



Sandy Manning

sandymanning@gmail.com

Janet Wintersberger

jwintersberger@wi.rr.com

Ann Weronke

aeweronke@earthlink.net

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T. L. C. for Trees (Tree L. C.)

by Sharon Morrissey Consumer Hort. Agent, MCCE

We share our planet with these very special creatures. If we "care a whole awful lot", to quote the Lorax, we will learn to give them T.L.C. Their virtues are well-known. They improve air quality, sequester CO₂, provide habitats for wildlife, and reduce storm water runoff. Their presence reduces energy costs for our homes and increases our property values by 15–25%.

Trees are generally misunderstood. Their roots extend way beyond the "dripline" where water drips off the outer edges of their canopies. All of their absorbing roots are only 6 – 12 inches deep. This area dries out without rain so even mature trees need watering. In forest settings, trees make it without watering because the soil is shaded and mulched with annual loads of leaf litter which retains moisture. Those leaves also enrich the soil as they decompose and release their nutrients. Forest trees are also always planted at the right depth from seeds that grow where they fall.

In man-made landscapes, trees are often mistreated. We unknowingly plant them too deeply putting them in our lawns where the grass uses most of the nitrogen. Over their roots we mow, play, park, pile and drive, compacting the soil and squeezing out the air they need to breathe.

Basic Tree L.C.

Planting, it is said, is a tree's most important 10 minutes. Recent science shows we must remove any soil covering the root flare at the base of the trunk and then plant to that depth or slightly higher by not disturbing the soil in the bottom of the planting hole. Work up soil within an area 2 – 3 times the width of the root ball. Once in place, remove as much of the burlap and wire basket as possible without damaging the root ball. Replace the same unimproved soil you took out. Even fertilizer is not needed. Settle the soil around the roots with water not your feet. Mulch the whole area with 3" inches of shredded bark keeping it away

from the trunk. On windy sites, put 2 stakes into undisturbed soil. Attach them loosely to the trunk with wide webbing, NOT wire even if it is protected with garden hose. Remove all supports after a year.

Water new trees every day or so if it's hot and dry, otherwise weekly. Even mature trees need about 6 gallons of water per 100 sq.ft. each week. Use an overhead sprinkler, a soaker hose, a hose on a trickle or a root feeder to provide it. Evergreens need watering until the ground freezes because they use it all winter long.

Mulch applied 3" thick over as much of the root zone as possible reduces competition with grass for water and nutrients and keeps lawn mowers from damaging the trunk. Mulch holds in moisture, cushions compaction, and adds organic matter as it decomposes. It must not be touching the trunk at all.

Fertilize young trees with 1 lb. actual nitrogen a year either all at once or split into two applications. In urban conditions, topsoil has been removed leaving only the subsoil which is compacted, poorly drained and infertile. Mature trees do not need fertilizing unless they show symptoms such as smaller, paler leaves or a thinning leaf canopy. Pale leaves with dark veins are called chlorotic and indicate a deficiency of iron or manganese and a need for soil or nutrient treatments.

Pruning a young tree to develop good structure or to correct structural problems in older trees requires some knowledge of tree anatomy and the physiological response to it. For young trees, retain only branches that are evenly distributed around the trunk with ample space above and below each other. Cuts should preserve the branch collar and be made at a 90-degree angle to the bark branch ridge. Branches 1" in diameter or more should be cut using the 3-step method. Pruning cuts do not need dressings or paint except oaks or elms if they

(Continued on page 2)



Trees continued from page 1

need to be pruned during the growing season. Large, dangerous projects are best done by an I.S.A. Certified arborists.

Common Problems

Exposed surface roots make mowing or walking or sitting under a tree difficult. They mostly occur where the soil is compacted. At the same time, older trees shade out the grass underneath and the soil starts to wash away. The best treatment is to cover the area with up to 4" of woodchips or shredded bark. If desired, you can create a shade garden of herbaceous perennials between the roots. Never saw off the tops of the roots, or cover them with any extra soil or build a raised planting bed over them. These actions will eventually kill the tree!

