

September 15, 2011: Master Gardener Volunteer timesheets due to local office.

September 22, 2011: North Country Master Gardener Volunteers Potluck, Spooner Ag Research Station.

September 27, 2011: Garden Walk - Fall Harvest, Spooner Ag Research Station Demonstration Garden, 5 p.m.

October 25, 2011: Garden Walk - Putting the Garden to Bed, Spooner Ag Research Station Demonstration Garden, 5 p.m.

General Master Gardener Volunteer Training Offered This Fall



The 12 week General MGV training course will be held at the Siren Government Center on Tuesday nights from September 6 through November 22. Classes will include distance education webinars and live speakers. Cost is \$120.

For a registration brochure and schedule call the Spooner Area Ag Agents Office at 715-635-3506 or 800-528-1914 or visit our website <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/sars/>.

Mary Emerson Retiring from Master Gardener Volunteers

Mary Burnham
Master Gardener Volunteer

Mary Emerson is a true volunteer, having served on the Washburn County Fair Board for 47 years, the County Board for 10 years and in the North Country Master Gardener Volunteer Association for 10 years.



While Mary served on the County Board, Kevin Schoessow was hired as an Agricultural Development Agent, a position that he still holds. Kevin taught the first Master Gardener training class in Spooner. Mary was very honored to report that she was a member of that first graduating class. Mary says that Kevin became an important mentor to her, and to the entire class and continues to serve as a very active advisor to all the Master Gardener Volunteers that have gone through the program.

Mary told me that one of her greatest achievements was being part of the conception and planting of the perennial garden at the Spooner Ag Station's demonstration gardens on Orchard Lane. The perennial garden, designed by MGV Sharon Tarras, was meticulously planted by the whole group. After painstakingly removing the turf, 4-5 inches of good organic rich soil was added. The area was gridded out with stakes and twine and each plant was placed and spaced according to the design. Layers of newspaper were then laid down and the entire area topped off with mulch. There was no irrigation system or well in the garden at that time, so all the watering had to be done by pails carried to the site. They used the "Gator" to transport the water, and Mary tells the story of being so eager to get water to the plants that she ran over the toes of another Master Gardener!

The garden has proven to be a wonderful tool for education. New plants were tried every year and data was collected and studied in an effort to find the right plant material to do really well in Zone 3. Mary remarked, "All the plants were there on a trial basis, if it's gonna die, pull it out!" The garden takes some work, but there is no sense worrying about temperamental plants that aren't happy here. Mary quotes Kevin when she says, "Every day is Christmas--hoe! hoe! hoe!"

She says that working as a volunteer gave her an opportunity to experiment and learn about individual plants before making the investment herself.

Mary really enjoyed the years of working with the school children. One of the main goals of the North Country Master Gardener Volunteers is to serve the community by providing educational opportunities, especially for the youth. Mary appeared in a number of plays sponsored and written by the group. She is fondly remembered in her role as Goldie, the Yukon Gold Potato and matriarch of the potato family. In this role she entertained the kids while teaching them about planting a potato crop, types of potatoes and their nutritional values. They also learned about Wisconsin's role in potato production for the United States.

The drive has been getting to be too much, especially during the winter, so Mary has decided to retire this year. She will be greatly missed by the whole group, but we are hoping she will still continue to mentor when she can. She will be honored at this year's Twilight Garden Tour on August 23. This is an annual free event that the public is invited to attend.

Mary's parting words to me were, "This is the best committee I've ever been on. Everyone is happy, learning and teaching, and they epitomize real teamwork. I've always enjoyed working with a team."

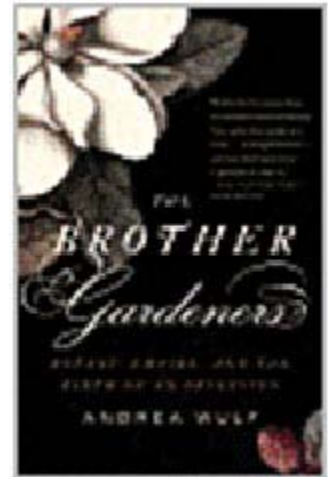
Book Review:

The Brother Gardeners

By Andrea Wulf

Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group

Available in hardcover, paperback and ebook



Sue Reinardy

Master Gardener Volunteer

If you enjoy history and are a gardener you will enjoy this book that reads like a novel but provide an excellent history of botany. It tells the story of a small group of naturalists who started the garden craze in Britain with seeds and plants from the American colonies. The brothers are Quakers who correspond and share their garden expertise.

It includes the fascinating tale of how the botanical naming scheme we know today was created by the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus. A white pine is named *Pinus strobes* under his two-word name for each plant while this same plant previously had the extraordinary name of *Pinus Americana quinis ex uno fulliculo setis longis tenuibus triquetris ad unum angulum per totam longitudinem minutissimis crenis asperatis*. Whew! After reading this book I have a better understanding of the plant names and the history of botany.



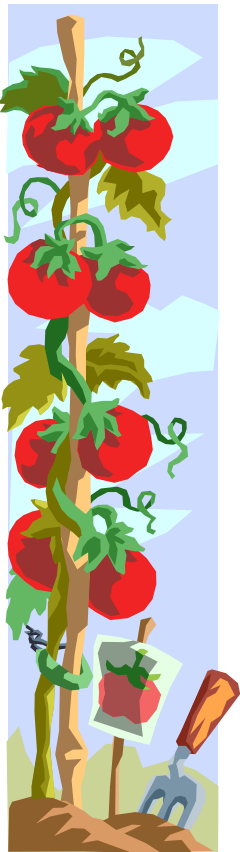
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