

**Tenured Faculty Review for
Sharon Morrisey, Milwaukee County Consumer Horticulture Agent for
2013 - 2017
100% Horticulture
November 28, 2017**

Milwaukee County is Wisconsin's largest county with a population of 1.7 million in the metro area. I have been in this position for 25 plus years. My programming has been mostly with large audiences through the mass media and with the largest group of Master Gardener volunteers (MGV) in the state. I also lead the plant diagnostic services for Milwaukee Co UWEX. These are the three areas addressed in this, my final TFR. I am retiring on February 1, 2018. This review then is looking back over my accomplishments and the evolution of horticulture programs in Milwaukee County.

Mass Media

Print

- **Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:** I have submitted a monthly garden calendar of tasks for yard and garden since in 1994 (23 years). It appeared in the Home section of the Sunday paper (now called Fresh) until 2011 at which time it was moved to JSOnline.com. It is also shared with a group of 14 individuals throughout the state who then either post it to their website or print it in newsletters, etc.
- **Wisconsin Gardening magazine:** I am one of three UWEX horticulture educators who write a bi-monthly report of horticulture topics for the 3 regions of the state. The first regional reports appeared in January of 2012 (6 years).

Radio

- **WPR show "Garden Talk"** with Larry Meiller: I am asked to be Larry's guest on this live, call-in radio show approximately once every 2 months. One year when the show was broadcasted live from the State Fair, I was honored to be asked to be the guest for this special broadcast. That was the only time he and I have ever seen each other face-to-face. I was also asked to be the guest for the show during pledge week and was told it was because I was a popular guest.
- **WISN-AM Radio "Yard and Garden Show":** This weekly, hour-long, live, call-in radio show, sponsored by Stein Gardens and Gifts garden centers aired on Saturday mornings aired from 2001 until 2010 (10 years) . Four UWEX staff served as the guest experts in a weekly rotation. The others were Dr. Brian Hudelson, Plant Pathology Specialist; Dr. Patti Nagai, Racine Co. UWEX Horticulture Educator (now Emeritus); and Lis Friemuth, then the Walworth Co. Horticulture Educator (now running her own business calling herself "The Garden Hoe". Unfortunately, she was kept on the program after leaving Extension representing her business).

Television

- **TMJ 4-TV:** I started as a weekly guest appearing live on the morning news program in 1993. I discussed timely horticultural topics using props when possible. In 1996 I asked 2

other UWEX horticulture educators to each cover one of the weekly shows. I dropped out in 1998 (6 years) and the other two took turns doing it. I don't know when it was that they changed their morning line-up.

- **MPTV:** For the show "Outdoor Wisconsin", I became one of the 5 people who appeared in pre-recorded segments on this popular magazine-type show in 1993. Mine would appear about once a month and covered plant related environmental topics about both natural areas and home grounds. I also submitted an article for their bi-monthly newsletter until 2001 (9 years).
- Also on MPTV "The Lawn and Garden Show" was introduced as a brand new show in 1996, hosted by long-time MPTV host Jim Peck and Melinda Myers, former Home Horticulture Agent for Milwaukee Co. UWEX. I provided a short, how-to segment each week. The show aired for 4 years.
- **Fox6-TV:** This 20 year- long partnership began in 1997 with TV personality, Gus Gnorski as a tour of local gardens visiting a different one each week throughout the gardening season airing live on the Wake-up News. Of course, I selected to visit mostly UWEX MGV and community gardens. In 1998, we created a garden on the studio grounds where we aired live, in 3-4 segments every Monday April through October for the next 19 years. Originally called Gus' Green Thumb Garden until Gus' retirement in 2009 when the segments changed to "In The Garden". I consider this garden a UWEX Demonstration Fruit and Vegetable Garden. These segments have consistently had the highest ratings of the entire morning news show. The webpage for these segments includes video of each segment which are kept on the website throughout the year and beyond. They mention UWEX at the opening of every segment and display our logo prominently on the website. See the webpage and view videos at: <http://fox6now.com/category/wakeup/in-the-garden/>. Viewership is estimated at 43,000 per segment.

