

President's Message December 2023

Ol Santa is coming one December night
with a reindeer sleigh full of toys,
to fill all the stockings
before it gets light,
for all the good girls and good boys.

A long list of names he studied with care.
"Ho, ho, ho!," he said with a smile.
"Wood County has so many great
Master Gardeners there...
it just might take me a while!"

"They've dug and planted, watered and pruned
to make their towns pretty and cheery.
They've helped people learn,
in person and on zoom.
Let's make their Christmas EXTRA merry!"

So, Santa began his yearly trip
spreading Blessings and Good Will of the season.
But, he left us this tip...
"Celebrate....Let 'er rip!"
The birth of our Savior, the reason.

Soon Christmas will dawn on the 'morrow,
as sure as the day you were born.
May your holiday delight
and your New Year be bright.
We couldn't ask for more.

Chris



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November Meeting Minutes

Wood County Master Gardener Volunteer Assoc. General Membership Meeting November 14, 2023 6:00 pm Alexander House, Port Edwards

Program: "Looking Back: Moving Forward" - Karleen Remington & Judy Miller

Total Present: 14

Business Meeting: (President: Chris Grimes) Called to order 6:05

Secretary's Report: (J. Miller) Review of minutes from October 24, 2023 was without corrections or additions and will be put on file.

Treasurer's Report : (Famia Marx) Report reviewed and will be put on file. The CD will be renewed at a better interest rate when it comes due in early December.

Old Business:

Nominating Committee: (Karleen & Bea) The officers nominated for next year are: President – Chris Grimes, Secretary – Judy Miller, Treasurer – Famia Marx, and 2 Directors – Jill Becker and Bea Kohl. The office of Vice-President remains open. The Vice-President position also includes the Program Chairperson. M/S/P to accept the slate of nominees unanimously.

New Business:

January meeting volunteers are needed as follows:

Project Authorization Committee: 1-2 members needed. Will meet on January 9, 2024.

Programs: 3-4 members needed.

Audit: This is a 3 year term and requires an in-person meeting.

WIMGA: (Mickey Erickson) Mickey is resigning from the WIMGA Rep position, effective immediately. This opening currently needs to be filled. The State meetings are usually on Zoom. The training for being a Rep also takes place on Zoom.

Recognition Hours for 2022: Gifts were given to these members at the appropriate level.

Shelby Weister – 150 hours

Jill Becker – 500 hours

Jen Fane - 750 hours

Donna Streiff – 1500 hours

Famia Marx – 1500 hours

Karleen Remington – 1500 hours

Mickey Erickson – 3000 hours

Karleen Remington was also honored for service to the BOD over the last few years as Director, VP, and Acting President.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:42. M/S/P to adjourn – Barb/Lil

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Time, location, and program TBA

Respectfully Submitted, Judy Miller,
Secretary

The next newsletter will be out sometime in January. It will be a combined Jan-Feb issue. Articles will be due the first week in January.

November Meeting Activity

Look Back; Moving Forward!

Our November program was a brainstorming session on 3 questions about our WCMGV organization in 2023, the first year we were essentially on our own. Members divided into 4 discussion groups, brainstormed the questions for 7 minutes each and took a couple more minutes to prioritize their top 3 responses to each. Members reconvened to share and briefly discuss their thoughts. The questions and prioritized responses from each group are as follows:

What are you looking for by being a member of the WCMGVA?

- Knowledge (from 2 groups)
- Friendship & camaraderie (from 2 groups)
- Volunteerism
- Learning new things from other members
- Socialization
- Problem solving
- Community enhancement projects /community contribution
- Access to science based information from UW Extension

What changes could be made to make your membership more satisfying to you?

- Revisit meeting times and locations (meld north & south)
- Increase recruitment (from 2 groups)
- Work on fun projects/activities
- More communication about projects
- Fun ice breakers at meetings
- Mentorship program for new members
- Take trips together
- More interaction with other MG'ers (groups and individuals)
- More publicity for greater visibility in the community
- Consolidate activities to make a reasonable work load that matches our numbers
- Publicize all projects tended by members

What continuing education topics or suggestions would you like to see implemented for our meetings?

