



Perennial Notes

June 2013

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society—an unincorporated nonprofit association

WHPS COMING EVENTS!

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

Tuesday, June 18, WHPS Garden Tours in Nakoma. Look for full info and directions on page 3.

June 25-29 WHPS Brandywine River Garden Tour! SOLD OUT!

Thursday, July 11, WHPS Garden Tour off Mineral Point Road in Verona. Look for full info and directions on page 4.

Thursday, July 25, WHPS Garden Tours in Oregon. Look for full info and directions on page 4.

Friday, August 2, WHPS Bus Trip—Sheboyan Area. SOLD OUT!

Wednesday, August 21 Summer Potluck Dinner and walk through Olbrich Gardens, 5:30 p.m. setup; serving at 6:00 p.m. A great chance to share a beautiful evening at Olbrich with fellow members. Bring a dish to share, along with your own utensils and plate. Lemonade/juice and coffee will be provided, and a soda machine is available.

Wednesday, September 18 Chic Plants for Modern Gardens: A Commentary on New Plants with Kelly Norris. In this commentary-style lecture, plantsman Kelly Norris, horticulture manager for the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, will share his views on the current state of ornamental horticulture, provide an overview of new varieties in some of the hottest perennial categories, while encouraging the audience's feedback and sass—that's right, some new plants just aren't all they're cracked up to be. Join us for a rousing discussion on what makes a great garden plant and why we all need to demand more from the people that make them. Norris is an award-winning author of three books including the *Iowa Gardener's Travel Guide*, the first travel guide to Iowa's public gardens and nurseries, and *A Guide to Bearded Irises: Cultivating the Rainbow for Beginners and Enthusiasts*.

Sunday, September 22, WHPS PLANT EXCHANGE, 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Allen Centennial Gardens. Bring plant(s); get plant(s)! Free parking is available in the parking ramp (Lot 36) across from the Gardens.

Wednesday, October 16 Joint Meeting with Hosta Society, SPECIAL TIME: 6:00 p.m. Social; 6:30 pm. meeting—Ferns for Gardeners with Sue Olsen. One of the most comprehensive and useful resources for garden ferns is the *Encyclopedia of Garden Ferns*, by Sue Olsen. With their beauty and versatility, often combined with a toughness that belies their appearance, ferns are among the most useful and rewarding plants that any gardener can grow. Ferns offer a staggering variety of habit and shape, with foliage comprising endless variations of green as well as bronze, pink, silver and blue-grey—a dazzling array of choices. Olsen has been studying, propagating and writing about ferns for over four decades. Her nursery, Foliage Gardens, has introduced numerous ferns to horticulture and is the oldest mail-order nursery in the United States for spore-grown temperate ferns.

2013 WHPS GARDEN TOURS

Tuesday, June 18, Nakoma
Thursday, July 11, Off Mineral Point Rd, Verona.
Thursday, July 25, Oregon

Wednesday, November 13 Why Grow That, When You Can Grow This? with Andrew Keys. The recently released *Why Grow That When You Can Grow This?: 255 Extraordinary Alternatives to Everyday Problem Plants* is garnering much praise and for good reason. Pining to grow lilac but lack the full sun? Try the fragrant pink and white flowers of Korean spice viburnum. Love the drama of canna but need something hardier? Try the bold foliage of variegated fleece flower. Boston-based author, garden designer and lecturer Andrew Keys offers hundreds of all-star alternatives that replace—and often outshine—popular problem plants. Each profile in his book shows the problem plant and offers three alternatives that include three or more of the original plant's characteristics—hardiness, shape, color, texture, light, and size. Join us as he presents some of that information in an entertaining lecture. The host and producer of *Fine Gardening's Garden Confidential* podcast, Keys' writing has appeared in *Fine Gardening* and other magazines, as well as on his blog, *Garden Smackdown*. <http://www.gardensmackdown.com/>

Wednesday, December 11, Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange and Member Potpourri. We hope you've been taking photos of your garden or gardens you have visited, because the WHPS Member Potpourri is one of our most popular programs and gives you a chance to share with us your favorite garden experiences. Plan on taking up to 10 minutes to present your photos, PowerPoint presentation or video. Contact Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com if you would like to participate.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Saturday, May 17, 2014 WHPS PLANT SALE

June 2014, WHPS TOUR OF ENGLAND —
North England and the Scottish borders. Dates TBD.

