



# Perennial Notes

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society, Inc.

April 2021



*Baptisia alba*

## Baptisia for Southern Wisconsin Gardens

By Steve Lesch, Landscape Designs, Inc.

Baptisia is derived from the Greek word "bapto" – meaning to dye or dip. Some species are used for dying fabrics. They began their evolution about 60-50 million years ago. They belong to the Fabaceae – the Legume Family, along with over 19,000 other species. The family includes: Glycine – Soybeans, Phaseolus – Beans, Arachis – Peanut and Pisium – Peas. All 15 species of Baptisia are native to the USA, east of the Rocky Mountains and all species and cultivars are very long lived.

**Foliage and form:** Alternating, usually gray-green, commonly 3-parted compound leaves are arrayed on sturdy erect stems. Stems may be green, red, brown, and even near black. Large bushy growing herbaceous perennials. A number of butterflies and moths use

(continued on page 10)

## WHPS coming events!

**SCHEDULING NOTE:** For the foreseeable future, our programs will be virtually via Zoom. You will receive a reminder and a link to the program within the week before the event. Our schedule at present is guided by the current 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. **Please pay close attention to your email, as updates and event zoom links (announcements at 6:45 pm.; meetings at 7:00 pm.) are sent.**

Questions about our events? Email [wisconsinhps@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinhps@gmail.com) for specific info.

**Wednesday, April 21 – WHPS Meeting via Zoom: Pollinators in the Garden (rescheduled from 4/2020) speaker Krissa Skogen.** Dr. Skogen holds a Ph.D., and is Conservation Scientist at the Chicago Botanic Garden. She is also an adjunct professor in Biological Sciences at Northwestern University. Her research interests include: reproductive and pollination biology; plant insect interactions; floral trait evolution; demography; population genetics; large-scale anthropogenic threats to biodiversity; understanding the causes and consequences of plant population and species decline; and Onagraceae, Spingidae, and Microlepidoptera. She believes that understanding the diversity of life starts with uncov-



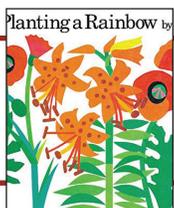
ering the evolutionary relationships between organisms and landscapes. As a botanist, she is fascinated by the rich diversity of flowering plants (angiosperms) and the insects that interact with them – both pollinators and antagonists (herbivores, seed predators, etc.) – and how these interactions may help explain the great diversity we see today.

**Sunday, May 23, WHPS Plant Sale Featuring Plants from Intrinsic Perennial Gardens,** from 10:00 a.m.-noon in the Barn Driveway at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Road, Madison, WI. We will be sending an email to members to ask for volunteers on sale day. We had a wonderful selection of fall plants at last September's sale and are expecting some lovely introductions and favorites from Brent Horvath of Intrinsic Perennials at this sale. Plenty of plants available and some great additions for your garden! **NOTE: Covid-19 social distancing will be maintained and masks must be worn.**



**Wednesday, September 15, WHPS Meeting via Zoom: A Few of My (New) Favorite Plants, with speaker Richard Hawke.** Richard Hawke

(continued on page 2)



*Planting a Rainbow* by **Children's books**

see p. 9.



**Biochar**

and jumping worms – see p. 4



**2021 Hosta of the Year**

see p. 12.

## WHPS events (from p. 1)

has been the Plant Evaluation Manager at the Chicago Botanic Garden since 1986. He has a horticulture degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Richard is an instructor for the School of the Chicago Botanic Garden, the author of Plant Evaluation Notes, and is an author and contributing editor for Fine Gardening.



In 2005, Richard received the Perennial Plant Association's Academic Award for teaching excellence. The Plant Evaluation Program received the Award for Program Excellence from the American Public Garden Association in 2008. Richard is currently the Central Regional Director of the Perennial Plant Association.

**Wednesday, October 20, WHPS Meeting via Zoom:**

**Title TBD. Laura Ekasetya**, former Director and Head Horticulturist at the Lurie Garden in Millennium Park in Chicago will discuss some of her favorite perennials and the plants used by Piet Oudolf at the Lurie to create that naturalistic garden as a place of rest and renewal for humans and wildlife alike.



