



Perennial Notes

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society, Inc.

September 2020



Book Review – The Earth in Her Hands

By Linda Brazill

These days, new books about gardening are published so fast and furiously that it is hard to keep track of them; let alone decide which ones to buy and read. But every now and then, one title rises to the top. Jennifer Jewell's *The Earth in her Hands* is just such a book, and one whose time is clearly now. Jewell is known for her work in public radio and her podcast program, "Cultivating Place."

The book is a print extension of that work where she "explores the relationships between our plants and gardens, the natural history of the places in our lives, and their importance to our cultural and environmental literacy, our broader communities, and our individual well-being." That suggests the book is heavy going, but the opposite is true; it is page-turning fascinating.

The subtitle, "75 Extraordinary Women Working in the World of Plants" (continued on page 2)

WHPS coming events!

SCHEDULING NOTE: We have cancelled in-person indoor events through the end of 2020, due to the continuing pandemic and our desire to do as much as we can to maintain the safety and health of our members. We are guided by the recommendations of the State of Wisconsin, Dane County and City of Madison for large events and the availability of facilities at which to hold them. We are working at present with the speakers below to present our fall programs via Zoom. **Please pay close attention to your email, as we will be communicating with you regarding these programs and providing directions that will allow you to access them.**

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

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 7:00 pm.
WHPS Meeting Via Zoom: Old Favorites & New Opportunities, with speaker Mark Dwyer, Landscape Prescriptions by MD. Dwyer will share his favorite perennials for



beauty and performance from over 20 years as Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens (Janesville, WI). Mark will cover a wide range of perennials for both sun and shade, with an additional focus on native selections, ornamental grasses and some exciting new perennials coming soon! A handout will be available in advance of the digital presentation with a listing of all the plants covered in the presentation. There will also be some time for questions and comments at the end of the presentation. Landscape Prescriptions by MD (<https://www.landscapeprescriptionsmd.com>) offers services that involve evaluating an existing landscape, designing a totally new one or even just making suggestions on how to utilize and maintain what a gardener already has in place, based on their preferences, needs and goals. Dwyer has a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana (1993) and a master's degree in urban forestry from the UW - Stevens Point (1996). Dwyer's professional experience includes time spent working at a garden center and nursery (Appleton, WI), followed ultimately by a transition to public horticulture, working at Fernwood Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve (Niles, MI). More recently, he served 21 years as Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens (Janesville, WI). He has also consistently been involved with private landscape design (residential and commercial) for over 25 years and enjoys keeping current in landscape design and the use of innovative plant materials and design features for beauty, form and function.

POSTPONED TO 2021 - Celebrating The Flower Factory. We have postponed our member celebration of Nancy and David Nedveck and their retirement and closing of The Flower Factory to late spring 2021.

Sunday, Sept. 20, WHPS Member Intrinsic Perennials Truck Sale, 2-4:00 pm., West Agricultural Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona. Brent Horvath of Intrinsic Perennial Gardens in Hebron, IL will bring his truck loaded with one-gallon plants for sale to our

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Nov. 18 Meeting

– see p. 2.



Garden Tools

see p. 3.



Plant Searching

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WHPS Events (cont. from p.1)

members. We will strictly follow Covid-19 guidelines – masks required by all, social distancing, hand sanitizer use encouraged (and provided). Full information about the sale, including a list of plants to be sold and parking info, will be emailed to members a few days before the sale. We will also be seeking volunteers for the sale – expect an email in early September.



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Wednesday, October 21, WHPS Meeting via Zoom: Discussion of

75 Extraordinary Women Working in the World of Plants, with speaker Jennifer Jewell, author of *The Earth in Her Hands: 75 Extraordinary Women Working in the World of Plants*.



Jennifer Jewell is a gardener, garden writer, and gardening educator and advocate. Since 2016, she has written and hosted the national award-winning, weekly public radio program and podcast, *Cultivating Place*, a co-production of North State Public Radio in Chico, California. Particularly interested in the intersections between gardens, the native plant environments around them, and human culture, she is the daughter of a garden- and floral-designing mother and a wildlife biologist father. Jennifer has been writing about gardening professionally since 1998, and her work has appeared in *Gardens Illustrated*, *House & Garden*, *Natural Home*, *Old House Journal*, *Colorado Homes & Lifestyles*, and *Pacific Horticulture*. NOTE: See the review of Jewell's book on p. 1.