- Use a variety of learning styles
- Have some programs "on location"
- Keep the thread going on "natives"
- Revisit shrub care (pruning, fertilizing, etc.)
- Hmong gardening/tour
- Ask Janell to communicate all her extension education programs to each individual member
- Hydrangeas
- Peonies
- Fall bulb care
- Field trips
- Landscaping series
- Training on accessing computer resources (google docs, extension resources, etc.)
- Edible ornamentals

Continued on next page

All four groups handed in their total lists to supplement the summary above. This information will be presented to the Board of Directors and the Program Committee for consideration during future planning. Thanks to all who contributed to this exercise. You gave the BOD much to think about and it will be of great value in developing a strategic plan for our future and planning continuing education for our membership.

Congratulation are in order!

Seven MGVs were honored at our November Membership meeting for milestone cumulative volunteer hours in 2022. Recognition gifts and certificates were given to each honoree. Congratulations to the honorees and thank you for sharing your particular talents, outstanding effort, and commitment to WCMGVA!

Shelby Weister	150 hours
Jill Becker	500 hours
Jennifer Fane	750 hours
Famia Marx	1500 hours
Karleen Remingto	1500 hours
Donna Streiff	1500 hours
Micky Erickson	3000 hours

Karleen Remington Recognized for BOD Service

Appreciation was extended at our November meeting for Karleen's service on the Board of Directors for the past several years. Karleen most recently served 3 terms as a Director from the North area of the county and 3 terms as Vice President, including stepping in as acting President when Sue Wilford moved mid term. Many, many thanks to Karleen for her calm, reasoned leadership and commitment to excellence in the service of WCMGVA.



Mickey (right) achieved 3000 hours of lifetime volunteer hours

For 2023 honorees, we'd like to get our Service Recognition program back on schedule to be awarded at our March meeting next year. The Master Gardener program office is not able to share that information yet, even if you consented to do so in the ORS earlier this year. So, once again, we request you share your lifetime volunteer hour total with us after January 1, as accrued through December 31, 2023.

Education Opportunities for C. E. Hours

As of the publishing date of this newsletter there are very few programs on any calendars for December or January. If you need continuing education hours to certify for 2023 by January 1, 2024 see the list of suggestions below.

UW Extension Horticulture [Wisconsin Horticulture – Division of Extension](#)

- The Extension Horticulture website is a treasure trove of educational articles, videos, webinars and courses. Go to the site listed above and click on the tab “Upcoming Programs”. Choose “Webinars for WI Gardeners”. You will find a list of programs you can watch. Or choose the next options “Videos” for more programs. You can get on the Horticulture email list to be notified of educational opportunities at: [Stay informed about Extension gardening learning opportunities!](#)
- The **Plants Plus** options are available on Canvas.
- Don't forget about Brian Hudelson's Medallions program at the PDDC website for many articles on plant diseases that can count for articles you have read.

From the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic

Ten Cool Diseases You Can Learn to Love (and Identify by Eye) DEC. 13, 2023, 6:30 – 8:30PM

Learn about ten fascinating plant diseases with such distinctive signs and symptoms that you can identify them by eye. This presentation will cover the biology of the organisms that cause these diseases and tidbits of disease control information as well.

Melinda Myers website

On the home page, scroll down to the orange button on the right side of the screen “Watch on-Demand Webinars”. Click on it and you will find a long list of her programs that have been recorded in the past year or two.

Coming in January:

Garden Guru January 15 at 6pm in person at the Marshfield Public Library or on Zoom by Master Gardener Barb Herreid

Topic is “**Homegrown National Parks**”. To enter the online You Tube presentation, go to Everett Roehl Memorial Public Library web page and click on Adults, then Programs, scroll down to Garden Guru and click on “Online”. That will take you to the You Tube location of the program. Or use this URL : <https://www.youtube.com/@ermpllibrary2715>

WIMGA Educational Program Jan 16, 2024 Craig LeHoullier, **Bring Your Garden to the Sun: All About Container and Straw Bale Gardening**

Coming in February:

“Plant Diagnostics: The Step by Step Approach to Identifying Plant Problems” class

Important Year-End Reminders

Recording Hours for 2023

2023 Deadline for Reporting Hours Extended to January 8th.

Our reporting year will stay the same, January 1 - December 31. However, we know everyone is busy during the holiday season. Therefore, you will have until midnight January 8, 2024 to enter your hours for 2023. **On January 9, 2024 the ORS will no longer accept hours for 2023.** Please enter your hours early.