**Wednesday, November 17, WHPS Meeting via Zoom: Chicagoland Grows® Trees.**

**Speaker Kim Shearer**, will provide an overview of Chicagoland Grows® including background, history, a brief overview of the Morton breeding program, Chicagoland Grows® introductions and some of her current breeding efforts. Kim is the tree and shrub breeder and manager of new plant development at the Morton Arboretum. She has the pleasure of working closely with regional and national nursery industry professionals, public garden colleagues and academic researchers in the selection, development, evaluation, and introduction of new plants. As the manager of new plant development, Kim works directly with



the Ornamental Growers Association of Northern Illinois and manages woody plant introductions for Chicagoland Grows®.

**Wednesday, December 8, WHPS Annual Meeting, Party, Seed Exchange and Trash & Treasure Exchange** at Olbrich Gardens. NOTE: This meeting is tentative (and optimistic) as we look forward to celebrating with our members the end of Covid-19 restrictions.

**Wednesday, January 19, WHPS Meeting with Plantsman Kelly Norris.** Kelly will discuss his newest book, *New Naturalism: Designing and Planting a Resilient, Ecologically Vibrant Home Garden*. He is one of the leading horticulturists of his generation. An award-winning author and plantsman, Kelly's work in gardens has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Fine Gardening*, *Garden Design* and in numerous television, radio and digital media appearances. He is the former director of horticulture and education at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, where for 8 years he directed efforts in design, curation, programming, garden and facility management. Kelly also presents plants for Cottage Farms Direct on QVC and lectures widely to consumer and industry audiences. In addition to his latest book, Kelly has authored three other publications: *Iowa Gardener's Travel Guide*; *A Guide to Bearded Irises: Cultivating the Rainbow for Beginners and Enthusiasts* (winner of the 2013 American Horticultural Society Book Award), and *Plants with Style*.



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## 2021 – Other gardening events of note

Key events of interest are listed below, but please visit the following websites for more info on events. Many of these garden entities are offering virtual classes and other events of interest to accommodate current Covid-19 conditions.

- [Allen Centennial Garden in Madison](#)
- [Boerner Botanical Gardens in Milwaukee](#)
- [Chicago Botanic Garden in Chicago](#)
- [Green Bay Botanical Garden in Green Bay](#)
- [Lynden Sculpture Garden in Milwaukee](#)
- [Mitchell Park Horticultural Park \(The Domes\) in Milwaukee](#)
- [Monk Botanical Garden in Wausau](#)
- [Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL](#)
- [Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison](#)
- [Paine Art Center and Gardens in Oshkosh](#)
- [Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville](#)
- [University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum](#)
- [Wisconsin Garden & Landscape Expo](#)

**Olbrich's Online Plant Sale with the Pros** - plants available now, curbside pick-ups begin May 7.

Now through April 18, **Rotary Botanical Gardens Online Plant Sale** (pick-up begins April 29). More info and available plants found at their website.

April 3-May 31, **Seasons of Legend, Spring Floral Show, Milwaukee's Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory** (The Domes) A look at how different cultures used folklore to explain the changing of seasons. The Show will showcase five legends. The plant selection will include spring show staples such as hydrangeas, tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, stock, myosotis, azaleas, digitalis and many others in an array of different colors.

April 6, 6:30 pm, **Pollinator Gardens: Plant Selection & Garden Care**, Susan Carpenter. Hosted by the UW Arboretum, UW-Madison Division of Extension Rock County, and UW-Extension Walworth County. Virtual event to learn how to select and care for plants to attract and support diverse pollinators in your garden all season long. Register [here](#).

April 23-24, **Wisconsin Garden Club Federation Landscape Design School Course** – Registration Deadline: April 10. This course is presented via Zoom and features instructors from University of Wisconsin and professional landscape designers. Topics include: design principles, an historical overview of landscape design, designing for the environment, basics of a site plan, and planning for your yard. [Brochure](#).

Saturday, May 8, **Troy Farm Plant Sale**, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., 502 Troy Drive, Madison, WI. The Troy Farm Plant Sale is the perfect place to stock up on plants for your home or community vegetable garden; great selection of certified organic vegetable, herb and fruit starts. This year, they will be doing things a bit differently to keep you and the farmers safe. There are two ways for you to get plants from the

Troy Farm Plant Sale: Order plants online by April 24; or come to the sale.

Saturday, May 22, 9 am - 4 pm, **Festival of Spring, Paine Art Center**, Oshkosh, WI. Paine's annual Spring Plant sale and more than 100 vendors of original art, fine crafts, plants and garden supplies.

**Sunday, May 23, 11 am. – 3 pm, Dane County Master Gardeners Plant Sale.** Co. Extension office at 5201 Fen Oak, Dr., Madison. Hundreds of perennials for sun and shade.