Gardening is akin to writing stories. No experience could have taught me more about grief or flowers, about achieving survival by going, fingers in the ground, to the limit of physical exhaustion.

—Eudora Welty

WHPS PLANT SALE 2013—Another Successful Year— Thanks to Our Members!

Two little words are too small to hold all of the grateful feelings we have, but those are the words that say it all...*Thank you!*

Despite a late winter this year that threatened to keep all of our plant sale plants from making an appearance in time, the 2013 WHPS Plant Sale was one of our most successful. In addition to a great turnout by our members and their guests, we had our first bus! Visitors from the Dubuque Regional Hosta Society came to Madison and made us their first stop—and were great customers. We'd like to officially invite these nice folks to attend again next year!

From hosting a dig or donating plants, to potting and labeling plants at the digs, to transporting the plants to the sale site, to setting up the sale site—moving plants and organizing them to their best advantage and pricing them—to working the day of the sale as cashiers, checkers, helpers, experts, cleanup staff—this year more than 80 individuals volunteered and worked extremely hard to get ready for the great crowds that came to buy (see our great volunteers listed at right.)

And buy they did! When our Board meets this fall there will be over \$6,000 to contribute to worthy garden entities in our area.


As often happens, there were plants left at the end of the sale, and we were pleased to be able to donate those plants to three projects this year: to Habitat For Humanity; to member and Master Gardener Mary Larson, who received plants for her project at the Madison Metropolitan School District building; and to Tesha Zimmerman, who will use the remainder to help make a garden on a Native American Reservation.

Finally, after 13 years, it is time for me to sign off as Plant Sale Coordinator. We will be meeting in July with individuals who are considering joining my great teammates Jeannette Golden and Linda Marx as they begin to work for an even more successful sale in 2014. *If you would like to join the Plant Sale Team, please email me at sone2@aol.com.*

As for me, I will continue to be a volunteer, and I hope those of you who have not yet volunteered or shopped the sale will think about doing so next year.

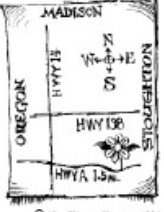
It's three months of planning that lead to three hours of fun and great plants for your garden.!

—Stephanie O'Neal, Plant Sale Coordinator, 2001-2013



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**Over 80 members volunteered/
contributed to our sale this year—
Thanks to each and every one!**

Lois Anderson	Ellen Karlson
Jane Barnett	Louise Karpinski
Aleta Barmore	Lois Kinlen
Lynn Belanger	Linda Krug
Bonnie Berg	Jane LaFlash
Jan Blakeslee	Phyllis Lathrope
Richard Bloomquist	Joan Lawrence
Stephanie Bloomquist	Joan Liegel
Missy Bodden	Tibi Light
Linda Brazill	MaryAnn Long
Burnie Bridge	Ed Lyon
Norma Briggs	Linda Marx
Ruth Cadoret	Percy Mather
John Cannon	Kate McWhirter
Maggie Carrao	Jan Minardi
Mary Collet	Richard Mueller
Tom Cottington	Patty Nisbet
Judy Crandall	Corrie Norman
Karen Crawford	Barbara Obst
Phil Crawford	Marty Petillo
Shirley Culp	K Ritchie Rheäume
Nell Cummings	Marlene Richard
MaryJane Curry	Marla Robinson
Jackie Finley	Eleanor Rodini
Janet Freeman	Anne Ruh
Donna Freiman	Diane Scharkey
Jane Gahlman	Barb Schuette
Jim Gentry	Shirley Scriver
Mark Golbach	Theresa Seeley
Jeannette Golden	Evelyn Shimshak
Frank Greer	Eileen Somers
Shirley Haidinger	Georgene Stratman
Becky Halstead	Margie Van Handel
Ed Hasselkus	Marilyn Vandenberg
Ellen Henningsen	Ann Voelker
Cindy Hoffland	Susan Walsh
Christl Iausly	Joanne Weber
Jean Jelacic	Jackie Winchester
Leslie Johnson	Conrad Wrzesinski
Dee Kanter	Laurie Zimmerman

**Our member businesses contributed
terrific prizes for our volunteer drawing
at the end of the sale—
much appreciated!**

**America's Best Flowers
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Gere Tree Care
Herbs & Everlasting
Schonheit Gardens**

A very special thank you this year to **The Flower Factory** for contributing eight flats of plants to the sale in addition to prizes for our volunteer drawing.

