Many “Chime” In At ECAMGA Make And Take Workshop

On Tuesday evening, January 21, some 29 individuals gathered at the Eau Claire UW-Extension Office in Altoona for a “make and take” workshop. The workshop was conducted by Nancy Spak from Azure Glass Studio.

Each participant made at least one glass chime which they could use as garden art in their own garden or give as a gift. It was interesting to see the wide spectrum of creativity at work as those in attendance worked at their very personal creations.

The public was invited and many non-Master Gardeners were in attendance. In addition, Nancy had other samples of what could be created using glass and pottery for use as ‘garden art.’

The workshop filled up quickly and there was a waiting list so it is very likely that the ECAMGA will ask Nancy to present a second workshop sometime later in the year. So, if you did not get in on the event Tuesday but wanted to, keep an eye out as there will be another workshop likely to be held.

The evening included some tasty treats and a number of great door prizes were given out.

Also, those who were not in attendance might be interested in being on Nancy Spak’s emailing list to be notified of any workshops she would make available. Call her at 715-210-7005 to be put on the email list for any future workshops she might put on. (These would not be ECAMGA events but her own workshops.)
ECAMGA Board

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NOTE: The ECAMGA Board minutes no longer appears in the newsletter. You may access them by going to the website at eauclairemastergardeners.weebly.com

ECAMGA 2014 Calendar

Put these dates on your calendar!
All meetings at UW-Extension Office unless otherwise noted

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 – Garden Jeopardy Fun Night
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

“Gardens are a form of autobiography.”
-Sydney Eddison
ECAMGA Program Changes

Hello Master Gardener Volunteers,

Please read my message below about changes to volunteer projects accepted for MGV recertification. Feel free to contact me with questions.

**Realigning the Master Gardener Volunteer Program with the UWEX Mission**

Over the last several years, there have been decisions made at the state and federal levels regarding budgets and policies, which impact us at the local level. Also during this time, UW-Extension hired Mike Maddox as the new director of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program. One of his duties is to adapt the program to the changing resources and to implement the new rules. The overall goal is to maintain the vibrancy of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program. Initial focus was on updating and developing new training resources for county programs; now added is the need to focus on volunteer management policy, aligning the mission of program with UW-Extension priorities, and to remain accountable and communicate clearly our value to local, state, and federal partners.

The Wisconsin Master Gardener Volunteer Program, as a whole, is looking to focus volunteerism toward activities, which demonstrate an increased level of educational outreach and, additionally, reduce high labor volunteer activities. This focus will better align with the MGV program mission of assisting Extension faculty in achieving program goals. The Eau Claire County UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program and the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association are assisting with this process by creating an approved volunteer projects list.

**Mandated Reporter Training**

On December 19, 2011, Gov. Scott Walker signed Executive Order #54, which requires that all University of Wisconsin System employees and volunteers must report child abuse and neglect. The University of Wisconsin-Extension strives to provide a safe and secure learning and working environment for everyone involved in university activities. Children and other vulnerable audiences come into contact with UW-Extension employees and volunteers through various programs, camps, and events.

**Volunteer Projects**

UWEX Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Area created overarching themes for UWEX colleagues to target their programming efforts into. These themes include:

- Creating a robust agricultural and horticultural economy
- Support healthy and safe food systems

(Continued on page 8)

***Something To Look Forward To***

Tulip photo by Jo-Ann Clark; hibiscus photo taken by Carol Losey.
Upcoming Events

Level 2 Training: Branching Out

It’s time to talk trees! Trees are not only important parts of our gardens but play many important roles in our communities.

Level 2- Branching Out builds on the introductory topics of Level 1 and will expand into concepts related to community forestry issues. This program is targeted for an on-line audience. Cost is $30 per person if registration is received by March 15, 2014 ($40 thereafter).

Topics:
Dr. Laura Jull is slated to present on tree diversity and selection. Dr. Chris Williamson will update us about EAB; we’ll have a piece added on how MGVs should respond to EAB inquiries. Kimberly Miller is working with the WI DNR Urban Foresters for a module on the benefits of trees. Barb Larson will do a module on tree identification. Mike Maddox will be hosting 4 optional tree identification workshops at a couple awesome arboreta in the area.

For more information and to register go to: http://fyi.uwex.edu/wimastergardener/2013/12/09/level-2-training-branching-out/

How fair is a garden amid the trials and passions of existence.
-Benzamin Disraeli

Tree and Shrub ID in Winter -- Session One - February 22, 9:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. - 17 spots available. Session Two - February 26, 9:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. – 20 spots available.

Leaves are one of the biggest clues for tree and shrub identification. So what do you do when there are no leaves? Winter offers a special time to appreciate trees and shrubs in a totally different way. This program points out unique bud and bark characteristics of many of our native trees and shrubs, making identification possible even in winter! A PowerPoint presentation and hands-on session inside will be followed by an outdoor hike around the Reserve to apply what we learned. Some easy tips and a simple winter tree and bark key will be provided for participants to take home. Bring warm clothes and boots for the outdoor portion of the program.

