



## MAMGA Newsletter

March 2021



Photo by Lisa Seidman

March: the lion & the lamb or the daffodil & snowflakes

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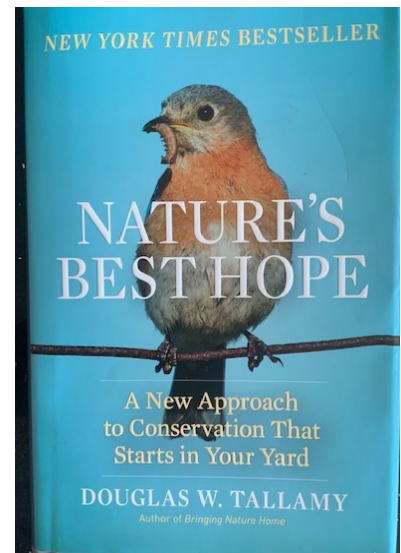
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### President's Column

Although our fiscal year begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, I always consider the start of MAMGA's year to be the annual membership meeting. In normal years we begin planning the annual

meeting in April, and have most of the “big” items done by September: securing a venue, finding a keynote speaker, contracting with a caterer. All the nitty gritty details get worked through by a committee of volunteers beginning in October or November. It really is a yearlong process...in normal years. This year was not normal. We didn't make any commitments until November. We found a speaker, but there was no venue, no caterer, and no clue as to how to mount a virtual event. Fortunately, the Program Committee, the board, and many members had become at least competent in the use of Zoom. We had members who were experts in using Zoom and the rest of us became...at least proficient.



So, in terms of activities, from my perspective, the year begins with the annual meeting. Half the board is elected and we begin to work on the challenges of the new year. And we have plenty this year. Once again, we will have very constrained opportunities for volunteering. Olbrich, Allen Centennial, the Teaching Garden, West Ag Research, the Arboretum, our signature prairie restoration project, and work with the MAMGA committees and board will all be available. But there will be many other places where we used to volunteer that may be off limits.

There will be lots of other challenges, including our Association's relationship with UW-Madison Division of Extension's master gardener program. There will be the necessity to have everyone do “onboarding” lite. Let's not let that or any of the other changes deter us from continuing on as master gardener volunteers. We can still serve the public and support Extension's mission as we have throughout the years.

One last thing, on a completely different subject. Jessica Ross's talk about science in our own gardens reminded me of Douglas Tallamy's book, “*Nature's Best Hope. A new approach to conservation that starts in your yard.*” I believe this was an Olbrich book club selection last year. It really dovetails well with Jessica's garden science.

Perhaps paying attention to the science in our gardens is the first, best step into the new year!

## Highlights of the Annual Membership Meeting

MAMGA Board Election - Members who attended the virtual annual meeting on February 27 also used Zoom technology to elect five members to the board. B'Ann Gabelt, Mary Collet, Art De Smet, and Percy Mather were reelected. Karen Allenstein was elected for her first term. President Ed Meachen presented an engraved vase to Bonnie Miller in gratitude for and recognition of her service on the board. Congratulations!

Citizen Science Opportunities - Jessica Ross was the keynote speaker for the annual meeting on the topic of Citizen Science for Your Garden. Citizen Science is a tool for data collection, a means for outreach and education, and an opportunity to engage with environment. Gardens are a perfect place to engage the natural world. To see the range of projects and resources, see [this website](#).

Changes to the MGV Program - Lisa Johnson described the emerging changes and what they mean to MGVs. The biggest changes relate to the new training of MGVs and the impact on MAMGA membership. A new training module called Foundations in Horticulture will be created and be made available online; live classes will not be offered.

For trained MGVs, most of the changes affect recordkeeping and legal requirements. The new reporting deadline for education & volunteer hours is now noon on 12/31 of each year. In order to maintain certification, ten hours of continuing education are needed. For 2021, volunteer hours remain optional. There is an annual enrollment process called “onboarding lite” to be completed by the end of March. This takes place through the [Online reporting system](#) and includes several check boxes to authorize emergency treatment, assume risk, etc. A background check will be conducted every four years. Once enrolled at the beginning of each year, MGVs report their hours as usual.