You must submit organizations by December 22, 2023! If you want to report hours towards an organization not already listed in the ORS, you must submit it for review and publishing in the ORS. Please plan accordingly. *Deadline is only for 2023 reporting.*

Holiday hours: There will be no technical help from the program office outside normal business hours of M-F, 9:00am to 4:00pm and it will be reduced between December 22 and January 2. Response times will be longer. Thank you for your understanding.

Self-service options: Automatic password resets and username retrieval will be functioning.

Did you complete 2022 Onboarding-Lite? If you completed Onboarding-Lite in 2022, you do not need to do it again in 2023. However, if you DID NOT complete Onboarding-Lite in 2022 and plan on volunteering and recording hours in 2023, **You Are Required** to complete Onboarding-Lite before you start volunteering or obtaining continuing education. There will be no exceptions in 2023. Upon completion, you can claim 5 hours of continuing education in the ORS. We estimate that it may take you less time than this. *Onboarding-Lite can be found in the Master Gardener Program: Canvas Classroom.*

2024 Hours reporting:

January 1 - 9, 2024 you will not be able to add 2024 hours; please hold on to these hours for reporting later. Starting January 9, 2024 the ORS will be shut down for maintenance. We anticipate this will only be for a couple of weeks.

Election of Officers

The following were elected at the November meeting to serve on the Board of Directors for another term. Thanks to all for accepting this leadership opportunity.

President: Chris Grimes
VP no nominations
Secretary: Judy Miller
Treasurer: Famia Marx
North Director: Jill Becker
South Director: Bea Kohl

After speaking with many of you, our VP position is still vacant. We're asking everyone to once again consider a commitment for one year only. We could also consider sharing of the responsibilities with a second person. Contact Chris Grimes to discuss your ideas.

Program Committee Needs

One responsibility of the VP is to chair the Program committee, which arranges our educational programs for our monthly meetings from March-November. Even with the lack of a VP, this committee is still needed. We're looking for several people to come together to make these arrangements. We have many program ideas, but need a group to coordinate them. Most of this work can be done by email, phone, or zoom. Contact Chris for more information.

Plant Sale Buzz



Propagating Houseplants

Propagating houseplants is an easy and affordable way to increase the number of plants in your home. Propagating plants means to create new plants by both sexual (seeds) and asexual (vegetative) means. Although collecting seeds for many plants is easy, this is not always the most practical or quickest way to propagate plants. Sometimes plants propagated from seeds will look different from the parent plant.

The more common method is vegetative propagation, in which the stem, root, node (area where the leaf or bud attaches to the plant's stem), or leaf is used to produce a plant identical to the parent. In most cases, vegetative propagation produces a new plant quickly; some plants, however, may not respond well to this method. For examples, consult a reference such as *American Horticultural Society Plant Propagation* (see Suggested Further Reading below). To ensure that your propagation efforts are successful, begin with plants that are free of disease, insects, and stress, and that are not suffering from a lack of water, high heat, light that's too bright, etc. Use sharp, clean tools and sterilized media. Above all, know the plant and the best methods and timing for optimum results.

Environmental requirements for successful propagation include:

- § Light: bright and indirect
- § Water: media should be moist but not saturated
- § Humidity: high humidity prevents plant material from drying out. Make sure the humidity isn't so high that diseases will develop (see the fact sheet, *Preventing, Diagnosing, and Correcting Houseplant Problems* for more information on this topic).

§ Temperature: rooting media temperature should be between 75° and 80°F for optimum results.

There are several types of propagation media you can use:

- § Water: use to propagate with leaves, stem tips, tips of branches, and stem sections
- § Sand: provides good water drainage and aeration, acidic pH. A pH no higher than 6.5 is preferred for cuttings for ensure good root development.
- § Vermiculite: holds water well, neutral pH
- § Perlite: provides good water drainage and aeration, neutral pH
- § Bark: provides very good water drainage and aeration, acidic pH

These materials can be used alone or in combination. Their advantage is that they allow roots to develop in a light, moist environment free of pathogens. Compost and garden soil are not the best choices for propagating houseplants because they are likely to contain pathogens and weed seeds, and they have a tendency to be heavy and not well aerated, which can yield poor propagation results.

