



# Perennial Notes

November 2014

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society—an unincorporated nonprofit association

## WHPS COMING EVENTS!

All regular meetings are 6:30 social time, 7:00 p.m. program at  
Olbrich Gardens Commons, 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison, unless otherwise noted.

**Wednesday, November 19, Jeff Lowenfels, Author and garden columnist, Anchorage, Alaska, *Teaming with Microbes*.**

Jeff is the award-winning author of the ground-breaking *Teaming with Microbes: The Organic Gardener's Guide to the Soil Food Web*, demystifying the soil food web and reviewed as one of the most important garden books written in the past 25 years. In his new work,



*Teaming with Nutrients*, Lowenfels explains the basics of plant nutrition from an organic gardener's perspective. Most gardeners realize that plants need to be fed, but know little or nothing about the nature of the nutrients and the mechanisms involved. A trained lawyer with a bit of the Harvard Lampoon in him, Lowenfels is not only engaging, but down right amusing and clever. Jeff is an international proponent of organics. His weekly column has appeared in the *Anchorage Daily News* for over 37 years, never missing a single week.

**Wednesday, December 10, 2014, WHPS Annual Meeting, Member Potpourri and Seed Exchange**—see page 2 for more info on this program.

## Other Events of Note

**Sunday, November 23, *Thinking Like an Arboretum* walk, 1:00-2:30 p.m., Aldo Leopold's essay "Thinking Like a Mountain" is the basis for this tour about the relationship between predators and prey, and the diversity of ecosystems.**  
<http://uwarboretum.org/events/>

**December 7-31, Holiday Express, Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. daily (closed at 2:00 p.m. 12/24, closed 12/25). Holiday gardens and large-scale model trains.**  
<http://www.olbrich.org/>

**December 12-14, 19-23, 26-28, Rotary Botanical Gardens Holiday Light Show, Janesville**  
<http://rotarybotanicalgardens.org>

**Saturday, January 31 & Sunday, February 1, Orchid Growers' Guild of Madison *Orchid Quest 2015 - New Venue: Madison Marriott West*, 1313 John Q. Hammons Drive, Middleton, FREE PARKING** <https://www.facebook.com/OGG.Madison>

**February 13-15, 2015, WPT Garden Expo, Alliant Energy Center, <http://www.wigardenexpo.com/>**

**March 7-22, Olbrich Botanical Gardens *Spring Flower Show*, 10 a.m.-4:00 p.m. daily**

## Coming in 2015

**Sunday, January 18, WHPS Potluck Brunch**

**February 13-15, WHPS Garden Expo Booth.** WHPS will also host **Speaker Mark Konlock, Green Bay Botanic Garden**, on the topic, *Choosing the Best of the New Plants Without Overlooking the Best of the Old*. To sign up to work the WHPS booth and receive free admission to the Expo, contact WHPS Garden Expo Display Coordinator Eleanor Rodini at 608-576-7099, [erodini@library.wisc.edu](mailto:erodini@library.wisc.edu)

**Wednesday, February 18, Program TBA**

**Wednesday, March 18, Program TBA**

**Wednesday, April 15, Program TBA**

**Friday, May 15, Setup Day for Plant Sale**

**Saturday, May 16, WHPS Plant Sale, 9:00 a.m.-Noon**

**Wednesday, August 19, WHPS Summer Potluck Dinner**

**Wednesday, September 16, Program TBA**

**Wednesday, October 21, Program TBA**



<https://www.facebook.com/WisHardyPlantSociety>

## 2015 WHPS Evening Tours

**Tuesday, July 14—Maple Bluff**

**Thursday, July 23—Far West**

## 2015 WHPS Trips

**Sunday, May 31: Green Bay—Green Bay Botanical Garden, Garden Fair at GBBG, Mayflower Greenhouse, Rose Hill Gardens, and two private gardens**

**Sat/Sun, June 27-28: Chicago—Blumen Gardens Nursery, Gethsemane Garden Center, Garfield Park Conservatory, Grace-land Cemetery tour, Bloomingdale Trail, Bahai Temple, Millennium Park, and a private garden**

**Thurs, July 30 - Tues, Aug 4: Portland—International Rose Test Garden, Lan Su Chinese Garden, Portland Japanese Garden, Oregon Garden, Rare Plant Research, Terra Nova Nursery, Iseli Nursery, J Frank Schmidt Nursery, Joy Creek Nursery, Sebright Gardens Nursery, Cistus Design Nursery, Edgefield Resort, and at least ten private gardens highly recommended by the Hardy Plant Society of Oregon members.**

Destinations on all trips subject to change.

