

MAMGA Newsletter

June 2022



Irises in the Teaching Garden

Photo by Percy Mather

In this issue:

President's Column p. 2

New Greenhouse pp. 2 - 3

Record Plant Sale p. 4

Calendar Events pp. 4 - 5

Employment & Volunteer Opportunities p. 5

MAMGA Board Draft Minutes p. 6

Signature Project Update pp. 7- 8

Meet Your Master Gardener – Jane Cramer pp. 8 - 9

Looking for a few more plants? Check out the bargains and numerous day lily varieties that are still available. The plants are located along the sidewalk along the south side of the building. Shop whenever the building is open. Pay at the receptionist's desk.

President's Column

by Ed Meachen

There was a day—May 26—when we almost caught up with our gardens. Everything around us had turned green, or had some great spring colors. The lilacs looked great, irises were blooming here and there, including the grand opening of the purple Siberian variety. The ferns were more prolific than ever. We walked around in the twilight that evening and marveled at how quickly the plants had come back to life after a fairly brutal April. But you know, it was twilight. Everything looks better in the evening, and the rains helped too. Alas, over the last few days the equilibrium has been broken. Entropy, the cosmologists' word for chaos in the universe, has overtaken the yard. I remember that Robert Frost poem, so apropos, "nature's first green is gold, it's hardest hue to hold, it's first leaf's a flower, but only so an hour, so dawn goes down to day, nothing gold can stay."

Meanwhile, the program committee has been working to organize the remainder of the 2022 programs, including a trip to Boerner Botanical Gardens near Milwaukee [June 8], a tour of Faville Grove, an Audubon sanctuary near Lake Mills [June 11], a tour of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant, now the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area [July 13], and a tour and lunch at the Teaching Garden on Saturday, [July 16].

If you have any time to throw in the towel on trying to bring order out of the chaos of your gardens, sign up for one or more of these getaways.

New Greenhouse!

By Karen Allenstein

Thanks to the amazing generosity of Master Gardeners, the greenhouse project has a greenlight! We will have more information on timing of the construction after a 'kick-off' meeting planned for June. The greenhouse site (already graded) is located off the southwest corner of the Dane County Extension office building. The 36x18 foot greenhouse will be supplied by water, gas and electrical service. The frame of the greenhouse is constructed from galvanized steel roll-formed components and is engineered to meet snow and wind load ratings for our area. The twinwall polycarbonate panels covering the frame have an R-Factor of 1.55. The greenhouse package will include the following equipment:

- * 2 Exhaust Fans
- * 2 Motorized Inlet Shutters
- * High Efficiency Natural Gas Heater
- * 2 Horizontal Air Flow Fans

We have purchased ten 3'x8' heavy-duty resin ventilated bench tops with removable legs which we will be used for seed starting and for displaying vegetable, herb and annual flower seedlings at the annual Master Gardener Plant Sale. Other planned purchases include shade cloth, landscape fabric for the walking surface, hoses, hanging grow lights, and possibly, horizontal poles for hanging baskets, a larger potting bench with storage and cold frames for the outside of the greenhouse to accommodate acclimation needs of seedlings prior to planting outdoors. The accompanying photo is the greenhouse model specified in the contract. The site plan has been approved by Madison's Zoning Department and is available



on the MAMGA Notes website.

The new greenhouse will provide a proper environment for hands-on training of the public and Master Gardeners in growing seedlings and plant propagation. Dane County Parks plans to use the greenhouse for their native plant program in the summer. Master Gardeners will be invited to attend a greenhouse 'ribbon cutting' ceremony once construction is complete. In the interim, you can get updates on the progress of construction through the monthly MAMGA newsletter.

Plant Sale Draws Record Crowds

By Karen Allenstein

Customers were lined up over a half hour before the Plant Sale started on Sunday, May 22nd, eager to purchase the perennials, annual flowers, vegetables, herbs and house plants we offered. Volunteers potted over 800 daylilies (43 different varieties) that were donated from the West Ag Research Station. Many daylilies are still available for sale along the sidewalk on the south side of the Extension office building. Other sun and shade perennials were completely sold out in record time.

This year we were able to offer customers the ability to charge their purchases, which was much appreciated. To date, our Plant Sale revenues are on par with last year (around \$6500) and we continue to sell plants to Extension employees, master gardeners and visitors to the Extension. We also have over 10 flats of tomato plants leftover from the sale that will be donated to community gardens. A big thanks to all volunteers who worked so hard on growing seedlings, digging & potting perennials, labelling plants, producing & organizing laminated plant signs, 'tidying' up donated plants, putting up signs around town, collecting shallow plant boxes, weeding and planting in the Teaching Garden before the sale, bringing wagons & tents, pricing plants, setting up for sale, cashiering, and putting everything away after the sale. Master Gardener volunteers are the best!