WHPS/MAMGA Nakoma Garden Tour – Tuesday, June 18, 2013 – 4:00 PM-dark

Note that three of the private gardens are in the same block on Miami Pass and two on the same block on Waban Hill.

Please use maps or navigational devices to find your way around Nakoma.

Prof. Emeritus Ed Hasselkus – 746 Miami Pass, Madison

My garden has been evolving for 24 years around an 80-year-old Dutch Colonial home. A perhaps 80-year-old *Thuja occidentalis* 'Pyramidalis' repeats the vertical pattern of the fireplace chimney (the only plant saved from 1988). A rectangular panel of turf, edged with bluestone, separates two color-themed perennial borders. At one end, a mature white oak shades a planting of perennials and shrubs. The other end is edged with a brick patio and several "square-foot" vegetable plots. A wisteria-clad pergola serves to connect the house and garden. Sheared boxwoods, a large *Pinus cembra* and upright yews provide year-round interest.

Chris and Charlie Bylsma – 734 Miami Pass, Madison

The home of Chris and Charlie Bylsma is a typical Nakoma English-style pointy brick house covered in ivy with an atypical ski slope roof which gives the house a quirky asymmetrical character. Thus the quirky meandering walk and typical English cottage garden that covers the (mostly) sunny front from the house to the sidewalk, filled with bulbs, perennials, shrubs, grasses, conifers, specimen trees, herbs, self-seeding annuals and anything else willing to survive. Along the long driveway is a mix of perennials, conifers (including Uncle Fogey), shrubs, grasses and rhubarb(!) that transition from full sun to the deep shade beyond. The small but jam-packed backyard garden blends with neighboring gardens and is covered by a canopy of six white and burr oak trees. It is also home to a state champion *Acer pseudosieboldianum* (or could be, according to Ed). Understory inhabitants include hosta (some of man-eating size), hemlocks, ferns, grasses, *carex*, *actea/cimicifuga*, acers, *epimedium*, hellebores, and more plus comfy patio furniture for a rest between gardens. Come and enjoy. Free samples of stunning oak leaves available in the fall. No limit. No appointment necessary.

Carole Bain – 730 Miami Pass, Madison

I moved to Nakoma almost seven years ago and have thoroughly enjoyed developing my shade garden under some beautiful old oaks. My inspiration? I live next door to Chris Bylsma. (If you don't know what I mean, you will when you see her garden.) The garden is continually changing...winter damage (lots this year), my insatiable need to move plants around or making room for "gifts" from other Nakoma gardeners. You'll find hosta, *ligularia*, *epimedium*, *astilbe*, perennial begonia, *cimicifuga*, ferns, grasses, and a variety of ornamental maples.

Frank Greer – 925 Waban Hill, Madison

Frank's garden is a shade garden under white oaks on a standard city lot (50 by 175 feet) that is extensively gardened, including a pot garden on the driveway in the summer months. Frank enjoys finding unusual shade plants that will survive and compete in his garden. Large collections of ferns, *epimediums*, shade grasses, and of course a few hostas. Woodies include hemlocks and ornamental maples. There should be a large display of martagon lilies for the tour if conditions cooperate.

Wendy Adams – 901 Waban Hill, Madison (corner of Waban Hill and Yuma Dr)

Our garden has been evolving for the last 11 years, since we moved here from our largely sunny garden in Omaha. That summer I planted some *astilbes* and Siberian iris I had brought along. Since then nearly all the unhappy grass has been dug up and replaced with shrubs and perennials. With the help of neighbors and occasionally professional consultants I've become a happy shade gardener, gradually learning what "Wisconsin Hardy Plants" thrive in the shade and alkaline clay of Nakoma. There are a few plants, though, that I nurture with acidification and other fussing, even though this would not be their native happy spot, because I love them.

Longenecker Horticultural Gardens at UW Arboretum - 1207 Seminole Highway

Established in 1935, the 35-acre Longenecker Horticultural Gardens is the premier collection of trees and shrubs in Wisconsin. The more than 2,500 taxa of woody plants are generally arranged according to genus for the convenience of comparison and study. The newest and best cultivars are labeled and arranged in a pleasing landscape setting. A dedicated corps of volunteers (mostly WHPS members) meet every Friday afternoon to help maintain the gardens. Please note the elegant entrance feature to the Longenecker Horticultural Gardens, dedicated last July as part of the Ed Hasselkus Curator Endowment fund celebration.