Wednesday, Nov. 18, WHPS Meeting via Zoom: Have Plants – Will Travel, Speaker

Michael Jesiolowski, Director of Horticulture, Rotary Botanical Gardens. North, South, East and West, Jesiolowski has traveled across the country on a quest for stunning horticultural finds. From the



crapemyrtles of the Carolinas to the cacti of the Sonoran Desert, this presentation will highlight the most inspirational gardens and plants he has encountered in the Midwest and beyond. As Director of Horticulture, Jesiolowski leads the horticulture staff and volunteers, where they balance the creation of display gardens with building plant collections with diversity. Jesiolowski has spent most of his career at public garden institutions, most recently as Garden Supervisor at Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. At Chicago Botanic Garden, where he was Senior Horticulturist, he was responsible for the Entrance Gardens, which encompassed the Visitor's Center, Grunfeld Children's Growing Garden and the Regenstein Learning Campus. He created the seasonal displays in these areas, spearheaded the creation of gravel garden beds in the Parking Lots, and added hundreds of new taxa to the collection. Jesiolowski received his formal training through the University of Illinois, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Horticulture. He also has experience working at The Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL), Bernheim Arboretum (Clermont, KY), Epic Systems (Verona, WI) and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Wednesday, December 9, WHPS Annual Meeting

- Though we are canceling our in-person Seed Exchange, Trash & Treasure Exchange and Party for this year, we are still planning to present a brief Annual Meeting either via Zoom or email.

Book review (cont. from p.1)

Working in the World of Plants," gives you a clue, though it doesn't prepare you for the contents. These are women from every permutation of the gardening and plant world as well as every corner of the globe. I thought I was fairly knowledgeable when it comes to who's who in the garden world, but I only was familiar with 23 of the women profiled in these pages and most of those were white and middle aged or older.

The group profiled here includes artists, florists, entrepreneurs, garden writers, photographers, and botanists, along with environmentalists, agriculturalists, public garden administrators and those involved in social justice aspects of food and gardening. Their widely differing stories cross all boundaries: Ethnicity, socio-economic background, race, religion, sexual orientation and age, which make for a book that surprises, educates and inspires.

The book is arranged alphabetically by the women's

last names with four pages devoted to each. The profiles begin with a full page photo portrait of the subject along with three themes — her work, her plants and her plant journey — that allows each woman to describe the full range of her experience. Each subject concludes her profile with a list of "other inspiring women," which opens yet another vast range of less-well-known women in the plant world. Because each woman is essentially covered in a stand-alone chapter, you can read the book in short bursts; putting it down and picking it up again when you have time or need inspiration.

For most of us, working in our gardens is one of the most encouraging and uplifting things we can do in this strange year of staying home. Discovering this group of women and reading about their lives and work is even more so.

The Earth in Her Hands: 75 Extraordinary Women Working in the World of Plants by Jennifer Jewell, published by Timber Press, 323 pages, \$25.95

The Gardeners Have Spoken: Tools That Are Worth It

by Alissa Karnaky

A long-lasting, dependable tool that does the job well is worth its weight in gold to a gardener. We asked our members about their go-to tools and gear that have served them well over the years, and hope that this compilation will help readers to spend their dollars wisely.

The Multi-Tasking Soil Knife

The tool many of our members overwhelmingly recommend is a soil knife, also known as a hori-hori. This extremely versatile tool can be used for weeding, planting, deadheading and trimming, and transplanting and dividing plants. In many cases, it replaces the garden trowel. Common versions often have a flat-bladed side and a serrated edge, as well as depth markings. A holster helps with safety — these knives are very sharp — and to fasten the tool to your belt for easy access.



The A. M. Leonard soil knife. Many companies offer soil knives.

