



MAMGA Newsletter

February 2021



Photo by Lisa Seidman – [Rime Ice](#) on Lake Mendota Wetlands

In this issue:

President's Column pp.1 - 2

MAMGA Board Candidate Information pp. 2 - 4

MAMGA Events / Community Service Grants / Other Gardening Events p. 5

From President Ed Meachen

We have a great group of volunteers working on our virtual annual meeting. Because we had never done a virtual annual meeting before, we began by thinking we would simply replicate our in-person annual meetings with a Zoom annual meeting. This turned out to be a lot more complex than any of us had initially thought, so we decided to organize our volunteers into 5 working groups to analyze the details of each aspect of our annual meeting and to decide what we should keep and what we should discard in our virtual meeting.

Thank you to Deb Pienkowski, Dana Warren, Bonnie Mitchell, Aleta Murray, Sally Kefer, Dennis Tande, Mary Collet, Lisa Johnson, Em Meier and Art De Smet for their work in organizing the

annual meeting. We have shortened the meeting from 3 hours to 90 minutes (nobody wants to be on Zoom for 3 hours!), made the decision not to have a silent auction (the logistics were just very complicated), shortened the business meeting to 25 minutes, provided 20 minutes for two grant recipients to talk about their 2020 projects, and have our keynote speaker, Jessica Ross, present a 45 minute talk on “Citizen Science in Your Garden.”

The Annual Meeting—our first virtual meeting ever, but our 36th annual meeting—will be on Saturday, February 27th at 9 a.m. It is free, but we ask you to register yourself, and a guest if you like, at <https://www.mamgawi.org/event-registration/2021-virtual>. The deadline for registration is noon on Thursday, February 25th. We will send out the Zoom invitations to all registrants on Friday the 26th. If you don't register, you will not receive the Zoom information!

On February 15th we will send **to all members:** [Be sure you have renewed your membership!]

- 1) the MAMGA Annual Report for 2020,
- 2) the Treasurer's Report for 2020,
- 3) Lisa Johnson's Report on MGV certification in 2021, and
- 4) the Agenda for the Virtual Annual Meeting.

The biographical information for the five Board of Directors candidates is included in this newsletter.

I hope to see you all there!

MAMGA BOARD ELECTION CANDIDATES

At the MAMGA Annual Meeting on February 27th, we will be electing five candidates to two-year terms on our Board of Directors. Four of the candidates, Mary Collet, Art DeSmet, B'Ann Gabelt, and Percy Mather, are up for reelection. Karen Allenstein is standing for the first time. Each has written a brief biography of their time in MAMGA, so that you can get to know them a little better.



Board Candidate - Karen Allenstein

I have a passion for everything relating to plants and gardening. After retirement in 2014, I completed my MGV training with my lifelong friend, Jane Graham. The following year, Jane and I took over the leadership of the annual Dane County Master Gardener Plant Sale, which I continue to lead. In the past 3 years, plant sale revenues have grown to over \$6500 annually to support the Teaching Garden. Since many of the plants sold at the sale are dug up from the Teaching Garden, I became motivated to complete the labeling of plants in the garden. I was lucky to find that a blog and plant labeling system was set up by another MGV, which gave me a great start. By 2016, most of the over 800 plants were identified,

researched, posted to the blog, and labeled with stakes.

As new MGVs, Jane and I put in many volunteer hours in the Teaching Garden, working with other MGVs and students. I fell in love with the gardens and enjoy working with Lisa Johnson. In 2016 we initiated an Adopt a-Garden program to mobilize MGVs into teams dedicated to maintaining individual beds within the Teaching Garden. By focusing MGV and student teams on specific beds, we were able to increase overall participation in maintaining the garden and develop a sense of ownership and accomplishment in the process. The program was a success and continues to date.