Our tentative plan is for the Portland trip brochure to be sent out in January and the Green Bay and Chicago trips brochure to be sent out in March.

## Annual Meeting, Member Potpourri and Seed Exchange December 10

If you haven't had a chance to attend the WHPS Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange and Member Potpourri, you've been missing a great opportunity to network with member gardeners, pick up some annual and perennial seeds to store over the winter, and view photos and videos of member gardens and memorable gardens visited. The WHPS Board will also present the slate of officers and directors for member approval.

### Member Potpourri

If you've been taking pictures of your garden through the seasons, or if you have a special project you've documented and would like to show us, you can bring your photos saved on a flash drive or CD/DVD; we will load onto the WHPS laptop before the meeting. You will have 10 minutes maximum to present, and you are welcome to present as many or as few photos as you wish. **You don't have to be a professional photographer or presenter to be a part of the Member Potpourri.** Please contact *Stephanie O'Neal* (sone2@aol.com, 608-256-6108) by **December 1** so she can put you on the list to present your photos.

### Seed Exchange FAQ

Excerpted from *Perennial Notes*, Newsletter of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society, September 2002

What is a seed exchange? Exchanging seed is a time-honored tradition among gardeners. We collect ripe seed throughout the growing season. In late fall or early winter the seeds are brought or sent to a central place and distributed to those who want them.

When should seeds be collected? Collect seeds all season long! Pay attention to those developing seed pods as you stroll about your garden. Pick seeds as soon as they are ready or the plant, the wind, the birds or the chipmunk will disperse them. Wait too long and the seeds will be gone.

When is a seed ripe? As you watch the fruiting structure develop, be it seed pod, capsule, seed head or berry, it will expand and change color, becoming darker as the seed ripens. The seed, too, will darken. When ripe, the seed will be hard, so that you are not able to easily crush it between your fingers.

What should I collect seeds in? Anything that will contain them and allow them to dry. An open dish, glass, jar, envelope or paper bag will do. When the seed is dry, envelopes are easy to seal up. The envelope is labeled, of course, as soon as the seeds are put in.

How should seeds be stored until exchange time? Traditional advice is to store them in a cool, dry place, such as a bookshelf. A major exception to this advice is for seeds of most early woodland wild flowers, such as Dutchmans Breeches, Hepatica and Trillium. These seeds should not be allowed to dry out and require special storage conditions.

What sort of seeds are best to collect for sharing? Bring seeds from plants that don't divide well or spread too slowly, reseeding annuals and short-lived perennials. Keep in mind that seed of named varieties and hybrids will, in general, produce plants that differ from the parents. Seeds from an unnamed species will come true.

How many seeds should I collect? A little bit of seed goes a long way. A teaspoon of primrose seed is enough for 25 people. Collecting into a letter size envelope will prevent over collecting.

How should seed be prepared for a seed exchange?

At minimum, bring seed, clean or not, in a labelled container. It is desirable to have more information about the plant—common name, scientific name, cultural requirements, appearance, why you recommend this plant.

What is seed cleaning and why is it done?

Seed cleaning is the process of separating the seed from the other bits of plant material (chaff) collected with it. Removing chaff aids seed longevity by removing seed-damaging insects and fungi and keeps seed drier, as chaff tends to attract moisture. Cleaning also vastly reduces the volume of material to store and makes it possible to know how much seed is present. Most national exchanges require seed to be clean, so it is a good skill to learn. It can also be fun devising ways to separate all those little bits.

How is seed cleaned?

