



Perennial Notes

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society, Inc.

Sept. 2018



Taxus baccata 'Amersfoort'

By Jane LaFlash

It was love at first sight when I saw this plant at the Bickelhaupt Arboretum years ago. The next time I remember seeing it was at Evergreen Gardens Nursery in Ames, Iowa, when I was there with Ed Hasselkus and Lois Anderson in conjunction with a Conifer Society meeting. I asked Ed if he thought it would be hardy for me and he said maybe I could grow it in my "banana belt back yard," so I bought one.

I've since seen it in quite a few Madison area gardens.

'Amersfoort' is a dwarf cultivar that grows very slowly (6-9" per year) to 5-8' tall over the first 10 years and is best grown in evenly moist, fertile, sandy loams with excellent drainage in full sun to part shade. It exhibits a generally upright growth habit with outward to

(continued on page 4)

WHPS coming events!

All regular meetings are at 6:30 pm. social time, 7 pm. program, at Olbrich Gardens Commons, 3330 Atwood Av., Madison unless otherwise noted.

Questions about our events? Email wisconsinhps@gmail.com for specific info.

Wednesday, September 12-14, Green Bay/Door County Bus Trip. Bus trip is full.

Wednesday, September 19 – WHPS Program – Small Conifers in the Garden with an Emphasis on Troughs, with speaker Gary Whittenbaugh, an Iowa native well known in the Midwest for his many presentations on gardening subjects, particularly the use of conifers and companion plants in the garden. Gary was an electronics technician in his BC (before conifers) life and has been gardening for over 40 years with emphasis on dwarf, slow-growing and unusual conifers, plus trough and rock gardening. Gary served as President of the American Conifer Society Central Region 2001-2005 and, in 2005, he was the recipient of the prestigious Marvin and Emelie Snyder Merit Award for Support of the American Conifer Society.



Sunday, September 23, WHPS Member Plant Exchange, setup is 10-10:30 am., Exchange between 10:30-12:30 pm. at 1850 Baird St., Madison. After skipping last year, WHPS has decided to hold a Plant Exchange this year. Members are invited to bring a few of their favorite woodies, plants for sun, plants for shade, bulbs, etc. to exchange with other members. It's a great way to

get some new plants for free at the best time of year to plant! Please keep the jumping worm situation in mind. If you are potting up plants, wash the plants before potting and bringing to Exchange. Members who take plants should plan to wash plants before planting in their garden. More detailed directions are given in the jumping worm article on page 5.

Wednesday, Oct. 17 – Speaker Will Radler, creator of the renowned Knock Out™ roses and WHPS member, shares a casual evening on "what he does" in the gardening world.



Wednesday, November 14 – WHPS Program – Flowering Shrubs for All Seasons. David Stevens, Curator of the Longenecker Horticultural Gardens at the UW Arboretum, will highlight his favorite flowering shrubs from their Living Collection. The gardens contain Wisconsin's premiere collection of woody ornamental plants, with over 5,000 specimens representing over 2,500 taxa. Prior to his current role, David spent 14 years working in the field of forest tree genetics with the University of Wisconsin Forest and Wildlife Ecology Department. David has a Bachelor's degree in Horticulture from Virginia Tech and a Master's degree in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



(continued on page 2)



New to
the WHPS Board
see p. 4.



New to
the Workshop
Committee.
see p. 2.

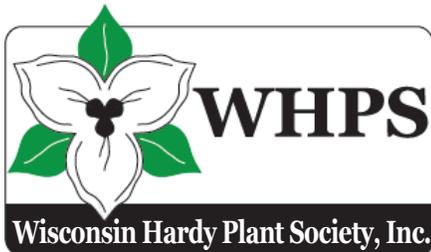


WEEDS!
starting on p. 5.

WHPS Coming Events (continued from p.1)

CANCELLED – Wednesday, Dec. 5, WHPS Meeting – Due to past low attendance no doubt created by demands of the season, this year we are cancelling our December meeting and combining our January Potluck with our Annual Meeting and Seed Exchange. See [January 20, 2019 for more information](#).

Sunday, January 20, 2019, Potluck, Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange, Speaker (TBA) and Free Garden Items. We have cancelled our December meeting and will be holding our Annual Meeting and Seed Exchange in conjunction with our January Potluck and Speaker, along with the addition of a giveaway of garden items. Look for more information in our November newsletter.



