

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News



October 2013



Gary trying to convince Erin of the superior qualities of his favorites!

Tomato Tasting Contest Results Prove Controversial...by Carol Cox

The potluck meeting held on Tuesday evening, September 17th at the Eau Claire County Extension Office was a wrap up session for the year's activities for the Eau Claire Area Master Gardeners Association (ECAMGA) with updates by Erin LaFaive, Extension Horticulturist, giving the members in attendance an overview of the program, both in our county and statewide.

An interesting side event on the evening's program also included a "tomato tasting" event. With a fairly good selection of the fruit to choose from there were some differences of opinion and some mild controversy over which variety of the perennial garden staple was the tastiest. After tasting them all

myself, I decided that it might just be a great idea to plant and enjoy them all. So, if you missed this opportunity to taste-compare – well, better come next time!! You just never know what you might be missing.

The meeting also saw the announcement of the ECAMGA placing in the International Master Gardener competition based upon the organization's efforts with the Winter Garden Seminar. See the article on page 3 for more details.

Also highlighted were the volunteer opportunities available in the coming year. These include helping out at Beaver Creek Reserve, Bolton House is asking for some MG volunteers, Schlegelmilch Gardens can always use help and there is always the "Ask A Master Gardener" booth among many other interesting ways to earn volunteer hours. So, if interested contact Erin at 715-839-4712 or call Nina Logan at 715-878-4585. Plan for a great year ahead in 2014.



Potluck meeting pictures courtesy of Carol Losey.



INSIDE:

Local Master Gardener News - 2
Bits and Pieces - 6

Upcoming Events

- 3



Local Master Gardener News

Changing e-mail? Moving?

If you do, **please** remember to notify the ECAMG and the newsletter editor of your new e-mail address and/or mailing address so you don't miss any Eau Claire Area Master Gardener happenings!



Email you're new information to Carol Cox at c7w6c2200@charter.net or notify her by snail mail at 1908 Hogeboom Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701 (or call her at 715-783-0016 - cell).



Bulletin Board Postings Stories and Opportunities!!!!



ECAMGA Board

ECAMGA BOARD MEMBER CONTACT INFO		
NAME/TITLE	e-mail address	phone number
Erin LaFaive	Erin.lafaive@ces.uwex.edu	715-839-4712
Mikel Reise	mandbreise@charter.net	715-836-7839
Gary Mathis	Garym5811@live.com	715-878-4031
Roslyn Siudak	apras2@mydnet.com	715-559-3199
Katie Hartsel	hartseka@uwec.edu	715-864-4300
Jeanne Mueller	jeanneventures@att.net	715-835-3146
Diane Hunter	sportflower@gmail.com	715-835-2775
Andy Heren	Rcktnut007@aol.com	715-831-9236
Karen Olson	kjolson@charter.net	715-838-0842
Daria Hutchinson	dariahu@aol.com	216-797-4793

NOTE: The ECAMGA Board minutes no longer appears in the newsletter. You may access them by going to the website at <http://www.eauclairemastergardeners.com/forms.html>

Opportunities for the 2013/2014 ECAMGA Year!!!!

Hopefully you have by now turned in your volunteer hours for 2013 and sent in your dues (if not, get those in – the deadline was October 1). Next begin to think about how you will be involved in the coming year to earn those volunteer hours and help the ECAMGA complete yet another successful year of actively educating the public in the area of horticulture.

Some of the opportunities to serve are:

- 1. Serve on the Education Committee;**
- 2. Serve on the ECAMGA Board;**
- 3. Volunteer to help with the gardens at Bolton Refuge House;**
- 4. Volunteer to help at the Schlegelmilch House Gardens;**
- 5. Help out in the “Ask A Master Gardener” Booth;**
- 6. Contribute articles and material for the ECAMGA Newsletter;**
- 7. Help with the Winter Garden Seminar (both in the planning and/or the night before set-up and the day of the event;**
- 8. Help with the fall plant sale;**
- 9. Volunteer at Beaver Creek Reserve.**

These are just a few of the areas that are in need of volunteers to serve. For more information contact Erin LaFaive at 715-839-4712 or one of the Board members.



Ready, Set, Grow!

