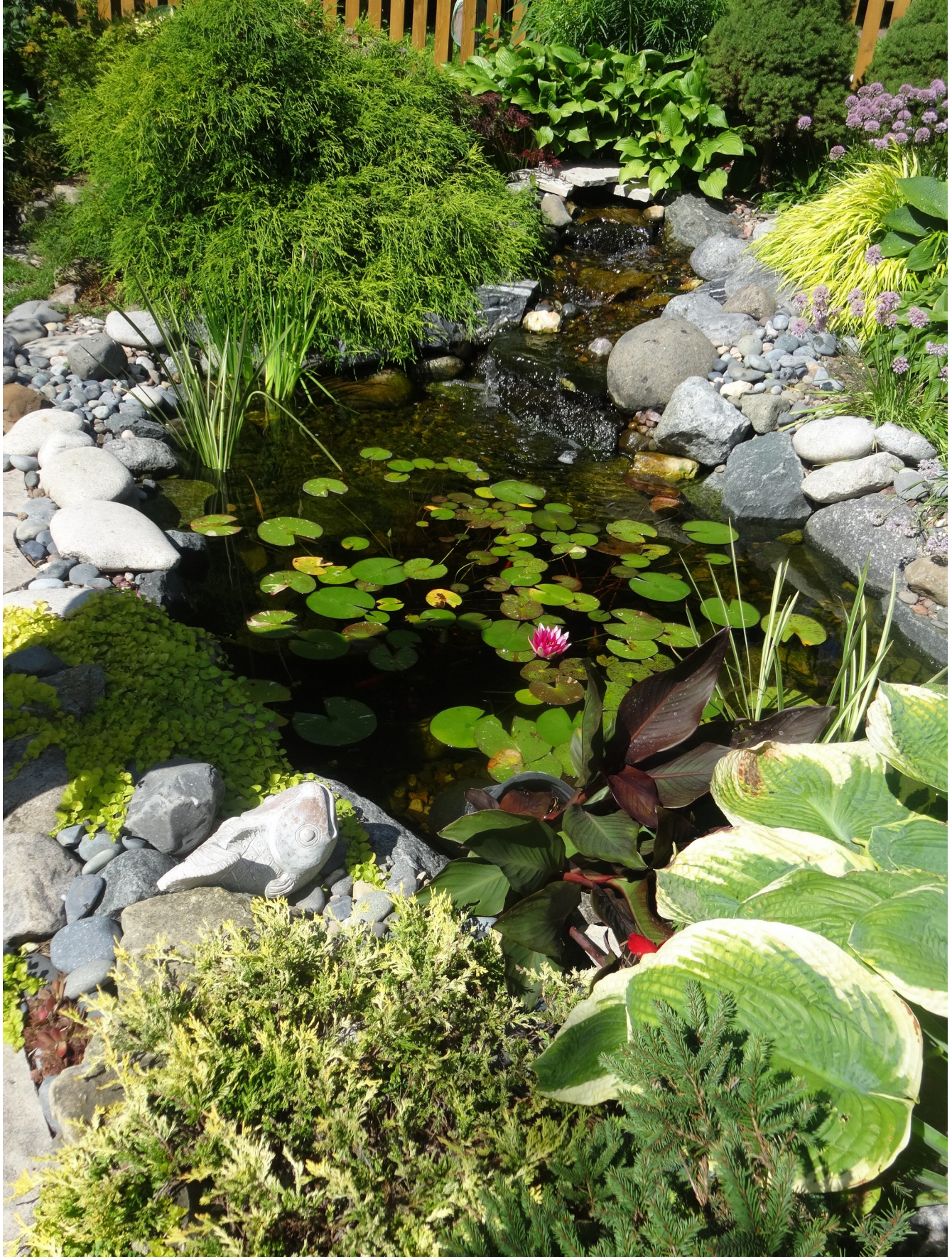


MAMGA Newsletter

September 2021

Photo by Mary Collet



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President's Message

by Ed Meachen

August was a tough month for gardeners, at least in my neck of the woods. It was hot and it was dry. Trying to keep up with watering while harvesting fruits and vegetables in the heat was a challenge. To top that off, my wife launched a new garden project...that is, the project was a new garden. It is anchored by a young sycamore, a Norway maple, a western serviceberry, a pagoda dogwood, an amur maple, a smoke tree, an arroyo willow, and a pretty large eastern red cedar. We hired a crew to take out all the grass, lay on some top soil to which I added quite a lot of Purple Cow compost, and started our garden with an assortment of 33 perennials. We put down a pretty heavy covering of hardwood mulch to hold in the moisture. Its pretty much half shade and half sun so we could choose a wider array of plants. This in the heat of August! And we have about 100 more perennials to acquire and plant before frost.

I'm not a horticulturist or a garden designer, so I don't know if I'm choosing the right plants for the right places, but I do know I'm having a happy time. There is something extraordinary about creating a completely new garden. It's a commitment to the future and a sense of accomplishment in the present. I cannot think about Covid, about Afghanistan, about political battles, or about not being able to travel. I'm in the present and delighted.

I hope all of you have had some delightful gardening moments this summer. I look forward to MAMGA programs and events in the upcoming fall and winter.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Program Committee is looking for a few new members. It's a great group of activist members who put together very interesting programs, but some members are rolling off after working on the committee for years. We usually meet 4-5 times each year and we'll be putting together the 2023 program beginning this fall. (In pre-COVID years, the Committee would hold a celebratory lunch upon completion of the calendar.) The 2022 program is very nearly complete. Members can look for a complete calendar for 2022 in December this year. Contact Deb Pienkowski at deb.pienkowski@gmail.com to learn more about being on the Program Committee.

Volunteer at the Henderson (Elementary) School Garden,