Stem girdling roots wind around a tree's trunk either at the surface or just below. This eventually

restricts growth of the trunk in that area. The first sign is the absence of a root flare so that the trunk goes straight into the ground like a telephone pole. As a result, over time an area of the canopy may become thin and weak and some branches may actually die. The primary cause of girdling roots is deep planting and not correcting bad root structure before the tree is planted. Some species of maple and lindens tend to form girdling roots more readily. Removal of extra soil from the root flare and removal of the offending root can benefit young trees but hire an I.S.A. Certified arborist to do the job.

Our new brochure, display and presentation will have many great photos to show all of this and more. Everyone should learn more about Tree L.C. Our trees will thank us for years to come.

This is the topic of the display and brochure for our booth at the Realtors' Home and Garden Show starting March 15th.

Anyone scheduled to staff the Home Show booth should try to attend my presentation on this topic on March 6th at 6:30 p.m. at the MCCE office.

Everyone is welcome. (No pre-registration required.)

Solving the mystery of THE DIG

by MGVs Ann Weronke & Janet Wintersberger

Just what is a dig? Why is it done? Where does it happen? When does it happen? And how does it happen?

These questions befuddle first-year master gardener volunteers. However, it will not take them long to learn the answers which become abundantly clear when attending their first dig. Please consider becoming a master gardener "digger."

A dig is just that. MGVs gather in a 'donor's garden, grab shovels, turn the soil, uproot the perennials, divide them, return some clumps to the garden and transport the 'extras' via sleds to be handled by other volunteers at a Pot-a-Thon. The donor garden is then restored to its normal state.

Perennials form the basis of our annual plant sale – SEWMG's only fundraiser which funds our 52 garden projects, provides support to the extension horticulture programs, and our own organization.

These digs occur in the early spring usually in April with a few days of May sometimes included. Many April weeks are filled with digs, often 4 to 5 per week. Although weather sometimes interferes with the schedule, MGVs are a mighty force to be reckoned with.

Who is a donor? Someone whose garden has become overcrowded by perennials. Perennials are ideal to cultivate because they can be divided every three years or so. Our own members often offer their gardens for digs and others in the community contact us and want to participate. It's a win/win.

The garden sites are identified in late winter. Patty Witt and members of the plant sale committee survey the potential donor gardens and determines the size and scope of the dig. By March, the schedule is developed.

Some digs are small and only a few MGVs dig and retrieve the plants. Those plants are transported for a Pot-A-Thon later on. Other digs are enormous and volunteers who are willing to get down and dirty are asked to help. Many hands make shorter work. Those larger digs are become sites for the Pot-A-Thon gatherings.

Planning for the next year's plant sale starts shortly after one ends. While memories are still fresh, a list of "desirable plants" is created. It includes those that sold well or were most sought after and it excludes those that didn't.



News from the County Office

by Sharon Morrissey Consumer Hort. Agent, MCCE

Initiatives for 2013

Our Milwaukee County UW-Extension Consumer Horticulture program led by Sharon Morrissey will pursue two new initiatives in 2013 – cultivating partners in the urban agriculture movement in Milwaukee and youth gardening.

In response to the evolution of the urban agriculture movement in metro Milwaukee and the increasing interest in sustainable gardening and food production in urban areas, UWEX Consumer Horticulture in Milwaukee County is actively cultivating partnerships with local organizations and communities to provide education in sustainable practices especially related to vegetable gardening.

This spring, arrangements are being made for some of our MGV Master Composters to offer two composting workshops for the public in partnership with Kompost Kids, a local organization whose mission is “to educate the public, individuals, businesses and institutions about the benefits of compost and to reclaim organic materials from landfills to create soil for community-based agriculture projects.” MGVs are welcome to attend. Dates to be announced.

UWEX will also be working with Victory Gardens Initiative for training VGI garden mentors and providing MGVs to be mentors. VGI sells 4'x8' raised beds to local residents which are then constructed by volunteers during their Spring Blitz in May. Garden mentors are offered to all new garden owners. We will help train these mentors and MGVs can serve as mentors if they wish. Dates to be announced.