Winter Garden Seminar

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Volunteer Association



<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To educate MGVs and the general public from surrounding counties. Increase interest in gardening as well as expand awareness to the public of the resources available from the UW Extension and Master Gardener Volunteer Program. 	<p>Impact</p> <p>Each year this one day event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About 150 attendees 10 speakers 90% of the evaluations show excellent ratings <p>The comments indicate that attendees are learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New varieties that work for our area's climate Enhancing environmental consciousness Excited to try new gardening techniques Increasing knowledge of gardening techniques Increasing awareness of local gardening business 	<p>Venue</p> <p>Takes place at the Chippewa Valley Technical College every first Saturday in February. The date is set to consider other County MGV Association seminars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely affordable rental fee Technical equipment provided Located in Eau Claire, WI Draw participants from about 100 mile radius 
<p>Fees</p> <p>Fees haven't been raised in 8 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendees \$30 Vendors \$20 (another \$10 for on-site meal) Includes registration fee, 2 snacks, and catered lunch 	 <p><small>Right: The registration table is where all attendees check in. They receive a folder with agenda, meal ticket, and paper to take notes. Left: Free catalogs and literature table. Volunteers contact companies for free catalogs.</small></p>  <p><small>Full auditorium for main speaker.</small></p>	  <p><small>Speakers are local gardeners, business, and University of Wisconsin Extension specialists.</small></p>   <p><small>Top: Door prizes donated by local businesses and volunteers. Names listed on the wall (upper right of the picture). Bottom: Snacks & refreshment table by morning and afternoon. Catered by the venue.</small></p>



For full details of program description, methods, materials and seminar evaluation, visit www.eaurogardeners.com

Award Winning Garden Seminar by Lori Kempen

The Ready, Set, Grow... Winter Garden Seminar has been awarded second place in the Search for Excellence Competition 2013! The International Master Gardener (IMG) Conference sponsors this contest consisting of seven categories for submission. The Ready Set Grow event was entered in the Workshop or Presentation division.

In the summer of 2012 Nina Logan and I assisted Erin in preparing the application for the competition. We heard nothing further until receiving an email announcing that we had won second place. Ironically, this arrived on the Friday night before our 2013 Seminar. It was requested that we not make this public in press releases, newsletters or websites until after the September IMG Conference.

We were asked to prepare a poster featuring our seminar. This was displayed at the IMG conference in Alaska the week of September 7th. There was no monetary prize, but the group will receive a certificate and was recognized in the conference program. The poster is now proudly displayed at Extension Office. Stop in and see it!

RSG received a 95 out of 100 in the composite score by all judges. Among the comments were these:

- *I liked the variety of topics so much that I would like to attend.
 - *Well-organized and planned seminar.
 - *Nice to see an evaluation process being done with this project.
 - *Good idea to use non-gardening months for education and prep for planting season.
 - *Nice touch to add vendors.
- (continued on page 6)

Upcoming Events



Nature Center Host-Training October 19, 2013; 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wise Nature Center

This volunteer training session will include greeting visitors, answering phones, ringing up cash register sales, organizing the Nature Store, etc. The Reserve is looking to fill spots for weekday and weekend shifts. On-call hosts are needed for weekday morning and afternoon shifts as well as weekends.

Monday to Saturday morning's shifts are from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Sunday shifts are from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

What a great way to spend a few hours connecting with nature at the Reserve. If interest in learning more about becoming a Nature Center host, please register at www.beavercreekreserve.org. Registration is required by October 17.

Cost: FREE for Friends; FREE for Nonmembers.



Looking for work: skilled in mowing lawns and also quite capable of fertilizing them. For further details call 1-715-IAMALAMBCHP.



Upcoming Classes

Registration is not required for most classes but is appreciated.

Saturday, Oct. 12th, 19th, 26th 10:00 am -- Playin' with Pumpkins

Free pumpkin painting for the kids, free pumpkin cookies and hot apple cider in the café, plus much more!

Thursday, October 3rd 5:00 pm -- Dried Floral Arrangements Class -

Build your own, pay only for what you take home

Learn how to make a wonderful table top arrangement out of dried floral items. We will also touch on how to force spring flowering branches. Bring your own vase or pick one out at DTE.

