



Door County Master Gardeners Association, Inc.

A Volunteer Organization of the UW-Cooperative Extension Service



Volume 20, Number 2

April-May 2014

Kathie's Note

Out of gardens grow fleeting flowersbut lasting friendships!

The 21 members of the Class of 2014 visited Larry Maas in March. Thank-you Larry! The trainees have their last Wednesday night class in March and then orientation in the greenhouse. The greenhouse work will provide many hours for their volunteer commitment. They start their years as Door County Master Gardener Volunteers by planting seeds and seedlings for the plant sale. I hope that both the seeds AND our students get a good start! As with everything in life, there is a direct relationship between what you put in and what you get out. Have fun playing in the dirt! I hope all of our new members find their niche' and make lasting friendships.

An enormous thank-you to Martha Burris, Donna Hake and Christine Gritzmacher. We met several times and have made a form for each committee chairman to summarize the committee's annual activities. We want to create a smooth transition when a new person takes a chairmanship. There's no point in reinventing the wheel or repeating efforts on things that did not work well before. A flow chart for the Board has been created to identify the Board member who will be the "go to" person or liaison for each of the MG committees, so that members will know who to contact on the Board if needed. I will post the chart on the website for members only.

Lots of MG activities are in progress. Lucy Kile and Carrie Potier will co-chair the perennial area of the Plant Sale. We met with Chriss Daubner and have not only a flow chart but a good start on the volunteer list. Deborah Javurek and I are writing a grant for the youth program. A Youth committee meeting will be called in April—watch your e-mails! We hope the ground will thaw to allow the kids to plant while school is still in session. We had a social committee meeting for the Meet 'n Greet event. Mike Van Ess will meet with his committee to update the By Laws. The last set was ratified in 2007. Technology has changed a lot in the past seven years!

We have mandatory reporting training (a group session scheduled for April 14). MGVs, who serve as Research Station Volunteers have received a UW volunteer's informational letter. I will have a form for MGVs to sign to acknowledge receipt of the UW volunteer's information. It will be in the classroom on a clipboard for you to sign. DCMGA also has a new agreement with PARS that continues our relationship with PARS, including our use of its facilities for DCMGA gardens and events.

All of our work is organized and planned in committee meetings. Feel free to join any committee that interests you. If you are a new member, do not hesitate to show up and jump into the discussion. We welcome your insight and views. It's refreshing to have new thoughts!

As I look out my window there are still snow drifts with a new dusting of the white stuff. I'm sure, however, that this winter weather will turn to spring! I look forward to seeing and working with each of you at one or more of the DCMGA events scheduled for the spring and summer.

Kathie

Door County Master Gardener Association Board of Directors and Officers:

President..... Kathie Vavra
Vice President..... Mike Van Ess
Treasurer.....Martha Burris
Secretary.....Bonnie Rankin
Board Members: Bill Freyman, Jim McFarlin, Wendy Woldt, Tim Kazmierczak, Jim Baxter, Chris Gritzmacher
State Board Representative Rod Bohn
Advisor.....Dean Volenberg

MISSION STATEMENT: The Door County Master Gardeners Association, Inc., in partnership with UW-Extension, shall strive to make a positive impact on horticulture in our community through education, community outreach, and stewardship of our

Door County Master Gardeners . . . "taking care of business!"



DCMGA Board Meeting—March 19, 2014 by Bonnie Rankin

Board Members Present: Jim McFarlin, Mike VanEss, Bill Freyman, Kathie Vavra, Chris Gritzmacher, Martha Burris, Bonnie Rankin, Wendy Woldt

Also Present: Sarah Freyman, Carol Berglund, Nancy Santorielle

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Secretary's Report - Motion was made and seconded to approve the January 15, 2014 minutes. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report – A listing of miscellaneous assets will be created. A more detailed reporting is being planned for the plant sale, giving sale results for each respective area. Discussion was held regarding using "Square Up", a credit card device, for the plant sale. This would give customers another option to pay for their purchases. Motion made and seconded to approve credit card purchases. Motion carried.

Old Business –

Promotions - The Landmark contacted Kathie regarding holding the State MG Conference at their location. She also had a phone interview with Gary Jones from the Pulse.

PARS Contract – There was no opposition to the agreement as published. A motion was made and seconded to sign the contract. Motion carried.

Mandated Training – If you have completed your class, you can send the certificate to Judeen Hanson at judeen.hanson@ces.uwex.edu

Plant Sale Gift Certificate - A discussion was held regarding two versions of the Plant Sale Gift Certificate which Martha created. It was decided to use the smaller version which will fit a business envelope without folding.

Grants - The tent grant will be rewritten in April and submitted.

PA System - Wendy reported that the PA system is repaired and back.

By-Laws Update - The 2007 by-laws were reviewed for thoughts and recommendations. Mike will put together a committee to update them by sending an e-mail to the membership for volunteers.

Publicity - The WDOR schedule for April-October was distributed. Interviews will be held on the third Thursday of the month from 10:15 to 11:00 am. Each month will feature a different part of the organization.