## Report on the February 2<sup>nd</sup> MGV 2021 Statewide Kickoff Event

by B'Ann Gabelt

ELEVATE Master Gardener Volunteers was a virtual statewide kickoff event held Tuesday, Feb 2 that begins the MGV program changes. A total of 1538 MGVs registered representing 68 counties; more than 800 attended the event. Amy Freidig served as host. To start off, 4 MGVs from different counties, serving on the recognition committee, each shared how MGVs in their counties adapted during the pandemic and what they were able to accomplish. New skills were acquired in learning how to maintain connections, educate and share information using Zoom and You Tube. Other positives included more time to spend in one's own garden!

Next, extension educators (including our own Lisa Johnson) expressed their gratitude for what MGVs in their districts were able to accomplish. The 2020 class was praised for their persistence; approved vegetable gardens donated 70,500 lbs of harvest; coffee hours were held with presentations by specialists; raised beds were installed; bylaws were updated; plant health advisors continued serving the public remotely.

Mike Maddox then shared his own heartfelt struggles during the past 20 years as the MGV program underwent major changes starting several years ago with budget cuts resulting in the loss of educators and other staff to the reintegration of Extension into the University. He was quite distressed wondering how the program would ever recover. Then the pandemic came and provided time to contemplate how to elevate the program. The progression of technology provided a way to make social connections; younger persons might now be more easily included. The development of an educational program, Foundations in Horticulture (FIH), will be offered to the public in addition to those wishing to become MGVs. The Onboarding process will serve as an orientation for those enrolling in the MGV program – statewide roll out is expected later in 2021. Virtual meetings among educators, local leaders and advisory committees will continue to be utilized to fine tune what the program will be in the future.

Finally, a drawing was held for those who registered for Garden Expo to determine the 10 winners who will have a chance to meet virtually with WI Public Radio host Larry Meiller. Listening to the recording of the Kickoff Event can be counted as 1hr of volunteer service in the Online Reporting System. <https://youtu.be/nmVqR4Y1Fog> Stay tuned to the Volunteer Vibe for info about MG Volunteer week, April 5-9.

## MAMGA Events

March 2 12:30 – 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday via Zoom

Houseplants is the topic for discussion. Look for an email with the website or join the Zoom

Meeting at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87379126122?pwd=OTBVT2w2NE1Za2h2S2luK2IjBXM0QT09>

Meeting ID: 873 7912 6122

Passcode: 158144

The March 6 tour of Agrecol has been cancelled and rescheduled for 2022.

March 9 Tuesday 6-8pm MAMGA Board meeting via Zoom. Members who wish to attend should contact Ed Meachen via email to [willismeachen@gmail.com](mailto:willismeachen@gmail.com)

March 17, Wednesday Maple Syrup Production – live event with masks & social distancing  
Nestled on the northwest side of Dane County are two very different maple syrup operations. At 1 PM, Paul and Deb Pienkowski will show us their backyard operation at 9332 Turkey Road Black Earth WI 53515. Sap is collected in bags hung from trees, a fire pit boil and final processing that is brought into their home.

Then at approximately 2 PM, we will drive over to Open Kettle Farms located at 5260 Otto Kerl Road in Cross Plains, where Tim and Jan Noll use 700 taps, a tube system and reverse osmosis to produce their maple syrup. Their syrup will be available for purchase. These locations are just 5 miles from each other. Check Google maps or mapquest for directions. The tours are outside and will require walking up and down some hills; warm clothing and boots are recommended. A wagon will be provided at Open Kettle Farms for transportation into the sugarbush. Masks and social distancing are required. Attendance is limited to 30. Register early at this [Eventbrite site](#). Rain/Snow date March 24.

April 17, Saturday 9 am

Mark Dwyer, formerly with the Rotary Gardens in Janesville, shares his extensive experience virtually in a program titled “Avoiding Garden Mistakes”. Registration information will be available in the April newsletter, on the website, and via email.

## Plant Sales

The plant sale normally held at the Extension office will not be held this year, although volunteers will start plants for the Teaching Garden. Anyone interested in helping with this project should contact Karen Allenstein by email to [kallenstein@charter.net](mailto:kallenstein@charter.net)

The Annual Troy Farm Plant Sale resumes this year with the online ordering of organic vegetable, herb, and flowers through April 24. The minimum order is \$24. Go to [www.rootedwi.org](http://www.rootedwi.org) to select plants. Order and pay online for your order by April 24, then pick them up from Troy Farm at 502 Troy Drive on May 8 from 10 am to 3 pm. Be sure to wear a mask and observe social distancing. Some limited quantities may be available for purchase the day of the sale but for COVID safety reasons, gardeners are urged to pre-order plants!