Youth gardening will be expanded during 2013 by actively seeking opportunities for MGVs to do programs with youth through 4H and scouts. We also hope to expand Gardening with Kids, the existing SEWMG youth program that offers programs through municipal recreation departments. One of our long-term goals is to run a Jr. Master Gardener program in Milwaukee County with the help of SEWMG volunteers.

If you have experience in 4-H or scouts or if you are interested in helping to plan or conduct these programs, please contact Sharon Morrissey (414)256-4660 and watch for planning meeting announcements. If interested in helping conduct programs with Gardening with Kids, contact MGV Jane Schneider (414)425-8858.

Educational Focus Presentation

“T.L.C. for Trees” is our focus this year (see article on page 1). Sharon Morrissey will make a presentation on Wednesday, March 6th from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. which will cover all of the material included on the new display being developed for the Realtors’ Home and Garden Show. Hear the latest recommendations on planting, watering, pruning, fertilizing and pest management. It will include important information on problems we can avoid with proper care such as girdling roots, exposed root damage, care of damaged branches and trunks and what it might mean if your tree’s leaves are smaller, paler and fewer. There is no pre-registration for this presentation. (Get some volunteer time in to help set-up and tear-down the room that day. Contact Sharon for more information.)

This presentation is highly recommended for all volunteers scheduled to staff the booth at the Home Show and for those who may give public presentations on tree care.

Get on the bus to the Capital

On April 9th UW-Extension is arranging meetings with our local legislators in Madison. Small groups representing different programs will have appointments to meet legislators and explain what impact these programs have on their lives and why they are worth their support. You may participate in one of two orientation sessions by phone prior to the visit to help you prepare. We will start at 9:15 a.m. at the Milwaukee County office for a continental breakfast and a briefing. Lunch will be at the Concourse Hotel in Madison. Each person will visit two legislators between 1:30 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. We will return to Milwaukee by 5:00 p.m. promptly.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Sharon Morrissey.

Garden Workdays

The flurry of activity in the MGV approved garden projects will begin shortly. Many have already announced workdays. Watch your e-mails for these announcements. The first workday at each garden usually requires a lot of help. Attending several of these is a great way to find out if there’s a garden you are particularly interested in doing more volunteer service in. You are also encouraged to contact any of the garden chairs to find out more about volunteering there. A list of approved gardens is on the SEWMG website at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/volunteers/>.



Youth gardening will be expanded during 2013 by actively seeking opportunities for MGVs to do programs with youth through 4H and scouts.



President's Corner by MGV President Kris Jensen

The next twelve weeks are important to the future of SEWMG and our mission. During March, April, and May of each year, Master Gardener Volunteers come together to produce the yearly SEWMG Perennial Plant Sale. The proceeds of this sale enable us to support the horticulture education programs of the University of Wisconsin Extension with direct donations, and to support approved gardens and projects with our annual budget. The sale, all the workdays and Pot -A-Thons provide a great opportunity for fellowship, learning, and fun while earning volunteer hours.

The 2013 Plant Sale will be held on **Saturday, May 18th**, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the DNR area of State Fair Park. The Plant Sale Committee is already hard at work, and its members can use your help. What can you do?

Visit the SEWMG web page and select Perennial Plant Sale from the list on the left. Or use this link: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/perennial-plant-sale/>. Here you will find the latest information on workdays and Pot -A-Thons.

If you would like to donate plants, please read the [Desired Plant Listing by Category](#). Then contact any member of the Plant Sale Committee to learn how to donate your plants. Committee members are listed in this article and near the bottom of the web page.

Wondering what a Pot -A-Thon is like? Come on out and join the fun! Come early if you'd like to help unload the trailer and set up tables. Before the Pot-A-Thons, there are "digs." Some digs are done on a large scale volunteer effort asking all of us to help while a smaller crew may do the digging at other more compact sites. MGVs who would like to help with small digs should contact MGV Patty Witt. At the Pot-A-Thons, some MGVs divide the plants, others pot them, and some put labels on the pots. Or you could mix the fafard (potting mix) with water, make sure potting tables are stocked with trays and pots, count

plants, or move trays of plants. Whatever your interest, experience, and physical ability, there is a job for you! As an added benefit, you also get to see some very impressive gardens!