New Business –

Board Responsibilities – A flow chart draft has been created to clearly outline responsibilities for each board member. Each board member will have areas of responsibility so that coordinators/committees from those areas may direct their questions to the appropriate contact person on the Board.

Outreach – We need someone to take on this responsibility.

Board Meeting Minutes (*continued*)

Garden Door 10th Anniversary – A discussion was held regarding creating 10th anniversary of the Garden Door t-shirts for MG members to wear at the Open House and Taste. Cost is expected to be under \$10. Shirts will be for members only and not available for sale to the public.

Committee Chair Forms – A form has been developed for committee chairs to compile their job duties; what worked well, what didn't work, etc. This information will be placed on the website in the future to give new chairs an opportunity to understand what the position entails.

DCMGA e-mail – Bill volunteered to cover e-mail messages while Kathie and Kerry are in Germany.

Crossroads Sign – A discussion was held regarding a solar powered or reflective sign to indicate the entrance to Crossroads. The entrance is not clearly visible in darkness. Coggin will be approached for her input.

E-Mail Service – A brief discussion was held regarding hiring an e-mail service. It was determined that an additional expense for a service was not necessary.

Cards for Sale – Martha suggested that perhaps we could create cards from some of the pictures we have available and sell them (e.g., 5 for \$8.00).

Sustainability Fair – The fair will be held on April 26th at Martin Park. The board decided not to participate in this event unless someone volunteered to man the booth.

Lending Library – Future training classes may be held at Crossroads. Having a Lending Library in the classroom may be an option and may also help Crossroads with matching grants. Martha will speak with Coggin.

State Association Report – Money has been sent for the conference.

Committee Reports:

Education – The next meeting will be May 6th. Programs are well attended and received. April 14th is the mandated training date; 7 pm at Crossroads. New bookmarks are ready for distribution.

Signage – The Cherry Hills sign on the South side of the Garden may be available for our use. The owner of the North side sign is being sought. For safety and less confusion, Enter and Exit signs are being purchased for events.

Plant Sale – Locations of the plants, cashiers and the holding area are being revamped to offer a better flow for customers.

Meet 'n Greet/Tiny Tim – A shower for Tim's new family will be held in conjunction with the Meet 'n Greet on April 12th at Sevastopol Town Hall. The shower will be held at 4:30 pm and pot-luck at 5:30 pm.

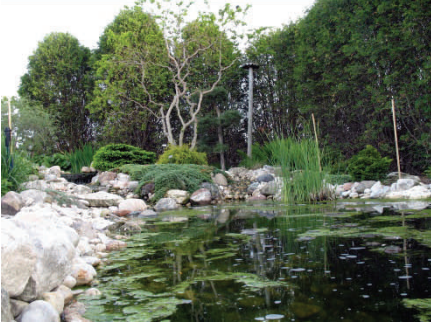
Volunteer Agreements – Every volunteer at the station must sign an agreement. Jim will forward the form from the 2014 MG Volunteer training materials to Kathie; we may obtain signatures at the April 14th meeting.

Special Events Coordinator – Linda Lambert has volunteered to take this role.

Announcements:

The next meeting will be on May 21st.

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.



Garden Door Notes

By Vicki Dirst

The Garden Door

The Garden Door Committee Meeting — March 10, 2014

Present: Jim McFarlin, Vicki Dirst, Allen Miller, Jo Ann Tarczewski, Kerry and Kathie Vavra, Wendy Woldt, Jim Baxter, DD Knutson, Phil Block, Jim Friedrichs, Barb Ottum, Kaylynn Peterson, Christine Gritzmacher, Deb Javurek, Shirley Ziman, Chriss Daubner, Patty Medeiros, Sandie Ott, Carol Berglund, Martha Burris, Kathy Green, Jerry and Vikki Saballus

Call to order: Jim M. chaired the meeting in Tim's absence. He called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Signage: Phil announced that we have ordered plant sale banners for placement at two locations in town the week prior to the event. Banners for the Open House have been updated. Various other signs were discussed, both for the garden itself and for special events. Kerry said he has purchased traffic control signs and cones.

Rack Cards: Phil has re-designed TGD rack cards following feedback at our last meeting. The committee approved the design. Phil will arrange to get them printed.

T-Shirts for 10th Anniversary: Jim M. suggested getting new t-shirts to celebrate the ten year anniversary of TGD. It was suggested that the design include the structure logo, "The Garden Door," and "10th anniversary." Wendy said that if we intend to sell them to the public we need a colorful design to make people want to buy them. Kathie said we still had about seven of the old t-shirts, and those were difficult to sell. Kaylynn said the new shirts should be the uniform for members taking part in this year's events. It was pointed out that several members never wear t-shirts. Sage green was suggested as the shirt color. Allen and Chris G. will help Jim M. with shirt design and cost alternatives.