With help from other MGVs and Marc Nielsen ('Special Ops' guy at the Teaching Garden), a number of projects were implemented over the years to promote the garden and improve the visitor's experience. Projects include designing and installing 12 garden area signs and 2 map signs to welcome visitors to the garden; installing various paver, stone, and gravel pathways

throughout the garden; creating a Teaching Garden web page and Facebook page; designing a Teaching Garden promotional handout; installing drip irrigation system in the Edibles Garden; raising money to install a new 18x36 ft greenhouse; etc. The new greenhouse is expected to be constructed in the spring of 2021.

I thoroughly enjoy working with and learning from other MGVs to maintain the Teaching Garden. As I am working at the garden, I am often rewarded by compliments from Extension employees and visitors about the beauty of the gardens. I am interested in serving on the MAMGA Board of Directors to support the work of MGVs in Dane County. MGVs are the best! I believe my organizational skills, business background and passion for gardening & horticulture will be an asset to the board.



Board Candidate – Mary Collet

I have been a master gardener for a decade, enjoying opportunities to contribute to community gardening efforts. I served as lead gardener for the Schumacher Farm Park heirloom vegetable garden for 4 years, maintained the rain garden at Pope Farm Conservancy for 3 years, and currently serve on the UWEX Speakers Bureau. My shady garden at home is devoted to perennials. I wish to continue to promote responsible gardening and stewardship of the land through serving on the MAMGA Board.

Board Candidate - Art De Smet

With the frustratingly long pandemic, it's hard to remember when I last worked with fellow gardeners on gardening projects. I did spend time almost every day in my own gardens. My



perennials looked better than ever. I built a small raised bed for tomatoes after giving up on an increasingly tree-shaded location. I should have switched the location a long time ago. My tomato yield was the best in more than five years.

Educational work with the Extension Speakers Bureau ended with a January talk and the Ask a Master Gardener table at the West Farmer's Market never started. One minor benefit of the pandemic was switching to online work as a Plant Health Advisor for the emails and phone call received on the Extension Horticulture Helpline. The software worked well and eliminated the need to drive across town to Extension.

My adopted garden at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station has done well since beginning three years ago. With adding new perennials and dividing, the plantings have filled in nicely. Since it's a solo project, social distancing was no problem.

I have continued to be active in MAMGA having been on the Board and serving as Treasurer for six years. If I am re-elected, I am willing to continue as Treasurer.



Board Candidate – B'Ann Gabelt

Hello! My name is B'Ann Gabelt. I have been a MGV since 2013, graduating from the UW Extension Dane County program. I have been on the MAMGA board and Executive Committee since 2019. I am the MAMGA local representative to WIMGA. As part of this duty, I attend twice annual meetings of local representatives and convey information from MAMGA to WIMGA and vice versa. I have been a member of the MAMGA Program Committee since 2014. I have contributed ideas and have arranged some of the educational opportunities I hope many of you have taken advantage of.

I welcome the opportunity to serve on the MAMGA board for another 2-year term, especially during this time of change in the master gardener volunteer program.

I discovered the program by chance after reading an article about an acquaintance who mentioned the MGV program as an activity. Since I was about to retire from 30+ years in ophthalmology research, I was looking for something to get me outside and more involved in the community. I did not come into the program with much of a background in horticulture aside from the usual houseplants and perennial borders. However, I was eager to learn and have tried to engage in a variety of volunteer activities and educational opportunities to broaden my knowledge base.

I have been a regular at the horticulture helpline where I especially like being able to look up information if I don't know the answer off the top of my head. I also am a co-leader at the Fitchburg Farmer's market Ask-a-Master-Gardener table where I am challenged to answer questions and provide educational resources to the public. Other volunteer activities include gardening type activities at Allen Centennial Garden on the UW campus, MOM food pantry garden, the Arboretum Native Plant garden, West Madison Ag Research Station, and the MAMGA prairie restoration project. Each winter I start native plants from seed, using the winter-sowing technique, which are made available for school and community projects. All of these provide varied horticultural educational experiences. I have attended the state WIMGA conferences and the 2019 international conference in PA. I have also gone on the Costa Rica and New Zealand trips advertised in the WIMGA newsletter. I enjoy experimenting with some of the things I have learned such as lasagna gardening, replacing part of my lawn with no-mow grass, incorporating more native plants and shrubs into my landscape, utilizing floating row covers for pest management, and creating a rock garden/hypertufa area.