For the convenience of visitors there is ample parking, and restrooms and drinking water are available at the comfort station (building will be closed after 4:00 p.m.).

Open Garden – True-Aerts Garden Thursday, June 27 – 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm (rain date Friday, June 28)

Betsy True and Danny Aerts – 4785 Toepfer Rd, Middleton

Our hilltop home is making use of the sun in so many ways, producing heat, hot water and energy for the house, allowing a seed starting space and growing vegetables and fruits. The emphasis here is on functional use of the yard for efficiency, comfort and food production. A large vegetable garden and several fruit beds range around the suburban acre lot. Hardscape and a pond surround the house; a masonry bread oven is handy to the kitchen. Landscape plants, native, gardened and weedy, are used for bast fiber, soaps, dyes, and forage for us, our pets and the honey bees. This yard feeds us throughout the year; produce is stored in the freezer, root cellar and canning cupboard. Various ornamentals are included for their color, texture, form and fruit.

Directions: Take Airport Rd west from Hwy 12. Drive 4.2 miles. Turn right on Toepfer Rd.

WHPS/MAMGA Oregon-Brooklyn Garden Tour Thursday, July 25, 2013 – 4:00-Dark

Norma and Mike Briggs – 1519 Storytown Rd, Oregon WI

This garden consists of five acres of small hillsides that include woodland, raked gravel, fishponds, standing stones, sunny terraced beds, a rain garden and inviting places to sit. Some paths, depending on the season, are bordered by peonies, muscari, daffodils, or lenten roses. To the south are pear and apple trees, and raspberries and currants. To the east, there is a belt of evergreens for privacy. To the west there is a restored prairie. And, to the north, there is an acre of woodland filled in the spring with ephemerals.

North Parish Gardens – Samantha Roffe and Ron Schraufnagel – 967 Storytown Rd, Brooklyn WI

The gardens were established about 10 years ago. We purchased a dilapidated farmette and started reclaiming, recycling and rebuilding. We began by spading trees, building landscape forms, securing rocks and boulders and of course PLANTS. Our inspiration comes from our love of design, our travels and again PLANTS. The highlights of our garden include: the Bridge to Somewhere, Voo-doo lounge, H- beam waterfall, Paradise Garden and Tori Gateway. Our gardening motto is that we will be rewarded as they are `studios of exhaustion from diligent service`. We look forward to your visit.

Directions to both:

Storytown Rd runs north/south for about 5 miles from Purcell Rd at the north end to Cty Hwy A at the south end and runs contiguously with Cty Hwy D for two of those miles. The Briggs garden is on the north end of Storytown and North Parish is at the south end.

The best route from Madison to both locations is Fish Hatchery Road (Cty Hwy D), south from the Beltline. Drive about 6.5 miles south on Fish Hatchery Rd (Cty Hwy D). Turn right (west) at the stop sign, staying on D (Fish Hatchery continues straight). This leads you to Storytown Rd. Turn right for the Briggs garden and left for North Parish

Parking at Briggs (1519): Look for the green firesign for 1519, and turn into the shared driveway. Pass neighbor's house on the left and keep turning right on to the blacktop. House is at top of hill. Park anywhere on your right, but save the parking spaces immediately next to the garage for people with disabilities.

Open Garden – Lyon-Hart Gardens – Oregon Wednesday, July 3, 2013 – 6:00- 9:00 pm

Ed Lyon and Dylan Hart - 248 North Main Street, Oregon, WI 53575

Unfortunately Ed will be in Vancouver for the WHPS Oregon tour so he is hosting an open garden. Ed started the garden in 2007; it surrounds an 1897 Queen Anne Victorian home on Main Street. It is a small property but probably the most packed with plants you are likely to see, from hostas and ferns to hakone grass and cobra lilies. Several changes in 2013 include conversion of a tropical raised bed to perennials and raised growing table beds for vegetables.

Easy to find right on North Main Street in the Village of Oregon whether you come into the village on the MM (North Main) or 138 (Janesville Street) ramps from Highway 14, park in the parking lot next door.