Straw Bale Gardening: Kaylynn saw a recent magazine article about straw bale gardening, and asked if someone would like to do this for an interpretive display. Chriss said there is room in the holding area. Barb Ottum said it is a daily intensive process to get the straw ready to plant (more than two weeks). Deb and Patty are willing to work together on this. The location will be Deb's plot in the Garden Next Door. Wendy volunteered to provide four bales of straw.

Labels for Grass Garden: Jim Baxter passed around color samples.

Garden Maps: Jim Baxter reported that he has prepared a sketch map of the plants in the grass garden. However, he would like to have an accurate map showing the locations of individual plants. He suggested that we could put this map on our website. In order to prepare an accurate map, he recommended buying a laser measuring device at a cost of about \$75.

Tim's agenda notes suggested that he was interested in having a map of the entire garden for public use: "Goal is to have a simplified, user-friendly/intuitive ... garden map that guides the public so they can learn, enjoy, relax..."

Vicki went over how our current map was developed in 2010. Prior to undertaking the task, she asked the committee to identify the purpose of the map. While people didn't have a clear concept, the general idea seemed to be that it was for gardeners to use in working on TGD. She then spent a number of days using a 50 foot tape measure and compass to plot the locations of paths, structures, beds, trees, etc. With the aid of an aerial photo, she then plotted the data on a large paper map. A slightly reduced 11"x 17" version was copied and distributed. The result is accurate to within 2 feet for all features shown. The map includes a scale. What it does not show are the cactus bed and the paths in the shade bed, since these were installed later.

The Garden Door Committee Meeting *(continued)*

Vicki then asked someone to clearly articulate why a new map is needed. Who is it for and how is it to be used? This affects matters of draftsmanship, scale, degree of detail and labeling. She explained that if you want a map to go on a garden brochure for visitors (and she would argue that such a navigation aid is not needed), you would make a much different map than one for an interpretive kiosk. Also, since the garden continues to change from year to year, the manner of addressing revisions should be discussed.

Jim B. said he simply wants a map for his area (the grass garden). Martha said we should take care of the labels first and worry about the maps later. Kaylynn said she didn't think we need a new map. The committee voted to approve the purchase of a laser measuring tool to assist Jim B. in his project. It was uncertain whether this would be charged to the tool shed budget.

Plant Inventory: Tim's agenda called for every area supervisor to prepare a plant inventory and an inventory of all hardscape materials and garden art. The intent is to include this information on the website. The inventory should include all trees, shrubs, and perennials, listed alphabetically by botanical name, with accompanying common name and cultivar.

Plant Labels: This year we will attempt to label all plants in the garden, using the established format of botanical name, common name and cultivar. People should check the rack of plant labels in the shed to see if there is a label already made for a given plant. If new labels are needed the information should be typed and given to Sandie either on a paper form or in an email. Since perennials and annuals are labeled in different colors, people need to specify to Sandie what they are. Furthermore, we should specify if we want short stakes (about 1 ft.) or tall stakes (about 2 ft.).

Other Discussion:

Carol will write up an information sheet for docents to use in giving tours.

Jim M. said Tim amended the grant application for buying tents. We should find out in April if the grant comes through.

Chriss called for people to submit their perennial orders.

Jim M. asked Allen to comment on the possible construction of an interpretive kiosk in the corner of the parking lot. Allen said a small one-sided kiosk would cost \$800 or \$900. A double sided one would cost more. One side could serve as a replacement for the current sign (The Garden Door). The other could have a map, our website, the history of the garden, how to become a master gardener, acknowledgments, etc.

Kaylynn brought up the idea of having solar lights, perhaps on the pergola and gazebo.

Allen brought up the question of theft at the plant sale.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58. The next meeting will be May 12th.

Grant Support Received

The DCMGA has received a grant from the Raibrook Foundation to assist with the purchase of portable tents that will be used at outdoor events, such as The Open House and Taste of The Garden Door. Thanks to Tim Kazmierczak, Jim McFarlin, and Barb and Doug Henderson for their work in securing this grant.

The Garden Door Needs Helpers in Spring

MGV's will be needed in April or May (weather permitting) to help:

1. In the Rock Garden to relocate rocks and plants to accommodate the widened path near the Gazebo;
2. Throughout TGD to identify plants, including by Latin names, for labels ; and
3. Throughout TGD to map and identify trees, plants, and garden features to update TGD map.

For more information, check the dcmga.org web site or watch for e-mail reminders.

Education Committee Report**2014 Educational Programs for Spring**

February and March have been busy months for the Door County Master Gardeners Educational Programs, all open to the public and held at Crossroads at Big Creek in Sturgeon Bay. We have had six speakers present programs on growing mushrooms, ferns of Northeast Wisconsin, professional landscape design, dahlias, garden tools, and growing lawns by using organic, conventional or in-between approaches. These programs provided informative and enjoyable evenings as described in the pages that follow in this Newsletter. Despite the challenging weather we have had this winter, all were well attended and appreciated. We extend our thanks to all who helped organize the programs, present them, provide treats served during the breaks, or serve and clean up after the breaks.