Both sessions will be held at the Wise Nature Center. Cost: $5 for Friends, $8 for Nonmembers. Registration and full payment are required by Feb. 19, 2014. To register for this event go to: https://www-beavercrekreserv-rg.org.site.attfni.com/explore/event_registration.phtml?id=E27A08E1 or call 715-877-2212.
Upcoming Classes
Registration is not required for most classes but is appreciated.

Terrarium Workshop – Saturday, February 1 at 10:00 a.m.: Come discover why terrariums are growing so popular and how they are a great way to get kids excited about gardening. A simple glass container can be transformed into a self-sustained tropical oasis! Learn how to properly put together a glass terrarium that creates a perfect growing environment for plants, and adds life to your office desk, the nook in your kitchen or a child’s room. Cost: Bring your own container or purchase one here; only pay for what you take home.

Winter Pruning Class – Thursday, February 6 at 5:00 p.m.: Learn what and how to be pruning this time of the year. Fruit plants, roses, trees, and shrubs… What to do? We can help show you what to do. We will provide you with tips on how to force flowering branches to bloom as well as tips for the spring and summer months.

Sweetest Fairy Garden Workshop – Saturday, February 8 at 10:00 a.m.: Design and create the sweetest fairy miniature garden! With just a few plants, a selection of miniatures, and a touch of fairy dust you will have the sweetest little fairy garden! Choose from our wide variety of containers, plants, and miniature collections to create your own one-of-a-kind fairy garden! Fairy gardens make perfect indoor gardens, but can be enjoyed outdoors as well. Cost: bring your own container or purchase one here. Build your own; only pay for what you take home.

Baskets and Brunch – Saturday, February 16 at 10:00 a.m. and Saturday, March 1 & 8 at 10:00 a.m.: It may be winter, but we are thinking ahead to spring! Come enjoy a delicious breakfast brunch in the greenhouse. Then discover the joy of creating a hanging basket. We will be planting baby plants in your hanging basket. Then DTE will care for your baskets until they are ready to go outside. You’ll be able to pick up your baskets in May to take home and enjoy. Feel free to come in and check on the status as they grow. Cost: $50; includes breakfast buffet and one hanging basket; additional baskets may be planted at $40 per basket.

Hanging Basket Workshop – Thursday, February 20th and 27th at 5:00 p.m.: Break away from winter and come plant your very own custom hanging basket in the greenhouse! We will be planting baby plants in your hanging basket. Then DTE will care for your baskets until they are ready to go outside. You’ll be able to pick up your baskets in May to take home and enjoy. Feel free to come in and check on the status as they grow. Cost $40 per basket, everything is included.

6025 Arndt Lane, Eau Claire WI, 54701
715-833-1234 or E-mail - home@downtoearth.com
Website: http://www.downtoearth.com/index2.html

February Class
Bees in the Garden
February 7th, 2014 – 10:00

The Potting Shed
Garden and Floral
1717 Devney Dr.
Altoona, WI 54720

We will be discussing pesticide use and offer up natural alternatives as well as suggestions of great plants to attract bees, butterflies, and other garden creatures!

To register call - 715-831-4000
Think Spring Garden Seminar
Saturday, February 15, 2014
Chippewa Falls Middle School -- 750 Tropicana Blvd.
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Keynote Speaker:
Jim Schweibert - “The Lives of Butterflies”

Plus a choice among 12 breakout sessions and workshops
For more information contact
Chippewa County UW-Extension (715-726-7950) or contact Carol Buchholz at
cbbuck@citizens-tel.net.

Cost for seminar (including lunch) is $20 if registration received by February 7 or $25 if registration is received after February 7. Some of the workshops have additional cost for materials also.

Sponsored by Chippewa County UW-Extension
And Chippewa Valley Master Gardeners Association

Bits and Pieces

A Hug from Heaven by Joan Wester Anderson
(from Chicken Soup for the Gardeners Soul)

It was an autumn morning in 1971, shortly after our family moved into our first house. The children were upstairs unpacking boxes, and I was looking out the window at my father. He was moving around mysteriously on the front lawn. My parents lived nearby, and Dad had visited us several times already.

“What are you doing out there?” I called to him.

He looked up, smiling, “I’m making you a surprise.”

What kind of surprise? I wondered. Knowing my father, an engaging and imaginative man, it could be just about anything. But Dad would say no more, and caught up in the busyness of our new life, I eventually forgot about it.

Until one raw day in late March when, again, I glanced out the window. Dismal. Overcast. Little piles of dirty snow still stubbornly littering the lawn, as boots and mittens cluttered our closets. I had always hated winter—would it ever end?

And yet...was it a mirage? I strained to see what I thought was something pink peeking out of a drift. And was that a dot of blue across the yard, a small note of optimism in this gloomy scene? I grabbed my coat and headed outside for a closer look.