Plant sale week is always busy. If you have a truck, van, or SUV, you could help transport trays of plants from Pot -A-Thons sites to State Fair Park. Or you could work at the DNR area, checking in plants and organizing them for the sale. Or you could prepare food for the hungry workers during that week.

Friday evening before plant sale day is the Master Gardener pre-sale. MGVs get first pick of the plants (with some restrictions) and may bid on items in the silent auction. MGV Mary Redlinger is in charge of the auction; if you have items to donate or would like to help out, please contact Mary. Auction items vary from year to year, usually including some gorgeous specimen plants and some lovely pieces of garden art. All proceeds from the pre-sale and silent auction go to SEWMG.

Sale day! Hundreds of people come out to purchase the thousands of plants we have carefully divided, potted, and nurtured. We need several hundred of you to help them! We need greeters to welcome customers and give them sleds (our plant-hauling device of choice,) and guides to help customers find the plants they want. We need experts in sun gardening, shade gardening, and butterfly gardening. We need MGVs who know about hostas, or iris, or daylilies, or natives, and we need many MGVs to answer general questions about selecting, planting, and caring for plants. We need people to tally plants, we need cashiers, and we need MGVs to help customers take their plants to their cars and to bring back those all-important sleds!

If you are a new Master Gardener Volunteer, or you have been unable to help with the plant sale before, I hope you will join us this year. I think you will find it a very rewarding experience.

The proceeds of the Perennial Plant Sale enable us to support the horticulture education programs of the University of Wisconsin Extension with direct donations, and to support approved gardens and projects with our annual budget. The Plant Sale, all the workdays and Pot A-Thons provide a great opportunity for fellowship, learning, and fun while earning volunteer hours.



Stay Informed and Connected

Can't get to a business meeting? Did you know that the business meeting minutes are on our web site? Check out this link: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/minutes/> Make sure your project or activity gets listed on the MGV calendar. Staying in the know just got easier.



Garden Support Committee News

by MGV Mary Thiele & Patty Witt co-chairs

The Garden Support Committee hosted a Volunteer Opportunity Fair on Saturday, January 19th, which was attended by 175 people, 38 of whom were our MGVs-in-training. It was good to see so many people attend. The displays were beautiful and very informative and the food was delicious. Everyone had fun participating and securing new volunteers for many gardens. They then had the opportunity to earn an educational hour. Our in-house program committee did a wonderful job, securing Mike Yanny who spoke on "Importance of Natives of the Landscape."

We will also be hosting a **Garden Chair Spring Forum** on Thursday, **March 14th at 6:30 p.m.** This is an opportunity for the Garden Chairperson (s) to get:

- ⊗ the latest list of vendors who are registered for the tax exemption certificate.
- ⊗ an order form for signage and stakes for labeling the plants in their gardens.
- ⊗ more information about advertising UWEX

and the Master Gardener program in their literature.

- ⊗ more information about our inventory loan-out program including "enabling tools" to be used in their garden projects.
- ⊗ information about our 'plant sharing' program. This was started last year, but now has new emphasis behind it to help our gardeners collect plants they want for their garden projects. They help by exchanging extras. This helps to save money for other necessities.

Our own Sue Donohoe, Master Gardener and horticulturist, will speak on natives. Sue has chaired a Master Gardener garden and has designed gardens. Since there is so much emphasis on natives at the moment, this presentation should be particularly informative.

We hope to see all the garden/project chairs in attendance.



Calling all MGV Bakers

by MGV Mary Redlinger, Hospitality chair

We know you are out there!

When it's time for the next master gardener meeting, consider bringing a treat to share. Home-made or store-bought bakery is greatly appreciated by everyone.



Trips and Tours

by MGV Doris Fons Trip Committee chair

On May 29th, 2013, we will be going on our annual tour of Jerry Nelson's garden. Jerry is a Racine/Kenosha Master Gardener and owner of Classic Gardens.