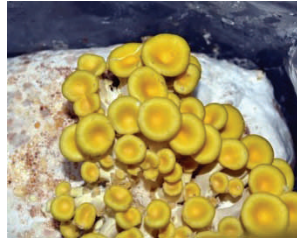
Our next program is **Chriss Daubner's Butterfly Gardening presentation, on Tuesday, April 8**, at 7 PM at Crossroads at Big Creek. Chriss is both a MG and Wild Ones member with extensive experience gardening to attract butterflies. To make your garden a butterfly magnet, you need to do more than plant some flowers. You also need to understand how butterflies live, what they need to eat, how they reproduce, and what makes a garden attractive to them. Chriss will describe in detail the lives of butterflies and tell you ways to make your home garden a welcoming place where butterflies will flourish. Chriss will illustrate planting ideas to attract butterflies to Door County landscapes based on her own butterfly and prairie gardens. We anticipate that this program will be well attended by Wild Ones and Wisconsin Master Naturalists, as well as Master Gardeners and the public. Please consider baking/bringing treats for this program. If you can contribute treats, please email or call Sarah Freyman to let her know.

Tom Luebker will present two Educational Programs in April. The first will be on **“Choosing Plants Wisely” on April 15th**. Successful gardens and landscapes require selecting plants appropriate for the location and growing conditions, and consistent with the type of care the gardener will provide. Tom's second program will be **“Landscape Design 101” on April 22nd**. He will describe how to plan and create a detailed design for a landscape that meets your needs and wants. Tom is an entertaining and informative speaker who draws on his considerable background and experience in gardening and horticulture to provide useful advice for Door County gardeners.

Our final spring Educational program will be on **April 29th, on “Intersectional Peonies” presented by Sue Zimmerman**. Intersectional peonies result from a cross between a herbaceous lactiflora peony and a woody (tree) peony, often resulting in a plant of intermediate appearance and flowers that resemble those of a tree peony. The plants can have increased hybrid vigor and disease resistance. We look forward to learning more about these hardy perennials.

DCMGA Fall Seminar—November 8, 2014

SAVE THE DATE: Door County Master Gardeners' 2014 Fall Seminar will be Saturday, November 8, at Crossroads, from 9 AM to 2 PM. Our speaker is Nancy Nedveck from The Flower Factory, and registration is free for DCMGA members. This seminar will be open to the general public for a modest registration fee. Lunch will be served at a modest cost. More details will be provided closer to the seminar date.



Mushroom Gardening and Forest Farming

On February 11, 2014, Laura Kahles (above left) of Field and Forest Products (“FFP” in Peshtigo, WI) presented a fascinating program on mushroom growing for home use or marketing. She was informative and entertaining in describing how to grow a variety of edible mushrooms. She also provided copies of the FFP catalog that contained additional details on products and methods for growing mushrooms.

Most people in the audience had never grown mushrooms, so Laura began by describing easy-to-grow types: Wine Cap *Stropharia* and Almond *Agaricus*. Wine Cap is a wood chip decayer with a burgundy top, blue-gray gills and spore prints, and a white stem with mycelium at the base, but no bulb. Wine Cap is grown in a shady area by spreading spawn (mycelium growing in wood shavings) in spring over a layer of wood chips and then covering the spawn with more wood chips, which must be kept moist through the summer to produce the first mushroom crop in fall. One Wine Cap sowing on wood chips can produce mushrooms for 2 to 3 years, whereas when grown on straw, it will produce only a single crop. Wine Cap is suitable for polyculture, e.g., growing in the shade of another decorative or vegetable crop that requires similar moisture conditions, such as hosta or tomato plants. Another easy-to-grow species is Almond *Agaricus*, which is a compost decayer. It can grow on composted straw or garden compost, but should not be grown on any animal waste to avoid harmful bacterial contamination of edible mushrooms. Almond *Agaricus* is a whitish cap mushroom that is picked at the button (small cap) stage. It can be grown in polyculture, but it cannot be allowed to dry out. FFP uses straw on the ground, which is covered by spawn and then a “casing” (e.g., paper feedbags) over the spawn. Constant moisture is maintained by drip irrigation under the casing and sprinkling from above. The casing must be lifted when mushroom caps start to develop.

Laura described how to grow Oyster, Shitake, Nameko and Lion’s Mane mushrooms on logs inoculated with spawn. These species all have specific tree types on which they will grow, described in detail in the FFP catalog. She illustrated different ways to inoculate logs, including a “totem” method in which spawn is layered between three log sections placed on top of each other, and then the reconstructed log is kept moist in plastic bag in a warm place for 2 to 3 months when mushrooms start to develop. Logs can be inoculated by three drill-and-fill methods that insert spawn into holes in logs. Inoculated logs are kept outside for 6 to 18 months in moist, shady conditions (including under winter snow) before mushrooms will develop.