211 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, Madison, WI 53704

President – Jane Gahlman, 608-837-2317, jmgahlman@hotmail.com, Seed Exchange Coordinator, Trip Committee
Immediate Past President – Frank Greer, 608-233-4686, frgreer@sbcglobal.net, Program Committee
Vice President – Emily Buckingham, 920-960-6928, emilybuckingham@gmail.com
Treasurer – Diane Scharkey, dscharkey@gmail.com
Secretary – Emily Buckingham, 920-960-6928, emilybuckingham@gmail.com, Workshop Coordinator
Sally Averkamp, 608-235-9084, aversigg@sbcglobal.net, Newsletter layout
Lynn Belanger, 608-215-9127, lynnbelanger7300@gmail.com
Caroline Bohler, 262-483-2500, HomegrownFlowers.com, Webmaster
John Cannon, jtcannon@wisc.edu, Trip Committee
Anna DePauw, 815-970-0733, anna@botannaca.com
Donna Freiman, Donnafreiman@gmail.com, Dig Host Coordinator
Jane LaFlash, 608-243-1208, jlafash@wisc.edu, Membership Coordinator, Tour Coordinator, Trip Committee
Terri Maliszewski-Kane, 608-513-4189, terrimk1@hotmail.com, Olbrich Liaison
Linda Marx, 608-249-7717, ljmarx@chorus.net, Program Committee
Stephanie O'Neal, 608-256-6108, sone2@aol.com, Publications, Plant Exchange, Plant Sale Coordinator
Shirley Scriver, 608-467-2870, scrivs@charter.net, WHPS Garden Expo Display Coordinator, Trip Committee
Conrad Wrzesinski, 608-231-3279, conradw@charter.net

Friday-Sunday, February 8-10, 2019, WPT Garden Expo. WHPS will once again host a booth and a speaker at the Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo. Opportunities to work in our booth will be emailed to members and published later this year.

Wednesday, February 20, 2019, 40 Years of Gardening: A Madison Gardener's Reminiscences, with speaker Frank Greer.

Frank will discuss his favorite plants, people, places and recommendations for gardening success. More importantly, he will discuss thoughts for preparing for garden enjoyment later in life by simplifying a gardener's world. Frank has been with WHPS since its inception, serving as President from 1996-2016 and now serving as Immediate Past President. He has organized and arranged the WHPS biennial trip to England for over 20 years and currently is Chair of the WHPS Program Committee. Frank is known for his Nakoma shade garden, his love of epimediums and the beautiful containers of annuals that share his driveway each year.



Wednesday, March 20, 2019, Prairie Plants for the Urban Garden, with speaker Neil Diboll, Consulting Ecologist and President of Prairie Nursery.

A pioneer in the native plant industry and recognized internationally as an expert in native plant community ecology, Neil Diboll has guided the growth of Prairie Nursery for 30 years. He has dedicated his life to the propagation of native plants and their promotion as uniquely



beautiful, ecologically beneficial and sustainable solutions for landscapes and gardens. In 2013, Neil was the recipient of the Great American Gardeners Award from the American Horticultural Society. Neil's love of native plants and their habitat is contagious, and we look forward to his thoughts on the use of prairie plants in our urban gardens.

Wednesday, April 17, 2019, Abelia to Ziziphora: 30 Years of Plant Evaluation at Chicago Botanic Garden, with speaker Richard Hawke.

The Chicago Botanic Garden has been evaluating and recommending superior garden plants to home gardeners and the green industry since 1988. Richard Hawke will give an overview of the evaluation program and present a variety of proven plants from 30 years of trials, including new selections and old favorites. Richard Hawke is responsible for the comparative evaluation of over 1,000 perennials and woody plants each year. He is the principal author of Plant Evaluation Notes, an author and contributing editor for Fine Gardening, and writes for other horticulture publications such as Perennial Plants, The American Gardener, and Nursery Management.



Other programs/events. Please note that the Workshop Committee will be meeting toward the end of this year to plan Workshops for 2019. We thank the members who attended these free events in 2018 and encourage those who have thoughts/ideas for future Workshops to contact Workshop Committee Chair Emily Buckingham at emilybuckingham@gmail.com.