WHPS Garden Tour –VERONA –Thursday, July 11, 6:30-Dark

Rob Newlin and Karen Watson-Newlin - 7699 Almor Drive, Verona (Town of Middleton)

Rob Newlin and Karen Watson-Newlin created Windswept Garden nine years ago when they built their home in the Town of Middleton. Starting with a totally blank slate of 1 1/2 acres of land, they have created their own summer retreat with flowers, woody shrubs, interesting tree specimens, a small orchard, a pond and a pool. Windswept Garden features over 600 varieties of daylilies and over 450 different hardy plants. Karen is a recently retired art teacher and applied her knowledge of art concepts to her design of the garden with an emphasis on color combinations and textures.

Directions: Go west on Mineral Point Road from the Junction Road interchange 3 miles. You will pass a Kwik Trip, K & A Greenhouse and elementary school on the left. Directly across from the entrance to Tumbledown Golf Course, turn right into Sauk Point Estates on Welcome Drive. Follow Welcome Drive to Sonnet Drive. Turn left on Sonnet. Turn right at the next street which is Almor Drive. Our home is the first right on Almor.

2013 CALENDAR OF GARDEN EVENTS

Two Plant Sales – Saturday, June 8, Habitat for Humanity Plant Sale, Habitat ReStore West, 5906 Odana Road, Madison, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or until sold out. **Thursday-Saturday, June 13-15** at Habitat ReStore East, 208 Cottage Grove Rd, Madison. Plant prices are \$4 each or 3 for \$10, unless otherwise marked. All proceeds are used to help build homes for Habitat families in Dane County. Plant prices are \$4 each or 3 for \$10, unless otherwise marked. All proceeds are used to help build homes for Habitat families in Dane County.

June 13-15, 2013 American Hosta Society National Convention, Milwaukee. For more information visit: <http://www.americanhostasociety.org/>

Saturday, June 15, 5:00-10:00 pm, Rhapsody in Bloom, Olbrich Gardens. Dine and drift through gorgeous summer gardens at Olbrich Botanical Gardens' Rhapsody in Bloom Benefit Gala. For ticket information and reservations call 608-246-5616.

Sunday, June 16, Noon-4:00 pm, Rose Show, Olbrich Gardens. The Madison Rose Society hosts this indoor exhibit of cut roses and arrangements in all sizes and colors. Stroll through Olbrich's two acre Rose Garden. For more information call 608-634-2146. Free and open to the public.

June 19, Current Garden Problems and How to Treat Them, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville, WI. UWEX Horticulture Educator, Barbara Larson will highlight the most current garden problems in Southern Wisconsin and discuss ways to treat them in this class from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.. \$7 (\$5 members). For more information or to register contact Kris Koch at (608) 752-3885 ext. 17.

June 21-23, American Conifer Society, Central Region Meeting, Schaumburg IL, Check their website for more information: www.conifersociety.org

Friday, July 12 (10:00 am-4:00 pm) & Saturday, July 13 (9:00 am-3:00 pm) Home Garden Tour: Featuring Olbrich's Neighbors. Tour exceptional gardens in the neighborhoods around Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Linger in each of these gardens, talk with homeowners, see how other home gardeners use innovative landscape designs and get great ideas for your own garden. Tickets are \$12 for Olbrich members and \$14 for the general public.

Friday, July 12 & Saturday, July 13, Windsor Area Garden Club 2013 Garden Tour, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Seven local gardens featured. Tickets \$10.00; purchase tickets at Country Bloomer's Greenhouse, DeFlorist Floral & Gifts, call Monique at 608-846-5299 or at any garden during the tour. Profits donated to UW Carbone Cancer Center.

Friday, July 12 & Sunday, July 14, 9:00 am-5:00 pm, Iris Sale, Olbrich Gardens. The Madison Area Iris Society sponsors this sale of iris rhizomes, the roots that grow into iris plants. For more information call 608-271-3607.

July 13, Garden Walk Manitowoc, WI. Manitowoc Co. MGA, bi-annual event featuring nine gardens. For more information contact Judy Lango, 920-682-2824.

July 17-August 11 Olbrich's Blooming Butterflies, 10:00 am-4:00 pm daily. Contact (608) 246-4550 for more information.