6025 Arndt Lane
Eau Claire WI, 54701
715-833-1234

E-mail - home@dwntoearth.com

Website: <http://www.dwntoearth.com/index2.html>

Bits and Pieces

THE OTHER SIDE OF WEEDS

by Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension

Professor, University of Vermont (Article taken with explicit permission from:

<http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articleS.htm>)

Did weeds get ahead of you this year? Still have “weeds” in your garden? This may not be all bad, as weeds too have purposes and even can provide natural benefits.

So you think you know what a weed is? Did you ever think “why” you have weeds? Did you ever think about positive values and functions that weeds might provide? In a book I’ve had for some years and enjoy rereading, *Weeds, Friend or Foe?*, author Sally Roth covers all aspects of weeds, both the good and the bad, how to use them as well as to control them.



As the author opens, she states that “weediness is in the eye of the beholder. The word weed is an epithet of purely human invention; in the botanical world, it simply doesn't exist.” She goes on to point out that even plants with no seeming redeeming value such as burdock, may be of use to others such as herbalists. So for the definition she states, “the simple answer is that a weed is a plant out of place. When a plant interferes with the tidiness of our flower gardens, the sweep of our lawn, the size of the harvest, or even our personal well-being, it's a weed.”

This definition was reinforced when I visited with the head groundskeeper, David Mellor, at Fenway Park on maintaining turfgrass and weeds. His example was that even the most beautiful rose, if growing on the ball field, would be considered a “weed” in this situation.

So given lemons, how can you make lemonade? Or in this case, how can you use some of those weeds in your garden? Some home uses include for food, herbal remedies, and in crafts. Sometimes weeds are useful left in gardens, and often provide many benefits to wildlife.

Most have heard of dandelion wine, but perhaps not of the use of its leaves in salads and as greens. Varieties have even been selected for this use. The long curling and acid-rich leaves of sorrel have been used, especially in international cuisine, for a piquant flavor in soups and sauces. Even the flowers of the invasive southern kudzu vine can be candied!

Many weeds also can be used herbally and medicinally, just make sure when doing so you know exactly what weed you are using, and how. The same applies to using them to eat. Sorrel can be used in small amounts for its flavor, but contains oxalic acid similar to spinach and Swiss chard. With sorrel's higher concentration, too much can cause kidney damage. Some of the safe uses of weeds are topical, such as leaves of burdock on skin irritations, leaves of curly dock on boils, and leaves of dandelion applied as a wart remover.

Jewelweed, a tall impatiens (3 to 5 feet) with orange flowers, has become weedy in my gardens, the prolific seeds spreading in open areas and filling them by late summer. Yet I leave it as the hummingbirds are fond of the August flowers, and the plant I've learned has many medicinal properties. Native Americans and herbalists have used the sap for years for mosquito bites, bee stings, and rashes such as from stinging nettle and poison ivy. Simply rub the sap on the skin right after contact, and keep applying it if needed. It has other fungal skin remedies too, such as for warts, and contains the active ingredient in some formulations of Preparation-H ointment.

Perhaps the easiest and most common home use of weeds is for crafts. These may include fresh or dried arrangements. Often weeds, or wildflowers, don't last as long as fresh (continued on page 6)

The Other Side of Weeds continued from page 5...

garden flowers. They may also be pressed for botanical art. Or use the blossoms in potpourri.

As long as weeds aren't let go to seed, becoming seed invasive (such as the purple loosestrife), or others allowed to spread by their aggressive roots and kill out weaker plants, they may help your garden. They provide the green cover nature seems to want over bare ground, while your other plants are growing larger. This prevents germination of more aggressive weed seeds.

Shallow-rooted spreaders, such as ground ivy, provide a ground cover, preventing erosion, seed germination, and baking of heavy soils in the sun. Dock and similar tap-rooted weeds open up the soil deeply, especially useful in heavy clay soils. Clover and other legumes actually improve soil fertility, adding nitrogen. When all is said and done, pulling weeds (especially tap-rooted ones, when pulling is easier after rains) helps loosen the soil so roots of desirable plants may grow more easily.

There are many wildlife uses for weeds, including hosting more insects than you see or can imagine. There are more good insects than bad in gardens, many being predators of the bad, or serving as food for birds. Small parasitic insects, also serving as biological controls for bad ones, feed on the nectar of many weed flowers.

