



Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society

Perennial Notes

February 2010

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.

February 12, 13, 14, 2010 WHPS Booth at the WPT Garden Expo. WHPS will host a seminar on Saturday, February 13 at 9:00 a.m. in Mendota 6-7 with speaker Dave Wanninger, chief horticulturist at Beaver Creek Nursery. Dave will discuss *New and Better Shrubs for the Home Garden*. Stop by our booth (107) to enjoy some great photos from member gardens. Members who have renewed or renew at the Garden Expo can qualify for our member drawing, with prizes donated by member businesses. Let's all think spring with a visit to the Garden Expo! *For more information on the WPT Garden Expo, go to www.wpt.org/garden_expo.*

Wednesday, February 17, Mike Heger, Ambergate Gardens, Chaska, MN, *A New Look at Shade Plants*.

Wednesday, March 17, Ed Lyon, *What's New and Upcoming in 2010 Plants*.

Wednesday, April 21, Andrew Bell, Curator, Woody Plants, Chicago Botanic Garden, *New Plants and New Gardens at the Chicago Botanic Garden*.

Saturday, May 15, WHPS Plant Sale, 9:00 am. to noon at the West Agricultural Research Station. Wide selection and great prices on perennials, shrubs and trees from member gardens.

Saturday, May 22, WHPS Annual Buying Spree to Song Sparrow Nursery. A map to Song Sparrow will be provided in the April newsletter.

June 13-June 22, WHPS Trip to England. Questions about this trip should be directed to Frank Greer at frgreer@sbcglobal.net.

SUMMER GARDEN TOURS

Tuesday, July 13 we'll visit the West side gardens of Jeff Epping, Eleanor Rodini, Vaughan James, Luba Konowalskyj, Paul Lyne and the HospiceCare garden.



Thursday, July 29—we'll visit the East side gardens of Ann Munson, Susan Mahr and the Master Gardener Extension office teaching gardens.

Wednesday, August 18, Potluck Dinner and Walk Through Olbrich Gardens.

FALL GARDEN TOUR

Wednesday, September 8, Tour of Allen Centennial Garden with Ed Lyon

Wednesday, September 15, Program TBA

Wednesday, October 20, Program TBA

Wednesday, November 17, Program TBA

Wednesday, December 1, Program TBA

WHPS BUS TRIPS 2010

Saturday, August 7, Milwaukee with Dennis Buettner

Friday-Sunday, August 20-22, Minneapolis

Saturday, October 2, Chicago Botanic Garden

More info on the trips in future newsletters.



Other events of note

Through March 21, Chocolate: The Bitter and the Sweet, Bolz Conservatory, Olbrich Gardens

Chocolate is one of those flavors that most people love. However, the dark brown, pleasantly bitter, chemically complex substance bears little resemblance to the pulp-surrounded seeds of the cacao pod. Visit the tropical Bolz Conservatory to see the unique cacao tree and learn about the impact of chocolate on culture. The conservatory is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission; \$1 for the general public; free for Olbrich Botanical Society members and children 5 and under. <http://www.olbrich.org/>

April 8-11, Milwaukee Art Museum, Art in Bloom
Beautiful floral arrangements inspired by the museum's artworks and presentations and lectures on such topics as shade gardening and floral photography. This event is a highlight of spring. For more information, please call (414) 224-3200, or go to <http://www.mam.org/bloom/>

Master List of Gardening Events in April Newsletter

Help us build a complete list of garden plant sales, tours, shows and events for the 2010 garden year.

Each year in April we try to publish a list that you can use for reference throughout the season.

If you know of a plant sale or garden event to list, send information by March 15 to Stephanie O'Neal, 1850 Baird Street, Madison, WI 53713 or email sone2@aol.com

The Big Snow of '09

It all started innocently enough with some light snow throughout the day on December 8, 2009. By 5:00 p.m. heavy snow was falling and the wind had picked up, producing very limited visibility for the evening commuters' drive home. The storm continued through the night, and near blizzard conditions on Wednesday, December 9 necessitated the closing of schools, businesses, and even UW-Madison (unprecedented!) for the day. (Our December 9th WHPS Annual Meeting and Member Potpourri was also cancelled.) Over 14 inches of wet heavy snow fell during a 24-hour period in Dane County and the surrounding counties in most of the southern half of Wisconsin, marking this as one of the biggest snowstorms ever recorded in the Madison area. Needless to say, this snowstorm took its toll on vegetation and wildlife in the area.