Friday, June 4, **Garden Fair, Green Bay Botanical Garden**, 12-7 pm and Saturday, June 5, 8 am-3 pm, Green Bay, WI. To make your experience safer and more enjoyable, timed ticket reservations will be required in advance (link coming in April!). Reservations open for Garden Members at 9 am on Monday, April 26 and at 9 am on Monday, May 3 for the General Public. Shop local area plant professionals' selections featuring annuals, perennials, containers, hanging baskets, succulents, shrubs and more! There will be garden supplies, pots, bulbs, landscape design services and limited handcrafted garden art for sale as well.

June 6, **Waupaca County Master Gardeners Spring Plant Sale.** The master gardeners will hold their spring plant sale this year at the Education Building at the Waupaca County Fairgrounds.

June 21-28, **Olbrich On-Line Pollinator Plant Sale.** Support National Pollinator Week and expand your pollinator friendly plant palette!

**Summer Day Camps at Bookworm Gardens**, Sheboygan, WI. For children 3K to 5th grade, see website for more information. [www.bookwormgardens.org/camp-bookworm](http://www.bookwormgardens.org/camp-bookworm). Bookworm also has a full summer of events planned. See website for details.

July 9-10, 9 am-3pm, 2021 **Olbrich Home Garden Tour, Featuring Gardens of Madison's West Side: Radio Park, University Hill Farms & Glen Oak Hills.** Follow the tour map and explore exquisite home gardens that offer a look into each gardener's individual sense of creativity, imagination, and beauty. Talk with homeowners, landscape architects, and Master Gardeners to get tips on how to incorporate various garden techniques into your own home landscape! Tickets - \$15 Public / \$13 Olbrich Members.



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## Jumping Worms and Biochar



Gardeners who have jumping worms will begin to see them emerge in late May/early June in very tiny form. (Info on jumping worms at the DNR [website](#).) Though there is no current solution to the problem, many have found that the addition of biochar or diatomaceous earth to the first six inches of the soil can act as an abrasive and has shown to have an adverse effect on the worms. (Tips for biochar can be found in [WHPS September 2020 Newsletter](#), page 7, and more complete info on biochar in [April 2020](#), page 11.) Other resources to search for biochar include: [Tree Health Management](#), [The Madison Greenhouse Store](#), The Home Depot, Target, Ace Hardware, or Amazon. Though there is no solid evidence that biochar can eradicate the worms, it is highly effective at retaining both water and water-soluble nutrients, while also creating a healthy habitat for beneficial soil microorganisms.

## 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 nonprofit organization or a group that is associated with a nonprofit organization. For more information, go to our [website](#).

## Members in Print

*Fine Gardening*, April 2019

*Garden Gate* - March/April 2021, page 46 - "Make Every Inch Count" featuring the garden of Ed Lyon

*Fine Gardening* - March/April 2021, page 64 - "Digging Deeper into Stachys" by Richard Hawke

## WHPS Members Fundraise Through Purchases - Amazon and Brent & Becky's Bulbs

When you shop with Amazon, you can support WHPS! Navigate to [Amazon Smile](#) and select the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society as your charity of choice.

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](#)

and select "Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society" and hit "GO" to be sent to the 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!

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## In Remembrance - WHPS Members who have passed

**Roy Anne Moulton** passed away November 21, 2020, at 67. In addition to being an active member in the Winnebago County Master Gardener Association, she enjoyed combining her passion for gardening with her passion for travel. Our condolences to her family, including her husband Glenn Thomsen.



**Ronna Kelley**, Cottage Grove, passed away December 24, 2020, at the age of 75. She had been a nurse at the Central Wisconsin Center for most of her working life, and she and her husband Bob loved to travel, especially to the mountains near Scottsdale, AZ. They also spent much time working in the Door Creek Church garden and at Olbrich Gardens.



WHPS member **Dr. Victor Wayland** passed away January 4, 2021, at the age of 94. Vic is survived by his longtime partner Ted Streseman. Members of the society may remember touring Vic and Ted's garden on Madison's west side. Their garden was beautifully designed and lovingly planted and tended (see



photo below). Upon entering the driveway the shaded side yard garden featured a formal pool with a fountain at the head of a path leading into the back garden. Use of design elements, hardscaping and structure was evident walking along the path leading through an arbor into the back garden. Trellising was used to create a screen and backdrop for growing roses and colorful annuals surrounding a deck overlooking the back garden. Asian-inspired plantings included a moss garden dotted with small conifers, ground cover plantings and stone under high trees, creating a green oasis in their back garden. Here is a glimpse of their garden in a 2006 appearance by Wayland and Streseman on [Wisconsin Gardener](#) June 29, 2006.