Vegetative Propagation Methods

Cuttings can be made using a leaf or stem. This method is the most common and considered the easiest way to propagate plant material.

§ *Leaf and tip cuttings*: Begin by taking cuttings of actively growing stem or branch tips, or whole leaves. For tips, cut a piece that is 3 to 6 inches long and has at least two nodes. Remove leaves on the lower half



of the tip and place in a glass of water, or in a light media mix such as vermiculite, peat, or perlite. For leaves, leave no more than a half-inch of the petiole (the slender stem or stalk that supports the leaf) and treat in the same manner as the tip. Dipping the end of the tip or leaf in a rooting hormone before placing it in the water or media will speed the development of new roots. Be careful not to use too much hormone: only a little is needed and using an excessive amount will slow root development.

To use the hormone, dip the cut piece in it and gently tap off any excess. Place the cutting in a warm location, with high humidity and bright, indirect light. Plants that propagate well using this method include African violet (*Saintpaulia spp.*); snake plant (*Sansevieria spp.*); Rex begonias (*Begonia rex-cultorum*) and Grape ivy (*Cissus rhombifolia*).

§ *Stem cuttings*: Cut a 2- to 3-inch portion of the stem with at least two nodes on it. The stem cutting can be treated two separate ways: (1) stick the stem vertically into the rooting media with at least one node buried in the media or (2) lay the stem horizontally on the media with half the stem inserted into it. Roots will form at the sites of the buried nodes, while additional shoots will develop at the exposed nodes. Dumbcane (*Dieffenbachia spp.*) and Dracaena (*Dracaena spp.*) are two plants that respond well to this method.

Grafting is a method of propagating a scion (a shoot or twig) with desirable characteristics, such as shape, flower, color, and rapid growth, onto a rootstock (the portion growing in the media) with certain advantages (better anchorage and growth rate). Grafting is commonly used when propagating: (1) cacti and other succulents that have a slower-than-desired growth rate, (2) plants that do not produce chlorophyll, and (3) plants that require another to supply its food (parasitic).

The most common grafting methods are the flat, or side graft, and the apical-wedge graft. Neon cacti and rebutia (*Rebutia canigueralii*) respond well to flat grafts.

§ *Flat or side graft*: This process involves:

- o Selecting a desirable rootstock plant and scion.
- o Cutting both plants at an angle with a sharp knife, so that when cut, the two pieces (rootstock and scion) will match up. Instead of cutting the rootstock and scion at an angle, use a knife to cut both pieces in half, horizontally.
- o Line up the two pieces so that the rootstock's conducting tissue (the food- and water-conducting tissues) matches that of the scion; then join the two

pieces and turn them in a screwing motion to remove any air bubbles.

- o Secure both pieces in place with an elastic band.
- o Place the plant in a warm location with high humidity and bright, indirect light.
- o Water the media as needed.

§ *Apical-wedge graft*: This method is used for cacti that are very slender and therefore do not respond well to flat grafts. Begin by selecting a slender rootstock. Slice it vertically down the center through the conducting tissue. You will not remove any tissue from the rootstock; instead you will insert the scion of the plant you want to graft into this "slit." Cut a piece approximately 2 to 3 inches long from the terminal end of the scion you want to graft. Pare both sides to expose the conducting tissue, then slip the scion into the rootstock, lining up the conducting tissues. Secure with grafting tape, raffiti, or elastic. Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera*), responds well to apical-wedge grafts.

Division is used to propagate plants that are clump forming, such as snake plant (*Sansevieria spp.*), orchids, Bromeliads, and hens and chicks (*Sempervivum tectrum*). Gently pull or cut apart the plantlets. Immediately replant all the new plants after they have been separated.

Layering includes several methods: natural, simple, compound, and air, each with its own advantage.