Begin the process by separating the seed from its pod or cluster. Shake it, crumble it, rub it over a screen or coarse surface, crush it with a rolling pin—do anything that works. Then shake the seed/chaff mix through sieves and screens of various sizes held over a collecting box. Sometimes the seed will fall through and the chaff will be left on top. Sometimes the reverse happens. When a seed/chaff mix cannot be separated by size, it can probably be separated by taking advantage of weight differences. Place the mix in a shallow box, such as a shoebox lid. Blow very gently at the mix. The chaff, being lighter, should blow off. Another approach is to place the mix at one end of the box. Raise that end about 30 degrees from horizontal, and gently tap the box. The seed, being heavier, generally falls to the lower end of the box. Blowing gently while tapping will keep the chaff at the high end of the box.

—Ruth Cadoret

Bring your seeds and tubers to offer to other members in the half-hour before the meeting (6:30-7:00 p.m.) and after the meeting. If you have questions before the event, contact Jane Gahlman, our VP and Seed Exchange Coordinator, at 608-837-2317, [jmgahlman@hotmail.com](mailto:jmgahlman@hotmail.com).

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### Become a Member of Our Board

Since our last newsletter, we have received member nominations to serve on our Board. If you have ever wanted to be a part of the decisions that guide our organization, you can still submit your name in nomination.

At the next Board meeting in mid-November, the Board will vote on the nominations in order to present the proposed slate of officers and directors to the membership at the December Annual Meeting.

As a director, you would attend three Board Meetings a year. Depending on a director's interests and/or the needs of the organization, the new director will join committees such as the Program Committee, the Plant Sale Committee, the Trips Committee, etc. By maintaining a diverse and full board, any work involved in board service is evenly maintained by the directors.

If you are interested in serving on the Board in 2016 and beyond, please submit your name by November 14 to Stephanie O'Neal at [sone2@aol.com](mailto:sone2@aol.com), or call her at 608-256-6108.

## Landscape Legend: Edward Hasselkus: A Man For All (A Tree's) Seasons

Reprinted with permission from *The Weedpatch Gazette* 2000, edited by Rommy Lopat

TWG Editor: In order to set up this interview, I turned to TWG business manager Carol Richardson and asked if she had a phone number for Edward Hasselkus. Carol, ever unpretentious, gawked at me and said, "Edward Hasselkus? He must be very important with a name like that!". Important? You bet! For over 35 years, horticulture Professor Emeritus Edward Hasselkus has been evaluating the best trees and shrubs for Midwest landscapes—and teaching thousands of horticulture students, landscape professionals, and nurserymen about the best and the worst picks among woody plants. He is a landscape legend you should know.



It was a beautiful, sunny spring day when I visited Ed Hasselkus in Longenecker Gardens, the woody plant collection he has been developing and curating since 1966 at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum in Madison. Hospitable and gregarious, Ed spent virtually his whole day showing me around, despite the fact that he was overbooked. He needed to get ready to leave for the Magnolia Society convention;

he was worried about the arrival (in his absence) of a crew from *Martha Stewart Living* ("I told them that under no circumstances could they cut samples of the crabapple flowers for a layout. No one prunes these trees except me!"); and he had a late afternoon meeting with a student intern. Given his schedule of guest lecturing throughout the country and the time needed to continue to curate the Gardens, it was hard to imagine that Professor Hasselkus is officially "retired."

To walk the grounds of this 60-acre garden with Ed Hasselkus is a real treat—and all-too-short education—on woody plants and what makes them worthy candidates for our landscapes. "This is a hybrid between the Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum*, and the Korean maple, *Acer pseudosieboldianum*," Hasselkus says as he stops in front of a gorgeous tree that I'm thinking looks like a purple beech. Waxing into sartorial splendor, he begins to list the tree's attributes: "Dr. Susan Wiegrefe of The Morton Arboretum is making similar crosses to create other forms and colors, but this cross is a real beauty. It has bronzy-purple foliage, deeply incised leaves, hybrid vigor, and is a beautiful red in the fall. And it drops its leaves rather than holding them into the winter." I glance sideways at Hasselkus. Looking back, blue eyes twinkling, he rather slyly says, "I don't like trees that hold their leaves in winter—too messy looking."