Board Nominee - Percy Mather

I write this as the inauguration of President Biden is taking place, in the midst of a still-raging pandemic. We are all hungry for unity and optimism and we hope to see more of it this year. During the past challenging year, I felt a sense of comfort and security from my participation in MAMGA and the Master Gardener program. Despite the cancelled programs and tours, I felt connected and stayed busy while working safely at several gardens. (Zoom was especially helpful once the growing season was over!) MAMGA has introduced me to a network of wonderful gardeners.

I love being a Master Gardener Volunteer because it brings together so many of my interests: growing food, enjoying nature, protecting the environment, and maintaining good health. MAMGA and the Master Gardeners program give us opportunities to work for a unified and more equitable world. We pass on our best values to the community by volunteering at a range of locations and sharing what we've learned from horticultural experts.

I became a Master Gardener in 2012 and since then have been a member of MAMGA serving on the Board for several terms. Currently, I produce the monthly newsletter and make updates to the MAMGA website, after struggling to learn the basics of the software involved. The Board sets policy for the MAMGA organization and I feel can contribute to improve the organization and its communications. I am seeking re-election to focus on training more members who can update and produce MAMGA's communications. Other projects are making MAMGA's good works more visible to the public, continuing support for school and community gardens, and utilizing the Teaching Garden Greenhouse to grow more plants.

MAMGA Events

- February 2 Tuesday 12:30-2pm Green Thumb Tuesday.

First time participants should email Dana Warren djwarren5703@hotmail.com ahead of time to check in. To join the Zoom Meeting, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87379126122?pwd=OTBVT2w2NE1Za2h2S2luK2lJbXM0QT09>

Meeting ID: 873 7912 6122

Passcode: 158144

- February 13 Saturday 10am via Zoom Gardening without Gravity by Simon Gilroy, UW Botany professor. Register at [Eventbrite](#) and enter MAMGA as the promo code to waive the \$10 fee.

- February 27 Saturday 9 to 10:30am via Zoom MAMGA Annual Membership Meeting. [Register](#) before noon on Feb. 25.

- March 1 Monday Deadline for submitting Community Service Grant Application.

Attention Madison Area Master Gardener Association (MAMGA) members, Dane County Community Gardens, Non-Profit Gardening Initiatives and School Districts

MAMGA Community Service Grant Applications are being accepted until March 1 for gardening and horticulture projects for 2021. Grant awards will be announced on or about March 15, 2021. The purpose of these grants is to help support school garden and public, non-profit community based garden projects located within the Dane County area. A MAMGA Master Gardener must sponsor a project. MAMGA Community Service Grants may not be used to benefit individual home gardens or private businesses. Individual grant applications may request up to \$500.

Grant funds may be used for seeds, plants, fertilizer, mulch, tools, information and education of students and the community and garden infrastructure but not for paid labor. There are a number of sources in Madison for free seeds, seedlings and other forms of assistance that may help match the resources requested in your grant. Applications are available on the MAMGA [website](#).

Given the pandemic situation for 2021, MAMGA will support innovative and on-line gardening projects. Applicants must follow all state, local and school district policies regarding social distancing during the course of completing a project. Grant applications, guidance and scoring details may be found on the MAMGA website. Contact Sally Kefer at sjkmail10@yahoo.com with questions and to submit a grant application per the grant instructions.

Other Gardening Events

- February 12 & 13 Virtual Wisconsin Community Garden Conference via Zoom Register at <https://danegardens.net/conference/> This is a virtual event for community garden organizers and gardeners on gardening techniques and leadership.

- February 20 & 21 Wisconsin Garden & Landscape Expo See the [website](#) for registration & schedule.

- Friends of the Arboretum Native Plant Sale

Prairie plants, woodland plants, shrubs, trees, citizen science kits, and mixed garden kits available. Order all plants online at foamadison.org by March 15 or see the FOA Facebook page. Curbside pick up in May. No tent sales this year.