Calendar Events

The Tree Identification event originally scheduled for Thursday, May 25, was cancelled due to stormy weather. Watch for an email with information about the rescheduled date and time.

June 8 Wednesday Boerner Botanical Gardens, lunch, and Eberts Nursery. Limit 20. Tour begins at 10 AM. Meet at UW-Ext at 8:15 if you would like to car pool or caravan together or just meet us at Boerner Botanical by 9:45. Entrance to Boerner is \$10.50. Tour will last 90 minutes. As we head toward Eberts Nursery, we will take a quick detour for lunch at Zincredible in Delafield. Bring your van or SUV to take back all the fantastic plants you'll want from Eberts in Ixonia. Sign up at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/boerner-botanical-lunch-eberts-nursery-tickets-331134932497> Ignore Eventbrite when it says "Free".

June 11 Saturday 10am – 1pm Faville Grove Tour and lunch. Limit 20.

Join David Musolf and Roger Packard, resident managers of Faville Grove Sanctuary in Lake Mills, for a guided tour of the prairie. This wildlife sanctuary previously served as a research site for Aldo Leopold. Faville Grove Sanctuary is owned and managed by Madison Audubon, and is part of 2,000+ acres that the organization has restored to native habitat. David and Roger will help you identify the many native plants, birds, and insects we will see. Lunch will be at the Oakstone in Cottage Grove. <https://www.oakstonerec.com/> Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/faville-grove-tour-and-lunch-tickets-331163407667>

June 27 Monday 4 to 8pm Garden Tours Jointly Sponsored by WI Hardy Plants & MAMGA

Gardens in South Madison and Fitchburg are featured in this tour. For maps and more information, see <https://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.org/event-calendar.html>

July 13 Wednesday 9:30AM. Tour of the renovated Badger Army Ammunition Site, Sauk Prairie. This includes the Badger History Group Museum and the beautiful lands of the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area. There are 7,300 acres. We will rent a school bus at \$5 per person to drive thru the area. Afterward, we will have lunch at Wollersheim Winery on our own. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tour-of-the-renovated-badger-army-ammunition-site-tickets-350818235787>

July 16 11 AM. UW Extension Teaching Garden tour and luncheon. MAMGA members are invited to the UW Extension Teaching Garden for a luncheon and tour. Come see what has changed! Every year so much happens in these gardens! Don't miss this opportunity for a guided tour and luncheon provided by MAMGA. Maybe you'll see the beginning of the greenhouse construction! Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-teaching-garden-tour-and-luncheon-tickets-350821365147>

Employment (\$) and volunteer (V) opportunities are listed on the MAMGA website under [Resources](#). MAMGA lists that information as a courtesy to our local organizations, businesses & employers. Feel free to pass this information to anyone who might be interested in employment or volunteering.

<<We are in need of a master gardener to help get our yard in order. We can pull weeds etc. but I'm afraid we mistakenly remove flowers. The hourly fee is negotiable.

The previous owner of our house was a master gardener and we have have owned our house now for seven years. I am disabled and my wife works full-time, so I'm sure you can imagine the state of our yard.

It would be great to have somebody who knows their plants, and can help us plan a less labor-intensive garden, and has thoughts on where to plant some trees, since we have lost two. Our home is located on the westside of Madison, in Parkwood Hills, near Owen Conservancy Park.

Email to pantoga.c@gmail.com >>

[From the editor: As an indication of the large demand for gardening services, I observed that a landscaper with 30 years of experience posted a notice with NextDoor and received 54 messages from people who had gardening work to be done.]

MAMGA Board Minutes
4:00 May 16, 2022
5201 Fen Oak Drive Madison, WI
(EIN 39-1694554)

Board Members Present: Karen Allenstein, Mary Collet, Art De Smet, B'Ann Gabelt, Judi Janowski, Ed Meachen, Barbara Park, and Dennis Tande