The hardest hit in my garden and in gardens I observed around town were the arborvitae. Throughout the snowstorm I noticed the wet heavy snow accumulating on the foliage of my biggest arb (about 20' tall), forcing several of its leaders and branches to splay out at a 90-degree angle from the vertical. After the snow stopped, I went out with a broom and tried to bump the branches gently from underneath to knock off the bulk of the snow, but some were too tall for me to reach. Most of my other smaller and shorter evergreens (junipers, yews, etc.) were completely buried underneath the snow, which is where I left them for the time being. Many lower branches of larger evergreens were pulled down by the weight of the heavy load of snow, making cozy little condos for the ever-burgeoning rabbit population. Even deciduous shrubs such as lilacs, dogwoods and willows had their densely branched tips bent over under the snow. I managed to free some of them before the colder weather set in—some will be locked in their snowy embrace until warmer weather arrives in spring.

The other big "casualty" in my garden was my ornamental grass. I call it a "casualty" because one of the main reasons to grow ornamental grasses is for their wonderful winter interest; their leaves gently swaying in the winter wind provide movement in the garden when most everything else is lifeless and still. Unfortunately, this year after the snowstorm they are all plastered down horizontally under mountains of snow. It's hard to tell that there are even any ornamental grasses there! But rest assured that the grasses are not being harmed in any way by being buried under a mountain of snow. Their roots and crowns are just fine resting undercover of the insulating layer of snow and come Spring they will "spring" back to life with renewed vigor just as they always do every year! So *Think Spring!*

—Jane Gahlman

I think the biggest effect that the 18" had on gardens was massive damage to branches of trees. At Allen Centennial Garden, we had major tearing and consequently removal of branches from Scots pine, white pine, callery pear and hawthorn. Some of the damage was severe enough that it altered the structure of the tree to where I will need to replace them. One of the best smokebushes in the area is beside a dorm next to me and it was hit so hard Grounds had to cut out major branches. I was on a Wisconsin Public Radio program right after the storm and most of the questions that day from across the state were about damage to trees and shrubs—arborvitae and Scots pine were particularly hard hit. And whereas the depth of the snow helped our perennials through the frigid temps that followed, the packed nature made it difficult again for animals to eat, so expect rabbit and deer damage.

—Ed Lyon

My pruning will be much more serious this year. I may even need to use a chainsaw for some of those big broken limbs. The good news is that there is still really good snow cover on the ground beds. That should provide good protection unless it melts and gets really cold again.

—Bill Hoernke

I remember standing outside on Wednesday, December 9 taking a break from shoveling the drive and stopping to admire the beauty of the snow on my 50-year-old black locust trees. A half-hour later I noticed a younger locust had fallen on the roof of the house two doors down (fortunately damage was minimal). I took a closer look at the garden behind my garage and



found extensive damage on my oldest lilac (flattened, see center of photo), a small (10-inch diameter) black locust had broken in two about 10 feet up from the base of the tree. Another large branch had fallen on top of my tree-pruned euonymous, and all of the red and yellow twig dogwoods and the ninebarks were almost flattened. They are starting to right themselves again, but much pruning will be needed in the next month.

Although the garden will need a lot of work this spring and the rabbit damage is inevitable, I'm amazed by nature's ability to withstand this heavy snowfall. Even now, as the snow begins to recede, I see the green of corydalis leaves just waiting for the spring sun to bring on its early white blooms. Can the daffodils be far behind?

—Stephanie O'Neal

Perennial Plant of the Year

The Perennial Plant Association has named *Baptisia australis* (Blue False Indigo) its the 2010 Plant of the Year. It grows three to four feet tall and wide and is a wonderful native addition to the garden.



This zone 3-9 shrubby perennial grows very quickly in full sun and has beautiful blue flowers that bloom in early June. The flowers become black seed pods that make a soft

sound in the summer wind and are great in flower arrangements.

This plant looks great as an anchor in the back of a sunny garden bed and is a perfect complement to other spring perennials like columbine and coreopsis.

For more information on the Perennial Plant Association and its selections, visit <http://www.perennialplant.org/>.

Host a plant dig for the plant sale?

Are there plants in your garden that you know will have to be divided this year? If you are going to have enough plants to divide in the spring to create six or more flats, think about hosting a dig in April and donating plants to the WHPS Plant Sale. We can provide volunteers, pots, potting soil and plant markers for your dig, turning an all-day job (or more) into a 2-3 hour fun project.

If you would like to host a dig, contact Dig Coordinator Bill Hoernke at 608-235-1122, bhoernke@gmail.com.

And if you are a member with an uncommon or unusual plant in your garden, won't you consider dividing it this spring and contributing one or two pots to the plant sale?

