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Good Earth News

South East Wisconsin Master Gardeners

President's Corner

by Liz Burke

It is official; I have spring fever. My fingers itch to feel warm moist soil and I spend long moments looking out the window at all my little sprouts. Plus, all of the Master Gardener activities have added to my fevered condition. And this is our slow season?

MGVs, now is the time to assess where you have been spending your volunteer hours. Are you looking for something new? Do you want more social interaction or less? Or maybe you are looking to have greater contact with our community? SEWMG offers you many options for getting your hours completed and adding a few more.

Soon a weekly e-mail will provide a work schedule for each approved garden. Please go to the SEWMG website and look for Approved Gardens/Projects. The list includes the garden locations and contacts.

There have been e-mails seeking help with invasives along with other requests.

Then there are the special events:

Plant Sale preparations, Pot-A-Thons and the Plant Sale itself at the State Fair grounds

Consider adding a variety of volunteer activities. You never know how many enjoyable hours you can spend as a MGV.

One more item, please get comfortable using the website for follow-up information and details. Simply search for SEWMG and once at the website you can access information about everything from “who we are” to volunteers to newsletters and the all-important Plant Sale.

I hope to see you soon at one of the gardens or a Pot-A-Thon or the Plant Sale. Keep watching those tender sprouts; they will soon become a riot of colorful flowers! Happy spring.

Starring Ann Phillips

Source: Penzey's Spices Spring Catalog

SEWMG has a “star group” in our organization. Ann Phillips and the MGV gardening crew at the Ronald McDonald House Secret Garden are featured in Penzey’s Spices Spring catalog.

In the article, Ann relates that she has worked there as the lead gardener since 2002. Her crew works in the gardens from April through November. In the winter months, they enjoy a book club and a Garden Education Program. The publication’s article shares some insight into how Ann and her crew make this a “magical place” for the families who use the Ronald McDonald facilities while their children are recovering from medical issues.

The article becomes a visual picture of a wonderful place. It is a tribute to Master Gardeners in general that we have within our midst such a dedicated and sensitive group. We thank you, Ann, for all you do.

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Consider adding a variety of volunteer activities. You never know how many enjoyable hours you can spend as a MGV. All while meeting your volunteer service hours requirement.

In-House Education Committee

by MGV Rita Piper, In-House Education Commitee Chair

Editors' note: We owe a debt of thanks to the In-House Education committee members for all the fine programs they have researched, booked and offered this past winter. These programs get SEWMG gardeners through the long, cold and barren winters of Wisconsin. Thanks to Rita Piper, Ilze Balodis-Larson, Sherrie Ihlenfeldt, Catherine Price, Peg Riesen, Joy Towell, and Judy Williamson.

Ben Futa, Garden Director of Allen Centennial Gardens, spoke about Artful Edible Gardening at last week's final program of spring.

The in-house education committee sessions will resume in September. During May through August; please take advantage of the multitude of educational opportunities available in the community.

Master Gardeners are Certified

by MGV Mary Voelker

The UW Extension SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners are pleased to let you know that we have been certified as a Service Enterprise by Points of Light. Points of Light is the world's largest group dedicated to volunteer service.

Master Gardener Volunteers and UW-Extension staff worked throughout 2015 to make this achievement possible. Milwaukee County UW-Extension Consumer Horticulture Agent, Sharon Morrisey and Office Director Eloisa Gomez teamed up with SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardener volunteers Diane Thieme and Mary Voelker. The team completed an assessment and over twenty hours of training on best practices for volunteer engagement. The team identified where we excel in volunteerism. The training gave the team ideas about where and how we can improve. One project will be writing a volunteer handbook. Another will be finding ways to better use the skills that volunteers bring into the Master Gardener program. The team will continue working during 2016.

The February SEWMG Needs Assessment Survey was part of this work. The team sought your input and feedback about what is important to you. The findings from the survey will help the team identify needed improvement projects. The team will be inviting other volunteers to help with the improvement projects. Watch for more information in the coming months.

Garden Support Committee

by MGVs Catherine Price & Ken Loeffel, Garden Support Committee Co-Chairs

"The mission of the Garden Support Committee of the SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners is to provide support and guidance to all approved gardens/projects to ensure the Garden Chairs implement the expectations of the UW Extension Master Gardener Program."