Hasselkus strides across the lawn towards a 40'-tall *Amelanchier x grandiflora* named 'Strata'. It's in full glorious white bloom. "That's one of my own selections of serviceberry," he states with obvious pride. "It has far less suckering than most others and blooms earlier. That tree's about forty years old now. Great shape, don't you think? I also introduced 'Flambeau'. By now, I could be considered an *Amelanchier* expert. Five years ago, *Amelanchiers* were hardly used and they were all called *Amelanchier canadensis*, although they might

have been *A. laevis* or hybrids. It was a confusing situation. I strongly felt that introducing cultivars would solve the problem, and now we have many—most of them selected in Illinois or Wisconsin. The 'Royal Family' series was introduced by Wisconsin's Tom Watson, for example. In fact, the original 'Prince Charles' is here at Longenecker and the original *Amelanchier* 'Prince William' is at my church." As we walk, I begin to comprehend this man's prodigious ability to recollect the histories of each tree in Longenecker's collection. He can rattle off the provenance of each cultivar ("the seed for that tree came from the Arnold Arboretum in 1968"; "that magnolia came from Mike Dirr, but was a selection from Joe McDaniel's collection"). Charmingly, Hasselkus will frequently respond to my question by asking, "Oh, do you want that story?" And, of course, I do, because it is the longtime camaraderie and exchange of opinion among Hasselkus and the country's nurserymen that has resulted in the selection of so many great trees for Midwestern gardens.

Longenecker Gardens is unique in the Midwest because it emphasizes cultivars of woody plants. (Many arboreta only plant the species version of a tree or shrub, unless an evaluation is being undertaken. For example, you might see a river birch, but not its cultivar, river birch 'Heritage'). In addition, Hasselkus says that he will cut down trees which have become poor performers. "Some public gardens have really geriatric collections of plants. They keep everything. But Longenecker's crabapple collection is the most up-to-date in the world. I start with three examples of each cultivar and then eliminate them as we select the best performer." As we walk, Hasselkus points out a crabapple named 'Golden Raindrops': "It's a cutleaf crabapple. And it's a fantastic maroon in fall," he beams.

Hasselkus notes that magnolias are experiencing a revival and lilacs are coming up, too. He calls *Magnolia x Elizabeth*, "the ultimate yellow magnolia," but is quick to point out that legendary nurseryman Roy Klehm, who is now growing many cultivars of yellow magnolias, prefers 'Butterflies': "It's more bushy, less upright." The magnolias are in full flower as we walk. "If I could have but one magnolia," Hasselkus murmurs, "it would be *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel'."

Given Hasselkus' prodigious ability to document the detail of every tree's life, I'm not surprised when he tells me that he enjoys genealogy as well. I report that I heard that he is an Anglophile. "Oh, do you want that story? Well, in 1955 I was in the Army and was stationed near Newbury, England. Ever since, I've loved England. My wife Betty and I go almost every year. My maternal relatives are Welsh and Cornish, and I've found most of the old family farms there. On my father's side, though, I'm German. In fact, my cousin Engelbert owns the hotel in Lennep, Germany, if you ever want to visit..."

continued on next page

*Landscape Legend*, continued from previous page

It is not just Ed who values education: his wife Betty is a Ph.D and Professor of occupational therapy who is also the Editor of the *Journal of Occupational Therapy*. Their daughter Jane is an MBA who is Director of worldwide marketing for Kodak's mammography division, and their son John founded the highly successful firm, Visual Networks. John's family is relocating from Maryland to the Madison area. The move means that Hasselkus can truly dote on his three-year-old granddaughter, Carolyn.

If playing with his granddaughter portends to cut down on his busy lecture and travel schedule, it's one which he has already curtailed out of respect for his successor at the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Laura Jull. Hasselkus no longer lectures inside the state, for example, so that Jull can become better known; Jull has also taken Hasselkus' place as organizer of the Wisconsin Woody Plant Society. Hasselkus has, however, maintained his 25-year tenure on the boards of the Bickelhaupt Arboretum in Clinton, Iowa, and the Paine Art Center and Arboretum in Oshkosh, WI, and he often travels with the WI Hardy Plant Society. He works as volunteer curator of Longenecker Gardens on a half-time basis, and is hopeful that an endowment large enough to support a full-time curator will soon be developed.