Master Gardener Volunteer Program

Starting in 1977 with a training class of 24 participants, this program has grown to almost 500 certified members in 2017 with over 600 members of SEWMG, Inc. Each fall 125 new trainees take the 13 week-long Level 1 training. While participants have always come from both Milwaukee and Waukesha counties, the program was only through Milwaukee Co. UWEX. In 2001 a partnership with Waukesha Co. added a second Level 1 course with assistance from their ¾ time Consumer Horticulture Educator, Ann Wied. I still lead the program and all of the recordkeeping and volunteer coordination is done by Milwaukee Co. staff. Ann and I work together on educational programs for MGVs and make policy decisions together.

SEWMG, Inc.

Our non-profit support group whose mission is "to provide horticultural education and experiences to supplement the educational programs of the University of Wisconsin Extension, guided by UW-Extension educators" is truly committed to that mission of assist UW-Extension in delivering research-based educational programming under UWEX direction. Their structure includes a Board of Directors with officers and a long list of standing committees which provide leadership for many activities and projects. Financially supported by their

extremely successful Perennial Plant Sale for the last 22 years, they generously support everything from garden projects to educational programs for MGVs. They also donate funds to the Milwaukee Co. UWEX office and all four of the UWEX horticulture and urban agriculture educators in both counties.

UWEX MGV Training

- Level 1 training replaced General Training and is the result of evolution of the statewide MGV Program. Class enrollment has been 125 each year since 1998. When I started in 1992, General Training was only offered once a year in a portion of the state and was rotated around the state. The larger metropolitan areas including Milwaukee-Waukesha, Racine-Kenosha, Fond du Lac and Dane, offered Specialty Training instead every year which covered one of 4 subject matter areas in rotation. The 8, 6-hour sessions required volunteers to perform 50 hours of service in return. General Training had been developed by the state specialists running the MGV program and in 1996, we offered it as videotapes from distance education programs produced in Madison and recordings of Bob Tomesh giving the lectures to a camera. MGVs complained about the format so I provided live lectures for some topics and eventually all of the topics. This course was 36 hours of training and therefore MGVs were required to perform 36 hours of service. Those who took both General and Specialty training in one year ended up owing 86 hours of service. Currently, the annual requirement for all MGVs is 24 hours.
- Volunteers were not really required to submit timesheets when I arrived in 1992. Instead, the MGV serving as volunteer coordinator wrote down what she remembered that everyone did. I don't think it was even reported to the state! We have developed our own timesheet (instead of using the state MGV program one) and over time it has evolved into a very sophisticated Excel spreadsheet (or fillable-form for those without Excel). These are recorded onto a detailed spreadsheet that provides me with ALL of the activities reported by EVERY MGV and includes their names and hours reported for that activity. I worked with a very talented MGV to develop the format. She also enters every activity on every timesheet to create the report ([Exhibit 1](#)). Or open the timesheet at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/reporting-your-hours/>.
- Level 2 training replaces the old Specialty training. The same topics plus a few more are the focus of these locally developed courses consisting of 4, 3-hour sessions. UWEX specialists and local experts are scheduled to conduct the sessions. I have conducted some of the sessions on topics that are my strengths.
- Level 3 training is not specified by the state program and allows for many other types of educational programs to be created. These are intended to be hands-on workshops or just single session on a single topic. For the SEWMGs I offer an annual Speakers' Workshop and an Educational Focus presentation on the topic presented through the major display created for the spring Realtors Home and Garden Show. I offered the first pruning workshop in 1994. Then in 2000, Ann Wied and I partnered to conduct pruning workshops in 2 – 3 locations every year, a total of approximately 39 sessions over 18 years. I also conduct a training for Plant Health Advisors, the MGVs who assist with plant diagnostics in Milwaukee County. In 2016 I developed a manual for this training and revised it in 2017.

- I developed and conducted 3 Summer Shortcourses between 2007 and 2009. Topics included Trees and Shrubs, Perennials, and Lawns. Three-hour sessions were offered once a month May through August and included a one-hour Powerpoint presentation and 2 hours on the grounds of Boerner Botanical Gardens. They were held in the evening to accommodate the MGVs who could not take Level 2 trainings offered during the day. For the Trees and Shrubs course, I developed 52 distinct factsheets on different landscape plants which are currently available on the SEWMG website at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/training/training-materials/> (Exhibit 2).