**Marlene Webb**, Oregon, 74, passed away on Monday, March 15, 2021. A registered nurse at UW Health until her retirement, she continued to stay busy with her landscaping and gardening at home and with the garden club, horseback riding, volunteering at the multicultural center, and participating with her church choir. Marlene and her husband Ed were long-time members of WHPS; Marlene served as a Plant Sale volunteer and took WHPS trips in addition to attending meetings. Our condolences go out to Ed, her family, and friends.



## New Members

The following members have recently joined:

Heather Bailey, Fitchburg, WI; Botanophilia LLC, Antigo, WI; Jill Botvinik, Kaukauna, WI; Busy B's Landscape Care LLC, Mazomanie, WI; Victoria Coulter, Windsor, WI; Linda Granato, Madison, WI; Vonnie Greene, Bangor, WI; Barb & Doug Henderson, Sturgeon Bay, WI; Lynn Hertel, Grafton, WI; Susan Ipsen, Lake Forest, IL; K&A Greenhouse, Fitchburg & Verona, WI; Darcia Keplin, Fond du Lac, WI; Christine Kirkeng, Sparta, WI; Deborah Kucken, Fort Atkinson, WI; Nathan & Amanda Mueller, Oshkosh, WI; Natural Perennials, Campton Hills, IL; Mary Olver, Middleton WI; Carla Olson, Milton, WI; Diana & Randy Peterson, Madison, WI; Delores Robillard, Madison, WI; Deborah Rodgers, Kenosha WI; Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville, WI; Elizabeth Rothe, Hales Corners, WI; Debra Schlough, Neenah, WI; Erica Severson, Clinton, WI; Nancy Skeffington, McFarland WI; Scott Szukalski & Jacob Schenk, McFarland, WI; JoAnne Streit, Madison WI; Doug Tompkins, Madison WI; Rachele Towne, Wild Rose, WI; Debra Wienke, Beloit, WI; Rebecca Yoh, Madison, WI

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# Landscaping Beneath Mature Trees – Plants for Dry Shade

by Laurie Robertson, Nursery Manager & Buyer, Ganshert Nursery & Landscapes, LLC

Trees are our friends. Trees are beautiful. There is no shortage of reasons as to why we should plant trees. They give us oxygen, help combat global warming, provide habitat for living creatures, reduce the amount of storm water runoff and pollution in our waterways, provide food like nuts and resources like wood just to name a few. Trees provide much needed shade to our yards and homes.

It is this last attribute, shade, that although wonderful, can cause homeowners some problems. It can be difficult to get grass or anything else to grow under the reduced light and moisture conditions under trees.

If you are lucky enough to have mature, shade-producing trees around your home, you may have noticed a decline over the years as to what is able to grow beneath them. Fortunately, there are many lovely shrubs, grasses and perennials that can not only tolerate dry shade conditions but thrive in them.

Following are a few examples of some dry shade loving plants to compliment your mature trees, all are zone 5a hardy for our area.

## Carolina Allspice or Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus* and cvs):

A native and very versatile shrub that tolerates sun to shade and dry conditions beneath existing trees. This shrub is best known for its very fragrant flowers in early summer, said to combine the scents of strawberry, pineapple, and banana. The flowers' scent is most noticeable at sundown. The flowers can be used as a cut flower. The leaves turn a golden yellow in fall. A larger specimen, filling in at 6-8' tall and 8-10' wide, it is certainly an easy and attractive way to fill in larger areas of vacant under story.



## Foam Flower (*Tiarella cordifolia* spp. and cvs):

Tiarella 'Susquehanna' a cultivar of a native species. The native *Tiarella cordifolia* is on Wisconsin's endangered species list. *Susquehanna* is a very vigorous grower that can cover up to 2' in one season. Deeply lobed leaves with random deep purple markings that darken with age. Tolerant of some drought. White flowers and evergreen leaves. Tiarellas attract butterflies and hummingbirds. Deer resistant. Divide in spring.



## Japanese Forest Grass or Hakone Grass (*Hakonechloa macra* and cvs.):

As you probably know, our "normal" lawn grass, such as Kentucky Bluegrass, does not grow well once trees have shaded out areas of your yard. A beautiful ornamental alternative is Japanese forest grass.

