

# MAMGA Newsletter

January 2023



An orchid at Olbrich Photo by Percy Mather  
Garden books pp.4-5

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## President's Column

by Ed Meachen

Over the holidays and during the bitter winter winds, I've been acquiring and reading some gardening books. I think I've been inspired by Dennis Tande's new column, "What I'm

reading.” In today’s newsletter he recommends “Epic Tomatoes—how to select and grow the best varieties of all time,” by Craig LeHoullier. Since Dennis is the “prince” of tomatoes at Kopkes, this is something I will pay attention to.

I spent some time looking at garden books considered “classics” by the *New York Times*. I found two that perhaps you have read. Rather than “how to” gardening books, these are literary garden books. Both involve the work of Katharine S. White, a long time editor of *The New Yorker* magazine. She was an avid gardener and with the approval of the magazine’s editorial staff began short essays about gardens. The first one published in the magazine on March 1, 1958 was entitled “A Romp in the Catalogs.” She refers, of course, to seed and plant catalogs. The critiques of the 1950s catalogs are helpful and humorous. Some of those seed companies are still with us. R.H. Shumway, for example, just arrived in my mailbox. The essays covering all sorts of garden issues were gathered together in book form, and entitled “Onward and Upward in the Garden.”

Elizabeth Lawrence, a newspaper garden columnist in North Carolina, happened to read Katherine’s first *New Yorker* seed catalog piece, and wrote to her suggesting additional seed catalogs. Over time Katharine White and Elizabeth Lawrence became friends, as well as pen pals. Their letters were preserved and published in book form: “Two Gardeners. A Friendship in Letters.” It’s a marvelous story about how love of gardening brings people of differing cultures, politics, and geography together.

Reading the story of these gardening friends seemed like a perfect way to lead off a new year.

**Membership Renewal.** We’d like to urge you one more time, if you haven’t already renewed your MAMGA membership, to do it now while you are thinking about it. Let it be the first step toward a successful gardening year. You’ll avoid feelings of guilt and the extra postage and effort needed to distribute membership cards to members. Remember your membership card gives you discounts at a number of local businesses and nurseries. Some members find that the discounts pay for their MAMGA membership.

MGVs need to report their volunteer (24 hrs) and continuing education hours (10) on the online reporting system to keep MGV certification current. However, you can be a member of MAMGA regardless of your MGV certification status.

## Calendar Events

**January 3 12:30 – 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday** meets at the Breakwater Restaurant, 6308 Inland Way, Monona, just off Bridge Road where it crosses the Yahara River. We have a separate room for our group. Let Dana Warren know if you plan to attend.  
[dwarren1943@gmail.com](mailto:dwarren1943@gmail.com) or [djwarren5703@hotmail.com](mailto:djwarren5703@hotmail.com)

**January 9 Monday 4 – 6pm** MAMGA Board meets via Zoom. Contact Ed Meachen at [willismeachen@gmail.com](mailto:willismeachen@gmail.com) if you wish to participate but are not a Board member.

**January 9 Monday midnight is** the extended deadline for submitting MGV volunteer and continuing education hours.

**February 7 12:30 – 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday** meets at the Breakwater Restaurant, 6308 Inland Way, Monona, just off Bridge Road where it crosses the Yahara River. We have a separate room for our group. Let Dana Warren know if you plan to attend. [dwarren1943@gmail.com](mailto:dwarren1943@gmail.com) or [djwarren5703@hotmail.com](mailto:djwarren5703@hotmail.com)

**February 10-12 Garden & Landscape Expo**

Can you believe it is that time again? Check out the website for information.

**March 1 Wednesday** Due date for MAMGA Grant applications. The MAMGA grant application process has begun. Each grant applicant needs a MAMGA member sponsor. Applications are due by March 1, 2023. If you know of an eligible organization that might be interested in a grant, see the [MAMGA website](#) for information and the grant application forms.

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**2023 Winter Presentations Organized by Friends of Allen Centennial Garden**

The 2023 theme, “Seeds of Change”, focuses on how historical agricultural traditions, diverse ethnic and indigenous perspectives and modern research are acting as “seeds of change” to impact future gardening practices and food production. Registration is now open. Sessions attended count as continuing education credits. Presentations will be held virtually on Saturday mornings from 10 to 11:30am during January and February. See information on [this website](#). MAMGA is a joint sponsor for the February 25 program so MAMGA members can join that session for free.

Sessions are offered in collaboration with Allen Centennial Garden at UW-Madison, to be held virtually on Saturday mornings from 10:00 to 11:30 am during January and February.

Titles and speakers are listed below.

Further information and registration is available online at <https://allencentennialgarden.wisc.edu/>

January 21 "Seed to Kitchen Vegetable Variety Trials" - Julie Dawson, Horticulture Dept.

January 28 “From Seed to Farmer to Table - Lessons Learned along a Food Justice Journey”  
Philip Kauth, Executive Director, REAP Food Group, Ma -

February 4 “BIPOC(Black & Indigenous People of Color) Foodways: From Africa toMadison”  
Yusuf Bin-Rella, Chef, UW-Madison & Cofounder, TradeRoots Culinary Collective.  
(This presentation will be delivered in person on the UW campus as well as live-streamed.)

February 18 Activity of Woody Perennials Through Winter - Al Kovaleski, Horticulture Department, UW-Madison

February 25 “Gardening for the Seasons: Lessons from Lurie Garden”

Kathryn Deery, Head Horticulturist for the Lurie Garden at Millennium Park, Chicago MAMGA members can [register for this session](#) free by using the promo code: MAMGA.

Using Lurie Garden as a model, we will explore choosing the “right plant, for the right place”, perennials for every season, designing with native plants, mindful watering, and best practices for cutting back your garden for wildlife and insects. The high diversity and concentration of plants makes Lurie a leader in plant selection, management, and ecologically sensitive maintenance practices. With a few simple adjustments to way we garden, a beautifully designed space that considers sustainability and ecology is within everyone’s reach.

Kathryn is passionate about the vital role public gardens play in communities. Her goal is to maintain the design integrity of Lurie Garden while facilitating the garden's adaptation and evolution. She previously held positions in horticulture and public programming at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Prior to that, she worked in habitat restoration with the Golden Gate Parks Conservancy and served as a Conservation Corps North Bay AmeriCorps member.

## What I'm Reading

by Dennis Tande



### ***Epic Tomatoes - How to Select and Grow the Best Varieties of All Time***

by Craig LeHoullier

As the seed catalogs start to arrive and you make your lists and plan your purchases, I recommend *Epic Tomatoes*. I can already taste homemade salsa and BLTs. *Epic Tomatoes* contains 9 chapters with beautiful photographs and detailed information from planning and planting to maintenance and trouble shooting. There are recipes along with charts listing variety, shape, size, season, flavor and days to ripen.

In the Q&A chapter, LeHoullier dispels urban myths and clearly answers a variety of questions. For example, all tomatoes have similar acidity. Some taste sweeter because their sugar content is higher and masks the acidity. He troubleshoots diseases, pest and other problems: foliar damage, fruit damage. plant growth, He ends with 250 recommended varieties. (Spoiler alert: Brandywine is a favorite.)

The book is available at the Madison Public Library and Olbrich's Schumacher library.

### **MAMGA's History is on Our Website**

Ed Meachen led a group effort to record the people who provided leadership to the organization. That story is now on the website listed under Resources.