Specialty Weeding Options

When weeding, many gardeners also prefer specialized hand-held tools for precision work. Hook or claw-like tools, like the Cape Cod weeder or Cobrahead weeders, work well to break up compacted soil, remove rhizomes and clumps, and prepare soil for planting. A handheld hoe, such as the dutch hoe or a slightly curved ho-mi, also works well to carefully scrape away small annual weeds in tight areas. One professional gardener recommends a linoleum knife, found at your local hardware store or at specialty garden retailers, which has a curved blade that provides even more precise control to remove weeds from narrow cracks or edge a bed.



Cobrahead weeders in Original and Mini. Cobrahead is a WHPS Business Member based in Cambridge, WI.

For gardeners who prefer to stand when weeding, one excellent option is the dutch push-pull hoe. This is highly recommended by plantsman Roy Diblik for quick, back-saving weeding of larger areas. Other options include the garden claw, which works well for deep weeding as well as preparing planting beds, and the long Cobrahead weeder, which cultivates and weeds at a shallower depth. The claw is a more labor intensive tool than the narrow-profile Cobrahead weeder.

2020 – Other Gardening Events of Note

Because the Covid-19 virus has caused so many event changes and cancellations, we are not listing specific events in this issue. Instead, we refer you - as always - directly to the websites for the organizations listed below to view their current calendar, and for more information on their key activities and events:

- [Green Bay Botanical Garden](#)
- [Lynden Sculpture Garden](#) in Milwaukee
- [Mitchell Park Horticultural Park](#) (The Domes) in Milwaukee
- [Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL](#)
- [Olbrich Botanical Gardens](#) in Madison
- [Paine Art Center and Gardens](#) in Oshkosh
- [Rotary Botanical Gardens](#) in Janesville
- [University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum](#)

- [Allen Centennial Garden](#) in Madison
- [Boerner Botanical Gardens](#) in Milwaukee.
- [Chicago Botanic Garden.](#)

Preparing for Planting

Many of the previously mentioned tools work well for site preparation, but the shovel remains a mainstay of the garden tool shed. However, many gardeners prefer a mini-shovel, which is more easily maneuvered to prepare planting holes or for dividing plants. One innovation is the Root Slayer shovel, which slices through tough roots. A digging or a border fork is also a good way to loosen soil, gently divide plants, or weed out tricky root systems intact and requires less effort than a shovel. For quality retailers for long-handed tools, look to sources like A.M. Leonard, Garrett Wade and Sneeboer. Select stainless steel to prevent rust.



The Dewit Diamond hoe.

Pruning

For pruning, many gardeners recommend investing in high-quality handheld pruners, like the industry-standard Felco F2 or more economical Corona BP 3180D. Gardeners with smaller hands may prefer the Felco F6 or ARS HP-VS8XZ, or if you have a lot to prune, a model with a rotating handle. Professional gardeners often use a small folding hand-held saw, like the Corona Quick Saw. If you prefer loppers, a bypass lopper will provide a cleaner cut than an anvil lopper. WHPS president Stephanie O'Neal highly recommends Fiskars bypass loppers for smooth cuts.

Clothing

Many of our members highly recommend specialized garden clothing made by Duluth Trading Company. The DuluthFlex fabric sheds dirt well. Tool vests with many pockets are available for men and women. The Heirloom Gardening Bibs and pants for women have removable kneepads, as do the Fire Hose Bibs and carpenter pants for men. Their flexible neoprene knee pads can replace a kneeling pad. For women who prefer leggings, Carhartt offers a waterproof pair with reinforced knees. Garments are rarely available with insect prevention treatments, so gardeners who encounter ticks may want to seek out a permethrin spray or send clothing away to a company like Insect Shield for the application of a safe coating durable for 70 washes.



photo by Mark Golbach

Member Linda Brazill models her Duluth Trading Company Heirloom Gardening Bibs with removable Neoprene Kneepads inserted.

To protect the hands, a nitrile glove like the Showa Atlas 370 — available in both bright and muted colors — allows the most dexterity. Gardeners with longer nails can add a finger cot underneath the pointer finger to help the glove tip stay intact longer. When the weather gets cooler, Atlas offers insulated nitrile gloves.

Whatever tools you prefer, take the advice of one member to mark the handles of small tools with a bright color to keep them from being lost in the garden. Little is more frustrating than misplacing a treasured tool practically in plain sight!