Workshop Committee is growing

We'd like to welcome Jayne Squirrel to the WHPS Workshop Committee. Jayne is a senior scientist in Cell Biology at UW-Madison and joined WHPS along with her husband Gary Lyons in 2014, in part to learn more and find inspiration for their westside garden in Madison. Jayne has been a great supporter of the Workshops this year and is eager to see

the program continue to grow.

Please contact any of our Workshop Committee Members – Chair Emily Buckingham, Donna Freiman, Stephanie O'Neal and Jayne Squirrel, if you have any suggestions for future Workshops.



2018-19 Other events of note *David Stevens' Pruning Workshop, April 7*

Friday-Sunday, September 7-9, Fall Plant Sale, Janesville Rotary Gardens, Friday 9 am.-6 pm., Saturday 8 am.-5 pm., Sunday 10 am.-4 pm., <http://www.rotary-botanicalgardens.org/events/2018-09/>

Saturday, September 15, 1-3 pm. Longenecker Horticultural Gardens Tour: Edible Landscaping. Join Judy Kingsbury and Marian Farrior at Arboretum Visitor Center.

Sunday, September 16, UW Arboretum Native Gardening Conference, 8:45 am.- 4:30 pm. For more information see <https://arboretum.wisc.edu/visit/events/native-gardening-conference/>

Saturday, September 22, 1-3 pm. Native Plant Garden Tour: Fall in the Native Plant Garden with Susan Carpenter at the Arboretum Visitor Center.

Friday, September 28, Crackle – Fire & Froth, 7-10 pm., Olbrich Gardens. Be inspired by the beauty of a crisp fall evening in our gardens. <http://www.olbrich.org/>

Saturday, October 13, 1-3 pm. Longenecker Horticultural Gardens Tour: Fall Favorites with Michael Jesiolowski at the Arboretum Visitor Center.

Tuesday, October 23, A Rock Garden for All Seasons, with speaker Marcia Tatroe, 6:00 pm., Olbrich Botanical Gardens Atrium. The WI-IL Rock Garden Society is hosting this event and all WHPS members are invited to attend.

Tuesday, October 23, Botanic Talk: The Other Witches' Brooms – Gems of the Conifer World! with Josef Braeu, 6:30-8:00 pm., Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville. Registration not required. \$7 non-members, \$5 members. <http://www.rotarybotanicalgardens.org/events/2018-10/>

December 1-31, Olbrich's Holiday Express: Flower and Model Train Show, 10 am.-4 pm. daily (closes 2:00 pm.). <http://www.olbrich.org/>

January, 2019, Advance order forms for the 2019 Friends of the Arboretum Native Plant Sale will be available by mid-January. Order forms will probably be due mid-February. Contact Karen Deaton (director@foamadison.org or call 608-571-5362) for more information.

February 2-3, 2019, Orchid Quest, sponsored by Orchid Grower's Guild, <http://www.orchidguild.org/orchid-quest.html>

WHPS members received hands-on instruction in proper pruning on April 7 by David Stevens, Curator, UW Arboretum Living Plant Collection. The first hour was held indoors, and David showed us what he described "his basic arsenal" of pruning tools, from hand pruners to 20-foot tree pruners. He gave us a quick history, a handout illustrated with basic pruning cuts, and a list of shrubs and trees and their pruning times; a full hour of good, useful pruning tips. David then took us out into the gardens, demonstrating correct shaping, limb removal, types of cuts and proper renewal and rejuvenation, and tree pruning for central leader train-

ing. We would have happily stayed for longer than the two and a half hour workshop time. Many thanks to David for giving so willingly and enthusiastically of his time and for providing such a wealth of information to the group. WHPS is fortunate to have the great resources that Longenecker Gardens has to offer. We hope that at some time in the future the Board will be able to reopen the discussion of making a yearly donation to the Longenecker Gardens.

Below are glimpses of other 2018 WHPS Workshops.