Laura brought live examples of table-top mushroom kits. These blocks of spawn in a plastic bag will produce a mushroom crop when kept moist and warm (see pictures, above right). She also brought a sample of mushroom butter made with some FFP mushrooms to sample during the break to further entice anyone who might have wondered whether the mushrooms tasted as good as they looked.

Thanks to Kerry Vavra who served as the coordinator for this event. Thanks also to the MG’s who made, contributed or served the treats served during the intermission.



Ferns of Door County

On February 18, 2014, Gary Fewless (above center) of University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (UW-GB) discussed many of the common native ferns (Pteridophytes) found in Door County, which were included in his informative handout. He told us about the UW-GB biodiversity website that will link people to an introduction on fern biology, a key for identifying common species, and a list of Wisconsin's ferns (www.uwgb.edu/biodiversity/herbarium/pteridophytes/pteridophytes_of_wisconsin01.htm). Wisconsin's Pteridophytes include 67 true ferns, of which 30 are common, 14 club mosses, 9 horsetails, 3 spike mosses and 2 quillworts, which grow underwater and are rarely seen. Gary described the structures used to classify true ferns and described their role in fern biology. True ferns have small stems, typically at ground level, often covered by leaf debris. Some ferns also have underground stems (rhizomes) by which the ferns spread by vegetative reproduction. The most conspicuous parts of a true fern are the above-ground leaves that are often complex, with distinctive branching stems and chlorophyll-bearing leaflets. The number, arrangements, and shapes of stems and leaflets are used to help identify and distinguish ferns. A variety of spore-bearing structures used in fern reproduction are represented in the common species of Wisconsin's true ferns. These include tiny spore producing structures found on the underside of a leaf and covered by an umbrella-like "sorus" (e.g., in Wood Ferns), spore-bearing stems that intersect or rise above the main leaf (e.g., in Interrupted Fern), and separate non-chlorophyll leaves that carry spore cases (e.g., in Ostrich and Cinnamon Ferns). These features are used in fern identification and Gary showed many examples of the variety of structures found in common Wisconsin ferns. His slides included many detailed pictures that were both beautiful and instructive.

Gary's comments about Door County's ferns also described the environments in which each type typically grows, from relatively sunny meadow (e.g., Bracken Fern) to swamp species (e.g., Crested Wood Fern). He encouraged people to preserve these habitats where fern species grow naturally, rather than transplanting or using ferns in landscaping where conditions may not be suitable for these plants. Gary also recommended not eating new growth fern leaves ("fiddleheads") because some are poisonous and all are unpalatable. Gary advised that if you have to cook something in bacon fat and smother it with cheese to make it taste good, you should just leave it where it grows.

Gary's enthusiasm and expertise made this presentation informative and fun. His sincere comments about respecting and preserving the land and forests in which Wisconsin's ferns grow gave us something to think about beyond simply being able to identify our native ferns.

Thanks to Sarah Freyman for coordinating this program. Thanks to the MG volunteers who provided and served snacks during the break.



Professional Landscape Design

At the Crossroads on Tuesday, February 25th, the Door County Master Gardeners welcomed Greg Meissner, who presented a program about professional landscape design. Greg is well qualified in the subject of landscaping. He is the co-owner of Meissner Landscape, Inc., a full service landscape company that has been providing services in Door County for some 32 years. His background includes a BS degree in biology from UW Stevens Point, many years of practical landscaping experience at Evergreen Nursery, Co., including; management of the landscape division and retail garden center and ending as their Secretary and Vice President, before he started his own landscape business in 1982.

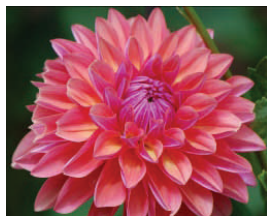
The evening's program was sponsored by the DCMGA and was also open to the general public. It was well attended with a full house of 80 some people. We also had an abundance of great treats at intermission, provided by our members, which made for a fun and "filling" time.

During his presentation Greg discussed how a landscape company works with its customers to arrive at a plan that will achieve a quality finished project. He emphasized the necessity of arriving at an agreed upon plan with the customer as the first step. He showed some of the detailed plans Meissner, Inc. had used for larger projects. Greg also highlighted the iterative, back and forth discussions that usually take place between the landscaper and customers, a requirement in arriving at a plan that balances the customers' desires and financial realities.

Greg went over the myriad of things a customer should consider when thinking about a landscape project, e.g., landscaping around your home. His company uses a "Landscape Think Sheet" as a guide when discussing what the customer wants to achieve. It is broken down into three main sections: 1) What do you want? 2) What have you got? and 3) Putting it all together. This "Think Sheet" is filled out by the customer and becomes a guide for conversation with the landscape planner. Noted on the sheet is: "Beautiful home grounds do not come by chance but rather through careful analysis, planning and adherence to some basic principles of design." This "Think Sheet", with other information, was included in Greg's handouts at the program.