Plant Searching - Mail Order Company Recommendations

Ed Lyon, Director, Reiman Gardens and proprietor, Spellbound Garden Writing & Consultation

As a “plant collector,” or at least “gardener who needs cool and rare plants,” I have always appreciated the nurseries and garden centers that carry unique plants. If you say you are a bigger fan than I of The Flower Factory, we might have a fight on our hands because they represent that type of on-site source Madisonians have benefited from for years as well as access to some companies such as Song Sparrow Perennial Farm.

However, we have been losing a number of these specialty sites over the last few years without much in the way of replacement. I have always mail-ordered plants but never more than since my move 5+ years ago from Wisconsin to Iowa. The availability of unique plants is greatly reduced here and now the bulk of my plant sources are mail order. So I have a fair amount of trial and error experience that I am willing to share.

Keep in mind, my article is based on my personal experiences and opinions from others in the horticultural field; others may have different results. Companies go out of business or get reorganized or sold and product availability and quality may change as a result. For instance, from 2001 to 2011, a mail-order company purchased a number of other mail order firms through whom we had all enjoyed great product and service for years – they were our “go-to’s.” When they were bought out each company retained their name, but since then, I have seen the quality of the product and service decline significantly and I no longer order from any of them. If you look at reviews (Dave’s Garden is an excellent review site) and Better Business Bureau complaints, you will see customer reviews of these companies have changed to mostly negative. Other companies that once had good reputations but high prices no longer have plant size or quality worth the inflated prices. Another previously great source for unique plants that I tried again after moving here now have abysmal product (example - daylilies in 2.5” pots); their customer service people didn’t even get how bad their plants were even after they saw photos I had taken. Another firm is variable: some products are fine, others too small and some are sealed in airtight plastic. I have never seen that done before and those plants came dried out.

Criteria that make me stop ordering from a company includes:

- Poor quality plant material
- Inaccurate information
- Claims that are not true
- Variable product quality
- Better size/quality/price elsewhere
- Not sizable for price
- Poor customer service
- Poor refund service

Also Note: Don’t mistake the big national branding firms for plant producers. I’m not going to write this with all of their register and trademark symbols but they include names such as Proven Winners, Ball, Plant Select, Cultivaris, Southern Living, American Beauties, HGTV Home Plant Collection, and Bloomin’ Easy. These are not companies for purchasing from; they are brands. Many garden centers and companies will carry plants with these

brands, but it can vary considerably as to what nurseries actually grew the product. Your individual garden center/nursery may have grown the plants from plugs or the finished product could be coming from a wide variety of wholesalers from across the country. Gardeners tend to be more trusting of marketing claims and images but keep in mind that this industry is no different from any other. For instance, just because the name is Proven Winners, it does not guarantee that every plant sold had several years being trialed, much less trialed in your area.

If you are new to mail ordering, here are things to consider. Mail ordering:

- Increases plant selection dramatically.
- Opens your selection tremendously to rare and hard-to-find.
- I find refunds are generally easier – but just like retail, you must follow through quickly. I take pictures and send with email. I have found most companies are excellent at giving credit/replacements. Know their policy!
- If on their newsletter list, you will be alerted to new product offerings, sales, etc. online. I allow newsletters because many will announce sales, special shipping reductions, additions to inventory, limited time offers, etc.
- Some have paper catalogs, some online only – often online has more offerings than you might see in a catalog. Online is often more inventory accurate.
- Make sure you select the correct ship dates. If you don’t have a place to protect from frost, most will not be hardened. I usually choose mid-April because I have a plastic covered gazebo. The average gardener probably shouldn’t have ship dates much before the second week in May if they don’t have such facilities.
- Just as in everything, quality costs more (if it sounds too good to be true...).
- You will incur additional shipping and handling charges (I divide shipping cost into plant cost to compare with retail).
- You can’t see the product in person. After all you aren’t the one picking from what is available.
- For best availability, you need to watch for when the product first becomes available; just as in a nursery/garden center, product availability can change through the season.
- Sale prices exist but not as many as retailers might do. You might also have to get on their email list – many mail-order firms wait until later in the season to offer sales than do the garden centers.
- As in most on-line ordering, the shipping cost may not show up until you take your shopping cart all the way to payment. If you decide shipping adds prohibitive cost, empty your cart. Many companies see carts with product sitting in them – they may contact you to encourage you to complete the sale.
- Some send plants without pots; you might have to pot them if necessary to hold for more than a few days or plant immediately.