Volunteer Service

- In 2017, 498 SEWMGs volunteered 34,647 hours of service and participated in 12,264 hours of continuing education.
- The Volunteer Service Policy for SEWMGs (Exhibit 3) was co-written with Ann Wied in an effort to make it easier for MGVs to decide for themselves which activities would qualify for credit and which wouldn't. It spells out the 3 basic criteria that must be met by every activity. All approved activities should also fit into 1 of 6 categories which are aligned with the state MGV program scheme of community education, youth and support:
 - Community Support
 - § Approved Public Garden Projects
 - § Public Presentations
 - § Public Events
 - Youth
 - § Activities
 - § Approved Gardens (SEWMGs take lead responsibility for these partner gardens)
 - Support of SEWMG, UWEX and WIMGA.
- The Garden Projects category has 3 additional criteria to meet including having at least 50% of plants labeled; providing educational programs, signage or literature; having UWEX and SEWMGs recognized by the partner and acknowledged in the garden. There is also a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that details the roles and responsibilities of the partner and the SEWMGs (<https://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/approved-garden-projects/>). It also explains under what circumstances UWEX may need to terminate the relationship. It must be signed by a representative of the partner and the SEWMG co-chair for the garden project. There are currently 11 gardens in Milwaukee County and 13 in Waukesha including such partners as Ronald McDonald House, Milwaukee County Zoo, Wisconsin State Fair in Milwaukee Co. and Ten Chimneys Historical Site (summer home of Broadway stars Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontane), Sharon Lynn Wilson Center for the Arts and the Waukesha Memorial Hospital in Waukesha.
- § The Garden Support Committee of the SEWMGs assists garden projects in many ways. They provide garden signs and plant stakes (stainless steel) for free to each garden each year. They also provide waterproof labels and a laser printer for their use. They hold a Garden Project Co-Chair Forum each spring that explains the procedures of the garden for each garden. They also offer a Volunteer Opportunity Fair in January with over 70

booths set-up and staffed by volunteers with those projects for the purpose of recruitment of new, MGVs-in-Training. In 2017, Ann Wied and I worked with this committee to develop a Garden Project Co-Chair Handbook (<https://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/approved-garden-projects/>).

- § Public Events includes 2 major garden-related events in Milwaukee Co. – the Realtors' Home and Garden Show and the Wisconsin State Fair 'Model Backyard' garden. For the Realtors' Show each year a topic is chosen for the display in the booth. This is considered the educational focus for the year. Working with MGVs, the booth space is designed to have exhibits that show aspects of the topic. I create the format and provide the content for a brochure which condenses and summarizes the topic from existing UWEX factsheets and publications. We have been incredibly fortunate to have a few talented, professional graphic artists who then design the motif and graphics for the main display panels and the brochure (Exhibit 4). I use that as a template for Powerpoint slides and create a presentation to both train the MGVs who will be staffing the booth and for public presentations by myself and the MGVs. We have produced 8 booth/brochure/presentations in the last 8 years. Literally thousands of these brochures are distributed throughout the metro area every year.
- § The 'Model Backyard' garden at State Fair Park has an average of 50,000 visitors during the Fair each year. Throughout the garden are exhibits with signage to make them educational and over 50% of the plants are labelled. Educational components include butterfly and pollinator gardening, composting, rain gardens, native plants, shade gardening, and accessible gardening. There is also a hardy cactus and succulent garden installed and maintained by the Southeast Wisconsin Cactus and Succulent Society.

Volunteer Opportunity Directory

With over 100 opportunities for MGVs to volunteer it can be intimidating and daunting especially to new MGVs. Over the last 1 ½ years, Ann Wied and I have worked with 2 MGVs to develop this directory to provide a listing of the possibilities along with details such as a description, the location and MGV contact persons. It is set up to correlate with the format of the Volunteer Service Policy and the timesheet so as to further reinforce that structure. Other important information related to volunteering is included. It will be distributed for the first time to the MGV trainees in Level 1 Training this fall.

