

Your monthly e-newsletter from the Madison Area Master Gardener's Association. [Click here to visit the MAMGA website for even more information for local garden events, meetings, and more!](#)

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November 2018

Newsletter

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The President's Message



From Ed Meachen, MGV

I'm really looking forward to 2019. MAMGA has a line-up of 18 programs/tours for the coming year. And the annual membership meeting on March 30th (the latest we've ever scheduled it) is all set. Of course, as always, there is much work yet to be done, but we have the venue (Zor Shrine), the caterer (Blue Plate), and a great speaker (Christina Harrington, landscape manager at Taliesen). We will be able to significantly reduce the cost of attendance to under \$20.

But I'm also looking forward to winter. I love the struggle with the weather, the blizzards, the snow as a perfect backdrop to brown hydrangea masses and the skeletons of bushes and orchard, and time for indoor contemplation. Full disclosure: I get to take off a couple of

weeks every winter to somewhere in the Caribbean as a break from the blizzards!

But the fall and winter is also a time for a lot of MAMGA work. The first order of business is renewing your membership. It's interesting to note that by this date last year we had 83 renewals. This year we have only 43. I know many members intend to renew before the first of the new year, but simply forget because of much more important things in day-to-day life. Still, it would be very helpful for the MAMGA board if you would renew early. We are putting together our 2019 budget, and the one uncertain factor is the number of members we will have in 2019. For easy renewal, go to the MAMGA membership web page to renew by credit card or check.

<http://www.mamgawi.org/mamga-membership/>

See you at the MGV graduation on November 15th at 7 p.m. at Zor Shrine, 575 Zor Shrine Place, right off the beltline on the Mineral Point exit.

MGV Graduation & Awards – Nov. 15

November 15 Thursday 7-9pm Class of 2018 MGV Graduation & Celebration at the Zor Shrine Facility

Sign up at: here <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-master-gardener-volunteer-graduation-and-awards-recognition-tickets-50661531003> Our speaker is David Drake, professor of forestry and wildlife ecology. He has studied urban foxes and coyotes and their interactions. He'll speak about managing wildlife in the garden. The facility is located just off D'onofrio Drive, which connects Mineral Point Road and High Point Road near the Beltline on Madison's west side.

MAMGA–Sponsored Events Also check the MAMGA [website calendar](#) under Events. Please note that the website has two calendars: one for MAMGA–sponsored events and one for events sponsored by other organizations that may be of interest to our members.

November 6 12:30 - 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday Monona Garden Restaurant Join other MGVs for lunch, conversation, and fellowship.

November 15 Thursday 7-9pm Class of 2018 MGV Graduation & Celebration at the Zor Shrine Facility

December 4 12:30 - 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday Monona Garden Restaurant Now that the gardens are asleep for the winter, join other MGVs for lunch, conversation, and fellowship.

Community Services Grant Application & 2018 Awards Summary

MAMGA is announcing their 2019 Community Services Grant application period, which runs Nov. 1, 2018 to Feb. 4, 2019. The grants help support school and public or non-profit community gardening projects in the Dane County area. We believe these gardens set good examples for educating the public about growing your own food and beautifying our neighborhoods. The grant awards are up to \$500 per project and should be completed no later than fall of 2019.

The link to the MAMGA grant application form can be found on the MAMGA website or here <http://www.mamqawi.org/mamga-grants/>.

2018 Community Services Committee Grant Program Award Summary

The following groups received a Community Services Grant award based on scoring

and discussion of the grant review group that included: Jim Scorgie, Carol Troyer-Shank, Mary Pinkerton and myself (Sally Kefer). The grant applicants have been notified and checks sent out by Treasurer Art De Smet.

1. Glendale Switchgrass Bale Gardens REQ \$300/AWD \$300
MG and Contact: Nancy Kieraldo, 608-334-6622

The grant continues from last year's MG grant of placing bales on the periphery of the garden for the purpose of increasing production and controlling weeds. The grant also adds a 4-5 bale growing station to grow vine crops such as pie pumpkins, winter squash and gourds. Work includes continued demonstration and instruction of students and adults about the differences between straw bale and soil gardening. Teachers and students will select straw bale gardens to grow, tend and harvest from a variety of straw bale gardens including Rainbow Pollinator Garden, Strawberry Parfait Garden, Winter Squash and Gourd Garden, Snack Garden, Red Salsa Summer Garden, Green Salsa Summer Garden, Potato Garden, Pole Bean Garden or Cucumber Garden.