On Tuesday, March 15th, the committee sponsored a well attended Garden Chair Forum forum for chairpersons of all approved gardens/projects. About sixty MGVs attended this event. This is only one of two annual events that Garden/Project Chairs or a representative is required to attend. At the Forum, committee members discussed resources that are available for approved gardens/projects and administrative duties inherent in chairing an garden or project. In addition, everyone viewed a PowerPoint presentation of new-for-2016 plant and flower varieties.

The next Garden Support Committee meeting will be August 10th, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. at the UW Ext Milwaukee Office 9501 Watertown Plant Rd, Room 305.

Please contact Catherine Price at wolvescnp@yahool.com or Ken Loeffel at kloeffel@wi.rr.com with any ideas or comments for the committee.

Realtors' Home & Garden Show

by MGV Faouzi Kablaoui

Thanks to all the MGVs who helped make this event successful by designing, staffing, setting up and taking down the display.

Volunteers:

Only one person who had volunteered for a shift did not arrive.

Visitors:

The total number of visitors to our booth was estimated at 7,740 visitors, based on 5-minute count every hour. This year's show was one day shorter than last year when we had about 14,988 visitors - an extraordinary large number. Usually our visitor count is between 7,000 and 9,000 people.

Brochures:

The total number of brochures distributed during the show was 4,965 brochures; last year the number was 5,679. The most popular brochures were Critter Control, Successful Container Gardening and the Gardening Resources Card.

Points of Interest:

Because the booth's subject was wildlife, most of the questions were about deer, rabbits, chipmunks, mice, moles and voles.

General Comments:

The display was attractive and the visitors appreciated talking to MGVs.

Trips and Tours

by MGV Doris Fons, Commitee Chair

Our visit to Jerry Nelson's home and Classic Gardens will be on Wednesday, June 1st from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. The focus will be on vegetable gardening using row coverings, tunneling and trellising. It will also include succession gardening and season-long production. He will also put together a couple of his special pots and a tour of his yard.

Registration will begin on May 3rd at 6:00 a.m. - ***Not before***. E-mail dorisann.fons@gmail.com, preferred. Or call 414-425-6072. There is a limit of 40 and a cost of $7. A letter will be sent to you if you are on that list. As always, we will have a waiting list.

June 1st 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Vegetable Gardening
Jerry Nelson's
Franksville, WI
Registration begins May 3rd

Plant Sale Update

by MGV Janet Wintersberger, co-editor Good Earth News

The excitement is building! It's a team effort.

In about six weeks, SEWMG will be hosting its annual Plant Sale on the State Fair Grounds. This sale is important for our organization and its faithful and new customers. The SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardener organization is self-funded. Profits from the sale form next year's budget for all our SEWMG activities, plus donations to the Extension's horticulture programs and to Boerner Botanical Gardens.

Most perennials that are sold are from our own gardens. A small portion of woodies and specialty plants are purchased from a local nursery. Recent e-mails have asked for help configuring a trailer and getting supplies for planting. The "Pot-A-Thon" schedule was just released. Once we have supplies, the work begins with digging the plants. Then comes the dividing, potting, labeling, tending, transporting (to the State Fair Grounds), staging the flats and holding a five-and-a half hour sale. We need your help throughout this period.

You can volunteer for any (or all) of these Plant Sale activities and quickly earn your service hours. Make sure to check your e-mail for weather-related updates on the scheduled Pot-A-Thons. As the Plant Sale nears, an updated list of plants that are available will be posted on Facebook.

The Plant Sale is Saturday, May 21st

A preview sale just for master gardeners is Friday, May 20th

Pot-A-Thon Schedule

by MGV Patty Witt

All are welcome; come when you can and stay as long as you can. There is no sign-up; you keep track of your hours and your mileage. Bring potting tools, gloves and dress for the weather.

