

# MAMGA Newsletter

November 2021

Photo by Lisa Seidman



Tobacco hornworm [The red horn distinguishes it from the tomato hornworm. See this [video](#) featuring background music by Scott Joplin.] This hungry caterpillar chomps on a tomato plant that I brought indoors. Normally, it would mature to become a Sphinx or hawk moth known for hovering in place while feeding through its long proboscis.

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## President's Message

by Ed Meachen

My column this month is a kind of potpourri as we're approaching the hard part of fall. That's the part where we have ten hours of sun and 14 hour of darkness. That's when we're facing highs in the upper 40's and lows in the 30's with many nights in the 20's. If it stops raining I'm debating when to take the hoses in, when to begin emptying pots of annuals, when to take down all the garden art that doesn't like below zero temperatures. I need to cut down the peonies and winterize the climbing roses. These are not chores I look forward to, but still it's

nice to get outside.

But there's always a next year in gardening!

As a member of the program committee, I've been working with the team on garden tours for next year. I'm looking forward to the Arboretum lilac tour and tree identification tour in May. If you haven't been to Boerner Gardens in Hales Corners in a few years, you'll want to join us for a tour in June. It's a lovely and very large garden, and we'll have some docents leading our tour. We'll have another tour in June, a visit to the Audubon Society's Faville Grove Sanctuary in Lake Mills. In July we're going to have a guided tour of the renovated Badger Ammunition Plant, which has been converted into a prairie by the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance. You may remember Charlie Luthin's talk about the Sauk Prairie Alliance at the 2020 annual meeting. It was incredibly interesting, and we had intended to do a trip up there in the summer of 2020. But alas, Covid intervened and made such trips the last two summers impossible. But now, I believe, we can do it. In August we have a trip to Agrecol, a native seed and plant greenhouse in Edgerton. And it likely we'll have a guided tour of our own Olbrich garden next year.

So put down your trowel, your weed pullers, and your tomato cages and join us for a set of really great tours next year. The sun will be out, the heat will be up, the Covid will be a memory, and we will have some fun!

## **Calendar Events**

**November 2 Tuesday 12:30 pm – 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday** Monona Garden Restaurant, 6501 Bridge Road, Monona. Please contact Dana Warren if you plan to attend. She will contact the restaurant with the number of place settings needed. Dana's phones are 833-5703 and 843-7061. Bring a mask to wear while you walk through to our reserved dining area.

**November 7 Sunday "Fall back" one hour to Standard Time**

**November 9 Tuesday 4 – 6pm MAMGA Board Meeting via Zoom**

Members who are not on the Board who wish to participate should contact Ed Meachan for information on joining the call at [willismeachen@gmail.com](mailto:willismeachen@gmail.com)

**December 7 Tuesday 12:30 pm – 2pm Green Thumb Tuesday** Monona Garden Restaurant, 6501 Bridge Road, Monona. Please contact Dana Warren if you plan to attend. She will contact the restaurant with the number of place settings needed. Dana's phones are 833-5703 and 843-7061. Bring a mask to wear while you walk through to our reserved dining area.

**Recap of the talk by The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Director**

State director Liz Koehler spoke to 18 MAMGA members on October 20 via Zoom. TNC started in the 1950s, growing to be the largest network of private nature preserves in the US. TNC operates in 76 countries and all 50 states to protect nature and preserve life,

emphasizing collaborative and non-controversial acquisitions. Nationally, the organization has one million members.

TNC has four global priorities: protect land and water, address climate change, build healthy cities that are vibrant and resilient, and sustain food and water. In Wisconsin, TNC has 45 staff, mostly doing scientific or technical work. They work with volunteers to do removal and restoration work. The Conservancy owns 29,000 acres, most of which are open to the public for low impact forms of recreation. TNC is active in maintaining properties; in 2021, 1700 acres were burned. Another success story is the 15-year history of using specific insects for the control of purple loosestrife, an invasive (and attractive) flower that threatens wetlands. The insects were imported from areas where loosestrife is native. Studies showed that the insects lived only on the loosestrife and disappeared once the plants were eaten. For a list of properties owned by TNC, see [this website](#). Maps are available for those who are looking for new places to experience nature and to gain a new appreciation for the unique landscape features found in the state. However, during Q & A, we learned that dogs are not allowed on these properties.

Current projects include working with farmer-led groups to reduce water pollution while maintaining their farms' viability. Two focus areas near Dane County are the Baraboo Hills and the Military Ridge area. TNC has also been involved in the conversion of the Badger Munitions plant to the Sauk Prairie State Recreational Area, where MAMGA has plans for a tour in July 2022.

### **Good News about the Teaching Garden Greenhouse Project**

By Lisa Johnson

Thanks to a very generous donation from MAMGA member Sharon Gilson and her husband Bob, the greenhouse is now funded to the level we need to put the project out to bid in March!! Hopefully, costs will not go up between now and then. We thank Sharon and Bob profusely for their incredible generosity and for saving the day! We are so grateful for their support and very excited that the project can now move forward after three years of diligent work by Karen Allenstein, who never lost heart in spite of many obstacles, and without whom the project would never have gotten off the ground. I want to thank her husband Steve as well, who donated his professional skills as a landscape architect. I thank MGV Marc Nielsen, who provided input from his background with advice on electrical, plumbing and gas utilities. There were other experts and advisors along the way who also provided great information. I also want to recognize the efforts of my Area Extension Director Carrie Edgar, support staff Sandy Jensen and Dane County Project Manager Ryan Shore for strategic planning assistance and advice. Finally, I want to send a round of applause and sincere thanks to those of you who donated towards this project, including a recent donation by Percy Mather



that will help us get the hardware and tables we need to furnish the greenhouse. It takes a village to build a greenhouse. You all are just the best!! Thank you!

**Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership!**

Go online and pay with a credit card or print out a paper renewal form [here](#).

**Lussier Prairie Project Photos** A closeup of the flowers at Lussier The marigolds and zennias that were planted on a whim actually extend the season of color into the fall when most of the native blossoms have faded and set seed.



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Below: An area with Canada thistle, reed canary grass and Solidago canadensis destined for removal with asters providing some color  
Photos by Percy Mather