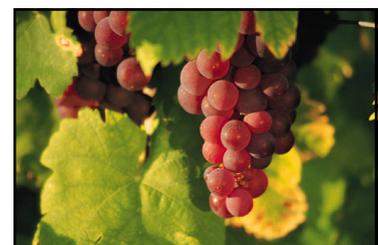
Our educational focus will be on growing grapes as he is planting a new vineyard. We will visit this topic for the next 3-4 years as the vines grow to harvesting stage. There will also be some new fun things to do with your containers. A tour of his many wonderful plants and trees is also included. This trip is limited to 40 SEWMG members. Transportation is on your own. Directions will be included with the information letters sent if you are among the 40 to make the trip.

We will meet at Jerry's house at 9 a.m. The program lasts until 11 a.m. Jerry always has coffee and some treats for us. We have a small plant exchange at the end of the morning consisting of something interesting or special you can share from your garden along with the plants Jerry may have for us.

Registration will begin on April 10th at the business meeting and by phone and e-mail. There is a charge of \$7 that is collected when you check in at Jerry's house. This is a gift for him to put towards a plant purchase to add to his collection.

Watch for the e-mail notice for registration on April 10th, 2013.

May 29th, 2013
Annual tour of Jerry Nelson's garden in Racine
Provide your own transportation
Registration starts April 10th



UW Extension Pruning Workshop by Ann Wied Consumer Horticulture Educator

Two University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Hands-On Pruning Workshops will be offered in March. Choose the date and location that works best for you!

Pruning workshops will be held:

- ☼ **Saturday, March 16th, 2013** – 9:00 a.m. to Noon at the **Community Room at the Franklin City Hall**, 9229 W. Loomis Road, Franklin.
- ☼ **Wednesday, March 20th, 2013** – 9:00 a.m. to Noon at the **Nashotah Fire Station**, N44w32787 Rasmus Rd, Nashotah

Maps to these locations can be found and downloaded at the “Events” link at the Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardener website at: <http://milwaukee.uwex.edu/mg/>. (If the map is not found there now, it will be there shortly.)

Registration will be taken on a first come, first serve basis. Act fast if interested. Space is limited. Registration could close early if classes are filled.

The workshop will include an indoor presentation on pruning techniques and tools followed by an outdoor, hands-on pruning component where participants will be given the opportunity to practice what they have learned. The workshop will be team taught by Ann Wied, Waukesha County UW Cooperative Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator and Sharon Morrisey, Milwaukee County UW Cooperative Extension Consumer Horticulture Agent.

Pruning tools will not be provided. Participants should bring their own hand pruning tools and gloves and dress for the weather including comfortable shoes or boots. Workshop will be held regardless of weather. In case of extreme weather, call 414-256-4660 on the day of the workshop, one hour before the scheduled time, to confirm that the workshop will be held. Questions about workshop should be directed to Mary at 262-548-7775. Confirmations to this workshop will be done by e-mail or phone call. We prefer e-mail. If you do not have e-mail, you must have voice mail with your phone number so we can leave a message.

Cost of the workshop: \$17.00 for UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteers and \$32 for the General Public. No telephone registrations will be accepted. Fill out the registration form on the bottom of page and mail in with your registration fee.

Mail registration form and check (Payable to: University of Wisconsin Extension)

Mail to: UW-Extension Waukesha County, Pruning Workshop, 515 West Moreland Blvd AC G22, Waukesha, WI 53188

University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating, UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming including Title IX and ADA

----- **Pruning Workshops Registration Form** (Clip Bottom Form & Mail with Check) -----

Did you attend the UW-Extension Pruning Workshop in 2012? ___ Yes ___ No

(If you attended a pruning workshop in 2012, your name will be placed on a waiting list. You will be contacted only if space becomes available.)