Greg also mentioned that Meissner Landscape worked on various types and sizes of landscape projects, e.g., a job done by the landscaper for a new home on a large area, to smaller jobs which might require only help with a plan or certain materials and then the customer would do the actual work. In this part of the program, Greg showed "before" and "after" pictures, with detailed discussion of various different sized projects Meissner Landscape had done. Many of these pictures were taken in the spring or summer with green leaves, lawns and beautiful flowers. The pictures were much appreciated by the audience and gave us all hope that spring would come soon, despite the fact that it was very cold and snowy outside the Crossroads that evening. Greg finished this enjoyable evening with a question and answer time.

Thanks to Tom Kile for coordinating this program and summarizing the presentation for this Newsletter. Thanks to the MG volunteers who provided and served snacks during the break.



On March 3rd, two Door County MGV's presented a "double header" on topics useful to Door County gardeners: **Dahlias** presented by Vicki Dirst and **Garden Tools** presented by Jim Baxter.

Dahlias: Beautiful, Diverse and Easy to Grow

Vicki Dirst presented an informative and encouraging program on growing Dahlias, which can provide beautiful blooms in Door County from late June until fall's frost. She summarized the known history of these diverse flowering plants, which are native to Mexico where they were grown for decorative and medicinal uses. Europeans first encountered the plants in Mexico in the 1500s, and brought them to Spain in 1789. Named after botanist Andreas Dahl, the plants became popular throughout Europe by the 1800s. Most dahlia species have a single row of petals around an open center, but by 1826 double varieties were grown almost exclusively, usually with purple or purple tinged blooms. By 1828, scarlet red double varieties were produced and the new varieties sold for as much as \$25 per plant. Since then, dahlia has been hybridized from a small number of species to produce a plant with one of the largest arrays of forms, colors and sizes of any flower grown. Nearly 50,000 varieties have been developed in the last 100 years!

Vicki summarized Dahlia classification, which is based on (1) bloom sizes, ranging from over 10 to under 4 inches in diameter, (2) bloom forms (at least 18 types are recognized), and (3) 15 color classes that include purple, red, pink, orange, yellow, cream, white, and bicolor. Plants can grow from 6 inches to 20 feet, but usually are 1 to 6 feet tall. Vicki described how to grow dahlias in Door County, using the "easiest method" (planted outside in late May or when the ground temperature is about 60 degrees, in at least 6 hrs. of sunlight) or by starting them in pots in April with minimal water, moving to a sunny spot when sprouts appear, and transplanting in late May or early June to a sunny garden. Growing plants should be watered regularly, deadheaded, and tied to stakes if over 3 ft tall. Dahlias typically are grown without herbicides (i.e., hand weed only), with a low nitrogen fertilizer (e.g., a 5-10-10) and with no compost. Vicki does not find pests or diseases to be a big problem. At the end of the season, after frost, you may overwinter the tubers by digging them up with a spading fork, removing the stalk and cleaning the tuber with water, drying briefly, and packing them in a medium (not sealed in a container or plastic bag) and storing them in cool temperatures. Remember to label the stored tubers. Or you can "treat them like tomatoes and throw them away" and buy new ones next year. Dahlias can be divided in fall or spring, but tubers must have at least one eye (on the center stalk) to grow. Propagation can also be from cuttings or seeds.



Vicki described her personal history as a Dahlia grower since 1992, including her role in identifying the origin of the "Wisconsin Red" variety (right), formerly called "Catherine Becker." In about 1997, Vicki received some red dahlias by John Hagman, whose family had grown the variety since about 1900, starting with John's paternal grandmother's family in Appleton. John's grandparents spread them to Ashland, WI, John's parents gave them to friends in Duluth, WI and Grand Marais, MN, and John has shared them with folks in Madison, Middleton, Cross Plains, Sturgeon Bay, and Washington Island. When Vicki tried to identify the variety of this red dahlia (for her donation to a DCMGA plant sale), she researched it via the internet. She found an identical dahlia variety offered in 2009 for the first time by the Old House Gardens (OHG) website as "Catherine Becker." OHG had obtained its dahlia from Vytas Virkau, who had admired the flowers for 40 years, growing in a farmhouse vegetable garden near his summer home near Wausaukee, WI. Vytas was given a start for the red dahlia by the lady of the house, Catherine Becker. Vytas later gave the dahlia to OHG, which named it "Catherine Becker." When Vicki provided OHG with her compiled history of the Hagman family's dahlia, OHG confirmed the family history with John's wife, Brenda, who also told them that John's aunt and uncle had grown their red dahlia for years in Marinette, about 30 miles from Wausaukee where Catherine Becker grew red dahlias. John's uncle, Charlie Koepf, was an avid gardener and doctor in Marinette who was well-known for giving plants to his patients. Following these communications, OHG exchanged tubers with the Hagmans and Vicki. After trials confirmed the "Catherine Becker" dahlia was the same as the older Hagman family dahlia, OHG changed its name to the more inclusive "Wisconsin Red" designation. Under its new name, this variety it has been described in *Fine Gardening* magazine, and *Vintage Wisconsin Gardens* by Lee Somerville. With its history as an ornamental grown in vegetable gardens, OHG included "Wisconsin Red" in four heirlooms it sent to the White House for use in Michelle Obama's vegetable garden.