Service Enterprise

The Milwaukee Volunteer Center delivers a program for this initiative which is designed to assist organizations with volunteers to better leverage those volunteers and the community resources for them to be part of living your mission. The six session course leads you to creating an action plan to guide the improvement of your volunteer program. To become a certified Service Enterprise the organization must create a binder of documentation taught in the course. Two MGVs, our Office Director and myself participated for over a year and attained certification in February of 2017. The Volunteer Opportunity Directory is part of a large goal of producing a Volunteer Handbook for our MGV program.

Volunteer Recognition

The first volunteer recognition program was held in 2006 to thank all the MGVs for their service and to recognize leadership service by the SEWMG board and standing committees. It also served as Graduation for the MGVs that became certified that year. The entire Horticulture and Urban Ag program at Milwaukee Co. UWEX and Ann Wied played indispensable roles in these events which were conducted annually through 2016 - 11 in all. While general attendance was between 120 and 150, each year it seemed that those that we were there to recognize were out of town (how do you say "snowbird") to the point where in 2016 it was actually embarrassing. Now, during the SEWMG Annual Holiday Party in December as part of the program we briefly recognize graduates, SEWMG board, and MGVs who have accumulated 1,000 hours or more.

Plant Diagnostics

Milwaukee County UWEX has had LTE staff to provide diagnostic services through the Milwaukee Co. office since before my time. After many years on the job, doing a great job communicating accurate information to the public, deteriorating health and apathy made it necessary for me to terminate that longtime member of our staff in the end of 2015. UWEX HR would not allow us to repost the position as it had been for a couple decades. Their way would be to have a specialist but at a pay level we could not afford. So changes had to be made to the diagnostic services in Milwaukee County.

MGVs trained to diagnose plant problems, called Plant Health Advisors (PHAs) have assisted UWEX staff since shortly after I started with Extension in 1992. Now, they were going to have to be the primary diagnosticians. I provided in-depth training to them in 2016 and 2017 resulting in the current manual.

We stopped having posted office hours for diagnostics when volunteers would need to come to our office. Instead, our phone message tells callers to leave a detailed message and provides them with our PHA e-mail address if they would prefer. We also developed a procedure for PHAs to retrieve voice mail messages from their cell phone or home phone and to call back without having their own number divulged. Similarly for e-mail, they were trained to access the Outlook system from their home computers and handle e-mail questions. From January 2016 until July, I supervised them until a new position was approved for a Plant Diagnostic Services Coordinator who would coordinate and oversee the activities of the PHAs answering the questions. The position was filled in August of 2016.

I also serve as the Director of the UWEX Horticulture Center at Boerner Botanical Gardens (BBG). The Center was created as part of a BBG-UWEX-Friends of BBG educational partnership formed over several years at the turn of the millennium while a new education and visitor center was being constructed. The Hort Center, a regional project of the UWEX Horticulture Educators in the "Quad Counties" was occupied in 2004 and a grant from Senator Herb Kohl's office supported a Program Assistant for it until 2009. At that time, the participation of the other 3 Quad Co. terminated and I took on the Director role and the SEWMGs took on managerial roles in addition to providing diagnostic services. Now, our Plant Diagnostic Services

Coordinator also oversees PHA activities at the Center. PHAs staff are in the Hort Center from May through September, Monday through Friday from 10:00 – 2:00. They have walk-in clients as well as inquiries by phone and e-mail.

Other Service

Teamwork

Throughout the above description I have mentioned colleagues I have worked with extensively; Ann Wied from Waukesha Co. UWEX, the regional Horticulture Educators involved with the Hort Center, and those who shared the WISN radio program.

I have been a member of the Horticulture Team since its inception and served on the Consumer Horticulture workgroup as well as the Horticulture Repository workgroup.

Outside of Extension, virtually every activity I am involved with as well as those of the MGVs includes a partner. We are in the process of creating an accurate list of community partners of Consumer Horticulture including names of contact people and their e-mail addresses. There are currently 99 partners on the list.

Contribution to the University and Profession

As a member of the DALs, I have held positions on the SRP committee, Nominating committee, and am currently on FTAC (reviewing 7 portfolios in November and 10 in December!).