One outcome will be an improved end-of-year mulching using both used and spent bales as brown material for the improved compost site. Adult education of composting methods will be taught at the Glendale Neighborhood Festival in July as well as the October Family Harvest Fest.

2. Refugee Gardening at Marlborough Community Gardens REQ \$432/AWD \$300
MG and Contact: Barbara Park (608) 273-8775

Will cover the expenses for six garden plots at Marlborough Community Garden that will be made available to refugee families new to Madison and who have very few resources. We will work with Open Doors for Refugees, a non-profit volunteer organization that is helping recently arrived refugees to make a home in the Madison area. The grant funds will pay for the plot rental, removable fencing, trellises, seeds, tools, hay bales (mulch), and kneeling pads. Volunteers will work with the refugee gardeners to introduce them to the plants and practices suitable for growing vegetables in our climate. One outcome is interaction among refugees to make them more familiar with each other and gardening in WI.

3. Heal@Gardens: Healthy Eating, Active Learning through Gardening REQ \$490
/AWD \$300

MG and Contact: Shelly Strom, 306 N. Segoe Road, Unit 102, Madison WI 53705
The HEAL@Gardens project will provide 10 community garden plots at Troy Community Garden for three groups:

1. Adults with developmental disabilities and their caregivers
2. Military veterans
3. Recent refugees

Grant will provide facilitated weekly garden-based programming for these groups during the growing season (May-October) enhancing access and interaction among the groups.

Programming will be led by volunteers. Weekly topics will include sustainable gardening, healthy recipes, collaborative decision-making, expressive arts (art, music, story-telling), active movement and connections to nature (pollinators, birds, animals, insects).

4. Falk Elementary School Increasing Awareness REQ \$481/AWD \$300
MG and Contact: Anna Biermeier, 608/836-7211

This project expands the gardening area for children with mobility issues. Falk School Garden would convert some of its existing raised beds into beds tall enough and narrow enough for students who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices. The garden currently has three large circular pots that are a good height for wheelchairs.

Since students use the garden during the school day, the taller beds will be a benefit to all students – less kneeling on the ground to do their work (back to class cleaner). The neighborhood garden association has expressed an interest in working with the school and, Blackhawk church provides a full day of volunteering to the garden each spring.

5. Gompers Elementary - Gompers Grows REQ \$454/AWD \$200

MG: Deb Pienkowski Contact: Brian Emerson (608)-609-5701

Provide horticultural education throughout the school year with diversity of topics, (starting seeds, soil basics, vermicomposting, growing seasons, weather, harvesting, nutrition and food systems) with demonstration of seeding and seedling growth. Help students tie growing food to individual health and that of the community. "Family Gardening Night" to be held in May.

6. Spring Harbor Middle School Seedlings Learning & Growing REQ \$400/AWD \$300

MG and Contact: Mary Goonan (608)426-040

During the spring and summer students, community members, and staff at Spring Harbor School will learn about starting seedlings indoors using a grow light and all the other conditions necessary for successfully growing seedlings that can later be transitioned to an outdoor garden plot. Earth Day activities in April for student and staff. Garden Camps every 2 weeks throughout summer to tend gardens.

7. WI Heights Community Garden Bean REQ \$377/AWD \$300

MG and Contact: Terri Patwell (608)798-3073

Build a 30 foot bean tunnel as part of beautification and education program with produce distributed to students and local food pantries. Garden members have designed the 30' bean tunnel and with the help of family members will do the installation. Children will plant multi-colored seeds which will grow and hang from the tunnel.

WHCG is working with the elementary schools and libraries in both Black Earth and Mazomanie to drive enrollment of elementary school children in the educational program. WHCG has 2 MGVs and a horticulturalist on their board who will be conducting the programs. The program will be held one Saturday each month from 9am – 11am May – August.