Dig Date	Name	Time	Address
Mon. Apr. 18	Dig day		
Tues Apr. 19	Pat Adrian	9:00 am	1301 Thomas Trl Oconomowoc
Wed. Apr 20	Dig day		
Thur. Apr 21	Challa Patchett's	9:00 am	18100 Lamplighter Ln Brookfield
Fri. Apr. 22	Eble	9:00 am	19400 W. Bluemound Rd Brookfield
Sat. Apr. 23	Eble	9:00 am	19400 W. Bluemound Rd Brookfield
Mon. Apr. 25	Eble	9:00 am	19400 W. Bluemound Rd Brookfield
Tues. Apr. 26	Carolyn Hofman	9:00 am	3780 N Calhoun Rd Brookfield
Wed. Apr. 27	Dig day		
Thurs. Apr. 28	Patty Witt (lunch will be served)	9:00 am	16508 W. Melody Ct. New Berlin
Fri. Apr. 29	Eble	9:00 am	19400 W. Bluemound Rd Brookfield
Sat. Apr. 30	Ed Kraus (lunch will be served)	9:00 am	11625 W James Ave Franklin, WI
Mon. May 2	Ed Kraus	9:00 am	11625 W James Ave Franklin, WI
Tues. May 3	Dig day		
Wed. May 4	Bonnie Paplham	9:00 am	7927 W Bur Oak Dr. Franklin, WI
Thurs. May 5	Diane Sachs	9:00 am	14425 Westover Rd Elm Grove, WI
Fri. May 6	Matt Singer	9:00 am	220 W Cherokee – Fox Point

The Plant Sale is Coming.

Volunteer for any (or all) Plant Sale activities and quickly earn your service hours.

Check your e-mail for weather-related updates on the scheduled Pot-A-Thons.

A preview sale just for MGVs is Friday, May 20th

The sale is SEWMGs only fundraiser.

Back Care in the Garden

by MGV Kay Costello, LifeLong Gardening Committee

Avid gardeners hope to be able to work in their garden throughout their lifetime. Experiencing chronic back pain can put a stop to that. Observing good body mechanics while working in the garden is one important way to ensure a lifetime of gardening.

General Considerations:

Gardening is exercise, similar to other more traditional types of exercise. Consult your physician or therapist if you have a condition that may compromise your ability to garden. In spring, remember to start with less strenuous gardening tasks, and gradually build up to more strenuous tasks. Begin each session with gentle warm up exercises. Switch tasks frequently, alternating heavy and light duty tasks. Change positions often. Take frequent rest breaks. "Listen" to your body. If you are experiencing pain or fatigue, stop or change that activity.

Specific Considerations:

1. Lifting – i.e. potted plants, shoveling etc.

Face the object you are about to lift. Squat down, bending at your hips and knees, not your back. Push your buttocks out behind you [short stop position] as you bend. Your knees should not move in front of your toes, to avoid stress on your knees. Hold the object as close to you as possible. Lift the object, straightening your hips and knees. Do not hold your breath. If you need to turn to place the soil or pot, step around rather than twist through your torso. If possible, lighten the load before lifting. If in doubt – ask for help before you lift.

2. Standing – i.e. at a table potting plants

When standing for a prolonged time, put one foot up on a low stool to ease the pressure on your back. Alternate feet. Or, sit to do the task.

3. Pushing vs. pulling

Pushing requires no twisting of the trunk, pulling does. Pushing generates more force with less stress, because you are able to utilize your body weight to help move the load. Pushing can be done with two arms, thus sharing the load, resulting in less stress on each joint involved. Use of a cart is preferable to a wheelbarrow: it is more stable, and the cart's two wheels, positioned closer to the center of the load, bear more of the weight than one wheel of a wheelbarrow.

4. Weeding and planting:

Avoid bending over with straight knees to reach the ground. This puts too much stress on the muscles at the back of your legs, and the back muscles. Rather, if possible, kneel with one knee on the ground, and with the other leg place your foot flat on the ground. As in the picture, place your forearm on the horizontal thigh to help support your back in this position. Alternate leg positions periodically.

Consider other weeding options:

a. Use a garden seat and longer reach tools to reach the ground.

b. Use a longer tool while standing, such as a hoe (with an optional back saving handle), to decrease bending. Be sure the hoe is long enough to reach the ground without excessive bending.

Consider other planting options:

a. Use commercial or homemade seed tapes to decrease the time spent planting in the ground, resulting in less time in a compromising position. This also will decrease the time spent thinning seedlings after they have sprouted, as the seeds are already properly spaced on the tapes.

b. While standing, use a hoe to make a furrow, a long piece of

Back Care continued

PVC pipe to drop the seed in the furrow, and then the hoe to cover the seed with soil, all while standing.
c. Use a bulb auger and a power drill to plant bulbs. This decreases the need to bend to the ground to plant bulbs.

