

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News



December 2013

*ECAMBA Annual
Christmas Potluck
December 17, 2013
6:30 p.m.
UW-Extension Office*

Come and enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow Master Gardeners. Bring a dish to pass and any ideas and interesting garden experiences you may have had from this past season. There will be games and plenty of good food, so we hope you will mark this on your calendar!

Also that night will be the election of board members. Please consider running for a position. If you would like to run for a board position, please contact Andy Heren, at Rcktnut007@aol.com by Monday, December 16.

In addition the ECAMGA Photo Contest prizes will be given out (two of the three winners could not be there at our November meeting).



Spouses are also welcome, so see you there with bells on (Christmas bells, that is – or maybe Coral Bells, or Canterbury Bells or whatever!!! Just COME!!!

Larry Bennett Presentation Well Received at November ECAMGA Meeting... by Nina Loga

On November 19th, Larry Bennett, a certified bird bander and experienced lifetime birdwatcher and birdfeeder spoke about birds in winter, migratory birds, feeding habits of winter birds and the best food for them. The presentation was given at the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association (ECAMGA) monthly meeting held at the UW-Eau Claire Extension Center. Those learned about the best feeding stations and how to make a bird feeder. The presentation was well attended with both ECAMGA members and the public were present.



Birding has become a popular pastime for the casual observer as well as the professional and the audience was very attentive. Bennett, obviously very comfortable with his subject, spoke for approximately an hour and a half providing much interesting and useful information to birders as well as answering attendee's many appropriate questions.



Among many interesting bits of information was the statement that we probably won't see many winter finches this year as they are an irruptive species and they still have plenty of food available to them up in Canada. Iruptive species are those species that are not predictable as to their migration habits. They will stay where there is food and only move on when the food supply is gone. Bennett also suggested googling "winter finch report" if more information is desired.

Likewise Larry predicted that we would see an influx of owls this winter as mammal production is down in Canada and this will force them to come south. He thought that we might even see some great grey owls. (Bird enthusiasts can check with Beaver Creek Reserve about upcoming bird events. Phone 715-877-2212 or email at bcr@beavercreekreserve.org.)



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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!!!!



The ECAMGA constitution states that our board can have 5 to 9 members. We will be entering 2014 with 6 members.

Please consider running for a position. We do require that you miss no more than 3 meetings each year. There are many exciting things ahead as changes are being made to the state program.

This is a great opportunity to bring your fresh ideas and your talents to help run our organization. There is one meeting per month (cannot miss more than 3 in the year).

If you would like to run for a board position, please contact me, Andy Heren, at Rcktnut007@aol.com by Monday, December 16.

Andy Heren
Board Chair



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>



ECAMGA 2014 Calendar

*Put these dates on
your calendar!*

*All meetings at UW-Extension Office
unless otherwise noted*

January 21 – Nancy Spak – Make and take mirrored wind chime (cost \$10 for supplies)

February 1 - Winter Garden seminar at CVTC, *Ready, Set, Grow... lots of great speakers, door prizes, etc.*

March 18 – Tour of May's growing grounds (at Plant Marketing not at their main location)

April 15 – speaker TBA

May 20 - speaker TBA

June 17 - speaker TBA

July 15 - speaker TBA

August 19 - speaker TBA

August – Plant Sale in conjunction with Sustainability Fair at Fairgrounds

September 16 – speaker TBA & hours due in

October 21 – speaker TBA

November 18– speaker TBA

December 16 – annual potluck and election of officers



Looking for ideas for Christmas gifts?

by Carol Cox

How about remembering your “gardening” friends and relatives this Christmas with a gift of a registration for the February 1, 2014 **“Ready, Set, Grow...”** winter gardening seminar to be held at the CVTC in Eau Claire. What better gift to give a gardening friend than an early taste of spring via all the great speakers the planning committee has

lined up? And don’t forget about the great vendors Nina Logan always has on hand and door prizes Lori Kempen obtains for our attendees.

The keynote speaker for the 2014 event will be Bill Hogseth from DNR who will be speaking about preserving the Chippewa Valley Eco System plus he will do a breakout session that will bring that information down to the level of our own. (I wonder if he will tell me how to preserve that dratted squirrel that has been outwitting me all summer – preferably preserving it in someone else’s ecosphere!!!)

But that is just part of the exciting lineup. Faye Ryszkiewicz from Fryskzies’s Country Gardens will be updating us on the new invasive species list. You will be surprised by some of what is being added. Check that out. Then, Patty Martin, from Greener Grasses will be telling us what’s new for 2014 in the way of trees, shrubs and plants. That is always an interesting topic.

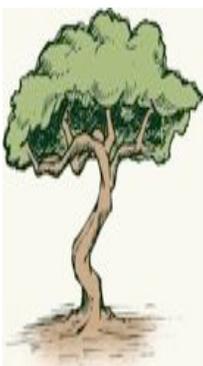
Jerry Clark, the Extension Agent from Chippewa County, will be talking about the effects of last year’s drought and what that might mean for us this coming year. He will also do a breakout session on growing raspberries and blueberries, which sounds rather appetizing just now!