Last year, Vicki grew 80 dahlias in her home garden, of which 30 were "Wisconsin Red" among the 20 different varieties that she grew. Vicki assured us that dahlias are easy to grow and encouraged us to "give them a try!"



Garden Tools

On March 4, Master Gardener Jim Baxter (left, shown in his other-favorite-pastime clothes) also spoke at the Educational Program at Crossroads at Big Creek. Jim reviewed tools that gardeners ought to think about acquiring when they know they're hooked on gardening. Because tools represent a substantial investment, gardeners should think seriously about their needs and how to cost-effectively satisfy them. In addition to his hands, Jim prefers having fewer, but high quality tools. For most gardeners, a handful of tools usually will suffice to start, but tools may be added as your gardens grow in size or complexity. This program was designed to introduce gardeners to available tools to help them plan their tool acquisitions as they plan their garden development.

Typically, garden tools are grouped into three categories, related to soil, plants, and water. Jim prefers to categorize tools as related to the critters or related to the gardener. The latter is most important because if the gardener gets bored or frustrated with the garden, or gets hurt, the other tools rapidly become irrelevant. Three non-typical tools that Jim believes will tend to keep you happy, interested and healthy in the garden are: binoculars, a notebook and indelible-ink pen, and a walking stick. Binoculars allow you to see wildlife in and around the garden. He prefers waterproof binoculars that can focus up close, e.g., 6 feet or less. If you train yourself to look up every few minutes, you'll be amazed at what you will see. And the views will open up a new dimension to your garden, such as the details of butterflies, dragonflies, spiders, frogs, snakes, and yellow jackets traveling to and from their nest. A notebook and pen allows you to jot down gardening notes, diagrams, questions and thoughts about life, presents for grandkids, etc. A walking stick attached to your belt with three feet of nylon cord will help save your knees and back.

Jim's reviewed tools for hauling, which is a big part of gardening. For moving solids (dirt, manure, compost, mulch, rocks, tools, plants or produce), he recommends a wheelbarrow and several flexible plastic buckets. For moving water, he recommends a watering can (or two) that holds as much as you can comfortably carry to minimize trips. For more water, Jim recommends a good hose with thick walls (avoids kinking) and using stakes to guide the hose away from plants. He prefers 3 ft sections of cedar poles with one end sharpened, although sections of 2 X 2 lumber sharpened at one end will also work. He recommends taking the hose to the garden after beds and paths are laid out, but before seeding or planting, to locate the entry points and turns the hose will make. Then place one or two stakes at each of those points. For extensive hoses made up of many segments, Jim recommends using in-line nozzles to turn off the water flow, which allows you to disconnect segments, do watering along the way, and reconnect before moving on. This will limit trips to the faucet or shed to find a nozzle. Jim reviewed about 50 garden tools (including the "Big Six" and "Little Seven") with a show-and-tell approach. He indicated his preferences based on insights derived from his garden experiences. And he told how he lives with the critters and what he does when he reluctantly decides he must keep them out. Although Jim thinks one of the wonderful things about gardening in Door County is all of the wildlife you can see while in the garden, he also recognizes that one of the terrible things about gardening in Door County is what the wildlife can do in your garden when you're not there.

Thanks to Vicki Dirst and Jim Baxter for presenting this program. Thanks to the MG volunteers who provided and served snacks during the break.

Your Lawn: Organic, Conventional, or In-between

On March 18th, Sharon Morrisey, consumer Horticulture Agent for the Milwaukee County UW Extension, spoke on lawn care. Her goal was to provide information so the audience could make informed decisions on the type of lawn care they choose. She provided a thoughtful, objective, and balanced description of lawn care based on research described in UW Extension publications (e.g., A3958, A3964, A3950) and a brochure on “Your Lawn ...Your Choice” published by the UW Extension and Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners. The brochure lists additional UW Extension publications related to lawn care. Publication A3958 describes “Organic and reduced-risk lawn care.” Both were provided as handouts at the program.

Sharon started with “the basics” of mowing (blades at 2.5-3” high; leave the clippings), watering (when and how much depending on soil and light conditions), and fertilizing. “When the basics are done right, the rest will be easier” which avoids weed, insect and pest problems. Fertilizing is an area that causes much confusion, so Sharon described how to read a fertilizer label to select the correct balance of nitrogen, phosphate, and potassium (N:P:K). (Wisconsin banned phosphates except for new lawns, so commercial lawn fertilizers for consumers should all have “0” as the middle number.) Lawn fertilizers should have about 25-50% slow release nitrogen (water insoluble N that lasts about 8 weeks). Sharon described how to calculate the percentage of slow release N from information on a label.