How I handle mail order plants when they arrive:

- Unpack immediately and water. I water even if they look moist.
- Photograph any plants that look less than pristine. I take

Mail Order (continued from p. 4)

photos of them along with the rest of the order. If you put the plant in the ground right away and then try to get credit if it fails, you are not likely to get results. But showing that a plant was questionable on arrival has always gotten me replacements. Photograph any damage to the box.

- Some of the plants will arrive large enough to hold as they are until they can go in the ground. Others will come too small to compete with existing perennials; I “up pot” and grow out more extensive roots. You will need a spot to “hold” plants if you do this.
- It seems there are as many methods of packing and packing material as there are nurseries. You are spending a significant amount of money on mail order plants, so excellent packing is a huge criteria for me.

My Recommendations by Category

Rare, Unusual, Hard-to-Find

Far Reaches Farm Washington www.farreachesfarm.com
no paper catalog

They are plant collectors and their site is also a conservancy for rare plants. I discovered them when I was looking for the vining species of monkshood and found many other plants I did not know existed. A must for shade gardeners. A good selection of fern cultivars, hard to find in retail stores. Plants come well grown and well packed. Shipped potted; most can be held in their own pots for planting, occasionally there are ones small enough I up-pot and grow out longer.

Fraser's Thimble Farms British Columbia www.thimble-farms.com
no paper catalog

One of the finest places to find large selections of ferns; I found this company when looking for more unusual selections. Not only did they have about the best fern selections but also many other woodland plants which I like to collect. You will find lots here that you don't know. There is a photo gallery. Huge Helibore selection. They have conifers and Japanese maples; I have never purchased. Well-grown and well-packed. Sent without pots. They will take care of any of the necessary inspections and phytosanitary needs coming into the U.S. For some reason they did not ship in 2020; I hope that won't be true in 2021.

Broken Arrow Nursery Connecticut www.brokenarrownursery.com
no paper catalog

This one is well-known amongst top-notch horticulturists. They have a retail store and not everything they sell is available online but still a large selection. I advise going into the “Available Online (mail order)” tab; it is hard to see the really cool stuff available at the nursery only! Some of the coolest cultivars of plants you will find; I usually feel I know most new plants as they come out, here I am continually surprised to find exciting new plants I didn't know existed. They sell trees and shrubs in sizes (3 gal) that I didn't realize would be cost effective to ship. Shipped potted. Some of the best quality and shipping I have seen. I constantly watch for when they open online ordering because they have such unique plants that they sell out of a lot of plants soon, especially with an on-site nursery.

Arrowhead Alpines Michigan arrowheadalpines.com paper catalog and **Wrightman Alpines Nursery** New Brunswick, Canada wrightmanalpines.com paper catalog

I do these two together because most gardeners will not be into alpine/rock garden plants, which is their specialty. However, Arrowhead Alpines also sells woodland plants with an option of bare root in bulk (24, 48, 96 bare root options) which is excellent for gardeners establishing woodland gardens. They have been claiming that they will eliminate any of their non-alpine product, but at this point in time, the woodlands are still listed. The bare root plants are excellent quality. Wrightman Alpines is specifically alpine and probably one of the best selections available. Alpine plants from both sources can be quite small. Alpines are already fairly “touchy,” so holding these plants can be challenging and I have had losses before they have been planted. I have learned to hold the alpine orders until May so that I can plant immediately. Excellent shipping for both.

Plant Delights Nursery North Carolina www.plantdelights.com paper catalog

This was my original go-to for the rare and hard-to-find. The company is well-known among experienced gardeners, especially since Tony is on the speaker circuit. The plants can be some of the highest priced for mail-order and I have had some issues with plants coming very small in small pots or not grown out to fill a pot. I have up-potted more plants from this company than any other; the plants are too high priced to put right into the ground if they are in small pots. I have not ordered from them since I found Fraser's Thimble Farms, Broken Arrow Nursery and Far Reaches, but I am not saying don't order from them; he carries really cool plants. But now I look first to see if the other nurseries carry the same plant larger and cheaper. Excellent shipping.