The proper use of a back saving handle applied to the middle of the shaft of a hoe results in less forward bending and less stress on the back. In the photos, both hoes have the handle. In the left photo, the gardener is grasping the shaft of the hoe as if there were no back saving handle. She is bending forward, causing stress on her back. In the photo on the right, she is grasping the back saving handle and standing more upright.

5. Raking:

Be sure the rake is long enough to use without bending. Use a back saving handle if necessary to minimize bending. "Dance with the rake", stepping forward and backward, rather than bending and straightening your back and hips repeatedly, to move the leaves etc. Alternate holding the rake on each side of your body.

6. Tool end consideration:

Keep tool ends sharp. Use tools with small tool ends so less soil, leaves etc. are moved at a time.

Disclaimer: The information above is intended for general information purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice or treatment. You should consult a physician concerning your own situation and any physical problems or medical questions you may have, before putting these techniques and tools to use in your own garden.

Volunteer News

by MGV Nancy Lehrer, UW Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator

March was very busy for MGVs and April will be even busier. Many MGVs will be giving presentations and holding workshops in April.

- Kathleen Walrath will give a presentation on composting on April 9th at NuGenesis Farm.
- A team of MGVs will lead a discussion and create a container garden at one of the collaborative Alzheimer's Association's Memory Café events on April 19th.
- Jean Akhter will give a presentation for the Islamic Resource Center.
- Sue Wood & Alice Lundstrom will staff a booth at Retzer Nature Center and give container gardening demonstrations during an Earth Day Celebration on April 23rd.
- Mary Jane Swedberg will talk about pollinators at North Lake's Town Hall Library.

Watch for e-mails:

Pant Sale, Plant Sale, Plant Sale - digging, organizing, labeling, selling. There is something for everyone to do during this April & May frenzy!

In May local Farmers Markets start. Watch for volunteer requests.

Watch for the Garden Work Day calendar as our gardens begin their spring clean ups and planting.

Happy gardening!

Remember there is a ListServe binder in the Master Gardener workroom that contains copies of all e-mails that I receive.

Chicago Flower & Garden Show Review

by MGV Doris Fons, Trips/Tours Chair

On Friday, March 18th, a bus filled with Master Gardener Volunteers headed to Navy Pier for the Chicago Flower & Garden Show. We have done this trip for many years now and always loved to see all the beautiful spring flowers and great displays. In the past, this show had lifted our spirits and made us anxious to get outside to play in the dirt.

This year, however, was a disappointment. There were many fake/artificial flowers and artifacts that were impressive, but not the same as live flowering plants. Many of the displays used pansies that had seen better days. The size and number of displays were down from last year that had already been sparse from previous years. There is a great deal of expense involved in putting on these shows and businesses are cutting back or just can't afford the fees for space and do an exhibit with live plants. It was still an enjoyable day out but would have been better with a few more blooms

We took a survey on the bus and 75% of our attendees said they probably would not make the trip next year. That is disappointing. Our committee, Sharon Roy, Cindy Lese and I, will meet to see what we should do next year. We will try to find an alternative or just drop this trip. I will try to contact people at the Chicago Flower Show to see if there are plans to make changes in a positive direction.

We welcome any suggestions you may have for a fun place to visit. We will check into gardens that may have a large bulb display during spring like Chicago Botanic Gardens or a conservatory like Lincoln Park Conservatory or the Mitchell Park Domes, if it is repaired. Many MGVs loved our behind-the-scenes tours we did at the Domes in the past.

We all miss the good old days of the great flower shows we visited each year in Chicago. As they say, all things must come to an end. Hopefully, we can find an alternative that will be just as much fun and even more beautiful.

22nd Annual Secret Gardens of Wauwatosa Tour

Tour six beautiful private gardens plus the historic gardens at the Kneeland-Walker house on Saturday, July 9, 2016, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., rain or shine*. Melinda Myers will be doing a Q & A session from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. She will have native plants as well as “Grow Smart” materials. Also on hand will be master gardener volunteers, plant societies, and vendors selling plants and garden items. Advance tickets are $10.00 and can be purchased beginning in early June at the following ticket outlets: Alfa Flower Shop, The Flower Lady, Rose’s Flower Shop, Stein Gardens and Gifts, (Wauwatosa location only), and Wisconsin Garden & Pet.