**Golden Variegated Hakone Grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola')**: A cool season, dwarf grass with slender stems holds bright yellow foliage with thin green stripes having the effect of a tiny soft bamboo. "Hakon" is a region in Japan and "chloa" is the Greek word for grass. These grasses create a spectacular effect in shady settings. Spreads at a slow pace. Yellowish to green spike-like flowers are carried above the foliage from late summer to early fall. 12-18" tall, deer and rabbit resistant.



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# Changing The Way We Mulch

by Anna DePauw, horticulturist and artist

Gardeners have been mulching around their plants for years. When used correctly, mulch can help the soil retain moisture, insulate plant roots in winter, prevent weeds and even decompose, adding organic matter to the soil.

Most people are familiar with the many types of mulch sold as the weather starts to warm. Whether it's gravel, bark or wood chips, we see bags stocked at the local nursery or the nearest gas station, and piles in driveways waiting to be spread.

In recent years, this practice has come into question, and we're seeing a trend to move away from the common materials. There are some drawbacks to mulch; for one, it can be costly! It's not unusual to spend \$200+ on a yearly delivery, and then there's the labor to spread it. Of course, before you go to that trouble, the plants need a spring cleanup. This typically involves cutting back perennials and disposing of the debris.

Many gardeners enjoy these yearly tasks, but you might ask: Is it necessary

to remove the plant debris and leaves, then purchase materials to put back in their place? Is this the most sustainable approach? An added problem with transporting mulch in Dane County is the spread of jumping worms. If mulch or compost isn't heated to 140 degrees Fahrenheit, then it's likely to transport jumping worm cocoons, which causes problems with our soil.

Faced with this dilemma over time, garden professionals are encouraging alternatives. A good place to start is by planting perennials fairly close together, so that as the garden matures, they form a groundcover. Gone are the days of a sea of mulch dotted with a few plants. This is unnatural, high maintenance, and hard on the environment.

In a more earth-friendly method, the plants are left in their natural state until spring, when the garden can be mowed or cut back. If using a mulching mower, all of the debris can be gently raked off the top, and left between plants as a mulch.

I've been successful at practicing this method in parts of my own garden as

well as some of the other gardens I tend. In fall, I have a lot of leaves drop. Most of them are Oak and Silver Maple, and they are fine enough that I can leave a lot of them on the gardens and it doesn't cause any trouble. I leave all of the plants "up" for the winter, with the exception of a few I've cut back earlier in the season for aesthetics. In spring, I mow over the garden with the blade on its highest setting, to remove the previous year's growth and shred the leaves. It's important to do this before you see a lot of foliage from spring blooming bulbs, so that you don't shred them! I haven't had a bag on my mower, which means the debris blows all around and I have to rake a lot of it back in place. Not a big



deal, but I finally acquired a bag, so I'll try that this year! Some people will also bag leaves or create a pile in fall that can be used to spread over the garden in spring.

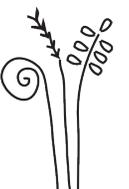
I still have some areas where I apply shredded bark mulch – where I have paths or large bare areas (like around my pond), sometimes around shrubs, and in an area where I am always experimenting with new plants and am left with bare ground. Weeds will always grow anywhere they can, so diligent weeding is still required.

You may choose to mulch for the first year when creating a new garden, and transition it with time. I planted a "prairie garden" in my front yard using all native plants a few years ago. I knew that within three years, the plants would fill in, but I chose to mulch with wood chips for the first year to decrease the amount of weed seed that could germinate. This has been effective, and didn't cause any problems.

I'm always looking for better ways to garden. As plant people, I think it's important to be participating with nature in a way that improves the quality of life for all living things. Changing the way we mulch can be a simple way to garden in a more ecologically friendly way. Plus, you'll have more money to spend on plants!

*Anna DePauw is a horticulturist and artist, inspired by nature, with 20 years of experience in landscape design and maintenance. She is the owner and operator of Botannaca ([www.botannaca.com](http://www.botannaca.com)), which offers a variety of detailed gardening services. You can reach her at [anna@botannaca.com](mailto:anna@botannaca.com) (Anna also serves on the WHPS board.)*



  
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GARDEN CARE

## A Note from The Flower Factory

By David and Derek Nedveck

The Flower Factory has shut down our retail operation, but will continue to sell at the Dane County Farmers' Market. The silver lining from the pandemic is that it forced us to explore ordering systems online, so now we can offer online orders for on-farm pick-up.