ReStore will not hold any plant sales this spring.



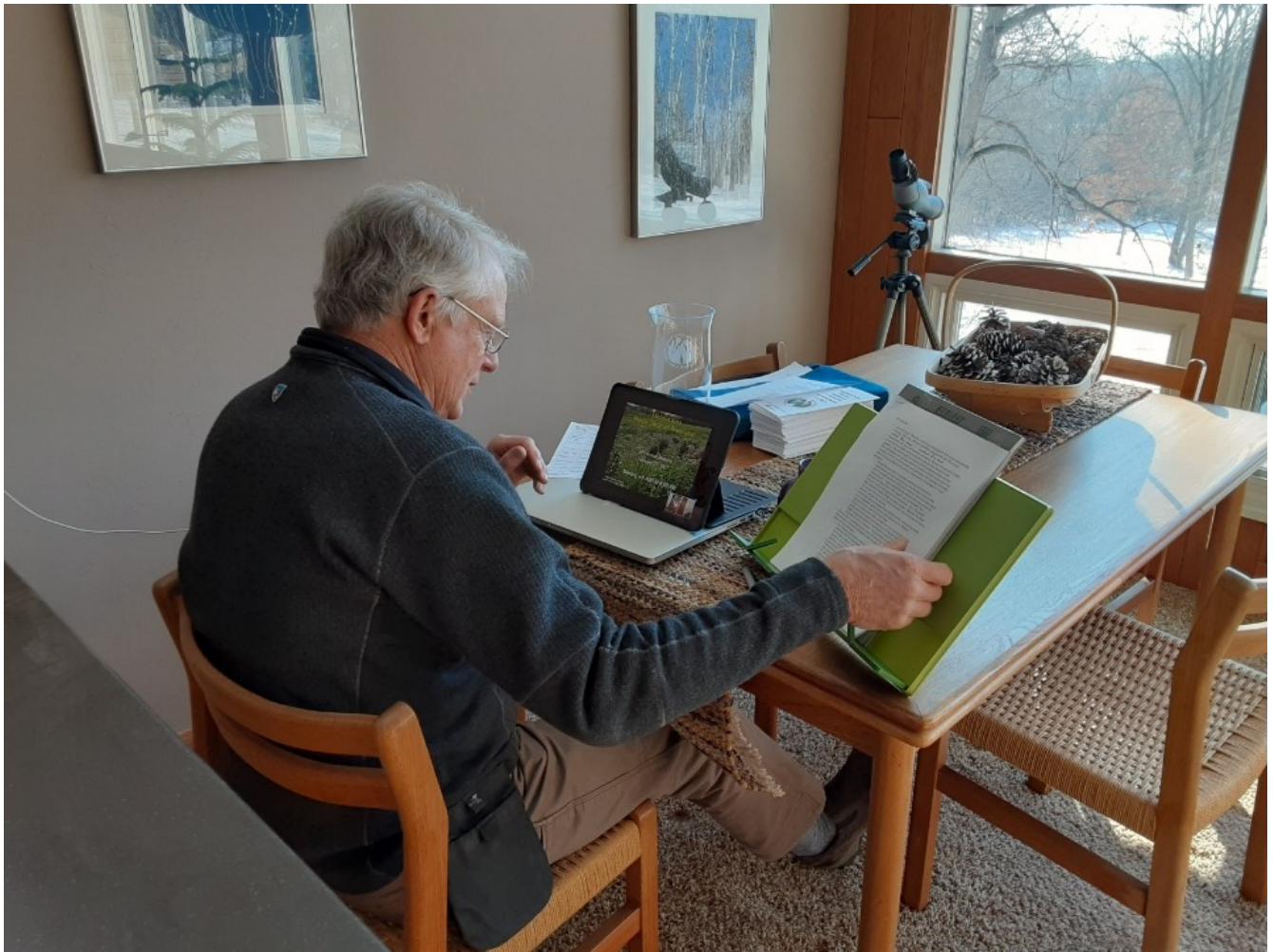


Photo by Dennis Tande

Here's Ed hard at work on Saturday morning as he conducts the annual membership meeting.