The Henderson School Garden, 1201 Tompkins Dr on Madison's southeast corner, is a dynamic school garden that is seeking the help of Master Gardener(s) to coordinate the garden with teacher Sara Milewski. Sara uses the garden as an extension of her FAB LAB curriculum around hands-on learning in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts

and Math. An engaged Master Gardener would assist Sara with providing valuable garden information, planning and coordinating projects and volunteers. Other MGVs have found that working with children and the school garden program to be deeply satisfying and energizing as they introduce children to plants in the garden. If interested in learning more, please contact Sara Milewski at smilewski@madison.k12.wi.us or 608.469.5106 by call or text.

Calendar Events

September 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 just in case...

September 13 Monday 4 – 6pm MAMGA Board Meeting via Zoom

Members who are not on the Board who wish to participate should contact Ed Meachen for information on joining the call at willismeachen@gmail.com

Recap of Garden Tours

Ed Meachen at Allen Centennial Gardens: We had a very good tour of Allen Centennial Gardens with 24 attendees on a hot day. The new ACG Director, Reba Luiken and the Horticulture Director Josh Steger, broke us up into two groups and walked us through a 60 minute tour of all the changes in the garden. Reba will be our keynote speaker at the 2022 annual meeting. The original tour date was a rain out, but we rescheduled to August 25th.

Percy Mather at the Teaching Garden on July 31: Lisa Johnson started the Teaching Garden in 2004. Karen Allenstein and many of the volunteers walked us through the different gardens starting with the Welcome Garden, where something eye-catching is always blooming. We admired the solar-powered water feature in the Pollinator Garden and the meadow that has been converted from the Color Circle in order to reduce costs of operation. A recent improvement is the paved walkway that winds its way along the building beneath some very interesting trees. A prairie and rain garden were flourishing. We enjoyed homemade cookies and lemonade overlooking the future site of the greenhouse.

Construction of the greenhouse, a project that has been drawn out and remains challenging, will take the Teaching Garden to a new level of plant growth and propagation. Anyone who is interested in donating to the greenhouse fund or getting involved in any of the Teaching Gardens should contact Karen Allenstein at kallenstein@charter.net

MAMGA also had a tour of Schumacher Farm on August 10th. There were 19 attendees. Ed couldn't go, but the members of the Program Committee who attended were very enthusiastic about the visit.