§ *Natural layering* occurs when plants send out runners or plantlets. Occasionally, roots will have already formed on the plantlet. If this occurs, sever the plantlet from the parent and immediately plant in another pot with media. If roots have not formed, while still attached to the parent, place the plantlet in another pot and attach it to the media. In some cases it may be necessary to hold the plantlet to the media with 'U' shaped pins until rooting has occurred. Sever the plantlet from the parent plant once roots have formed. Spider plant (*Chlorophytum spp.*) and strawberry begonia (*Saxifraga sarmentosa*) are easily propagated by natural layering.

§ *Simple layering* is used for plants that vine. With the vine still attached to the parent plant, slice a portion of the vine. Bend it down and secure it in the media in the new pot with paper clips or wire. Once it has rooted, cut it from the parent plant.

§ *Compound layering* uses simple layering, but it is done twice with the same shoot in order to produce two separate plants. Simply slice the stem, bend it, and secure it to the media for the first rooting, then repeat

the process for the portion of the stem that is further out from the parent plant, for the second rooting. When the new plants have rooted, simply cut them from the parent and from each other and you will

§ *Air layering* entails developing aerial roots on a stem or branch. Slice a portion of the stem or branch, place moist moss around the entire wound, then cover the moss with plastic wrap. Once roots have formed, remove the plastic wrap and moss and cut off the upper portion of the stem or branch just below where the new roots have formed. Plant the newly rooted piece immediately. Dumbcane (*Dieffenbachia* spp.), Schefflera (*Brassica* spp.), and *Dracaena* spp. are easily propagated using this method.

Whatever method you choose for propagating your houseplants, be sure to use the proper tools, making sure that they are sterile, and to place the newly propagated plants in the correct environment, with the appropriate light, water, humidity, and temperature conditions, to ensure success. Be patient. Some plants respond very quickly and send out new roots shortly after being propagated, while others may take months. If you find that one method doesn't produce the results you desire, try again with another. The more experience you get in propagating plant material, the more successful you may become, and the more plants you will have to decorate your home.

Suggested Further Reading

Toogood, A. 1999. *American Horticultural Society Plant Propagation*

Prepared by Mary Concklin, Montgomery County horticultural extension educator and Kathleen M. Kelley, assistant professor of consumer horticulture.

PENN STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

102 TYSON BLDG.
UNIVERSITY PARK, PA 16802
AUGUST 1, 2006

The Horticulture Fact Sheet series is produced for home gardeners and professionals by the Consumer Horticulture Center at Penn State. The complete series is available on the Web at <http://hortweb.cas.psu.edu>.

Visit Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences on the Web: www.cas.psu.edu.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of Congress May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Legislature. T. R. Alter, Director of Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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Calendar of Events

January 8 Absolute deadline for recording 2023 hours

January 9 Project Authorization Committee 1pm WC Courthouse Safety Room

January 15 Garden Guru 6pm Homegrown National Parks

January 16 WIMGA Educational Program

January 16 Finance/Budget Committee 1:30pm Mork Study Room; Marshfield Library

January 30 4pm Board of Directors Zoom

HELP NEEDED

Vice President position and Program Committee remains unfilled at this time. Please consider volunteering for this position and/or committee membership to preserve our tradition of monthly continuing educational programs. Talk to Chris

Facebook Co-administrator Wanted



Administrators respond to inquiries from the public sent to our page, post promotional notices about our meetings and fundraisers, and post topical educational features. It's easy and does not require much of a time commitment, so it's a great way to volunteer to get our message out there. Training provided! Call Chris Grimes with questions.

Standing Committees that need more persons to serve:

Project Authorization
Programs
Audit

Refer to the November meeting minutes for more details and the calendar for dates of meetings

WIMGA Representative— talk to Mickey

November 2023: Plant Pathology Playlist

NOVEMBER 17, 2023 HUDELSON



Years ago, I participated (with three other Extension colleagues) in a weekly Saturday morning horticulture Q&A radio show in Milwaukee, WI. One of the fun aspects of the show (other than being able to wax poetic about plant diseases on the air) was that I was allowed to select songs, snippets of which would be played as the show went in and came out of commercials. Each month, I'd pick a theme ("celestial bodies" anyone?) and select seven or eight songs that both fit the theme and my musical tastes. For this month's web article, I continue this tradition by sharing some of my favorite plant-titled songs ([with links to recordings](#)) and providing commentary on diseases that might affect the referenced plants.