How Online Orders will work: Go to [The Flower Factory Square Site](#) and choose from the available plants there, place your order, choose an available "pickup time slot," and pick up your plants at that time. We have kept our "Advanced Search" page on our website so you can use that to search for plants based on bloom time, location, and such, but you will have to place your order on our Square site.

## Hosting an Open Garden

Each year, the WHPS offers organized evening tours of a group of member gardens in selected areas. We also provide the opportunity for individual members to open their garden to visitors. Last year we cancelled the organized tours due to Covid-19 and, at this time, they are uncertain for this year. But members may still host an open garden.

In previous years anywhere from 20-75 people attended these open gardens, but last summer members were clearly hungry to visit gardens as our hosts estimated that nearly 100 WHPS members came through each of the four gardens that were opened.

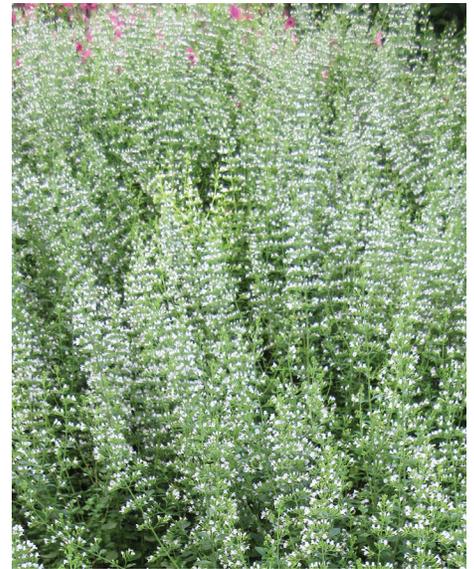
Hosting an open garden gives you the opportunity to invite people to visit your garden at very short notice, when you

The pickups start on Wednesday, April 7 for spring ephemerals and plants, with times on Wednesday and Sunday on alternating weeks. At the end of April we will update our inventory, including more plants as our other perennials wake up. We will continue the on-farm pickups every other week, increasing the selection of plants that we will be carrying this season. We will send out another announcement when we update our inventory for May pickups.

Spring is here!

think it's looking especially good. All you have to do is contact us a few days to a week (or more) ahead at [wisconsinhps@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinhps@gmail.com) with your name, address, a short description of your garden and the date and times you will be open, and we will send out an email invitation to our members.

We ask that you please think about the size and layout of your garden and if you think a group of people (maybe 20-30) could all be there at one time and remain safely distanced and if there could be a circular route through your garden so no backtracking is necessary. We will request that visitors wear masks and maintain social distancing.



*Calamintha nepeta subsp. Nepeta* 2021 Perennial Plant of the Year, available at the Flower Factory

Feel free to email with any questions.

We all love seeing each other's gardens and open gardens are always a very positive experience for both the host and visitors!

-- Jane LaFlash



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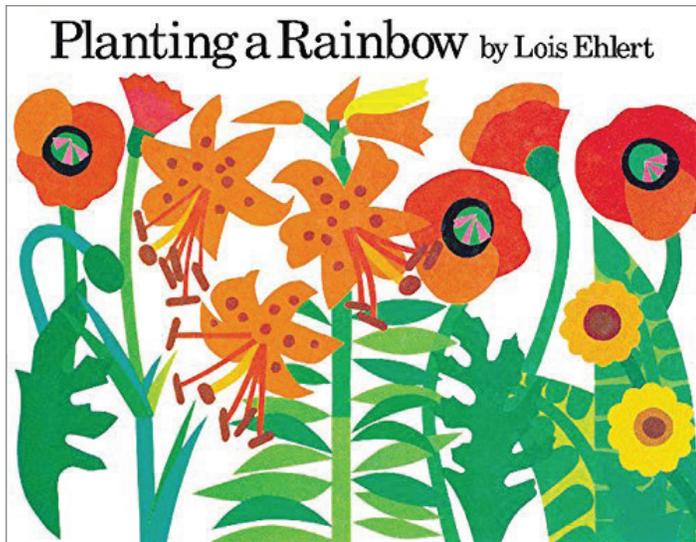


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## Children's Books about Gardens



This is another great list of childrens books recommended by our Facebook group.