Speaking of something that sounds delicious, Jim Schwiebert from Beaver Creek Reserve will be giving us the lowdown on wild edibles. Not only that but our own Erin LaFaive will be telling us all about “Herbs, Garden to Table.”

We will also have Steve Horan speaking on ornamental grasses and Judy Robison and Mary Zellmer will be talking my kind of language – “Gardening in the Space That You Have.” Maybe they can give me some ideas as to how to expand my garden area upward!

All in all it should be another excellent seminar and all at the same bargain price of \$30, which includes your meal, and, historically, anywhere from a third to a half of the attendees come away with a neat door prize. Those are much better odds than playing the lottery!!!

So, see you there with friends in tow! And have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!



The great French Marshal Lyautey once asked his gardener to plant a tree. The gardener objected that the tree was slow growing and would not reach maturity for 100 years. The marshal replied, “In that case, there is no time to lose; plant it this afternoon!”

-John F. Kennedy

Upcoming Events

Good gardening is very simple, really. You just have to learn to think like a plant.
Barbara Damroach



Nature Center Host Training

Wise Nature Center
 December 14 - 2:30 until 4 pm

The Reserve is looking to fill volunteer Nature Center host openings for weekday and weekends shifts. Substitute hosts are also needed for weekday morning and afternoon shifts as well as weekend shifts. We have an ongoing need for dependable and enthusiastic volunteers to work in our Nature Center. Hosts greet visitors, answer phones, ring up cash register sales, answer questions and assist with occasional clerical duties.

Weekend shifts are available 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 12:30 to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and 12 to 4 p.m. on Sundays. We can also use volunteers to help fill in for weekday shifts 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or 12:30 to 4 p.m. Individual training sessions can also be arranged at a time convenient for you.

FREE for Friends, FREE for Nonmembers, Registration required by Dec. 13, 2013



Upcoming Classes

Registration is not required for most classes but is appreciated.

Thursday, December 12th 5:00 pm and Saturday, December 14th 10:00 am

Decorate your own Wreath Class - Cost: \$40 per wreath - Build your own: We will start with a base wreath and go over different ways you can spruce it up. Think outside the traditional red bow.

Saturday, December 14th 3:00 pm (pre-registration required)

Holiday Fairy Garden Tea Party in the Greenhouse - Cost: \$15/adult & \$25/child

Mothers, bring your daughters to this wonderful holiday fairy garden tea party in the greenhouse! We will have tables set up in the greenhouse for this special event. Mini sandwiches, mini desserts, and tea will be served! After tea we will accessorize mini fairy gardens for each child to take home then read a book all about fairies! **Limited to 30 people, so please call to register.**

* Price of fairy garden included in child ticket price.

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

E-mail - home@dwntoearth.com

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



Classes:

Winter Porch Pot/Wreath Class: December

3rd at 6:00 p.m.: porch pot material and class fee is \$30.00 *Come and create your own Porch Pot with a

beautiful fresh mix of evergreens, dogwood and berries. The wreath is already made and waiting for you to attach your own decorating flare on. Let nature be your perfect decoration. You may also bring in your own pot to use, ask for details.

Create Your Own "Fairy" Christmas Garden: December 5th at 6:00 p.m. This class is free to anyone who wants to attend. If you want to make a Fairy Christmas Garden there, then you pay only for the materials you use. So come and learn or come and make your own. The choice is up to you and, either way, it will be fun and you will learn something new.

Space is limited, so please pre-register for all classes by calling 715-836-8220 or register online at <http://www.maysfloralgarden.com/classes>.

3424 Jeffers Road
Eau Claire, WI 54703

Bits and Pieces

Beyond Poinsettias: 6 Holiday Plants That Will Actually Last

by Colleen Vanderlinden, (Planet Green)

The garden centers and grocery stores are already loading up on poinsettias for the holiday season. And not just the red or cream-colored ones of our childhood. No, now you can get a turquoise, glittered poinsettia for your mantle (shudder). I'm not exactly a fan of the poinsettia. Part of it is because I think they're not exactly the most attractive plants. But more than that is the fact that poinsettias are generally considered to be "throw-away" plants, barely making it through the holiday season before being tossed by the thousands out onto the curb (it takes a bit of work and planning to make a poinsettia turn red for the next holiday season if you live in a cold zone.) Rather than creating more [waste](#) during the holiday season, how about buying a plant that says "holidays" just as well as the poinsettia, but will be along much, much longer?

1. [Norfolk Island Pine](#) - This is another plant that is common in grocery stores and home centers at this time of year, usually wrapped with one of those horrid foil pot covers. Buy one of them, recycle the foil cover, and repot the pine in a nice looking pot. You can make it look more festive by adding a small string of lights and tiny ornaments and garlands. Remove the decorations, and you've got a really pretty, easy-maintenance houseplant.