–Donna Freiman



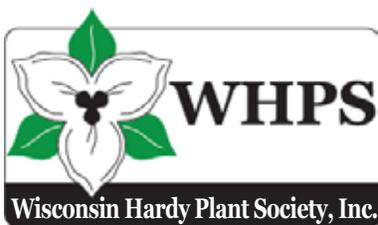
Volunteer Opportunity – Newsletter Content and Editing

As noted in the June 2018 newsletter, our current newsletter editor and content coordinator Stephanie O'Neal will be retiring from the WHPS Board at the end of 2019, and we would like to find someone to begin working with Stephanie on that aspect of the newsletter later this year in preparation for taking over the position in January of 2020. Presently, Stephanie and our director of layout Sally Averkamp put together five newsletters a year. The position involves keeping ears and eyes open for subjects of interest to our members,

identifying members to contribute articles, collecting information on the yearly gardening calendar and working with our Board to communicate regularly with our members. Stephanie looks forward to working with someone who can bring a new energy to keeping our members informed and updated on WHPS and the gardening community. Please contact her if you would like to discuss in more detail. – Stephanie O'Neal, sone2@aol.com.

WHPS Grant Program

The Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society will award up to \$500 to a community group, school, or other organization for a project that promotes the use of herbaceous perennial plants in the landscape. Applications are now being accepted for calendar year 2019.



Funds may be used for educational purposes, plant material, hardscaping, or tools and supplies. Priority will be given to projects in the state of Wisconsin that are supported by WHPS members and to organizations with nonprofit status who have not received previous donations or grants from WHPS. Grant requests can be submitted at any time and will be reviewed by the board members of the WHPS or a designated subcommittee of such group. If the grant is awarded, a progress report is re-

quested six months after the award funds are received. A verbal report of your project may be requested at the January annual business meeting of the WHPS.

To apply, complete the Grant Application located at our Website - <http://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.org/grants.html>

And just a reminder that you can donate at any time to WHPS by visiting the Donation Page on our Website - http://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.org/store/p28/WHPS_Donation.html

New Members since last newsletter

Sharon Anderson, Jan Brendle, Elizabeth Coppelmans, Carla & Michael Diiorio, Linda Hogle, Nancy Ludwig, Susan Marth, Antje Petty, Kathy Robin, Patricia Sweeney, Cheri Weihert, and Kurt Zimmerman – welcome!

Fun Fundraising for WHPS

You can help the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society raise money with any order you place with Brent & Becky's Bulbs. With hundreds of gorgeous blooms to choose from, you'll be sure to find something you just can't live without. Simply visit www.bloominbucks.com and select "Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society" from the organization drop down menu. Hit "GO" to be sent to the Brent and Becky's Website, where you can order any item, in any quantity – bulbs, tools, books, supplements, gift certificates and more – and 25% of your purchase will be donated to the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society. This option applies to phone and mail orders as well – just be sure to mention WHPS or write us in as the organization you would like to support. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, donations like these are essential to continue our mission.

Thanks to everyone who has participated in this opportunity so far – we have raised almost \$500 in the first nine months. You do not have to be a member to participate, so tell your friends. Now is the best time to shop for your 2019 bulb display!

Help Us Raise Needed Money!

Bloomin' Bucks
with Brent and Becky's

Welcome to the WHPS Board!

The WHPS Board has appointed Anna DePauw to fill the Board vacancy created when Jeannette Golden retired from the Board in 2017; her term will run through December 2019. Anna holds a degree in Landscape Design and Ornamental Horticulture, and has been in the gardening and landscaping business for 20 years. In 2015, she opened her own business, Botannaca (a WHPS business member), providing Garden Design and Care. She enjoys helping fellow gardeners create new spaces and solve gardening dilemmas.

Anna is married and has three children and a dog. When not gardening, nature inspires her to draw, paint, and make prints. She also likes to run, bike, hike and bird watch. We are excited to welcome Anna to the Board and look forward to the diversity of experience and expertise she will contribute.



Taxus baccata 'Amersfoort' (cont. from p.1)



ascending branching and produces short, flat, oval needles that are unusual for a yew and which gives it a completely different look.

Taxus baccata usually is not hardy for us in Madison WI, which is why some

people – like Peter Moersch at Stonewall Nursery and Gary Whittenbaugh (our Sept WHPS speaker and who has a fabulous garden in Oelwein, IA) – think this really isn't a *baccata* after all. Gary thinks it's a *cuspidata*. Online references go both ways. It's listed as *baccata* by the Missouri Botanic Garden, Far Reaches Farm, and the Royal Horticultural Society, but it's listed as *cuspidata* by Iseli, Broken Arrow Nursery, and the Conifer Society Website (with discussion). These discrepancies (all discovered by me while writing this article) alone should make it interesting to research.