Changes to MGV Training and Impact on MAMGA

[Note: This is an article explaining another of the changes to the MGV Program based on information from Lisa Johnson.]

There will now be two paths to certification for would-be new MGVs. They can take an in-person class with Lisa Johnson (which will run from approx. April to August) or they can take a completely online course called “Foundations in Horticulture,” offered in the fall/winter.

Either way, the students or interested public must still do the onboarding process which includes a comprehensive test as well as a 10 hour how to volunteer short course. Clearly, there is a substantial gap in time between the end of the course in August and the onboarding which can only be done between January and March. It may be that there are people who will not take either path, but will simply do onboarding and take the test. If they pass, they become certified master gardeners.

Apparently there are over 70 people who are attempting to become master gardeners by attending Lisa’s classes this year. This impacts MAMGA because we currently have access to MGV students; they are MAMGA members while they are students. MAMGA relies on new MGVs to join and strengthen our organization. With an online pathway to becoming an MGV, it’s not clear how MAMGA would be able to communicate with them. The online pathway will allow anyone in the state to sign up, not just those who live in or around Dane County so local events sponsored by MAMGA would not be as attractive to those MGVs.

We also do not know if current MGVs who certified in 2019 and 2020 have to take the “onboarding lite” this year to continue as volunteers.

Meet Your Fellow Master Gardener - Sue Wallinger (See photos on pp. 5 & 6) **by Mary Collet**

When Sue Wallinger moved into her current home, the only plants were “a ring of hostas.” Twenty-seven years later, hostas still play a major role in her shady garden—a splendid array of different varieties—but they’re interspersed with many other herbaceous plants and shrubbery. Sue is particularly interested in the design possibilities of conifers. For containers, she has a special fondness for succulents and a talent for combining different kinds.

Sue did not grow up among gardeners, with the exception of her grandfather, who grew roses. She picked up the gardening bug nonetheless; she feels as if she has always “played around with gardening.” Her favorite month is June, before plants start to tire out and get infested with insects.

As Sue and I talked, we were lulled by the lovely sound of a waterfall in the nearby pond. Shrubby, hostas, and grasses circle the pond, which is faced by a wooden bench that invites rest and reflection. [See the photo on the newsletter cover.]

As a Master Gardener Volunteer, Sue works in the Monona Terrace rooftop garden every week. She has learned much about prairie-style gardening from Tony Gomez, the lead gardener. Inspiration comes from reading *Fine Gardening* and listening to the magazine’s podcast, “Let’s Argue About Plants.” Sue also gets ideas from going on garden tours.

When I asked Sue, “What does gardening do for you?” she responded that it is her “happy

place.” She enjoys the solitude of gardening and always feels energized. Her advice to beginning gardeners: “Start somewhere. Grow plants that appeal to you. Don’t worry about where you put them—you can always move them.”

WIMGA Report

B’Ann Gabelt is our representative in the state organization. She forwarded this request:

My name is Sandy Vold, and I’m a master gardener volunteer in Crawford County. Those of us who work on the WIMGA newsletter have divided up the counties, with each of us being responsible for maintaining contact with those in our group. From now on, I will be contacting you on a bimonthly basis to see if you have any interesting information or photos for the next WIMGA newsletter. We hope you will be willing to share news about your county MGVA achievements and accomplishments or contribute other information that might interest master gardeners. You can send any photos or articles to me and I will forward them to our editor, Hali Dessecker, or you can send them directly to her. If you’d prefer not to do the writing, just give me the information and I’ll do it for you.

We publish six newsletters a year, and the next one will come out in September. You can reach me by phone at 608-391-0494 or by email at ksclearcreekretreat@gmail.com. I’m hoping to hear from you.

Note: Regarding WIMGA newsletters: If you did not receive an email at the beginning of May or July, with the WIMGA newsletter, you can get it from the WIMGA homepage (<https://www.wimga.org/>)

Sue’s Succulents

Photo by Mary Collet