Ensata Gardens Michigan www.ensata.com no paper catalog

Yes, irises. This company is listed not for the commonly known bearded iris. They specialize in Siberian and (the reason for this) Iris pseudata. I adore and have tried the tender, moisture loving exotics like Japanese and Louisiana iris but they just aren't tough enough for our area (at least the average gardener). Pseudata iris are a cross between Japanese iris and the super tough, robust Iris pseudocorus (yellow flag). They arrive bareroot in plastic bags; they aren't large clumps, so I generally transplant into gallon pots and grow out longer. They are worth it.

Garden Crossings Michigan www.gardencrossings.com
not sure about catalog, I don't get one

These aren't rare or hard-to-find but you will find new cultivars for the year and plants are generally well grown. The selection is likely better than local retail, heavy on Proven Winners. Packed well. They do offer 3-gallon options for shrubs, with good selection over local sources. At ~\$38 plus shipping, they aren't cheap, although not necessarily expensive either compared to local, but late in the season, they often send an end-of-year sale announcement cutting the price significantly and making the available selection a good deal.

Mail Order (continued from p. 5)

Bluestone Perennials Ohio www.bluestoneperennials.com catalog

Much like Garden Crossings, fairly standard perennials that are mostly well grown, cheaper pricing for multiples of the same plant. Offer sales on selected plants throughout the season so it is worth being on their email list. Plants are grown in coco-fiber pots. Interestingly, that sustainable effort is thwarted by a plastic label wrap but it is at least some effort! I have found some variability in the quality of plants purchased after the spring season. Excellent shipping.

Brushwood Nursery Georgia www.brushwoodnursery.com not sure about catalog, I don't get one

Specifically vines – hardy for us are Clematis, Lonicera (honeysuckle), and Wisteria predominantly – I also buy non-hardy Passiflora. The selection of clematis is huge. Even better is how well they are grown. Clematis can be tricky to establish – often the standard 4.5" pots don't have roots established well-enough. These vines are grown in gallon containers and not shipped until they have extensive roots. They are removed from the pot and shipped in plastic bags helping shipping weight. I do remove those bags and put the plants back in gallon pots on arrival for critical drainage. Excellent shipping and receptive about replacing plants that have issues in the first several weeks.

Bloomingfields Farm Connecticut bloomingfieldsfarm.com online only

Daylilies, you say! Once again, there are many, many sources for daylilies but not many for the late blooming varieties. Most people don't realize there are late season blooming daylilies flowering from late summer through fall, depending on cultivar. 'Autumn Minaret' is the most well-known but the selection is much larger. These tend to be taller and great for back-of-the-border late-season bloom. No fancy website here, very basic and you download the order form, fill it out by hand and send a check. Owned by a couple in their 80's, so this nursery may not be around for years. Delightful people to work with.

Natives

Prairie Moon Nursery Minnesota www.prairiemoon.com paper catalog

There are two reasons I order from this company. One is the availability of bare root native plants which ship cheaply and establish better than root-bound potted. They sell 38-cell plugs – a good size for home gardeners. Plugs are an economic way to purchase a larger number of plants and, with proper care, may establish better than potted. Unlike many companies selling entire flats of plugs, they also let you order an assortment in the same flat. They also offer seed and seed mixes. Their literature is also quite good. Excellent customer service, great quality and excellent shipping.

Prairie Nursery Wisconsin www.prairienursery.com paper catalog

Neil Diboll is one of the country's best experts on Midwest native plants. You can get flats of plugs economically and the quality is excellent. He also has a wide variety of seed mixes for

different cultural conditions – I'm not sure I have seen any other source that puts together plant recommendations for so many diverse conditions, including clay. Both catalog and website are rich in information and education.

Annuals

Select Seeds Connecticut www.selectseeds.com paper catalog

Generally I wouldn't include annuals– they are generally common local and easy to grow from seed. Select Seeds is one of my go-to's for seeds, but they also carry a fairly large selection of annuals and tropicals in small pots. These include many of the exotic and unusual plants you see in public gardens but not in the local garden center. There are also organic options for seed and plants.