Many wild mammals feed on weeds. Some weeds host the larvae of butterflies, such as the monarch larvae on milkweeds. We all have seen bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies feeding on flower nectar of many weeds. Especially important to these are the late season wildflowers, when not much else is in flower, such as goldenrod and aster.

Two wildlife aspects you may not think of are for materials and safety. Birds especially use fibers and bark from weeds, even moss, for nest building in spring. Weeds not only provide cover for wildlife, but a continuous strip or colony provides a safe corridor to move from one place to another.

You may be thinking, all these benefits sound desirable, but you don't want your gardens and landscape to look like one big weed patch. An easy solution is to reserve certain areas just for "weeds" (if there for a reason you can call them "wildflowers") that you leave through the winter and spring, with mowed areas around and containing them. Or, leave a strip along the back side of a property, a less visible area, or between other natural areas. In the case of annuals, like the jewelweed, these will die back with frost, when they can then be cleaned up. Make sure you tell visitors you're practicing sustainable, or environmentally-friendly gardening.

Award Winning Gardening Seminar continued from page 3...

Among the suggestions for improvement were:

- *Might find a partner who could provide free meeting space.
- *The evaluation should include measuring how much is learned how many gardeners adopt new methods.

We are delighted to receive this honor. So many people deserve credit for making this seminar a yearly success. The assistance from the staff at UW Extension and CVTC is invaluable. MGVS put in countless hours planning and coordinating this event. The businesses and individuals who contribute door prizes, as well as the vendors deserve a huge thank you for their efforts.

Please remember to congratulate and thank these great committee members for their hard work: Carol Cox, Jo-Ann Clark, Nina Logan, Sue Kaul, Cindy Ferver, Sharon McGeorge and Sue Wagner. Last, but not least thank you Erin for your help and guidance along the way. We couldn't do it without you!



**HANG IN THERE!
SPRING WILL
RETURN!!!!**



Eye Candy...



"Garden Portal"



Kalanchoe thyrsiflora

Surfing the internet for interesting Garden items can be rather addictive. These items were found on either www.pinterest.com or www.stumbleupon.com. You may want to search these sites for your own favorites plus lots of other neat ideas.



Pictures from www.malawitourism.com

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener's Newsletter Acquires An International Following

Editor's note: I got this email from a gal who lives in Malawi. A mutual friend had emailed her the newsletter when she saw the article on permaculture in the September issue and thought this lady and her husband would find it of interest. It is, indeed, a small world! Thought the ECAMGA would enjoy, not just the news that we have achieved an international following (lol) but also enjoy visiting her website. (She has given me permission to include her email note and the website in our newsletter).

Dear Carol,

I thought you might be interested to know that your newsletter found interested readers in Malawi. My husband and I were married in Neillsville in 1995 then came to Malawi in 1997 to work on improving nutrition. Our work involves teaching (and doing ourselves) food production, processing and utilization combined with water, sanitation, hygiene and general healthy lifestyles and first aid (such as natural medicines you can grow, process and use). We utilize permaculture as our thinking and learning tool for creating the most efficient and high impact designs. For more you can see www.NeverEndingFood.org.

If we every settle again in WI Eau Claire is definitely on our list of potential areas to be near.

Best,
Stacia



**"Autumn is a second Spring when every leaf is a flower."
(Albert Camus)**



Picture by Jo-Ann Clark

All gardeners live in beautiful places because they make them so.

Joseph Joubert

EAU CLAIRE AREA MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER
A newsletter for the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association members.

Unless otherwise noted, articles for this newsletter are submitted and/or written by ECAMGA members or the newsletter editor, Carol W. Cox. Unless otherwise noted, graphics are from clipart. Newsletter layout by Carol W. Cox



For more Eau Claire County UW Cooperative Extension information go to our website:
www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/eauclore
Phone: 715-839-4712
Fax: 715-839-6277
M-F 8AM-5PM



The University of Wisconsin Extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education, programming and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental, arrest or conviction record or veteran status." If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this program, activity or service, please contact Erin LaFaive at 715-839-4712 as soon as possible preceding the scheduled event so that proper arrangements can be made in a timely fashion

**Eau Claire County
Extension Office
227 First Street West
Altoona, WI 54720**