A Morning with the Roses

It's hard to avoid "rose" songs in music. They seem to be everywhere just like roses shrubs are everywhere in garden settings. This "rose" song by Richard Dworsky is my favorite. It's an instrumental piece and one of the first New Age songs I ever encountered.

The most common disease of roses is black spot. This disease affects rose leaves and canes, with classic symptoms being feathery-edged black leaf spots. On susceptible rose varieties, the disease can be so severe that shrubs will defoliate. For the causal rose grower, I suggest dealing with the disease by simply only growing black spot-resistant varieties. Routine thinning of shrubs to promote better airflow and create a drier environment is another useful management strategy. For hardcore rose growers, use of preventative fungicide treatments on particularly susceptible varieties may be needed to keep the disease under control.

Honeysuckle Rose

This Fats Waller/Andy Razaf song is part of the Great American Songbook, a compilation of ". . . the most important and influential popular songs and jazz standards from the early 20th Century. . ." (per the Great American Songbook Foundation). The definitive version of this song for me (probably because it's the first version I heard as a kid) is by Lena Horne (I could listen to her sing the telephone book). I also really love versions by contemporary jazz singer Jane Monheit and the amazing and tragic Eva Cassidy (I suggest listening to her cover of another plant-themed song, Sting's "Fields of Gold", as well).

Although this is another "rose" song, we're going to concentrate, disease-wise, on the honeysuckle part of the title. Every year, I enjoy watching my parents' vining honeysuckle develop powdery mildew, the most common disease that I see on this plant. By the end of the summer, the plant's leaves are powdery and white, but as with most plants, the disease is primarily a cosmetic issue and causes little actual damage. My parents' honeysuckle blooms profusely and attracts hummingbirds (which my parents can watch for hours on end). The twisted vines also provide shelter for English sparrows (much to my parents' chagrin). Management of powdery mildews on most plants, in my mind, involves developing the ability to ignore the diseases, given their cosmetic nature. On more susceptible plant species (e.g., phlox and beebalms), growing resistant varieties and thinning plants to increase airflow and reduce humidity (the driving environmental factor for powdery mildew development) can help manage these diseases.

Willow Song

Probably the most common diseases that I see on willows (usually weeping willows) are canker diseases. There are a wide range of canker fungi that can infect and girdle willow branches, leading to branch dieback. Often weeping willows grow rapidly and outgrow significant damage from canker diseases. However, if management is needed, I suggest pruning four to six inches below obviously dead areas on branches. Always be sure to prune only when it is dry, and be sure to disinfest pruning tools between cuts by dipping them in bleach diluted to a final concentration of 0.5% sodi-

um hypochlorite (the active ingredient) or (even better) 70% alcohol (e.g., rubbing alcohol). Spray disinfectants can be used as a source of alcohol as well. Just be sure to check the ingredient list of the disinfectant that you select to make sure it contains roughly 70% alcohol. If you decide to use bleach, be sure to thoroughly rinse your tools after you are done pruning and oil them to prevent rusting that can be caused by bleach use. You can dispose of branches by burning (where allowed) or burying them.

I'm not a huge opera fan, but this aria from "The Ballad of Baby Doe" by Douglas Moore and sung by the marvelous Beverly Sills really mesmerized me when I stumbled across it years ago. Baby Doe was one of Sills' signature roles (although I will always remember her best for her guest appearance on "The Muppet Show"). If opera isn't your thing, then consider as an alternate willow song, Gordon Lightfoot's "Pussywillows, Cat-Tails".

Seeds

If you talk about seeds, then from a disease standpoint, you need to discuss damping-off. This disease has both a seed decay phase (where seeds rot before germinating) and a seedling phase (where seedlings collapse and die just after emergence). Damping-off can be caused by several fungi and water molds, with the water mold *Pythium* probably the most common organism involved. To prevent damping-off, use pasteurized potting mixes/soil, decontaminate pots, germinate seeds at warm temperatures, and keep soil moisture on the dry side as seeds germinate and seedlings emerge.