Meanwhile, Stonewall Nursery has them for sale. Give one a try.

A jumping worm update, including Plant Exchange September 23



A few notes about jumping worms:

- Because so many members had asked about the WHPS Plant Exchange, we decided to hold a Plant Exchange on Sunday, September 23, in the driveway of the home of Stephanie O'Neal, 1850 Baird Street. Stephanie has seen jumping worms in her garden, and this Plant Exchange will acknowledge that plants contributed to the Exchange may have jumping worm cocoons, although EVERYONE contributing plants to the Exchange is asked to wash the plants and either plant them in sterilized soil, or put them in a plastic bag before taking them to the exchange. Once you have taken the plants home, it is highly recommended that you wash the plants and toss any previous soil before you plant. Taking home plants from the plant exchange is at your own risk.

- 8/13/18 – Beware of cardboard boxes used for plants. Member Susan King sent this recent email:

FINDING THE WORMS

I was sure I didn't have jumping worms. I had, of course, seen samples of the Medusa

imitators at the Master Gardener stands at the farmers' markets. I had never seen one in my garden, so I was dismayed to discover a writhing wriggle of worms on my asphalt driveway. There they were, under a damp cardboard box still holding plants several weeks after being purchased. I researched how the worms could have gotten there. I talked to my local extension agent. I learned that worm cocoons can be 1-2 millimeters in size; they're very difficult to see. One can even track cocoons into one's yard on shoes.

When I found another cardboard box, also filled with plants, with worms underneath, I thought I had an answer. They were born in the damp boxes setting in the asphalt. I put the writhing creatures in a plastic bag, sealed it, and let them expire in the sun. Did they ever smell!

Fortunately I called the nursery which had provided me with the boxes. The nursery was skeptical, but I was certain. How else would there be worms beneath their boxes? Surely their boxes must have been the source—the "vector." A quick response from the nursery taught me a thing or two. The owner and head gardener visited, looked at my worms, looked around. And then the gardener asked if he could reach into my soil. The worms were everywhere. He knew just where to look. Even the soil looked like the consistency of small dry grains.

So check your soil, especially after a heavy rain. They come up closer to the surface. Look for worms that react strongly if

they're touched. They writhe; they really do jump. Know your worms. Appreciate responsive nurseries that listen to your concerns. And consider wiping your shoe soles (with alcohol) before and after visiting another person's garden. That's basically how farmers keep their herds safe from pathogens. – Susan King

- This from member Shari Voss: *I just discovered them this year when digging and haven't seen the numbers I think others may have. I'm doing the same thing others are with Early Bird Fertilizer. And so it goes, jumping worms, Japanese beetles, etc. etc. But small problems compared to many in the world.*

- As a follow-up to the article by Linda Marx last year, she has been treating her garden with Early Bird Fertilizer, which has resulted in lots of worms coming to the surface – a stinky mess. And additional fertilizer must be applied to take care of the next cycle of worms. She reports that disposal of the worms is the most disgusting part of the process, and there is no progress on how to deal with the cocoons, since the Early Bird Fertilizer only eliminates active and growing worms.

- As a final reminder, Jeff Epping stated in an earlier newsletter that planting of deep-rooted native plants might be one solution to the problem of topsoil changes affecting the growth and hydration of plants with roots in the top layer.

LURIE GARDEN – Is this a Weed? Garden Invaders, Welcome Guests and Photo-bombers

by Scott Stewart | Ecological Horticulture, Garden Management, How-To Lurie Garden, Weeds

<https://www.lurigarden.org/2016/06/26/is-this-a-weed/> Reprinted with permission from Lurie Gardens

Weeds are simply plants out of place, and not all need to be removed. When deciding a weed's fate, a gardener must consider, among other factors, the weed species, its location within the garden, and the weed's potential function for its location.

We are taught a garden should be weed-free and that each weed not pulled is a mark against us. In the United States, gardeners spend millions of dollars and millions of hours annually pulling, digging, cutting, spraying, smashing, cursing, hacking, and otherwise declaring all-out war

against weeds in their gardens and lawns.