- *A Seed is Sleepy* – Dianna Hutts Aston, Sylvia Long
- *And Then It's Spring* – Julie Fogliano, Erin E. Stead
- *Anno's Counting Book* – Mitsumasa Anno
- *The Carrot Seed* – Ruth Krauss, Crockett Johnson
- *The Curious Garden* – Peter Brown
- *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits & Vegetables from A to Z* – Lois Ehlert
- *Flower Garden* – Eve Bunting
- *The Flower Hunter: William Bartram, America's First Naturalist* – Deborah Kogan Ray
- *A Garden Alphabet - The Gardener* – Sarah Stewart
- *The Great White Owl of Sissinghurst* – Dawn Langley Simmons
- *Grow* – JoAnn Early Macken, Stephanie Fizer Coleman
- *Growing Vegetable Soup* - Lois Elhert
- *Jody's Beans* – Malachy Doyle, Judith Allibone
- *Linnea in Monet's Garden* – Christina Bjork and Joan Sandin
- *Little Miss Burnett – The Secret Garden: A Babylit Flowers Primer* – Jennifer Adams
- *Miss Rumphius* – Barbara Clooney
- *Planting a Rainbow* – Lois Elhert
- *The Rose in My Garden* – Arnold Lobel, Anita Lobel
- *Rosy's Garden: A Child's Keepsake of Flowers* – Satomi Ichikawa
- *The Secret Garden* – Inga Moore
- *Sophie's Squash* – Pat Zietlow Miller & Anne Wilsdorf
- *This Year's Garden* – Cynthia Rylant
- *The Tiny Seed* – Eric Carle
- *Two Little Gardeners* – Margaret Wise Brown
- *Wild Flower Children* – Elizabeth Gordon (1918)

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## Baptisia (cont. from p. 1)

the plants to feed their young. While the entire plant is toxic to ingest, it requires a fair amount to be eaten to cause any problems. Deer and rabbit resistant.

**Soil:** While they prefer rich deep soils, they are tolerant of poor, even gravelly, soils. Our average garden soils suit them fine.

Baptisia don't like walnut trees.

**Lighting:** Sun to very light deciduous shade.

**Mulching:** Light autumn or very early spring mulch of 1-1½" deep, although not necessary.

**Flowers:** Are born on racemes with pea-like flowers that are a bit difficult to describe, so I recommend you look them up on-line. The bottom lip of the flower is known as a keel. Late spring blooming. Inflated seed pods rattle and may be used as cut-dried decorations. Many of the cultivars may only produce some pods. Beloved by bees, especially bumble bees.

**Winter:** Cut back dead herbaceous stems in the late autumn or very early spring. No other maintenance is necessary

**Fertilization:** While they all respond to a quality time-release fertilizer, they only enjoy light feedings. They do have the ability to fix nitrogen via bacteria on their roots.

**Planting:** Anytime the soil is workable from March to four weeks before ground freeze.

**Propagation:** Division on the cultivars; seed on the species. Most species require scarification of the seeds.

**Pest and diseases:** Very resistant to diseases.

**Hardiness:** All of the species and cultivars in this list are hardy to at least zone 5.

*Baptisia alba* (*B. lactea* & *B. leucantha*) – White Wild Indigo is native to Wisconsin and most of the Eastern USA from Nebraska to much of the Southeastern USA. Emerging in the spring looking like dark shoots of asparagus, they are open growing and about 3-4' tall with near black stems and green leaves. White flowers are produced on 12-20" racemes, blooming for about 3 weeks in late spring to early summer. Its flowers are followed by persistent cylindrical, yellow-brown pods. Tolerates most any average garden soil in full sun to very light deciduous shade. Spectacular larger presence in the garden.

*Baptisia australis* – False Blue Indigo is native to Wisconsin, and to the southern and eastern parts of the USA. Emerging as green shoots with gray-green 3-leaflet foliage, they quickly grow into a 4' bushy plant. The flowering scapes are 10-12" high or more, and are held above the foliage for about 3-4 weeks. The species has violet-blue flowers followed by 2-2½" blackish colored seed pods that may be used in dried arrangements. The flowers may be used as dye. Very long lived. One of my favorite forms is *B. australis* var. *minor*. It's similar to the species, but is half its size, growing to about 24".

*Baptisia bracteata* var. *leucophaea* is native to WI and the central USA. This creamy colored May flowering and wide spreading to cascading bush grows to

about 24" wide and 35-48" wide. It is wonderfully suited to dry prairie or meadow restorations. Interestingly, the entire plant may break off at ground level and be blown around by winds to disperse its seeds.