On tour day, tickets are $12.00 and will be available at the Kneeland-Walker House (7406 Hillcrest Drive, Wauwatosa), the starting point for the tour.

The tour is sponsored by the Wauwatosa Beautification Committee. For more information, or to purchase tickets online, check their website www.wbc-wi.org under “Garden Tour”

*In the event of severe weather warnings, tour will be cancelled. Tickets are non-refundable.

Photo Credit: Donna Kirschan Photography

A Day in Mexico's Monarch Butterfly Biosphere

by MGV Bette Frangesch

Our destination… Sierra Chincua, one of 14 separate colonies of millions of overwintering butterflies in The Monarch Butterfly Biosphere. Located about 100 km northwest of Mexico City this is the final destination to the majority of the migrating monarch butterflies from eastern North America. Known to the local people and finally found by scientists in 1975 after years of studying migration routes, the Biosphere became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008.

Photographs provided by Bette and Rich Frangesch

The adventure…. hiking and horseback riding up steep trails through the cloud forests of the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains to an elevation of 10,000 feet.

The reward…the vision of thousands of monarch butterflies coloring the oyamel fir trees with splashes of orange and bending their branches from their collective weight.

I sat with my husband and dozens of other people on the steep hillside behind the roped barrier and watched in awe as the monarchs on the outer layer of the clusters opened their wings to the warmth of the sun and fluttered about. Occasionally one would fly over to their silent and respectful human audience to rest on a hat or someone's outstretched hand, but mostly they soared above the colony in the treetops, presumably preferring to be in the sun.

It's hard to describe the sound of thousands of beating wings - some say it's like a light rain. To me it was a gentle rustling. This experience made me cautiously hopeful about the survival of this exceptional creature. There is ongoing planning by and cooperation between government agencies and local communities to provide alternative income sources to logging the forests that is a major threat to this fragile ecosystem.

Good news came in February when the area of this season's overwintering colonies in the Biosphere reportedly increased nearly fourfold over last year. However, in March, a severe snowstorm with high winds swept through the area of the Biosphere threatening the monarch population once again. And we northern gardeners are doing our part by providing the necessary milkweed and nectar plants to sustain future generations.

News from the County Extension Offices

by Ann Wied, UW-Extension, Waukesha County Consumer Hort. Educator and Sharon Morrisey, UW-Extension, Milwaukee County Consumer Hort. Agent

The Future of Cooperative Extension

Following permanent cuts in state funding, Cooperative Extension faces a $3.6 million annual structural deficit. These most recent state cuts went into effect on July 1, 2015. For the past year, UW-Extension has been working to build a new infrastructure that can continue the division's essential work and grow in the future. Labeled the "nEXT Generation", this restructuring has been a thought-filled process. A committee comprised of people throughout UW-Extension is attempting to move this project along. Soon there will be identified working groups that will be responsible for assessing and offering recommendations concerning particular areas throughout Cooperative Extension. We anticipate knowing more details by the end of the year. As always, feel free to contact Sharon or Ann if you have any questions

"Garden Talk Series" with ProHealth Care in Waukesha County Features SEWMGVs

If you live in Waukesha County or stop in a ProHealth Care clinic or hospital in Waukesha County, you will most likely encounter literature promoting upcoming educational programs. Please take a second glance at the information. SouthEast Wisconsin MGVs are presenting five free educational gardening programs as part of the ProHealth Care's "Garden Talk Series 2016." This is the third year the SEWMGVs are giving presentations. In addition, this SEWMG team also plant, maintain, and harvest a vegetable demonstration garden located in the area outside of the cafeteria. All produce harvested is donated to the Food Pantry of Waukesha County.