July 27, 2013 Walk About the Hoard Museum Gardens Fort Atkinson. Join Jefferson Co. MGVs for a guided walk through the Museum's five gardens: perennial garden, rain garden, intersectional peony garden, entry garden and herb garden, 2:00-3:30 pm. Free. Hoard Historical Museum, 401 Whitewater Ave, For more information call 920-563-7769.

Saturday, August 17 (10:00 am-4:00 pm) & Sunday, August 18, (11:00 a.m-3:00 pm Daylily Sale, Olbrich Gardens. For more information contact the Wisconsin Daylily Society at 608-221-1933.

Saturday, August 17 (10:00 am-5:00 pm) & Sunday, August 18 (9:00 am-4:00 pm) Dahlia Show, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by the Badger State Dahlia Society. For more information call 608-577-1924.

Sunday, September 22, WHPS PLANT EXCHANGE, 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Allen Centennial Gardens. Bring plant(s); get plant(s)!

Friday, September 27, 7:00-10:00 pm, Crackle – Fire & Froth, Olbrich Gardens. Watch the flames from bonfires dance on the Great Lawn, groove to live music, savor a variety of tasty foods from Food Fight restaurants, and sip frothy Wisconsin brews. Tickets \$20 for Olbrich members; \$25 for the general public. Food and beverages are an additional cost above ticket price. In case of inclement weather, CRACKLE will be held indoors.

October 2-8, Gardens of the Northwest. Olbrich tour of gardens in the Seattle-Portland area. Visits to the Washington Park Arboretum, the Japanese Garden, the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, and the Weyerhaeuser Bonsai Collection. While in Portland, tour the spectacular International Rose Test Garden and the Hoyt Arboretum with nearly 1000 species of trees and shrubs. Travel off the beaten path to Porterhowse Farms, showcasing a collection of over 2000 conifer species cultivated over 30+ years. Enjoy an amazing dinner cruise onboard a Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler, with stunning vista views and delicious food. Host is Olbrich's Director of Horticulture Jeff Epping. Per person double: \$2,115; deadline July 22, 2013. Contact Burkhalter Travel at 608-833-5200 to reserve.

Saturday, October 12 (noon-5:00 pm) & Sunday, October 13 (10:00 am-4:00 pm) African Violet Show and Sale, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by the Wisconsin State Council of African Violets. A portion of the proceeds benefits Olbrich Botanical Gardens. For more information call 608-833-5552.

Saturday, November 2, 9:00 am-3:00 pm, Herb Fair, Olbrich Gardens. Free! Sponsored by the Madison Herb Society. Visit www.madisonherbsociety.org.

Saturday, December 7-Monday, December 31, 10:00 am-4:00 pm daily Olbrich's Holiday Express: Flower and Model Train Show Twinkling lights, festive poinsettias, tiny landscapes, and large-scale model trains. Admission for Olbrich Botanical Society members is free. Admission for the general public is \$3 for adults, and \$2 for children 3-12. Children 2 and under are free. Admission to Bolz Conservatory is included.

2013 UW-Arboretum Walks

Free tours of Longenecker Horticultural Gardens and the Native Plant Gardens surrounding the Visitor Center are led by experts on Wednesday evenings from 7 p.m. until dark, and in the fall on Saturday afternoons from 1-3 p. m.

- *Native Plant Garden Tour: Woodland, Savanna and Prairie Gardens* - Wednesday, June 12 • 7 pm–8:30 pm
- *Native Plant Garden Tour: What's Blooming?* - Wednesday, June 19 • 7 pm–8:30 pm
- *Native Plant Garden Tour: Native Gardens for Pollinators* - Wednesday, July 17 • 7 pm–8:30 pm
- *Native Plant Garden Tour: Native Grasses* - Wednesday, August 14 • 7 pm–8:30 pm
- *Native Plant Garden Tour: Fall in the Native Plant Garden* - Saturday, September 21 • 1 pm–3 pm
- *Longenecker Horticultural Gardens Tour: Featuring Fall* - Saturday, October 12 • 1 pm–3 pm

Straw Bale Gardening Follow-up

Straw bale gardening seems to be the rage now in gardening literature but it has been around a long time. The theory behind it is sound and practical. The bales are thoroughly soaked and placed tightly together to make up the growing area. This is essentially a raised bed of pure organic matter lacking constructed walls.