By his calculations, Hasselkus has taught 3,000 undergraduates and 45 graduate students, many of whom have become well known in horticulture. Dan Krueger (Northwoods Nursery), Ray Prag (Forestfarm Nursery), Bill Thomas (Longwood Gardens), Kris Bachtell (The Morton Arboretum), Dave Guthery (Johnson's Nursery), and free-lance garden writer Kate Jerome are just a few of his memorable students. All of them speak of Hasselkus with great affection. They particularly note his kindness, his continuing interest in their careers and families, and his fondness for good restaurants.

Looking around at the thousands of trees and shrubs in Longenecker Gardens, he credits McKay Nursery and Klehm Nursery with great generosity in donating plant material.

Asked if he gardens at home and has ever bought a perennial, Hasselkus' eyes light up. "Oh, gosh, yes. If I wasn't here with you today, I'd be over at The Flower Factory buying some!"

*Rommy Lopat is a WHPS business member and blogger at weedpatchgazette.com.*

**NOTE:** I accidentally came across this older article on the Internet and shared it with a few friends. Jane Gahlman suggested we reprint it in our newsletter. A couple of updates: the *Acer pseudosieboldianum* mentioned in paragraph three has now been introduced as *Acer pseudosieboldianum x palmatum* 'Hasselkus'; three-year-old granddaughter Carolyn is now age 17. —Jane LaFlash



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## Make Outdoor Dreams a Reality

Relax on the patio, grill on the deck – do you plan on entertaining next spring and summer? Of course you do! Take advantage of Wisconsin's beautiful (WARM) seasons...escape to a comfortable place to be alone, enjoy your family, or entertain neighbors and friends. Surrounded by a unique Ganshert-designed landscape of lush trees and colorful plants, your special and private area will be the epitome of summer living. We can meet with you any time that is convenient this fall and have everything designed and ready to install first thing in spring 2015.

### START WITH A DREAM

Would you love to have an outdoor extension to your home's living space? Carefully planned and installed, a deck or patio can provide that extension. The trick is to work with an experienced landscaper to help you decide among all the many options, and which construction materials will fit in best with your current surroundings while meeting your wants and needs for outdoor relaxation and entertaining.

And best of all, an attractive and well-designed outdoor living space adds value to your home. In fact, landscape improvements can return up to 100% of their cost and increase property value by up to 15% at time of sale. If you'd like to explore how your outdoor spaces can be improved, check out our project portfolio at [www.ganshert.com](http://www.ganshert.com) or contact us at 274.2443, or email [info@ganshert.com](mailto:info@ganshert.com).

Ganshert is a 2nd generation, family-owned, medium-sized landscape design and install company (started by founder, Peter Ganshert and now headed buy his son, Paul J. Ganshert) serving the Madison and surrounding communities since 1951.

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## Common Witchhazel, *Hamamelis virginiana*

Reprinted from *WHPS Perennial Notes*  
December 4, 1998, by Ed Hasselkus

Witchhazel has the distinction of being the last shrub to bloom in autumn. Its tardy yellow flowers with four twisted, ribbon-like petals are revealed as the leaves drop in late October and November. Fall foliage color is bright yellow. If you are on the UW campus this fall, note the stunning specimens along Linden Drive on the north sides of the Horticulture and Nutritional Sciences buildings. Their blooms are particularly striking this year.



Autumn is also the season of fruit maturation. The dry capsules that have been developing for almost a full year split open to catapult their two shiny black seeds for distances up to forty feet! Capsules collected in a paper bag and brought into a warm room will produce a sound like the popping of popcorn as the seeds are expelled with explosive force.



*Hamamelis virginiana* occurs as an understory tree in moist shaded woods throughout Wisconsin. In the shaded understory, the horizontal branches are stratified in a picturesque manner. When planted in full sunlight, plants take on a dense, broad, vase-like form. Their ultimate height is 15 to 20 feet, so that witchhazels may serve as either tall shrubs or specimen small trees.