As part of each "Garden Talk" presentation, the MGVs end their presentation in the garden so they can show recommended gardening techniques and point out plants that they just highlighted. This project is highly visible to the public attracting close to thirty people at each presentation as well as the numerous walk-bys during the garden work days. The literature promoting this program reaches even many, many more! Thank you to the amazing group of MGVs who are part of this educational program and garden! To see a list of Garden Talk topics and dates, go to: www.prohealthcare.org/classes-and-events.aspx *We are not encouraging master gardeners to register and attend because space is limited and we want to reach out to the general public, but feel free to share information about this program with family and friends.*

Waukesha County UWEX Youth Garden to Start in June of 2016

Because of Waukesha County UWEX's success with their Huber Facility Garden and Nutrition Program for work and release inmates, Waukesha County UW-Extension was contacted to take the lead and coordinate a new youth garden. This garden program will provide an alternative to court sanctions for Waukesha County youth by allowing eligible youth the opportunity to forgo potential placement in a juvenile facility in favor of participating in this community garden program. Youth will gain work readiness skills, learn teamwork principles, enhance positive social skills, participate in hands-on horticulture and nutrition education programs, and grow vegetables that will be donated to the Food Pantry of Waukesha County. This garden, called the Waukesha County Community Youth Garden, is a pilot program for 2016. If successful it may continue into 2017 and beyond. While there are no plans for it to be an approved SEWMG garden, Ann may ask MGVs for occasional garden assistance if needed. Questions? Contact Ann Wied.

Waukesha County UW-Extension – Horticulture Helpline Update

While the Milwaukee County UW-Extension Office will be incorporating changes to its Horticulture Helpline and Diagnostic services, Waukesha County UW-Extension's Helpline will stay unchanged in 2016. We will continue to offer diagnostic services in three primary ways: in office samples, call in phone service and e-mail. The Waukesha County Horticulture Helpline is generally staffed 3 to 4 days a week April through October. Plant Health Advisor Master Gardener Volunteers answer phone calls and e-mails from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Consider Volunteering as a Plant Health Advisor with the Waukesha County UW-Extension

If you have a mind for facts and enjoy sleuthing, the Waukesha County UW-Extension – Horticulture Helpline can always use

News from the County Offices

continued

another volunteer in the office. All of our new volunteers are mentored by one of our top-notch Plant Health Advisors until everyone is comfortable with your ability to handle calls and e-mails on your own. We do, however, ask that you train in our office. It's important for us to be sure that volunteers are answering with accurate research -based information. If you are interested in becoming a Plant Health Advisor in Waukesha County or have questions, contact Kristin Krokowski, Waukesha County UW-Extension Commercial Horticulture Educator at 262/548-77689 or Kristin.krokowski@uwex.ces.edu

Home Show Recap

With another successful Realtors' Home and Garden Show over, thanks go to:

Faouzi Kablaoui for scheduling and providing instructions/tickets to volunteers

MGV in training Ann Kammerer for creating panels and posters for the booth

Booth Design committee (John Anderson, Janet Barthel, Chrystal Dombrowski, Ann Kammerer, Roger Kocher, Susan Lang, Jennifer Lazewski, Geri Nolan and Deb Petersen)

Waukesha County UW-Extension program assistant, Christa Thao, for creating the brochure using graphics from our graphic artist

The office crew for compiling the literature (Carol Von Kaenel, Peggy McGuire, and Nancy Lehrer)

Urban Ag Initiatives for MGVs

There are several opportunities this year for MGVs to play a key role by getting involved with urban gardening projects. They can connect with new audiences and direct them to Extension resources to help people succeed in their gardening efforts. Volunteers are still needed for all of these projects. To be part of this Initiative, please contact Sharon by e-mail at Sharon.morrisey@ces.uwex.edu for more information and to be put on the group list for Urban Ag Outreach Opportunities. Opportunities include the Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities program, the Milwaukee Urban Gardens program (MUG) and the SEED garden project.

Plant Health Update Sessions 2016

These sessions are held every other week throughout the growing season. They target MGVs who answer plant and gardening questions for the public in any way such as Horticulture Helplines, the Hort Center at Boerner, answering e-mails through the Plant Health. Advisors e-mail account as well as at farmers' markets, and other venues. This year the sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 -8:00 p.m. at the Milwaukee County UW-Extension office every other week beginning on May 3rd. The dates are May 3rd, 17th, 31st, June 14th, 28th, July 12th, 26th, August 9th, 23rd September 6th and 20th. No registration is required and you may attend whenever you can. Since our Milwaukee County diagnostics service is being restructured, we are encouraging MGVs who want to be PHAs but aren't available during the daytime to volunteer.

Opening Day at the Hort Center at BBG

The UW-Extension Horticulture Center at BBG will reopen for the season on Monday, May 2nd. MGVs will be on duty either in the Center or at the main desk in the lobby from 10:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday all season long. Don't forget to suggest this option to people for their plant problems. They can visit during open hours or they can call or e-mail anytime and someone will get back to them.