Although I am not a member of a horticultural professional organization (not sure what that would be), my contributions to the profession have been through the university research-based information I have disseminated to thousands of lay persons as well as professionals via the mass media and the hundreds of public presentations I have made to groups throughout the state.

Applied Research and Publications

I have not done any formal research in my position. I have set-up dozens of trials at the Fox 6 garden attempting to control variables and to have a control. Through them I can inform the public about the lack of validity of such simple trials where conclusions are often drawn when there is insufficient evidence of such.

I have authored numerous pieces of literature only two of which are peer reviewed Wisconsin Garden Factsheets: "Wisconsin Lawn Care Calendar" (XHT1147) and "Organic Lawn Fertilization" (XHT1197). The remainder are educational brochures and leaflets through which I can organize information in a different way so it makes more sense to the gardening public. The most popular and most frequently distributed leaflet is "The Spring and Late Vegetable Planting Schedule" (Exhibit 5). The brochures which accompany the educational focus topics for the last 8 years are definitely the best (see Exhibit 4). Before I retire, I am sending them to Susan Mahr, Assistant Director of the state MGv program for her to make changes that will allow other county office and entities to personalize them with their own contact information. They are currently in a graphics program that doesn't allow editing without the program. They will then be posted to the Horticulture Repository of the Hort Team and to the Wisconsin Master Gardener website.

Administrative

I serve as the Horticulture and Urban Agriculture (HUAG) program coordinator, a position in our office that requires me to keep my program members informed of office, county and state issues as requested. Our program includes 2 FTE educators, the Plant diagnostic services Coordinator and 8 other LTEs to staff the rental garden program, the beekeeping program, the MGV program assistant and volunteer coordinator, machine operator, repairperson and builder for the Urban Ag and rental garden programs. I instituted monthly meetings that begin with a potluck lunch which gets everyone there. It is the only way to be aware of what all of the members of our program are doing.

Major Career Accomplishments

- On the air from the Fox6 Green Thumb Garden for 3 segments every Monday from mid-April through mid-October for 19 years. (That's 1,368 appearances!)
- Restructured delivery of diagnostic services for Milwaukee Co. through the Horticulture Helpline and the UWEX Horticulture Center at BBG. Developed a PHA Training Manual.
- Developed and delivered over 100 presentations, 47 of which are available to MGV speakers to use to make public presentations.
- Developed factsheets and brochures which have been distributed to thousands of people throughout Wisconsin.
- Created 54 separate factsheets on trees and shrubs for a summer short course for MGVs.
- Produced 8 professionally designed displays with accompanying brochures and PowerPoint presentations.
- Expanded the MGV program from less than a hundred participants to almost 500 certified volunteers working in over 300 activities every year.
- Developed an organizational structure for the MGV program with training at different levels, volunteer and continuing education policies, garden project documentation and partner MOUs, and a timesheet in Excel specific to the activities of the SEWMGs.
- Produced a Volunteer Opportunity Directory to provide more detailed information about all SEWMG activities especially targeting the MGVs-in-Training.
- Created the 'Model Backyard' exhibit at State Fair Park which is staffed by MGVs throughout the Wisconsin State Fair and has an average of 50,000 visitors.

Bidding Farewell

Looking back over a 25 year career with Extension in a large urban county, there are too many memories to recount. Although I have seldom been able to actually show the impact of so many of my endeavors, especially with the mass media and the hundreds of one-time encounters at public programs and events. However, the demand, popularity and success with hundreds of programs along with the myriad of rave reviews, positive and unsolicited comments and the recognition by the public everywhere I go satisfies me that I have had an impact no matter how small or large on many, many lives.

Supplemental Information/Exhibits

Exhibit 1: SEWMG Timesheet (Excel)

Exhibit 2: Trees and Shrubs short course factsheet on hydrangeas

Exhibit 3: SEWMG Program Volunteer Service and Continuing Education Policies

Exhibit 4: "Trouble-free Tomatoes" brochure to accompany major display

Exhibit 5: "The Spring and Late Vegetable Garden Planting Schedule" produced in 1992.