



MAMGA August 2023 Newsletter

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President's Column by Ed Meachen

At the Board meeting on July 17 th I announced that this would be my last year as president. I will not run for another two year term when the 2023-24 board year ends in April. It has been such a pleasure and a privilege to serve as president of MAMGA for a decade. The board has done such an excellent job over that ten year period. We created a five year strategic plan that accomplished almost all our goals in 2021, securing financial stability, retaining a membership level of over 300, and managing our way through massive changes in the master gardener program over the last four years. We've had many talented and committed board members over those years, improved our program array, funded dozens of community, public and school garden grants, and launched a MAMGA signature project that continues through 2023.

Lisa Johnson encouraged me to join the board in 2014. I couldn't know at the time that I would end up taking on the president's role in that very year. I am grateful for her mentoring and support through all these years. I've had a wonderful time meeting so many master gardeners and learning from them.

What a marvelous organization!

I will continue to work on the Program Committee and offer support to whomever becomes the next president. It's time for new ideas, perhaps new directions, and fresh creativity. Meanwhile, there's still a lot of work to do finishing out this year. I look forward to it.

MAMGA's Signature Project Lussier Prairie Update

MAMGA members and volunteers with Dane County Parks finally finish weeding and weeding, especially invasives like thistle, Queen Anne's lace, and wild parsnip. Dad planting all the ordered seedlings on June 30th. July workdays focused on watering seedlings. County staff have been mowing the denser stands of parsnip and thistle while volunteers resort to pulling or cutting. The rain at the end of July was especially welcome and stimulated growth of the new plantings. Volunteers also continue to weed the pollinator gardens. Work sessions are on Friday morning from 9:30am to noon, with shorter hours on hot days. Drop-in volunteers are always welcome. Be sure to bring a sun hat, gloves, and protective clothing. In case of stormy or exceptionally hot weather, workdays will be canceled. For more information, phone or text to 608 520-4364 or email percy.mather@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

August 1, 12:30 – 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday at the Breakwater Restaurant, 6308 Inland Way in Monona just off Broadway. No need to sign up, just stop by.

August 4, 11, 18 & 25 Friday 9:30am to noon – Prairie workday at Lussier Family Heritage at 3101 Lake Farm Road. Tools, rest rooms, and water provided. Not sure what to pull out? We show you which weeds to remove. In case of stormy or extremely hot weather, workdays will be canceled. For more information, phone or text to 608 520-4364 or email percy.mather@gmail.com

August 9, 11 AM Wednesday. Tour of Seed Savers Exchange, Decorah, Ia. \$6. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tour-of-seed-savers-tickets-669558436307?aff=oddtcreator>

Join MAMGA on this exciting docent-led tour of Seed Savers Exchange. Seed Savers Exchange was established in 1975 to promote the sharing and preservation of seeds. They have over 25,000 varieties in their seed bank of which 600 are distributed commercially. They strive to conserve and promote America's culturally diverse but endangered garden and food crop heritage for future generations by collecting, growing, and sharing heirloom seeds and plants.

Decorah, Iowa is approximately 3 hours from Madison. The plan is to have attendees carpool, or drive independently. If they leave a bit before 8 AM they should arrive in time for the 11 AM tour.

Registrants are encouraged to go to lunch afterwards in groups. Some of the favorite local restaurants include La Rana Bistro and Wine Bar 120 Washington St or Mabe's Pizza 110 E Water St.

August 26, 9:30 Saturday - Tour of the Prairie Restoration at the Int'l Crane Foundation in Baraboo. \$11.50. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tour-of-the-prairie-restoration-at-the-intl-crane-foundation-tickets-669573762147?aff=oddtcreator>. Limit 25. Registration closes August 22 at Noon.

No Lussier workday on September 1 in honor of Labor Day.

September 5, 12:30 – 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday at the Breakwater Restaurant, 6308 Inland Way in Monona just off Broadway. No need to sign up, just stop by.

September 8, 9:30 – Noon Friday Tour of Aldo Leopold Foundation building and Aldo Leopold Shack and Farm in Baraboo. \$10.00. Register

here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tour-of-aldo-leopold-foundation-building-and-aldo-leopold-shack-farm-tickets-681298140077>. Limit 20 attendees. Registration closes September 2 at Noon.

Looking to Identify Caterpillars?

Check out this great resource for identifying caterpillars at [this website](#)

Is It Time to Step Up Your Level of Activism?

by Percy Mather

MAMGA needs a few people to provide leadership, guidance and continuity. We're seeing a turnover in MAMGA leadership which keeps the organization healthy. We do need members to step up and take up new responsibilities—like pruning a woody plant to encourage new growth. New faces bring fresh ideas and energy to nourish an organization that is fundamentally sound.

Have you considered taking on the challenge of leadership? Start with something that is small and doable. We've all seen examples of job sharing and dividing responsibilities among participants. Two or more members could easily join forces to produce the newsletter each month. The newsletter can always use new content. Our members can't attend the all the tours and events that MAMGA offers, so short articles on the programs are always welcome.

We could have co-presidents if the tasks were divided among the available volunteers. Members of the Board could take on the officer vacancies one month at a time. It's the perfect solution for those with more free time in part of the year. It's easier to volunteer when you know that the task at hand is only one month long. Another response is to change the tasks to be done. Perhaps we don't need a monthly newsletter because so many members stay in touch with email and get information from the Internet.

So I urge you to get more involved and fill in the gaps in our organizational chart. The goal is to feel challenged but not overwhelmed. Talk to a Board member for more information or to share your suggestions.

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Photos of Garden Tour Sites This month's photos on the cover and page 5 were taken in a beautiful garden on the joint MAMGA/WHPS (WI Hardy Plant Society) Garden Tour held on July 18th. The garden owner estimated that she spends about 20 hours a week growing and tending to her yard starting in winter months. Most of the annuals are grown from seed; others are propagated by cuttings and kept all winter under grow lights. The results are amazing. The yard is set on a hillside next to Old Sauk Road with several tall evergreens providing a backdrop for the floral riot of color that pours down to the street level. The photo on page 5 shows the concrete stepping stones that the owners poured and rolled into place to create an inviting walkway through the flower beds. It was a joy to walk through this garden with other smiling gardeners.



MAMGA members head for lunch and air conditioned space after touring the Teaching Garden. The new greenhouse is in the background. MAMGA volunteers have transformed this corner of the property into several demonstration gardens. Despite the hot weather, we had a good turnout. The site is open to the public and contains some very interesting perennials.

Photo credits

Lisa Seidman pp. 1 & 5
Percy Mather p. 6