Weeds are plants out of place. This means that the dandelion and the tulip alike could be considered a weed depending on where they grow, how they grow, and the gardener's tolerance for them in that location.

When a plant is growing in an unplanned place we cannot ask, in absolute terms, "Is this a weed or a flower?"; eliminate those falling in the former category, and still have a sustainable or ecologically-informed approach to gardening. Determining if a weed is worth removing

involves more than a simple 'good' or 'bad' categorization. The gardener must consider, among other factors, the weed species itself, the weed's location within the garden, and the weed's potential function for its location in the garden.

Lurie Garden's Categories of Weeds

Instead of discussing weeds as good or bad, Lurie Garden considers weed species as another part of the garden to be managed. Just as we manage the location and appearance of *Echinacea pallida* (pale

(continued on page 6)

LURIE GARDEN – IS THIS A WEED? (cont. from p. 5)

purple coneflower), staff also manages *Taxacum officinale* (dandelion). At Lurie Garden, weeds fall into the following four categories:

- Plants we never like
- Plants we once liked but are now hard to control
- Plants we leave and use in the garden
- Plants that disturb the design.

Even these categories are not absolute. While garden staff and volunteers may remove certain weed species from one area of the perennial planting beds, the same weed may be left elsewhere in the garden because it serves a specific horticultural or ecological purpose in that location.



Lipidium campestre (pepperweed) is a common weed of most gardens, including Lurie Garden. Most prevalent at Lurie Garden in the spring, pepperweed is pulled whenever possible but most are quickly shaded out by surrounding ornamental plants as the growing season progresses. Here, *L. campestre* is seen among a field of the desirable *Muscari armeniacum* 'Superstar' (grape hyacinth) at Lurie Garden.

Plants We Never Like

There are certain weed species our horticulturalists and hands-on volunteers never like to see and are religious about removing from the garden. These weeds are aggressive, invasive, and considered noxious. *Convolvulus arvensis* (bindweed) is a member of the large, taxonomically complex morning glory family (*Convolvulaceae*). This weed species is a perennial vine that twists its way around upright stems of surrounding plants to reach maximum sunlight exposure. When left unattended, their growth results in large, dense mats of



Convolvulus arvensis (bindweed) is seen here growing in *Salvia x sylvestris* 'Blue Hill'. Bindweed vines can quickly cover shrubs and other plants, killing them by shading and strangulation. At Lurie Garden, bindweed is controlled by hand-digging.

vines that shade-out surrounding plants. The round white flowers of bindweed may look appealing in the garden, but they will go on to produce a multitude of seed to spread this aggressive weed around the garden.

Lurie Garden staff and volunteers hand dig bindweed plants as they are found in the garden's perennial beds and shrub planting areas. Bindweed is a deep-rooted plant, so pulling is often ineffective and results in multiple plants arising from broken root segments. Herbicide treatment for bindweed can be effective; however, no synthetic chemicals are used in Lurie Garden for the control of weed species in accordance to the garden's sustainable and ecologically-informed management philosophy.

Another weed species regularly removed by Lurie Garden is *Taxacum officinale* (dandelion). Many gardeners battle dandelion in their garden and lawn spaces, so the fact that Lurie Garden removes this weed species from the garden may not be surprising. However, dandelion is removed from the garden not because of aesthetic reasons, but because of the species' reputation as a heavy seed producer and ability to quickly establish a monoculture that may out-complete more desirable ornamental plants. Lurie Garden appreciates the ecological value of dandelion as a source of pollen for foraging pollinators, but in the specific setting of Lurie Garden, where a particular design is to be maintained, the plant is considered weed species to be controlled.

Plants that Are Difficult to Control

This category of weed at Lurie Garden is comprised of plants most gardeners may not consider as traditional weeds. Many of the plants in the group are perennial plants once installed as part of the garden's design, but have become too ag-



Taxacum officinale (dandelion) is a common weed in gardens and lawns. Dandelion produces copious seed, which can quickly spread through a garden setting to create a monoculture. This weed species is controlled by hand-digging at Lurie Garden.

gressive or 'weedy' in the garden and must now be removed. Often they are beautiful plants, but act like real bullies in the garden.