This song was written by Pat Alger, Ralph Murphy, and Ralph Murthy, and I found it on country singer Kathy Mattea's "Lonesome Standard Time" album. Mattea is one of my favorite country artists from the 1980s and 1990s. I challenge you to listen to her recording of "Where Have You Been?" and not shed a tear.

Dusty Miller

I rarely see dusty miller in the clinic, but when I do, the problem is typically a root rot of some kind. Root rots tend to be caused by the same organisms that cause damping-off (discussed above). At least some level of root rot pathogens can be found in most garden soils, so management of these diseases tends to involve moderating soil moisture. Root rot organisms tend to be more active in wet soils, so making sure not to over-water and over-mulch can help prevent root rots from being an issue. Most established plants require roughly one inch of water per week during the growing season. Mulch usage varies depending on soil type. For heavy soils (e.g., clay), use one to two inches of a high quality mulch (I like shredded oak bark mulch and red cedar mulch). On light soils (e.g., sand), use three to four inches of mulch.

I doubt that this traditional bluegrass song is about dusty miller plants, but I had to include the song in my list because one version of it was recorded by Alison Krauss. "Dusty Miller" showcases Krauss' prowess with a fiddle; she's world-class. I encourage you to explore her other music starting with her big hit (with her band Union Station), a cover of the Paul Overstreet/Don Schlitz song "When You Say Nothing at All". Her voice is ethereal and angelic. There's a reason she's won 26 Grammy Awards (including two album of the year awards).

The Wind that Shakes the Barley

Barley is not a plant that home gardeners typically grow, but as part of my diagnostic responsibilities, I often receive agricultural crop samples such as barley and wheat. A common disease of these grain crops is barley yellow dwarf, a viral disease caused by *Barley yellow dwarf virus* (BYDV). This virus is aphid transmitted. The virus causes yellowing of barley and wheat leaves, particularly the flag leaf (the leaf just below the developing grain head). This leaf is incredibly important for producing the nutrients needed for proper filling of grain heads. Thus, the disruption and yellowing caused by BYDV can lead to substantial yield losses. Management of the dis-

ease often entails modifying planting times. For fall-sown wheat varieties, late planting after aphid populations have declined for the growing season is recommended to limit infections. For spring sown wheat varieties, early planting is recommended. This allows substantial time for plants to grow before aphids arrive and infections can occur. Late infections have a lesser impact on yield.

This adaptation (by Robert Dwyer Joyce) of a traditional Celtic song is on the album of the same name by Canadian national treasure Loreena McKennitt. Possessed of a haunting soprano voice and known for her harp accompaniments, I have enjoyed McKennitt's work ever since hearing her perform "Penelope's Song" on NPR in 2007.

Moments in the Woods

Thinking of plant diseases that I might encounter during a "moment in the woods", black knot immediately comes to mind. This is the disease that I affectionately call poop-on-a-stick, because the causal fungus induces formation of feces-like galls on branches of cherry and plum trees. At this time of the year, even with an absence of leaves, I can ID these trees in wooded settings just based on black knot symptoms. Pruning out infected branches on trees in landscape settings can help manage the disease. However, certain individual cherry or plum trees can be so susceptible to black knot (and have so many galls), that I recommend "basal pruning" (i.e., removal and replacement).

This song is from "Into the Woods", perhaps my favorite Stephen Sondheim musical (I'm a huge Sondheim fan in general). The added bonus of the version of the song linked above is that it's sung by one of my favorite contemporary singers, Sara Bareilles, who starred in the 2022 Broadway revival of the show. If you like Bareilles' voice, I suggest checking out "Gravity" (and other songs) from her "Little Voice" album.

Prairie Trains

One of the prairie plants that Lisa mentions in her song is big blue stem, and back in 2022 I received photos of this grass suffering from culm smut. This is a fungal disease where spores of the causal fungus infect the plant's flowers causing the formation of a fleshy gall. This gall eventually degrades into a powdery mass of blackish fungal spores that are blown to other big blue stem plants where they initiate additional infections. The pathogen not only infects the seed heads, but it eventually systemically colonizes the rest of the plant. Infected plants become stunted, and can continue to produce flower galls and fungal sporulation for a time. Eventually the plants decline to the point where they no longer bloom and eventually die out. Interestingly, there is speculation that this disease plays a role in the normal process of plant succession in prairies. That said, if you love your big blue stem, removing infected plants as soon as you see them is important to prevent spread of the pathogen to other big blue stem in your planting.