Absent: Eugenia Beecher, Percy Mather, Carol Troyer-Shank

Also Present: Lisa Johnson

1. **Review of March Minutes** Moved by B'Ann and seconded by Art. Approved.
2. **Treasurer's Report** Art sent the budget prior to the meeting and reported we are in good standing. Thanks for Karen for contacting members who had not renewed for a variety of reasons. We currently have as many members in 2022 as we did in 2021.
3. **Membership** There was a continuing discussion of how to recruit new members, since Lisa is not sure if we will have access to those who have completed the On-Boarding process. Lisa does promote MAMGA and the Teaching Garden at orientation. There is confusion about the classes required and how to find them. There is no specific class or number of classes required. The lack of in-person classes affects the social, shared experience and educational aspects of our members and potential members.
4. **Committees and By-Law Committees** Art provided a summary of the existing committees and made suggestions for combining/eliminating some. This will be discussed at the July meeting.
5. **Membership Directory** Currently all Board members have access to the membership spreadsheet. Percy has asked that this directory be available to other members who wish to communicate with each other. For example, it would be helpful for the Program Committee to have access in order to check membership status and to project coordinators to contact volunteers. It is possible to set this up on our website with password protected access. It would come with a statement that this information is for MAMGA use only. There will be further discussion when Percy returns.
6. **Program Speaker Honoraria** Deb Pienkowski contacted Jane LaFlash from the WHPS for suggestions. We support their community garden tours and could cosponsor future events.
7. **2023 Annual Meeting** We will meet at the Goodman Community Center. Possible speakers/topics included: climate change, phenology, SuperCharge foods, Megan Cain, Director of Olbrich Gardens.
8. **Insurance** We have two policies, one covering personal liability and the other covering directors and officers, for a cost of \$1,200 per year. Our policies are with Baer Insurance. Art suggested a meeting in October to discuss the policy and any riders. Ed will also attend.
9. **Teaching Garden Greenhouse** Lisa reported the project is fully funded and construction should begin this spring. She will check the time line.
10. **WIMGA** B'Ann asked for specific MAMGA concerns to ask at the upcoming WIMGA Zoom meeting on June 2.
11. **Next Board meeting** July 11, 2:00 Ed's home

MAMGA Signature Project Update



Trays of seedlings wait to be planted. We have kneeling pads, tools, and instructions available. All we need are volunteers. Our regular work day is on Friday from 9:30 to 11:30am, but we can show you how to access the tools & plants so you can work at times that are more convenient for your schedule. The prairie was not burned this spring, so we need to remove invasives like wild parsnip, Queen Anne's lace, reed canary grass, and thistles manually. Contact Percy Mather by phone 608 233-1955 or email percy.mather@gmail.com In case the weather looks threatening, call my cell at 608 520-4364 to see if the work session has been cancelled.

As shown below, the sensory garden has a new trellis this year to support vines

and provide extra shade. In the distance, the purple martin condo is occupied by several families. We often hear cranes and geese calling while we work.



Meet Your Fellow Master Gardener - Jane Cramer **by Mary Collet**

“I’ve never met a garden I didn’t like,” says Jane Cramer. She loves the form and color of flowers and considers her garden a palette for creativity. From chaos comes rhythm and unity. Trained as a scientist, Jane brings her love of experimentation to her garden.

Jane’s passion for growing plants goes back to her childhood. While she was young, the family lived in a second-floor apartment in Chicago. That didn’t stop her from enjoying nature—from visiting the Forest Preserves, to playing on the University of Chicago midway, to summer visits to her aunts. One aunt lived on a farm and the other had a huge yard (375 ft deep by 80 ft wide) with flower gardens, vegetable gardens and many fruit trees. When Jane’s family moved to Arlington Heights IL, one of her mother’s first projects was to start a garden and to plant flower seeds.

Jane’s garden has undergone decades of evolution. Challenges have been changes in light, jumping worms, water flow management, physical changes in adjacent yards, and heavy rainfalls. Fifty years ago, the backyard was heavily wooded. Then the red oaks succumbed to wilt. Later the yard was regraded and terraced. The ground is sloped, so affected by water flow from adjacent properties. Three rain basins, planted with sedges, collect excess water.

Jane has increasingly been thinking of plants as communities. She feels a dynamic tension between growing native and horticultural plants. The backyard is primarily home to native plants, which include ferns (maidenhair, lady, cinnamon, and Japanese painted), Celandine poppy, mayapple, trillium, Jacob's ladder, phlox, wild geranium, columbine, and fairy candles (*Cimicifuga*). Jane has also been introducing hosta, attracted by their names: 'Nancy,' 'Whirlwind,' and 'Little Mouse Ears,' to name a few.

Cultivars reside in the front yard, which, like the backyard, has undergone radical changes over time. Originally, there was enough sun for a vegetable garden. [Note: Jane currently grows single-harvest vegetables, like potatoes and onions, plus tomatoes, in Eagle Heights Community Garden.] In 1976, an ice storm destroyed a number of trees in the yard including a clump birch in the front. In its place, Jane planted a small redbud which, over time, has been pruned and reshaped by mother nature. Now a magnificent specimen, its trunk is hollow, and its heavy, low-hanging branches are bolstered by "crutches."

When Jane retired in 2014, she knew that she wanted to become a master gardener. She brings her skills and enthusiasm to the Allen Centennial Garden and the Ask a Master Gardener booth at the Westside Farmers Market. Her advice to budding gardeners: "Be patient and enjoy. Don't be afraid to explore—there's so much to learn and do. You're never going to run out of new puzzles. Gardening is many things, but it has to be fun!" Jane's garden was featured on the WHPS-MAMGA tour on May 19.