Briza media (quaking grass) is a beautiful ornamental perennial grass originally installed at Lurie Garden; however, the species quickly became an aggressive plant in the garden. As a result, garden horticulturalists classified quaking grass as a weed and continue to remove it from the garden.

Tradescantia (spiderwort) is a New World genus of plants in the *Commelinaceae* family, with many species native to North America and several cultivars available in the horticultural market. *Tradescantia* was planted in Lurie Garden as part of the original design plan with hopes plants would naturalize to fill-in bare soil areas. It accomplished this task well – in fact, the plant grew too well in the garden's setting and began to out-complete surrounding plants. The designers and horticultural staff, using the garden's ecological approach to management as a guideline, made the decision that *Tradescantia* must be removed from the garden's plantings. While large areas of the garden have been cleared of this ornamental species, due to the plant's ability to seed-into areas and reproduce by underground rhizomes, plants continue to appear throughout the garden – If any part of the root is not removed, a new plant can grow from the remnants. Each new appearance must be hand-dug to prevent a future appearance.

Plants We Leave or Use in the Garden

Lurie Garden's ecologically-informed approach to garden management means that, for some weed species, the time, effort, and soil disturbance required for removal outweighs any damage the weed plants themselves cause in the garden. In fact, many of the weed species in this category may serve beneficial purposes in the garden—attracting local pollinators to the garden or serving as groundcover plants to fill bare soil and prevent more aggressive weeds from establishing.

LURIE GARDEN – IS THIS A WEED? (cont. from p. 6)



Tradescantia (spiderwort) is seen here appearing among *Monarda brandburiana* (Eastern bee balm) and *Pycnanthemum muticum* (mountain mint). Spiderwort was once a part of the Lurie Garden's planting design, but due to its weedy tendency was selected to be removed from the garden. The process of removal continues by hand-digging.

Oxalis stricta (yellow woodsorrel) is a native North American plant in the Oxalidaceae family. Despite being one of the most ubiquitous weeds in garden and greenhouse settings, several interesting ornamental cultivars of yellow woodsorrel have been developed. At Lurie Garden, yellow woodsorrel is one of the most common weeds encountered throughout the perennial planting beds. Additionally some gardeners may learn to appreciate their lemony-flavored seed capsules as a garnish, making them a very welcome edible weed.

Lurie Garden staff and volunteers rarely bother removing yellow woodsorrel from the garden. This weed species is not only somewhat attractive, but also serves as a worthwhile groundcover to fill bare soil spots that would otherwise become infested with more aggressive weed species. *Oxalis stricta* is often found growing in combination with *Duchesnea indica* (mock strawberry), the latter being another common weed species left in the garden to serve as a groundcover.



Duchesnea indica (mock strawberry) is another common groundcover weed in Lurie Garden. As with *Oxalis stricta* (yellow woodsorrel), mock strawberry is rarely removed from the garden because it serves as a great groundcover plant.

In the early spring, Lurie Garden's perennial planting beds are often covered with *Cardamine hirsuta* (bittercress). This annual or biennial member Brassicaceae can be one of the first plants blooming at the garden. We do not remove bittercress



Cardamine hirsuta (bittercress) is a common early spring weed in Lurie Garden. This weed species is not removed from the garden since it does little harm to the garden, its design, or development.

due to its prevalence throughout the garden, small size, and pleasant early spring flower. Additionally, this weed species is quickly shaded out by other ornamental perennial plants as the spring growing season progresses.

Plants that Disturb the Design of Garden

There are some plants that just find themselves growing in the wrong place – *Asclepias syriaca* (common milkweed) growing in the middle of our iconic Salvia River, for example. In these cases, garden horticulturalists make the decision to remove the 'weed' even though the offending plant is actually an ornamental perennial elsewhere in the garden's design. In the case of plants critical to life-cycles of insects or other animals, out-of-place plants are removed before being used for egg laying or other important life-cycle stages.



An out-of-place *Asclepias syriaca* (common milkweed) in the garden's Salvia River (*Salvia nemerosa* 'Wesuwe'). Balancing the artistic integrity of the garden's design with ecologically-informed management, garden's horticulturalists removed this one common milkweed plant from the Salvia River early in the growing season. Other large colonies of common milkweed, *A. incarnata* (swamp milkweed), and *A. tuberosa* (butterfly milkweed) exist elsewhere at Lurie Garden. Even though common milkweed is a part of the garden's perennial plant design, sometimes a plant out of place can disrupt the artistic intent of garden design elements.