Personally, I would use hay over straw. Straw contains more lignin than hay, which breaks down slower, and the glossy surface repels water, making it harder to saturate initially and then hold water to force decomposition. Alfalfa hay also contains nitrogen. Weeds aren't an issue if you do not break the bales open exposing seeds to light. When I need hay or straw, I patronize the local farm coop stores; conveniently for me there is one here in Oregon. Regardless of which you use, I will simply refer to "bales," just know you can use straw, marsh hay or hay. Interestingly, a *New York Times* article on straw bale gardening warns' "Don't buy hay...Hay is a grass or alfalfa with the seed head still attached and waiting to sprout." As a former farmer, I can tell you this is bunk. Actually, straw is the harvest of mature (meaning it went to seed, the end product of the harvest) barley, wheat or oats and contains more seed than hay. Hay harvested for cattle feed, however, is cut before it goes to seed, since the protein drops tremendously after the plant goes to seed. That's one reason you will see grain crops (straw) harvested once in a season after it has matured and gone brown, but hay is harvested 3 to 4 times a year. Both could contain weeds, however, any seeds in the interior of any bale will not germinate without sunlight and any grain, grass, or weeds that start to grow on top of the bales, straw or hay, will be sparse and easy to pull.

In my opinion, bale gardening is most practically used to start gardens where there is no soil, i.e. on concrete, asphalt, brick or other hard surfaces. That is why this type of gardening is becoming popular in urban areas. How much easier can it be to start a garden where there is no soil than by placing large blocks (approximately 2 feet by 4 feet and around 20 inches deep) of solid organic matter side by side and end to end to create a raised bed? Bales are easier and lighter to handle than soil and fairly inexpensive, probably cheaper than the same cubic footage of soil outside major urban areas. It's the easiest raised bed you can create. This system is great for people starting with no soil or have "toxic" soils, including problems such as highly alkaline or acidic, contaminated with chemicals, too much sand or too much clay, or other issues that make gardening in soil difficult or impractical. Since you are essentially creating an "instant" compost pile,

I suggest the method be used as precursor to a lasagna garden for gardeners starting on soil. The best gardens contain nutrient rich organic matter, and I advocate using a number of forms of compost, each with its own merits and lasagna gardening works well to create some of the best conditions for plant growth. We created a similar garden at Allen Centennial Gardens with hay as the base but alternated it with layers of composted leaves and shredded wood mulch. Over time we will add more compost layers, such as mushroom compost, composted manure, and other forms of organic matter.

Start the process by placing the bales tightly together and then soaking them thoroughly. This can be accomplished by "water-



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ing" them daily or placing soaker hoses on top. It takes a lot of water to completely soak a bale and it may take up to three weeks. The bale interiors heat up with the water accumulation and will start decomposing almost immediately, especially with added heat from sun (some bale gardeners advise covering with black plastic during this process to speed up the heating and decomposition). Keep in mind, the hay or straw initially has no nutrients readily available to plants so add fertilizer; I would add a layer of decomposed manure across the top. The bales will heat up to 130 to 140 degrees as the decomposition begins. You cannot plant at this point. In around two weeks, the temperatures should drop closer to 100 degrees (it will feel a little warm to your touch when you insert your hand into the bale) and you should be able to plug in seedlings and create furrows for seed.

Local gardener Roger Reynolds started an amazing vegetable garden near Lone Rock, WI on over a foot of almost pure sand, with a pseudo-bale garden sub-structure. Check out his blog site at <http://infiltratinglandscapes.blogspot.com>, (click on Pictures of Gardens I Created, then click the Photos button, then click on the album Roger's Garden 2008. You will see photographs of how he built his garden, including one image of hay bales he soaked with water and formed the original layer of his garden. He broke open the bales and spread them out, but the philosophy is the same. As the garden developed, he took bale gardening one step further and followed Patricia Lanza's *Lasagna Gardening* book (1998, Roedale Press, Inc.). She also wrote *Lasagna Gardening for Small Spaces* (2002), for those of you with less room.. Take the time to check out Reynolds' site; you will be amazed at the size of plants in his garden. He is an excellent local example of Lanza's claim, "a new layering system for bountiful gardens: no digging, no tilling, no weeding, no kidding!"

Bale gardening is not new. Commercial growers have experimented with it since the 1950's. It does work. Just think of it as a different form of raised bed gardening and, to be even more successful, use it as a foundation for a lasagna garden, an even more advanced garden construction.