Fee: \$17=UW-Extension Master Gardeners \$32=General Public (Check payable to University of Wisconsin Extension)

Choose date:

___ **Saturday, March 16th, 2013 – 9:00 a.m. to Noon, Community Room at the Franklin City Hall**

___ **Wednesday, March 20th, 2013– 9:00 a.m. to Noon, Nashotah Fire Station, Nashotah**

Are you a Master Gardener Volunteer? ___ Yes ___ No If yes, ___ Milwaukee County ___ Waukesha County ___ Other _____

Name _____ County where you reside _____

Address _____ City _____ ZIP _____

Phone (____) _____ E-mail _____

Mail registration form and check to:

UW-Extension Waukesha County, Pruning Workshop, 515 West Moreland Blvd AC G22, Waukesha, WI 53188

2013 Officers

Kris Jensen, President, has been actively involved with our organization for the past three years. You will find Kris nearly everywhere. Kris completed her Master Gardener training in 2010, and then retired from a career in information technology. She describes herself as a “serious perennial gardener with a particular interest in providing attractive city habitat for butterflies, birds, beneficial insects, and small wildlife.”

Diane Thieme, President Elect, is active on the Plant Sale Committee, at several gardens projects, and on the Invasive Species team. Diane has a love of roses, and has over 100 of them in her small east side lot. Like many volunteers, Diane helps with many other non-profit activities. She completed her Master Gardening training in 2010. Now retired, Diane taught for many years.

Lindy Pawlak joined the officer team this year as treasurer. She has an extensive background in the accounting field. Lindy said she “prefers fields of flowers and she now has the time and the yard to garden in.” Lindy became an MGV five or six years ago and works with the Boerner Bloom Team. Lindy also belongs to the Daylily Society of Southeast Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society and the American Horticulture Society. So far, Lindy has lived in New Jersey, Tennessee (Nashville) and Wisconsin.

Linda Ziebell, Secretary, is in her second term as an officer. Linda is an avid gardener, interested in learning and volunteering. Linda’s previous work life was in the telecommunications industry mostly in the information technology field. She is also a 2010 graduate.



Kris Jensen



Diane Thieme



Lindy Pawlak



Linda Ziebell

Volunteer & Education Report

by Nancy Lehrer MG Volunteer Coordinator, MCCE



The volunteer requests are coming in daily for spring and summer dates Here are some details about speaker requests:

- ☞ Many times the speaker requests are not very detailed. Requesters just want someone to speak to their group about gardening. The topic is your choice!
- ☞ This is a perfect opportunity to try your hand at giving a presentation. Let me know what topic you are comfortable speaking about and I am sure I can find a perfect fit.
- ☞ Need a little confidence? **On March 2nd**, Sharon will offer a Speakers’ Workshop. This information and much more will be covered in the 3-hour training.

Once you have volunteered for a speaking event, I contact the event planner and give the planner your name and phone number. At this point I would expect you to get details ironed out for your event and then contact me with any handouts that you would like to take with you to the presentation. I will always provide 3 handouts: the SEWMG brochure, the Gardening Resource cards and the Plant Sale bookmark. If you would like to take along other handouts, you can look at the State MG website: <http://wimastergardener.org> Tab to the

Horticulture information. This is a wonderful resource for handouts that I can copy for your presentation. Please contact me if the document is several pages long. Many times there are condensed articles that I can print as a substitute In the MGV workroom at the Milwaukee office, I have handouts on file that are not on the website. Many were written by Sharon Morrisey. Please come on Tuesday (8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.) or Wednesday (8 a.m. –noon) so that I can assist you with the files.

A program request and report form* must be filled out with the details of your event including the date, time, location and your name and contact information. Also include the details of your presentation including topic and the equipment you might need from the Extension office. On the back, complete a list of all the handouts you would like to have copied. Please get the program request form to me at least one week before your event! When the handouts are copied, I will e-mail or call you and then leave them at the front desk with your name on them.

*Program request forms can be found on our website: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmq> Tab to document and scroll down to Volunteer & Hours Related Forms.

Important Dates to Remember:

March:

2nd Speakers’ Workshop, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. MCCE Room 414. Please RSVP to Sharon Morrisey. No experience is necessary.