Weed Control at Lurie Garden

How best to control weeds in gardens and lawns is an often hotly debated topic. Each gardener has their preferred weed

control method and tool. Weed control does not have a one-size-fits-all solution. Much as the gardener must consider the location, invasive potential, ecological function, and design consideration of a weed to determine if it should be removed; before implementing a weed control method, gardeners must consider personal or professional philosophies and the ecological impact of their preferred control methods.



Ornithogalum umbellatum (garden star-of-Bethlehem) exemplified the struggle of the garden to determine if a plant is a weed or valuable ornamental plant. This native European plant was brought to the United States as an ornamental plant, but soon escaped cultivation and has become a weedy (and even invasive) plant in many gardens and natural areas. At Lurie Garden, garden star-of-Bethlehem is removed from planting beds. What would you do with this plant?

Lurie Garden uses sustainable and ecologically-informed methods of garden management that attempt to balance the aesthetic requirements of maintaining the artistry of the garden, while simultaneously relying on the resiliency and plasticity of the garden and its biodiversity as an ecosystem.

For weed control, applying this sustainable philosophy means that no synthetic herbicides are used within the garden and alternative methods are used, evaluated, and applied throughout the garden setting. Methods of weed control at Lurie Garden include:

- Hand pulling and digging – Used for most weed species found in the perennial planting areas of the garden.
- Burning – Weeds occurring in the cracks and crevices of the public pathways throughout the garden are burned using a hand-held propane torch.
- Shading – Many early spring weeds occurring in the garden are not pulled or hand-dug because the surrounding perennial plants will, later in the growing season, grow taller than the weed plants, shading them out of the garden.
- Ignoring – Many weed species are simply ignored because they fill bare soil



211 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, Madison, WI 53704
Sept 2018 Newsletter

*Have questions about your membership?
Contact Jane LaFlash at wisconsinhps@gmail.com or (608) 243-1208.*

LURIE GARDEN – IS THIS A WEED? *(cont. from p. 7)*

spots throughout the garden and help prevent more aggressive weeds from becoming established.

Quick Tips – What Weeds to Control

- Learn about the specific plants that start voluntarily growing in your garden. You may learn that the ‘weed’ you have been pulling for many years may actually be beneficial.
- Consider the location, potential function, and invasive potential of a weed before controlling.
- Be proactive, persistent, and thorough in controlling aggressive, invasive, and noxious weeds in your garden.
- Research new plants before installing in your garden. Some ornamental plants may become weeds in your garden setting.
- Weed control is not a one-size-fits-all scenario. Consider multiple methods of weed control for maximum effectiveness. Aim to work smart, not hard.
- Be open to volunteer design surprises. If a controllable plant suddenly appears in



Sonchus (sow thistle) can be a troublesome weed and is often removed from Lurie Garden. Nonetheless, when the perfoliate leaves of sow thistle are examined more closely a certain beauty and interest can be discovered. Who knows, maybe some gardener out there uses *Sonchus* to bring a hard-edged, industrial look to their garden!

an unplanned place, wait to see if it creates a new, desirable effect that you would not have thought of otherwise. You can always remove the plant later.

- ‘Weeds’ can surprise you! Take some time to examine the plant you are about to eliminate. A weed may have an interesting or beautiful character that brings a welcome, unique addition to your garden. Do you have any stories of an ornamen-

tal plant turning hostile in your garden – or any ‘weeds’ you have started to tolerate or allow?

Weed Identification Resources

Two favorite weed identification and control guides for Lurie Garden staff and volunteers are:

- Alexander Martin. 1987. *Weeds*. St. Martin’s Press – This small format book (only 6 in. x 4 in.) is a good quick-reference guide for the most common weeds found in North America.

• Sally Roth. 2002. *Weeds: Friend of foe?* The Reader’s Digest Association – This book is both a good identification guide and unique coffee table book to stimulate discussions with gardener and non-gardeners alike.

[Thanks to WHPS member Jeanette Golden for referring us to this article.]

Fun Fact

WHPS membership has grown from about 60 in 1996 to around 600 in 2010 and is currently at 840.