Milwaukee Office Access

Currently, our new receptionist Marsha Tietz works 8:00 a.m. until noon weekdays and our doors are open during those hours. While the outer door into the foyer is left unlocked from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, the inside doors are locked after noon. Use the lobby phone and find the posted extension number of the person you're there to see. If that person is not available, alternate numbers are listed. Or you may use the doorbell on the opposite wall. If you schedule a program outside of office hours, you may come to the office while the receptionist is on duty and find out how to arrange to get in when you need to.

The Pollinator Group

by MGV Jennifer Lazewski, Pollinator Group Chairperson

This is an Approved Project and all MGVs are welcome. Pollinator Group field trips or other opportunities will be announced on ListServe and in this newsletter when possible. You can also join the Pollinator Group e-mail list and get copies of the presentations, resource lists, and other information. Just send a request to jenlazewski@gmail.com.

During our March and April meetings, the Pollinator Group has continued to learn more about pollinators. This summer we will get into the field to observe and plant for pollinators and to help others better understand pollinators and their value.

The new Wisconsin Pollinator Protection Plan issued jointly by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and UW-Madison experts now provides us with added university-based authority and we look forward to being a part of the Outreach encouraged by this Plan. The Plan (which is expected to be updated in final form after comments soon) is available at http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Bees_and_Honey/?Id=225.

In March, we learned about butterflies, raising caterpillars, and butterfly habitat gardening. Mary Jane Swedberg shared information on many of the common Wisconsin butterflies, including host and nectar plant information. Ellie Burke talked about raising several different species of caterpillars into butterflies and showed photos of their development.

Butterfly Families & Lifecycles

Because many butterfly guides organize their information by family, we discussed the major butterfly families and how to identify them. Other topics were the life cycle and annual cycles of butterflies, ways butterflies overwinter and the Monarch migration. Source: Butterfly Habitat at the Zoo handout available on the SEWMG website under "Documents."

Butterfly habitat gardens

Butterfly habitat gardens should follow the needs and behaviors of butterflies. They should have at least six hours of sun, preferably from mid-morning into afternoon, so butterflies can bask to warm up their body temperature and gather nectar from the butterfly plants. Butterflies need shelter from wind, rain, and predators provided by walls, trees, and shrubs. In urban settings, nectar and dew usually provide enough moisture for butterflies; in natural areas groups of butterflies gather on wet sand or wet soil.

Having host plants greatly increase the likelihood of seeing butterflies as females come by to lay eggs and caterpillars turn into butterflies nearby. Nectar flowers can be nearly any color but should be planted in larger groups of 5-7 plants for best visibility and butterfly magnetism. Although butterflies can see all colors in the spectrum, they are near-sighted. Their multi-faceted eyes can only see blurry blocks of color and light at a distance. Larger groups of favored plants are easier to see. Source: "The Butterfly Eye: How Butterflies Choose Flowers" available on request.

The best pollinator gardens have a succession of blooms throughout the season. Butterflies often prefer native plants, especially during late summer and early fall when they are most numerous. Choose flat daisy-like blooms that provide great landing spots with many little nectar spots in the center (such as daisies or zinnias) or blooms with many small clusters of flowers (such as butterfly bush and verbena). If nectar sources are close to each other, the butterflies will expend less energy in feeding. Varying the heights of the blooms also encourages different species to visit; smaller butterflies often prefer low blooms while others prefer taller flowers for feeding and basking. You should not use pesticides, including BT, in or around your butterfly habitat garden.

Plants for Butterflies & Other Pollinators

Our next meeting on Saturday, April 16th at 10:00 a.m. at the Milwaukee County UW-Extension Office. We will learn about the best plants for butterflies and other pollinators, such as natives versus cultivars, plants listed in articles and books versus our actual experience, ease of maintaining these plants and other pollinator gardening issues. We will also discuss hummingbird gardening.

Pollinator Group Meeting
Saturday, April 16th at 10:00 a.m.
Milwaukee County UW-Extension Office
An approved project
All MGVs welcome

Milwaukee County UW-Extension Office

9501 W. Watertown Plank Rd. Building A

Wauwatosa, WI 53226

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Grow with us

Check out our website

http://fyi.uwex.edu/sewmg

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Our Mission Statement

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