7th Plant Sale Training and Orientation, MCCE 6:30 p.m.

13th SEWMG Business meeting, Waukesha County Courthouse 9:30 a.m.

13th-17th & 20th-24th - Home Show, State Fair Park

16th Pruning Workshop, Community room at Franklin City Hall, 9229 W. Loomis Road, Franklin, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. **You must preregister**

20th Pruning Workshop, Nashotah Fire Station, N44 W32787 Rasmus Rd, Nashotah, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. **You must preregister**

April:

9th SEWMG Business meeting, MCCE office 9:30 a.m.

Companion Planting One Gardener's Experience

by Jodi Schmeling, MGV-in-Training

In January 2012, I became a member of the SouthEastern Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association. I joined to share my gardening experience with others who love to garden. I have worked in the landscape industry for ten years and owned my own small vegetable gardening business from 2011-2012. I continued to garden as a hobby in my own backyard and it was there I first discovered companion planting.

It all began when I planted nasturtium seeds along the fence line in my garden with the hope that they would grow up the fence and create a living wall. Instead, they grew along the ground and interwove themselves into my potato patch. This ended up being a very good thing because I accidentally discovered a beneficial companion planting. The nasturtiums covered the potato vines as they were dying back and became a natural shade for the potatoes underground. In addition, I got to look at the beautiful flowers of the nasturtium instead of the browning potato vines.

This is just one example of how companion planting works, and many times, it will occur as an accident that you did not intend. The well-accepted definition of companion planting is that some plants have synergistic relationships that create a cultural benefit, such as greater yields or pest control, when these plants are established in close proximity to each other. The evidence to support companion planting has been anecdotal to this point, but thousands of years of gardeners reporting a beneficial relationship among plants must have some merit.

The best way to test the theory is to try it in your own garden. What you decide to interplant will vary greatly based on what vegetables and herbs you enjoy. It will also be dependent on your garden's environmental factors, such as soil condition, sun and shade conditions and so on. Every garden has different growing conditions, so what may work well in my yard might not work similarly in your yard.

I will provide you with some simple guidelines to get started with companion planting. Use these as your guide, but not as rules. Plan on learning along the way; I have been companion planting for six years and I still learn something new every year. Any level of gardener can utilize companion planting, whether you are new to gardening or an experienced gardener. In addition, you may incorporate

interplanting into a new garden or a well-established bed. Companion planting even works in potted plants.

Start by drawing out a plan for your garden. Designate areas for flowers and herbs to be interplanted among your vegetables. Think about factors such as sun requirements, root growth, time until harvest, etc. Pick out flower varieties that are brightly colored and have wide open petals which provide beneficial insects with easily accessible nectar.

Once you have your garden planned and planted, observe to see what happens. Keep a journal to track your harvest yields, pest problems and general plant health. Make note of which flowers and herbs seemed to help nearby plants and which selection may have hindered growth. There will be some things that may not work as planned, but do not get discouraged. Simply make note to change your plan for next year and try something else.

Here are some companion planting ideas to get you started. Have fun planting! Plant:

- ⊗ *Pole beans and petunias* – Scent of petunias may discourage bean beetles.
- ⊗ *Onions and leafy greens* – Scent of onions may deter flea beetles and leafy greens work as weed control between onions.
- ⊗ *Tomatoes and lettuce* – Lettuce grows well in the shade of the tomato.
- ⊗ *Broccoli and thyme* – Thyme may repel cabbage moth.
- ⊗ *Allium family, mints and marigolds* – These may deter a number of common garden pests. Use freely in the garden, but consider potting the mint because it will spread.
- ⊗ *Cabbage and rosemary* – Rosemary may deter cabbage worms.
- ⊗ *Sunflowers and kale/collards* – Birds use sunflowers as perches to see bugs on kale/collards.

There are many excellent companion flowers such as petunias, cosmos, marigolds, echinecea, salvia, gazanias, yarrow, morning glory, calendula, sweet alyssum, nasturtium, sunflowers and zinnias

One gardener's experiences in the garden. Keep your own records of what works in your garden. Remember when talking to the public we can only give University based research results not our personal experiences.