As a landscape plant, it is a natural choice for shaded locations. Avoid sites with dry soils. Old established plants in the Longenecker Horticultural Gardens of the UW-Madison Arboretum have suffered branch dieback during years of severe drought. Witchhazel is generally free of insect or disease problems and seldom requires pruning.

In addition to its value as a landscape plant, a variety of medicinal properties have been attributed to witchhazel. Fragrant extracts of the leaves and bark have been used as a home remedy for cuts and bruises, and when mixed with alcohol, as a soothing after-shave lotion.



If it is true that one of the greatest pleasures of gardening lies in looking forward, then the planning of next year's beds and borders must be one of the most agreeable occupations in the gardener's calendar. This should make October and November particularly pleasant months, for then we may begin to clear our borders, to cut down those sodden and untidy stalks, to dig up and increase our plants, and to move them to other positions where they will show up to greater effect. People who are not gardeners always say that the bare beds of winter are uninteresting; gardeners know better, and take even a certain pleasure in the neatness of the newly dug, bare, brown earth.

—Vita Sackville-West

## Making a few good choices



For someone who over the years has been unable to resist buying perennials one at a time and planting them in the garden without much thought to the “big picture,” I struggle now to “edit” my garden in a way that will create more resting places for the eye and ease the workload as both I and my garden grow older.

Nancy Ondra's *Five-Plant Gardens* (2014, Storey Publishing), with its colorful photos and 52 sample garden layouts for different conditions, encourages the gardener to consider the benefits of starting small. Each plan suggests just five sturdy, complementary perennials with a focus on multi-season benefits, varying conditions, low maintenance, and saving money and time. Ondra offers some simple, colorful and inexpensive suggestions for perennials that are not necessarily “cutting-edge,” but have been around long enough to prove their reliability.

A good example of the simple and straightforward plans she offers is the one for “Color for Dry Shade,” consisting of *Epimedium x versicolor*, *Polygonatum odoratum* ‘Variegatum’ (variegated Solomon’s Seal), *Aster divaricatus*, *Polystichum acrostichoides* (Christmas fern) and *Pachysandra procumbens* (Allegheny pachysandra).

As she quotes in the introductory chapter, “Admire large gardens, but plant small ones.” This book is definitely worth a look for those who will be spending the winter months planning and dreaming of next year’s possibilities.

—Stephanie O’Neal

# Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



## November 2014 Newsletter

211 S. Fair Oaks Avenue  
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**Do you have a question about your membership?** Contact Jane LaFlash at [whps05@yahoo.com](mailto:whps05@yahoo.com), 608-243-1208.

..... **Member news, tips, etc.** .....

### Rommy Lopat in Country Gardens

The Spring (March) 2014 issue of *Country Gardens* magazine featured a five-page article on WHPS business member Rommy Lopat (blogging at [weedpatchgazette.com](http://weedpatchgazette.com)). Focusing on the development of her garden since 1987, the article features some lovely pictures and discussed the challenges of taking over the property and home built in 1852.

*I have found, through years of practice, that people garden in order to make something grow; to interact with nature; to share, to find sanctuary, to heal, to honor the earth, to leave a mark.*

*Through gardening, we feel whole as we make our personal work of art upon our land.*

—Julie Moir Messervy,  
**The Inward Garden**, 1995, p.19

### WHPS T-shirts available!



WHPS T-shirts available for purchase (sizes S-M-L-XL-XXL-XXXL) \$15 each. Please send an email to Jane Gahlman at [jmgahlman@hotmail.com](mailto:jmgahlman@hotmail.com), or call Jane at 608-837-2317 if you would like to buy one. Great for volunteers!

**Buy shirt; volunteer for Expo or Plant Sale; wear shirt**

### DUES FOR 2015

Dues notices will be mailed in early January to those members who have paid only through 2014. If you have paid ahead, you will receive an e-mail letting you know you do not owe dues.

Visit our website: <http://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.com>