If you would like to volunteer to work a plant dig, there will be sign-up sheets at the next few WHPS meetings for volunteers to sign up for helping at the digs, working the day before the sale (setup day) and the day of the sale. Or you can contact Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com to volunteer for the plant sale.

I have never had so many good ideas, day after day, as when I worked in the garden.

—John Erskine 1721-1803

WHPS

Membership and Financial Report

*Report by Treasurer Diane Scharkey and
Membership Coordinator Jane LaFlash*

Here is a brief report on WHPS membership and treasury.

As of the end of 2009, we have 529 memberships and 629 members (100 of the membership are family and thus really include two members). Nineteen of these are business memberships. There is hardly a week in the entire year that we do not get a new membership.

WHPS trips are not designed to be money-makers, but we do try to break even. Our trips for 2009 included a one-day trip to Woodstock, IL, a three-day trip to Michigan and a two-day trip to Iowa.

Income:

Membership income – \$5,630 (410 individual,
100 Family, 19 Business)
Plant sale income – \$7,092
T-shirt & misc. – \$215.71
Trips – \$17,529

Expenses:

Plant sale expenses – \$560
Speakers – \$1,340
Donations – \$5,500
Office/newsletter/postage expenses – \$3,157
Misc. – \$200
Trips – \$16,058

The Hardy Plant Society year end is October 31. As of 10/31/2009 our bank balance was \$14,990.94. The membership voted to distribute \$6,000.00 in donations (see below) that will be paid out early in 2010. This will bring the account down \$8,990.94.

Looking over the past years through 2005, this is an average amount in the bank at the end of each year.

Income and expenses for the past year:

Total income at \$37,675.71
Expenses at \$33,140.02

We are pleased to continue to offer interesting programs, beautiful garden tours and exciting trips—and we've been able to do so without raising dues since 2001!

Plant Sale Funds Help WHPS Donate

Each year in the fall the board recommends to the membership distribution of funds raised from the Plant Sale in spring. Below are donations approved this year at the end of 2009 and distributed at the beginning of 2010:

Olbrich Gardens \$2000
Allen Centennial Garden \$1000
Longenecker Gardens Endowment Fund \$1000
Rotary Gardens \$1000
HospiceCare Garden \$500
West Madison Agricultural Research Station \$500

..... **Member News, Tips etc.**

**Great food, gardens of beauty,
summer memories**

We'd like to thank members who took the time to put together photos and show them at the January 17 Member Potluck Brunch and Member Potpourri at Olbrich Gardens. Presenters included Norma and Mike Briggs, Judith David, Sherry Lloyd, Ed Lyon and Stephanie O'Neal.

Thanks also to John Cannon, John Fritsch and Jane Gahlman for putting together *Magnificent Michigan Gardens*, music and images from the Summer 2009 three-day trip to Michigan.

Bill Hoernke deserves great credit for making sure the equipment was setup and working properly and for working with the presenters to make sure the program was presented with no problems or glitches.

Members contributed great food, from hors d'oeuvres to hot casseroles to tasty desserts. The weather cooperated enough that members were able to take a walk through the winter garden.

The Member Potpourri is an event that we look forward to each year. We hope more of you will keep this event in mind as you photograph your gardens and those you visit throughout the year.

Members make the news!

Recommend a garden you think we should visit, let us know of a favorite garden tip you use, describe a favorite plant, shrub or tree and why you think we should all have it, or contribute a favorite quote.

We have so many excellent gardeners and lovers of gardening in our group and value your opinions and experiences.

Please consider writing a paragraph or two (or three) and send it to Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com. We value and look forward to your input!

WHPS T-shirts!

At \$10 each, WHPS T-shirts are a real bargain. Sizes currently available are medium, large and extra large.

To order a T-Shirt, contact Jane Gahlman at jmgahlman@hotmail.com (or call her at 608-837-2317 and leave a message).

DUES REMINDER

If you did NOT receive a dues notice in the mail, your dues are paid through 2010. For those who did receive the notice, remember dues should be paid by March 1, 2010 (or pay at the Garden Expo and enter our drawing!). If you have lost your renewal form, you can find one at our Web site.

WHPS Web site: www.madison.com/communities/wisconsinhardyplantsociety/

*Wisconsin Hardy
Plant Society*



**FEBRUARY 2010
Newsletter**

**211 S. Fair Oaks Avenue
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Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society—an unincorporated nonprofit association

Do you have a question about your membership? Contact Jane LaFlash at whps05@yahoo.com, 608-243-1208.