2. [Gardenia](#) - If you want fragrance in your home, you can't go wrong with a gardenia. Even when not in bloom, this plant's glossy, dark green leaves make it a very attractive houseplant. Gardenias can be a bit fussy about conditions; they require bright light, high humidity, and even moisture. If you can provide these, you should get at least one gardenia for your home.



(continued on page 7)

Tips for Care and Feeding of Cut Flowers

by Nina Logan

1. Buy flowers that have been kept under refrigeration. Flowers that have been standing in buckets in the produce department loose vase life.
2. Ask the florist for a vase life guarantee. Most florist will replace flowers that don't last for at least five days.
3. Roses and other sturdy flowers can be rehydrated by plunging them in water, including the stems, for three hours.
4. Make sure the vase is clean and full to the top with water. Use sharp scissors to cut off all leaves that will be under the water in the vase. Recut the stems and place them in water immediately.
5. Commercial plant food will extend the vase life of flowers. If you don't have a plant food, use a pinch of sugar and a drop of bleach in the vase water. If you have it, you can use a pinch of ground-up Viagra, yes, Viagra, to prolong vase life. It opens the vessels that conduct water up the stem to the flower.
6. Keep flowers in a cool spot away from direct sunlight. Spritzing them with water may extend their life also.
7. Change water and recut the stems every few days. Remove any flowers that have begun to wilt. They give off ethylene which can cause other flowers in the bunch to also wilt.



Information obtained from "Flower Confidential" by Amy Stewart

The Christmas Tree by Charles Kuralt (Reprinted from [Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul](#))

Trees just do not grow up here on the high plateaus of the Rockies—everybody knows that. Trees need good soil and good weather and up here there's no soil and terrible weather. People do not live here. Nothing can live up here and certainly not trees. That's why the tree is a kind of miracle.

The tree is a juniper, and it grows beside another tree for miles. Nobody Christmas ornament on it—some From that day to this, the tree has Nobody knows who does it. But each has become a Christmas tree.



U.S. 50 utterly alone, not remembers who put the first whimsical motorist of years ago. been redecorated each year. year, by Christmas Day, the tree

The tree, which has no business growing here at all, has survived against all the odds. The summer droughts somehow haven't killed it, nor the winter storms. When the highway builders came out to widen the road, they could have taken the tree with one pass of their bulldozer. But some impulse led them to start widening the road just a few feet past the tree. The trucks pass so close that they rattle the tree's branches. The tree has also survived the trucks.

The tree violates the laws of man and nature. It is too close to the highway for man, and not far enough away for nature. The tree pays no attention. It is where it is. It survives.

People who live in Grand Junction, thirty miles one way, and in Delta, Colorado, fifteen miles the other way, all know about and love the tree. They have Christmas trees of their own, of course, the kind of trees that are brought to town in trucks and sold (Continued on page 7)

The Christmas Tree continued from page 6...
in vacant lots and put up in living rooms. This one tree belongs to nobody and to everybody.

Just looking at it makes you think about how unexpected life on Earth can be. The tree is so lonely and so brave that it seems to offer courage to those who pass it—and a message. It is the Christmas message: that there is life and hope even in a rough world.

Beyond Poinsettias – continued from page 5...

3. **Cyclamen** - Cyclamen can provide a real pop of color during the holidays, and, if you care for the plant, will continue to do so for years to come. You can find cyclamen in most supermarkets and garden centers, most commonly with red, white, or pink blooms. Cyclamen require a dormant stage to bloom again, but that really makes it an even easier houseplant to care for!

4. **Amaryllis** - If you love blooms, you need to get your hands on some amaryllis bulbs! You typically find them everywhere this time of year, usually sold in boxes as complete planting kits. This is a convenient way to get them, but if you want more variety in your choices, you'll want to order from a reputable grower. Amaryllis provide gorgeous blooms during the holiday season if you plant the bulbs in November. Many people treat these as throw-aways as well, but it's actually quite simple to get them to bloom for the next holiday season.

5. **Christmas Cactus** - Also known as "Thanksgiving Cactus" (typically sold in bloom for both holidays) these succulent plants are fairly simple to care for. They don't do well in dim, drafty, dry areas, so you'll have to make sure you have a good spot for them. If you do, they'll reward you with blooms during the holidays for years to come.

6. **Orchids** - Don't give me that look. Phalaenopsis (also known as "moth") orchids are very easy to grow, bloom for months, and are among the least-fussy houseplants I've grown. Phalaenopsis are available in a variety of colors, and make a beautiful, elegant addition to your holiday décor. There you have them: six holiday plants that (in my humble opinion) outshine Poinsettias any day of the week, and add beauty to your house year-round.



Eye Candy...



"Surprise"

Photo by Carol Losey

She says these lilies were a surprise as she had forgotten she even planted them.



Photo by Jo-Ann Clark of her garden last winter.

"Winter Garden"



"Weird But Lovely"...
Photo from one of the many "forwarded" things that have come my way!

Merry Christmas!
Season's Greetings!
Happy Hanukkah!



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



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