Volunteer Opportunities

School Garden Resources

If you are involved with a school or youth community garden projects, be sure to check for resources and information at: <https://wischoolgardens.org/>. You can also sign up for an electronic newsletter.

East High Greenhouse Volunteer Needed to Work with Special Needs Kids

Our goal is to use the East High School green house to build a sustainable and fun school garden for students with disabilities that delivers essential life-skills training in a meaningful way, offers a sensory enriching environment, and provides

opportunities for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. Our fantastic south-facing greenhouse allows for gardening throughout the school year which is a major advantage in Wisconsin where 3 out of the 5 months in our outdoor growing season are during summer vacation.

Our first year we will establish the garden and implement our plan to sell wheat grass, herbs, and vegetable starters. Long term 3 year goals will be to incorporate compost, worm bins, and grow lights to expand our opportunities for learning. Additionally opportunities to consume fresh food and share it with the rest of the school will strengthen the bridge between the greenhouse and the rest of the student population. Students with disabilities and students with autism in particular have sensory challenges that make it difficult for them to eat foods with different colors and textures. Incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables into their diets is difficult. A growing body of evidence suggests that students with sensory challenges are positively stimulated and more likely to be open to trying new foods (e.g., cherry tomatoes on the vine, pea pods from the bush, fresh spinach and lettuce). For more information, contact Kelley at (608) 204-1783 or email to kohutchisonm@madison.k12.wi.us

WIMGA (WI Master Gardener Association) Rep Needed

Becky Gutzman (WIMGA president) is looking for someone to act as the local representative for Dane County. See the position description below and let me know if you may be interested.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

The WIMGA Board of Directors is the governing body for the Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association. It consists of fifteen (15) Directors, with twelve (12) District Directors chosen based on the former six (6) UW-Extension Districts/Urban Clusters and three (3) Directors At-Large elected from the entire membership. Each member Association must assign a **Local Representative** to maintain a connection to the Board.

Local Representatives are selected by each member Association to represent their Association in all official business with regard to WIMGA – they are the one recognized contact person for their Association. If an Association feels a need to have an alternate, the Local Representative can forward all the information to the alternate.

Key Roles/ Responsibilities for Local Representatives

1. Attend the two Face-to-Face Meetings with the WIMGA Board held each year.
2. Participate on any of the WIMGA committees and/or strategic initiatives as a member with full rights on that committee.
3. Download a summary report of each meeting of the WIMGA Board as posted on WIMGA's Website and relay the information to your Association.
4. Respond promptly to requests for input from the WIMGA Board.
5. Bring to the attention of your District Directors any issues you or your Association would like the WIMGA Board or the Master Gardener Advisory Committee to address with UW-Extension.
6. Make sure your local treasurer sends both dues and addresses of Association members to the WIMGA Treasurer by the deadline.
7. Make sure the **Annual Accomplishment Report** for your Association is submitted to the UW-Extension MG Program Office by the deadline. Who actually writes the report is left up to the group – in many cases it is the Local Representative who writes it, but in other Associations, the President/Chair, a committee or even the UW-Extension Agent handles this responsibility.
8. Make sure your Local Association's Calendar of Events on the WIMGA Website is up-to-date. Who actually submits the updates is up to the group, but the material for updates must be sent to the Web Page Coordinator.
9. Provide the WIMGA Secretary with a current list of your local Association's officers and changes as they occur due to elections or resignation.
10. Notify the WIMGA Secretary of any changes in your address, phone number and/or e-mail address.
11. Provide the WIMGA Secretary with a copy of updated Association by-laws when changes are made.
12. Assist in District-wide communication in conjunction with the District Directors. This

can be done by attending District meetings (either in person or by WisLine) and/or through District newsletters.

Note: Meetings and driving time to Board Meetings; Board and Local Representatives Joint Meetings and District Meetings count as volunteer time.