The final song on my playlist is a shoutout to my friend and colleague, Extension Dane County's Lisa Johnson. I've known Lisa since high school and watched her develop as a music composer and performer over the years. This song, from her "The Season" album, is an ode to the many trips that she and I made in our undergraduate days to a prairie remnant (now long gone) sandwiched between the stretch of Hwy. 26 and the adjacent railroad track that ran between Fort Atkinson and Jefferson, WI. I have many fond memories of those expeditions and the prairie plants that we stumbled upon.

I hope you've enjoyed this month's musical plant disease adventure. If you have your own favorite plant-titled or plant-themed songs, I'd love to hear about them. Feel free to contact me at pddc@wisc.edu or (608) 262-2863 with your suggestions. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

December Garden Guide

Taken from Melinda Myers website

- Check on container plants stored in an unheated garage for winter. Water thoroughly whenever the soil is thawed and dry.
- Thoroughly water new plantings and evergreens as needed until the ground freezes. Then drain and store your garden hoses for winter.
- Rake and destroy diseased leaves to reduce the source of disease in next year's garden.
- Wait for at least a week of freezing temperatures to protect non-hardy roses and other shrubs for winter.
- Install, monitor and secure fencing and animal barriers or regularly apply repellents to protect new plantings, fruit trees and other plants favored by deer, rabbits and voles.
- Create wind, sun and deicing salt screens to protect new plantings and sensitive plants from damage.
- Shovel the snow first before applying plant-friendly deicing salt. You'll reduce the amount of salt needed and the damage to your garden plants.
- Make cleanup easier. Cover groundcover plantings with netting to capture and remove fall leaves to the compost pile.
- Prevent snow load damage to up-right arborvitae and junipers. Wrap the plants with bird netting or loosely tie the branches together with strips of cotton cloth.
- Gather and save leftover seeds for next year's garden. Place in an airtight container and store in a consistently cool place like the refrigerator.
- Gather, inventory and store fertilizer and pesticides in a secure location away from pets and children. Keep liquids out of direct sun and in a frost-free location. Move granules to a secure, dry space for storage.
- Make a wish list of materials needed for starting seeds indoors. Consider giving the same type of gift or a gardening gift certificate to gardeners on your list.
- Give a gift from your garden. Include a picture, small packet of seeds or pressed flowers in your greeting card.
- Shred fall leaves with your mower and mulch the soil. The leaves will help protect the soil from erosion, suppress weeds and improve the soil as they break down.
- Once the mowing season is over, clean, sharpen blades and properly prepare your mower for storage.
- Those in cold climates need to empty and store annual, glazed and terra cotta containers for winter. Clean pots now and you'll save time during the busy planting season next spring.
- Leave healthy disease- and insect-free perennials stand for winter to increase their hardiness and vigor and provide food for birds and winter homes for beneficial insects.
- Leave the stems intact, plant bulbs near or place markers by butterfly weed, balloon flower and other late emerging perennials to prevent accidental damage in the spring.
- Take a soil test if the ground is not frozen and has not been recently fertilized. You will have some necessary and valuable information for next year's gardening season.
- Trim or remove vines that are climbing and encircling trunks of trees or damaging walls and siding.



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The Wood County Master Gardener Association is a non-profit organization with a mission to educate and share information with its members and the community alike. In addition, it is our charge to promote the UW Extension from which we are founded. We are a diverse group interested in the latest research-based horticultural information.

Future Article Submissions

Please send items for inclusion in the newsletter by the 25th of the previous month to: streiffonclay@tds.net

Wisconsin Master Gardener Website:

<https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/>

Wood County Extension Website:

<https://wood.extension.wisc.edu/>

Wood County Master Gardener Association Website:

<https://wood-county-master-gardeners.org/>

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<https://www.wimga.org>

Reminders

- Check out the year end deadlines
- Consider serving on a standing committee
- Consider serving as Vice President or sharing the position with someone
- If you need continuing education hours, see page 5
- Continue to propagate plants for our sales using information on pages 7-9
- Start to collect containers, for winter sowing after the holidays