Some gardeners have noticed relationships that create a cultural benefit, such as greater yields or pest control, when these plants are established in close proximity to each other.



Notes of Thanks

Each year our organization donates funds to the consumer horticulture programs in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties and to the urban agriculture agent (Milwaukee) and commercial horticulture agent (Waukesha). Below is Ann Wied's "Note of Thanks." [Sharon Morrissey and Kristin Krokowski (Waukesha County Commercial Horticulture Educator) each sent a "note of thanks" which were both published in the January/February 2013 issue of The Good Earth News.]

In 2012, Ann Wied used the SEWMG donation to purchase:

1. Two large tanks that hold water at the Waukesha County Community Gardens. There are six water tanks located throughout garden. Two of the tanks leaked so I needed to replace both. All water tanks are connected to the hydrant on site. They all have connections for hoses. Tanks allow people to fill watering cans to water their gardens vs. using a hose.
2. Twelve plastic totes for our Produce Collection Project. These totes are used at the Waukesha and Brookfield Farmers Market to collect fresh produce donations from vendors and customers. Over 10,000 pounds of fresh produce were collected from these two farmers markets and were donated to area food pantries and meal sites.
3. Plant material and supplies for three garden programs. All of these programs had either no budget for plant material/supplies or only a very small budget. I purchased pepper

- and tomato plants, onion sets, seed potato, compost, and straw for mulch. I had a few donated gift cards that I was able to use to purchase some of my other supplies. These funds allow me to continue to offer these programs even though the budget is tight.
4. Fresh flowers used at Master Gardener Level I training for the botany class sessions. Level I training participants used the flowers to learn about plant parts.
 5. Road repair for the Waukesha County Community Gardens. I coordinate the Waukesha County community gardens rental garden program. While these gardens are located on county property, there is no money in my small budget to cover anything more than my time to coordinate this project and the summer water bill. The gravel road surrounding the 1 1/2-acre garden had many holes and ruts making it very difficult to navigate. With the money I received from SEWMG, I was able to purchase crushed stone/gravel to fill in the ruts and holes in the road. The County Parks and Land Use Department assisted me in getting the gravel delivered to the garden and placed on the damaged sections of the road. The gardeners were very happy with the results.

I did not spend all of my money this year and have carried over leftover funds to 2013. With budgets being so tight, it is nice to have this money to turn to for unexpected expenses as well as for purchases that will benefit my consumer horticulture programming efforts. Again, many, many thanks for your support!



Milwaukee County Cooperative Extension Office
9501 W. Watertown Plank Rd. Building A
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

Phone: 414-256-4600

Fax: 414-256-4646

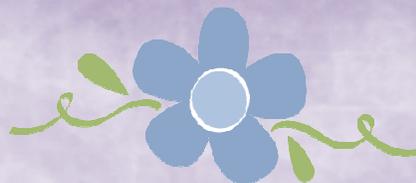
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[HTTP://FYI.UWEX.EDU/SEWMG/](http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/)



Mailed with this issue:

- March/April Events



For more information:

Calendar Hotline (MGV Hotline)

414-256-4666

On the Web

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg/>

Sharon Morrisey (Consumer Hort. Agent, Milwaukee)

414-256-4660; sharon.morrisey@ces.uwex.edu

Ann Wied (Consumer Hort. Educator, Waukesha)

262-548-7788; ann.wied@ces.uwex.edu

Kathy Bosetti Reese (Program Assistant)

414-256-4600; kathy.reese@ces.uwex.edu

Nancy Lehrer (Volunteer Coordinator)

414-256-4661, nancy.lehrer@ces.uwex.edu

Milwaukee County Cooperative Extension Office

9501 W. Watertown Plank Rd. Building A, Wauwatosa, WI 53226

Waukesha County Cooperative Extension Office

Waukesha County Administration Center, 515 W. Moreland Road,
Room AC-G22, Waukesha, WI 53188

Our Mission Statement

To support and assist UW-Extension in community horticulture programs through volunteerism, education and environmental stewardship.