Dane County Sweet Potato Project

Photo by Joe Muellenberg

The Dane County Sweet Potato Project is finishing up another productive season with hundreds of pounds of donations. The goal is to increase healthy food access in Dane County by growing sweet potatoes for local food pantries. Dane County UW-Extension does this by teaching community members how to grow sweet potatoes and provides free sweet potato slips, or transplants to community members. This year, many different youth programs helped to plant and harvest them. Sweet potatoes are a great choice for this project because they are a very nutrient dense vegetable, if properly cured, can last up to a year without refrigeration, making them ideal for food pantries. To date, local growers have donated over 16,000 pounds!

Growing sweet potatoes can be challenging to cultivate successful in a Zone 5 climate, but with the right soil preparation and management, they can be a very productive and enjoyable vegetable to grow. Here is some information on how to grow them.

Sweet potatoes are propagated vegetatively rather than by seeds. The saved sweet potato is used to produce slips, or transplants. They can be planted in late May through mid June in Wisconsin when soil temperatures are 70 to 80 degrees and all danger of frost has passed. In zone 5, Beauregard and Georgia Jet varieties do well as they have been selected for a shorter growing season and cold hardiness. When planting, remove all the petioles off the slip and plant the empty nodes in under the soil. A node is a bump or swelling on the slip where a leaf was attached. Each node will form its own sweet potato! Make sure that there is good soil moisture and water every other day for 1-2 weeks after transplanting as the slips are still fragile and developing roots during this

period. The spacing should be about 18 inches in rows or 3x3 feet for square foot gardening. The wider the spacing between plants, the faster the sweet potatoes grow. Sweet potatoes can tolerate acidic soils, but plant in raised hills or windrows if your soil is more clay-based.

Raised beds aid in root development and improve soil drainage and aeration as sweet potatoes do not tolerate waterlogged soils. Control weeds around the potato until the sweet potato vines cover the by mulching around the plants with newspaper and hay. Black plastic sheet mulch can also be used and is great for bringing the soil temperature up as sweet potatoes love hot soil and are very drought tolerant. After 90-100 days have passed, you may start harvesting by using a tine or pitch fork. Be sure to harvest before the first fall frost as dying vines may start to rot the potato roots. Be careful when harvesting as the potato skin is very fragile before being cured. The potato can be eaten immediately, but will firm up for storage after being cured in a hot (90+ degrees and humid environment for 1-2 weeks.



Grow your own nutritious snacks--pepitas!

Photo by Percy Mather

Who doesn't love a healthy snack, especially one that you grow yourself and is decorative as well? Several years ago, I read about Barron County farmers who grew them to produce pumpkin seed oil sold as a pricey and delicious salad dressing. The oil comes from the hullless seeds, eaten as a snack called pepitas. I've been growing them ever since.

If you grow this pumpkin (*Cucurbita pepo*, sometimes sold as variety *styriaca*), you get at least two rewards: a potential jack o'lantern in (almost) Packer colors, edible seeds, and edible, if bland, pulp. The diameter of the fruits varies from the smaller varieties (6 to 8 inches) to 12 inches (Williams) or more. The small fruit shown above (Lady Godiva) produced 1/2 cup of seeds, but larger fruits contain more than a cupful.

Several seed companies sell the seeds (Victory, Territorial, Baker Creek, Johnny's, Pinetree, etc.) or you can contact me (percy.mather@gmail.com) for a sample.



MGV & hobby beekeeper Randy Deering explains what is involved in honey production.

Photo by Percy Mather

The Basics of Beekeeping with Randy Deering

MAMGA member and MGV Randy Deering gave his audience a fascinating glimpse into the art, science, hard work and luck involved in honey production. Randy has two of his own hives and also helps a 40-hive small commercial honey business that operates within Madison, but may be closing down.

Two major factors responsible for the downturn in local honey production are the weather (extreme cold and snow late in spring and rain) and the parasitic Varroa mites that attack and cripple honeybee larvae and live on and weaken adult bees.

Randy left no doubt that he enjoys beekeeping, often referring to "the girls" with affection. He and his wife Cheryl brought along many of the tools and equipment used in beekeeping ranging from the frames to the protective bee suit that Randy wears if the bees are behaving aggressively.



Thanks for being a part of MAMGA. For questions about renewing your membership, upcoming events, and more, we encourage you to visit our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) pages, and to contact us anytime at info@mamgawi.org

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