Sharon reviewed the different approaches to lawn care, including hiring a service. Lawn care services have access to different chemicals and at different concentrations than available to the DIY approach, making it difficult for a lawn owner to compare (or control) the lawn care service practices. Conventional lawn care was described as “addictive” because it is easy, cheap and fast, often resulting in a beautiful lawn that comes at a price to long term soil and water quality. “Organic lawn care” is difficult to define because no established guidelines exist for “organic” turf (only for food crops). Products marketed as “organic” have not been scientifically tested or proven effective for lawn care, are often less effective and require repeat applications, and are usually expensive. Organic lawn care practices that include Spring and Fall core aeration (8” deep) and top dressing (e.g., 1” of high quality composted manure) are labor intensive and expensive (e.g., \$600/5000 square feet). The “in-between” approach is called “reduced-risk lawn care” that uses the mowing, watering, and soil management practices of an organic program, but may use additional fertilizers and pesticides, including synthetic fertilizers or those derived from biosolids. Reduced-risk care will only use conventional pesticides that meet the EPA’s criteria for reduced-risk or minimum-risk programs. UW Extension publication A3958 includes tables that list products that qualify as organic disease control products, EPA minimum-risk pesticides, or pest control options for organic and reduced risk lawn care, as well as a calendar for organic and reduced-risk lawn care tasks.

Thanks to Kerry Vavra for coordinating this program. Thanks to the MG volunteers who provided and served snacks during the break.

THANKS FOR VOLUNTEERING!
Check dcmga.org Website for Volunteer Opportunities

Thanks to all DCMG’s who participate in our events throughout the year. You help make our organization and community better. Please check our web site for current notices on volunteer opportunities.



COMING EVENTS

MEET 'N GREET THE DCMGA CLASS OF 2014

To meet and welcome the new MG trainees, please join us on April 12th at Sevastopol Town Hall (4528 State Highway 57 in Institute).

Potluck Dinner at 5:30 PM

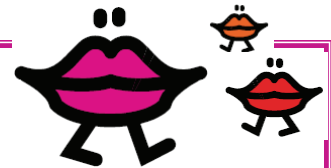
DCMGA will provide chicken and beverages (coffee, tea, water). Please bring a dish to pass (appetizer, salad, side dish, dessert, etc.) and other beverage of your choice. In addition to conversation and laughs, the evening will include games & prizes!

And Celebrate the Arrival of Caleb Evan Kazmierczak

At 4:30 PM before the potluck, we will have a shower to welcome Tim & L'Erin's new son. Please join us!

Please RSVP: If you (and a guest) plan to attend the baby shower, potluck dinner or both please sending an email to: dcmgabuzz@gmail.com or telephone Linda Zolnosky at 746-8253 with the number who will attend and the type of dish that you plan to bring for the potluck.

A Taste of the Garden Door **AND** Pesto Festo VIII 1-4PM, Saturday, September 6, 2014 Needs Volunteers!



Look for the "Walking Lips" (above right) during the next few months. They are the official logo for the 2014 Taste of The Garden Door & Pesto Festo VIII activities and needs. We hope each DCMGA volunteer will consider being part of this fun educational event. All job opportunities have a written job description that will be made available to you before you sign on! And don't forget – ALL hours that you record doing these jobs count toward your volunteer hour commitment for the 2014 year.

HELP NEEDED!

Veggie Grower for The Taste of The Garden Door: One person or a group of people are needed to grow veggies in a plot in The Garden Next Door. The grower will meet with area leaders to determine what veggies need to be grown and will then procure the plants, tend the garden, harvest the crops and deliver to the Taste. Previous experience is not needed but a love of growing veggies is! The larger the harvest the larger your pay – you get to eat the leftovers!

Taste Coordinator Shadows: The 2014 Taste of The Garden Door coordinators, Barbara & Doug Henderson, need shadows. "Shadows" will work with the coordinators and will learn "the ropes" so they can become coordinators for the 2015 event. No previous experience is needed for this exciting job but a desire to have fun working with and coordinating other volunteers is desirable!

To receive more information about either of these important jobs, please contact Barbara & Doug Henderson by email to barbdoug@doorpi.net or telephone at 743-9026.

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Editor: Christine Gritzmacher
Send comments to: mqdceditor@gmail.com

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Event Locations: PARS = Peninsular Agricultural Research Station Classroom, and CR = Crossroads at Big Creek

April 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Youth Comm Mtg 1 pm, Glas in S.B. Upstairs room	3	4	5 Green Bay Botanical Garden Symposium 8:30 am-4 pm
6	7	8 Ed. Prgm. 7 pm, CR	9	10	11	12 Meet 'n Greet 5:30 pm, Sevastopol Town Hall
13	14 Mandatory Reporting Training, 7 pm, CR	15 Ed. Prgm. 7 pm, CR	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29 Ed. Prgm. 7 pm, CR	30			

May 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Ed. Comm. Mtg. 5:30 pm, PARS	7	8	9	10
11	12 TGD Comm. Mtg 5:30 pm, PARS	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 Board Meeting 5:30 pm, PARS	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 DCMGA Plant Sale 9 am-12, PARS