*Baptisia sphaerocarpa* – Yellow Wild Indigo is native to the south-central part of the USA. Similar to *B. australis* except it has yellow flowers and the upper leaves have only two leaflets.

*Baptisia tinctoria* – Yellow Wild Indigo or Horsefly Weed is native to WI and nearly the entire eastern USA. It is typically not used in gardens as it is a sprawling unkempt plant. It has sparsely-flowered terminal racemes of yellow flowers. It is best suited for naturalizing in open prairies or lightly deciduous open forests. Grows about 3' high.

Some of the cultivars and hybrids include the following, amongst numerous others:

**'Anne'** is one of the top garden performers. Impressive numbers of yellow flowers on dusty lavender stems. Good wide spreading upright bushy form.

**'Blueberry Sunday'** is one of the more compact blue flowered forms. Heavy flowering in violet-blue, atop dense compact 32" high bushes.

**'Brownie Points'** has amber and brown, 10" spikes of flowers atop an upright bushy form growing to about 36-42" high. Green foliage.

**'Butternut'** has butternut colored flowers atop a sturdy compact bushy form.



*Baptisia australis*

**'Carolina Moonlight'** grows about 36-48" tall in an upright bushy form with butter yellow racemes/spikes up to 18" tall. Bluish green foliage.

**'Cherries Jubilee'** is the closest to date to a red flowered false indigo. Maroon buds mature reddish with a yellow margin and age to rusty red-orange. Upright, bushy plants mature at 36" tall.

**'Dutch Chocolate'** is a 34" tall, wider spreading, yet upright bushy form with an impressive display of reddish chocolate flowers on green stems.

**'Grape Taffy'** is a very compact 24-30" tall upright bushy growing form with reddish-purple flowers with a buff yellow base and keel. Green foliage.

**'Lemon Meringue'** is a vigorous, upright cultivar with up to three weeks of flowering on lavender-gray stems with bright yellow flowers and lavender-gray calyxes (the leafy bases of the flowers).

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608-233-4215 • Steve Lesch



## Baptisia (cont. from p. 10)

'Lunar Eclipse' impressive white flowers age to a dark lavender providing a stunning look in the garden.

'Midnight' is one of the tallest growing cultivars at over 48" with deep blue-violet flower racemes up to 24". It reblooms with 5" racemes. The plant has a more spreading, arching bushy form.

'Pink Lemonade' grows 42-48" high as a compact, bushy plant with deep blue-green foliage and charcoal stems. Soft yellow flowers age to dusty raspberry purple, showing both colors at the same time.

'Pink Truffles' grows to 48-52" on an upright bushy form with lighter green stems. Clear soft pink flowers with a yellow keel.

'Purple Smoke' is one of the oldest cultivars and continues its well-deserved popularity. Charcoal-gray stems emerge and continue right through its flowering time. Its foliage is much finer in texture than most other forms. Pale lavender flowers with deeper centers are born on 36" high compact bushes.

'Screaming Yellow' is one of the most freely flowering forms with yellow spikes of flowers atop a 36" high bush. Bluish foliage on a dense and sturdy bush.

'Solar Flare' has brilliant yellow and age to a deep orange. It grows about 4' tall.

'Sparkling Sapphire' grows about 3' high and 4-5' wide. Early vivid violet-blue flowers with deeper colored bases blooming on green stems.

'Starlight' grows about 5' tall with luminescent, soft blue flowers on green stems.

'Twilite Prairieblues' grow about 5' tall with sturdy upright light green stems. Its flowers are violet-purple with yellow keels. Greenish-blue leaves.

'Vanilla Cream' emerges in spring with bronze shoots and grows about 3' tall. Pastel yellow buds open to creamy vanilla flowers on green stems with grey-green leaves.

'Yellow Meringue' grows to 3' tall with bluish-green leaves. Bright yellow flowers are born on sturdy erect dark green stems.

Steve Lesch is the owner and president of Landscape Designs Inc., [www.landscape designs.bz](http://www.landscape designs.bz).

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## *Hosta of the Year 2021 'Rainbow's End'*

*By Mark Dwyer - 1/25/21 Facebook Post*

The American Hosta Growers Association (AHGA) has selected *Hosta* 'Rainbow's End' as their 2021 Hosta of the Year. I've been admiring this selection for a couple years now due to the very showy combination of jetting, dark green margins and the variable bright yellow to creamy white centers. The leaves have a nice glossiness and a crisp color combination. No two leaves are identical on this plant that reaches 11" in height. It looks great as a specimen or in groupings.