They were crocuses, not neatly marching along the house’s foundation in typical garden fashion (where I never could have seen them from the window), but scattered whimsically about the front lawn. Lavender, blue, yellow and my favorite pink—little faces bobbing in the bitter wind, they offered the hope I’d almost lost. “See?” they seemed to say. “You’ve survived the long dark winter. And if you hang on a little longer, life will be beautiful again.” (continued on page 7)
Continued from page 6…
that same encouragement every time they arrived. *Hard times almost over, light coming, hold on, hold on…* Then, apparently, the bulbs could produce no more. A spring came with only half the usual blooms. The next spring, about 1979, there were none. And none the years after that. I missed the crocuses, but my life was busier than ever, and I had never been much of a gardener. *I should ask Dad to come over and plant new bulbs,* I thought. But I never did.

My father died suddenly, on a beautiful day in October 1985. We grieved deeply, but cleanly, because there was no unfinished business. We had no regrets or lingering guilt. Our family had always had a strong faith, and we leaned on it now. Of course, Dad was in heaven. Where else would such a beloved person go? He was still a part of us; in fact, he could probably do even more for his family now that he was closer to God.

And if I wondered sometimes, just a little, about where and how Dad was, no one else ever knew. We suffered. We handled our pain. We laughed and cried together. Life went on.

Four years passed, and on a dismal day in spring 1989, I found myself running errands and feeling depressed. *Winter blues,* I told myself. *You get them every year. It’s chemistry.*

Perhaps.

But it was something else, too. Once again I found myself thinking about my father. This was not unusual—we often talked about him, reminiscing, and enjoying our memories. But now, in the car, my old concern surfaced. How was he? *I know that I know that I know,* I told God in the familiar shorthand I often use. *But do ~You think You could send a sign, just something little, that Dad is home safe with You?*

As I turned in to our driveway, I suddenly slowed, stopped and stared at the lawn. Small gray mounds of melting snow. Muddy grass. And there, bravely waving in the wind, one pink crocus.

*Hold on, keep going, light is coming soon…* There was no way, I knew, that a flower could bloom from a bulb more than eighteen years old, one that had not blossomed in over a decade. But there the crocus was, like a hug from heaven, and tears filled my eyes as I realized its significance. God had heard. And He loved me, so much that He had sent the reassurance I needed in a tenderly personal way, so there would be no doubt.

The pink crocus bloomed for only one day, April 4. My father’s birthday.
ECAMGA Changes continued from page 3…

The vast majority of Master Gardener Volunteer efforts fit these categories (and what doesn’t clearly fit here may find a home under themes in our other program areas, such as 4-H, Family Living, and Community Development). Though we are attempting to be as inclusive as possible with all existing projects, some projects may not be able to continue as-is. Project criteria to consider include:

- Does the project address one or more of UWEX’s themes?
- Does the project meet our Civil Rights programming mandates? This is primarily a “behind the scenes” thing that Master Gardeners are not expected to know; as the Extension educator, it is important I take the necessary steps to be inclusive with our programming as federal funding prohibits discrimination, based on Civil Rights laws.
- Is the projects goals and expectations clearly defined, as well as volunteer responsibilities? This partially addresses liability concerns, but also ties studies citing increased volunteer satisfaction and retention if volunteer projects are meaningful and individual’s roles are clearly defined.

It’s very important to know what the impact of our volunteer program is having in the community and if they’re benefiting UW-Extension programming and the UWEX mission. It’s my hope that having volunteers working on a more focused list of volunteer programs will equal greater impacts in the community.

Starting March 2014, volunteer hours used towards recertification must be:
- Completed in Wisconsin (There may be some exceptions for example, presenting at the International Master Gardener Conference).
- Be an approved Eau Claire County UW-Extension volunteer project.

At this time we are not accepting recertification hours that are completed as a board member for other organizations besides the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association. We certainly think these service hours benefit the community and we aren’t discouraging anyone from continuing those services.

What if my current volunteer project isn’t on the list? Please contact me if you feel your current volunteer project isn’t on the list. It’s possible that we just need to add an educational component.

**Eau Claire County UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program Volunteer Projects List As of January 3, 2014**

Answer horticulture questions at the UW-Extension office; Youth Gardens at North River Front, McDonough, and Bolton Transitional Apartments; Session Street Assisted Living Garden; Jeffers Road Rental Gardens; Forest Street Community Gardens; Ask-A-Master Gardener-Booth; Writing articles for the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association newsletter; Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association Board; Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association Committees; Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association Winter Garden Seminar; Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association Plant Sale; Wisconsin Master Gardener Association Board; Schlegelmilch Garden; Beaver Creek Reserve; Lower Long Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District; Giving presentations; Working with school gardens or other environmental education programs; Eau Claire EcoTeams; and Giving garden tours that have an educational component.
Sneak Peek: New Level 1 training materials

New online lectures will be available in 2014 to compliment the readings in the MG manual for Level 1 Training. Here are a few of the latest to be added:

- Botany: Introduction to nomenclature
- Entomology: Ecological roles of insects
- Soils: Introduction to soils

For more info go to: fyi.uwex.edu/wimastergardener/2013/12/03/sneak-peak-new-level-1-training-materials/

So much for trusting old and formerly reliable sources....