Brian's Botanicals Kentucky briansbotanicals.net I believe online only

Tropical plants grow so quickly I have no problem getting them mail order; in this case they are generally cheaper than garden centers. I found this company this year and discovered horticulturists across the country know Brian and laud his business. I will increase my order next year; the plants are some of the most sizable tropical plants I have gotten and he has the coolest new plants you will see in the botanic gardens. Excellent packaging, shipping and customer service.

Succulents

Leaf & Clay California www.leafandclay.co I believe online only

Succulents are everywhere now and you may not find a need to order, but if you do, there are a number of great sources. Leaf & Clay has a wonderful selection with excellent size for price. Sizes come as 2", 2.5", 4", 5" and 6". They come bare-root, no pots, and are wrapped well. They also offer different assortment packs and cuttings. You can purchase a heat pack for \$5 and ship in cooler temperatures. Free shipping over \$75, there is a first-time buyer discount and they offer special discounts through the year. I have used customer service twice and they are exceptional.

Mountain Crest Gardens California mountaincrestgardens.com not sure about catalog, I don't get one

Mountain Crest is highly regarded with exceptional reviews. They have a huge selection of hardy and non-hardy succulents. They have sampler sets, cuttings, bare root and potted. They also provide at a nominal fee a heat pack for cold weather shipping. They provide a lot of education on succulent care and project ideas as well as a photo gallery from customers. They also have a full line of accessories.

Bulbs

Odyssey Bulbs Massachusetts odysseybulbs.com online only

I have branched away from many of the mainstream bulbs and now add more unique bulbs annually such as Corydalis, Erythronium, Anemonella, Hepatica, etc. Do Hepatica transsilvanica and you will never look at spring blooming bulbs the same again!

Mail Order (continued from p. 6)

This source is for when you feel you are advanced enough to move up to more specialized bulbs. They aren't cheap so I add a few every year. One negative is that you order and pay in spring for fall delivery. But it is because they sell out quickly.

B&D Lilies Washington www.bdlilies.com paper catalog

My primary source for Orienpet, Asiatic, Oriental, trumpet and a number of species lilies. Size does matter with bulbs. The bulbs are HUGE and selection is excellent. Quantity discounts when ordering multiples of the same bulb. Excellent shipping and customer service. Occasional mail catalogs with sales.

The Lily Nook Manitoba lilynook.mb.ca paper catalog

My source for species lilies and especially martagons. I can get one or two martagon cultivars each at other bulb companies but The Lily Nook is the only source (outside of England) that has a large selection of them. Martagons are not cheap; add some every year, but the fact that they are in Canada usually helps cost when the conversion is to U.S. advantage. The Lily Nook martagon bulbs are generally the best sized of my sources which helps when they can cost \$25-35 EACH!

Old House Gardens Michigan oldhousegardens.com paper catalog

The focus on heirloom bulbs; I am fond of species tulips and some of the more unusual shapes and colors of heirlooms compared to today's standardized hybrid forms. Excellent customer

service; if they can't supply something, they add some bulbs to the order in addition to credit.

Brent & Becky's Bulbs Virginia www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com paper catalog

Most gardeners know them and they have a great selection of the usual bulbs including some of their own introductions. I use them for some of the harder-to-find bulbs such as Gloriosa lily (vining, not a Lillium) and a number of species bulbs. They also sell some perennials which I don't buy other than some tropicals – ones that might arrive small but grow quickly in season. Excellent customer service and support of public gardens.

Van Engelen Connecticut vanengelen.com paper catalog

This catalog cover is probably familiar to many gardeners. No color images (go online for that) but excellent descriptions, this is the catalog for bulk ordering bulbs at reasonable prices. This company offers economical options for mass plantings with the ability to purchase in quantities such as 25, 50 and 100. I used to have a group of friends who would order together and divide up the packages because it was so economical. The only problem is, it is so easy and affordable to order small bulbs at 100 each that it makes for a lot of planting when they arrive! If you sign up for their newsletter, they offer a number of sales. John Scheepers is the more consumer oriented part of the same company and they have a color catalog.