— Ed Lyon

Dyeing for a Splash of Color

My garden provides tons of inspiration for my many art projects: the variety of textures on leaves, the unexpected burst of color of a blooming plant long forgotten, the subtle shades and nuances of light filtering through branches - I can use all this whether I am painting, crocheting or weaving. But what I love best is when I can incorporate my garden into my art, physically.

I'm talking about dyeing, of course, using blossoms, roots and leaves, nature's own color bath! So here is a simple recipe to help us all enjoy our plants well past the blooming season.

You will need the following supplies: silk scarves (I order mine from a place called Dharma Trading, but there are other sources on the Web), zip-lock quart-size bags, vinegar, a microwave oven, and some dyeing materials from your garden: blossoms, roots, leaves, bark, berries, even vegetables. Optional supplies include butcher paper or freezer paper, spray bottle, string or rubber bands, and labels.

First, you have to prepare the scarves. Most materials contain some sort of sizing or finish, so it is wise to wash them in cool water with a gentle detergent and let them air dry. Once dry, lay out the material on paper, mist with water (this step is optional, but I find it helps keep the dyeing materials on the fabric). Sprinkle or arrange your dyeing materials on the fabric; twist, tie, fold or scrunch, whatever you desire. Now you are ready to perform some magic.

Place the scarf in the plastic bag, pour vinegar over the scarf, just enough to cover most of it, then seal and shake or smooch to get the vinegar over all parts. Place in microwave oven. Heat on high for two minutes or on medium for four minutes. Watch carefully; if the bag begins to balloon, pause the microwave, unseal the bag carefully to release the steam, then reseal and continue to "cook."

To complete the finishing touches, remove from microwave - be careful, it will be hot. Cool for a few minutes, run under cold water, hang to dry, iron if you want (I like to do this as it will seal in the colors), then label if you wish so you know what ingredients you used.



Gift, sell, or keep it for you! Above all, experiment—some flowers dye fabric better than others, some leave just a faint residue. Don't be afraid to unleash your creativity and be daring! If you don't like it, dye it again!

And during the winter months, use this method indoors by tapping wonders in your kitchen, such as wine, tea, coffee, onion skins, Kool-Aid, cake sprinkles or sugar crystals. Dye yarn, or recycled fabric. The possibilities are endless!

Hoping your dyeing instills new life!

— Laurie Zimmerman, WHPS member,
and budding fiber artist

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Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



**June 2013
Newsletter**

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

A "Tasteful Summer Event"

Saturday, June 22, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. at 213 Pocahontas Lane, Deforest, WI, sponsored by 4 Elements Garden Design. Roam the gardens, purchase containers that will add art to any outdoor area, ask about services such as adding low voltage lighting, building a pergola, arbor or raised bed, or constructing or adding ponds and pondless water features. There will be artfully hand-crafted wreaths (made from mostly dried florals), each with a personality and titled/named. Anyone can "like us" on facebook for further details or call 4 Elements Garden Design at (608) 445-4347. They'll have food, drinks, and music playing to set the scene for everyone.



Habitat for Humanity Green Team

The Green Team is a dedicated team that loves plants and enjoys working outdoors. Many are Master Gardeners who take care of a large perennial garden located behind the Habitat ReStore East on Cottage Grove Rd. and lead crews in the landscaping of all the Habitat Homes, including design of the plan, as well as planting. The Team also trains new Habitat Homeowners on the care of their lawn and gardens. If you have plants to donate, contact Ann Wolfe at aeaves@charter.net or phone at 608-442-8768.

A Great Plant—*Geranium macrorrhizum*

Geranium macrorrhizum is a real workhorse in the garden. It grows well in sun or shade, is drought tolerant and has a beautiful and striking pink bloom in late May/early June.

The spread of the plant allows it to be considered more of a ground cover, keeping weeds out and self-seeding readily. In some plants this would make it a thug, but *Geranium macrorrhizum* is shallow-rooted and easy to remove if it decides to move to an unwanted location.



It's also an inexpensive and easy care plant for containers. Did I mention the scent (think scented geranium) and fall color?

If you have a spot to fill in your garden and want something fast-growing, filling and beautiful, give *Geranium macrorrhizum* a try.

—Stephanie O'Neal