Jumping Worms Update - Tips for using biochar

In the last few newsletters we've been discussing the potential benefits of using biochar in the garden to reduce the number of jumping worms. Biochar is an organic soil supplement that appears to kill jumping worms. Here are a few tips from *Gardens Illustrated*, June 2019, "Growing without Soil."

- Always inoculate homemade or fresh biochar, otherwise it will act as a nutrient sponge for a few years before offering any benefit to the soil. The simplest way to inoculate your biochar is by adding it to a compost heap where it will become full of microbes and nutrients. This will have the additional benefit of speeding up the decomposition time of the heap.
- Apply the biochar activated compost as a thin mulch on top of the soil's surface.
- Inoculating biochar rapidly increases soil microbial growth and especially the development of mycorrhiza, a key fungus for healthy plant development.

WHPS Grants Program

The Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society offers grants to community groups, schools, or other organizations for projects that promote the use of herbaceous perennial plants in the landscape. Grants can only be awarded to a non-profit organization or a group that is associated with a nonprofit organization. For more information go to our website: <http://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.org/grants.html>

We have also received updates from two grant programs highlighted in our April 2020 Newsletter:

- Paw Print Park (removal of invasive species and restoration of native grasses and forbs), 18 N. Jackson St., Janesville - Despite a few delays and stumbling blocks, some of them created by the Covid-19 virus, volunteers (adhering to virus guidelines) were able to prep the site and install the plants in June and nurture them through bucket brigades and water timing with late spring rains until the City of Janesville could get the spigot going again. There was also a

delay in the installation of proper signage due to Covid-19 business closures. But they are persevering and have expressed their gratitude for WHPS grant assistance.

- Olbrich's Pollinator Residency Program (creating a thriving community of pollinators, particularly for threatened and endangered species of bees) - Katy Pratt's project has been progressing in this second year, "providing further plantings carefully selected and designed to establish and build home and community for those powerhouse pollinators."



Pollinators from Olbrich



211 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, Madison, WI 53704

September 2020 Newsletter

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

New members

The following members have recently joined WHPS:

Jill Andersen, Cheryl Bumgarner, Joan Furan, Dianne Geissal, Tracy Hubbard, Jake Immel, Liz Kepplinger, Pamela & John Kitslaar, Bob Klebba & David Waugh, Judy Langer, Kathleen Lockard, Angela Love, Yvonne & Jay Nadler, Janice Poehlman, Nola Risse-Connolly, Beth Schaffer, Rick Schwalbach, Shelley & Norman Selle, Kari Stetson, Lisl Walsh, Elaine Winkel

Welcome!

Members in print

- Article by Mark Dwyer published in *Nursery Management* magazine - *Plant Descriptions - Crimson Fans Mukdenia*

Your Amazon Purchases Can Help WHPS

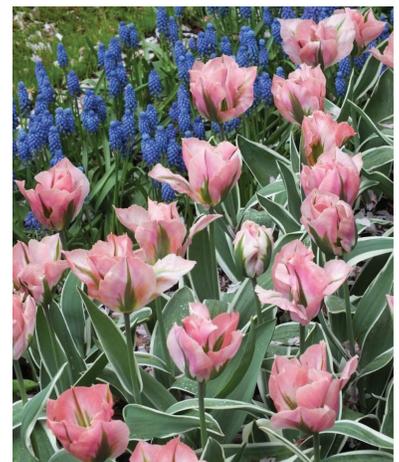
Did you know you can support WHPS when you shop with Amazon? Navigate to [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and search for the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society to designate us as your charity of choice. Your shopping supports our programming.

Brent & Becky's Bulbs

Help Us Raise Needed Money!
Bloomin' Bucks
with Brent and Becky's

If you've been admiring and enjoying all of the beautiful bulbs flowering this spring, now is the time to order for fall delivery and planting. 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. To participate, simply visit [bloominbucks.com](https://www.bloominbucks.com) and select "Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society" and hit "GO" to be sent to Brent and Becky's website. 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) nonprofit, donations like these are essential to continue our mission!



Tulipa 'China Town'