

# Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News



May 2019

## Rachael Hart-Brinson Gives Master Gardeners All The Latest Dirt!

Or at least all the latest about dirt. The Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association Volunteer (ECAMGAV) monthly education meeting was held at the Altoona Extension office on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. with a full house in attendance. Probably the high attendance was due to the very long winter we have had and the fact that gardeners are very anxious to get out and work in the soil. But first we need to prepare our soil. The evening's speaker, Rachael Hart-Brinson's job was to give attendees information on how to create the best possible soil for our gardens.



Picture by Steve Anderson

Rachael was the Agricultural Educator for Chippewa County and she is now the 4-H Program Coordinator for Eau Claire County.

To begin with it is important to know that soil is composed of billions of living organisms, decaying organic matter, minerals, air and water which all interact to form a complex biological, physical and chemical system. Did you know that one teaspoon of soil may contain billions, yes, billions of microorganisms?

Hart-Brinson went on to discuss many issues such as texture and tilth of soil, how water is held in the soil, purposes and kinds of tillage, soil compaction and conservation of soil. She then went on to discuss soil pH and how important it is to know your soil's pH (whether it is acidic or alkaline) before planting.

Also discussed were fertilizers, their function and purpose. It is very important to know the differences in nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium levels and requirements for various plants. Secondary sources of plant nutrition are calcium, magnesium and Sulphur. In addition, there are also micro-nutrients such as boron, manganese, zinc, copper and more that are essential for good crop health.

She then asked how many of in attendance do, or have done, a soil test. Not one hand was raised!! Soil testing is one of the most important things one can do before putting in a garden. You need to know what nutrients are missing and what the soil contains. She explained how to collect the soil for the sample, where to send it and how to interpret the results.

Hopefully all those who attended learned how important our soil is, what it contains and how to conserve and improve it. A question and answer opportunity followed the presentation. The door prize drawing, coffee, goodies and conversation followed that. Thanks to all who came and thanks to Rachael for a great presentation!!

Mark your calendar for next month's educational meeting (May 20, 2019 at 6:30 pm at the UW-Extension Office) when someone from Chippewa Valley Growers will be presenting on Container Gardening. The meeting is open to the public. Come and bring a friend.





## Local Master Gardener News

### Changing e-mail? Moving?

If you do, please remember to notify the ECAMG and the newsletter editor of your new e-mail address and/or mailing address so you don't miss any Eau Claire Area Master Gardener happenings!

Email your new information to Carol Cox at [c7w6c2200@charter.net](mailto:c7w6c2200@charter.net) or notify her by snail mail at 1908 Hogeboom Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701 (or call her at 715-783-0016 - cell).



**Bulletin Board  
Postings Stories  
and  
Opportunities!!!**

**MGV**

### ECAMGA Board

ECAMGA BOARD MEMBER CONTACT INFO		
Name	E-mail address	Phone number
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Nancy Spak	<a href="mailto:nancyspak@gmail.com">nancyspak@gmail.com</a>	715-210-7005

#### Note:

The ECAMGAV Board minutes may be accessed at <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org>.

### Volunteer Help Wanted...

Eau Claire County Land Conservation is once again asking for help from our Master Gardener Volunteers. The trees and native plants for their annual sale are coming in on May 9 to the Expo Center.

They need some help separating the trees and plants for the May 10 sale. They will be at the Expo Center, Barn C, starting at 9:00 am on May 9. If you will be able to help, please give Jenna Hazelton at Land Conservation a call at (715) 839-6226 so she knows how many to expect. If you decide at the last minute to help, you can still show up. They won't turn your help away!



#### ECAMGVA

#### 2019 Calendar

*All meetings at Extension Office  
unless otherwise noted*

**May 20, 2019: Container Gardening –  
Chippewa Valley Growers**

**June 9, 2019: Plant Sale at Phoenix Park**

**July (Date TBA), 2019: Tour of Square Roots  
CSA Farm/Mallard Rd, South of EC**

**August 19, 2019: Tour of Pollinator Gardens at  
the Chippewa Fairgrounds & Wissota  
State Park with MGV Sue Crisp**

**September 16, 2019: Annual Harvest Potluck**

**September 30, 2019: Volunteer hours due in**

**October 7, 2019: Deadline for MG Photo Contest  
entries**

**October 21, 2019: The ABCs of Mason Bees –  
Rita Gundry**

**November 18, 2019: TBA**

**December 16: Annual Holiday Party**



## Events



### **Woodland Plant Identification and Sampling Central Wisconsin Environmental Station 10186 County Rd. MM Amherst Junction, WI 54407 May 17, 2019 – 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

As part of the Plant Identification Workshop Series, this workshop is designed to provide the advanced skills and experience necessary to properly identify and sample woodland plants. The workshop will focus on identifying early woodland species of Wisconsin in both lab and field settings. Plant anatomy, dichotomous key use, and proper sampling techniques will be covered.

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Identify common species by sight
- Use simple dichotomous keys to identify plant genera and/or species
- Demonstrate field plant sampling techniques

Cost: Professional Rate \$175; Student Rate \$140. For more information and to register please visit <https://www.uwsp.edu/conted/ConfWrkShp/Pages/Woodland-Plant-ID.aspx>. Also you may contact Haley Frater (phone 715-346-3838 or email to [hfrater@uwsp.edu](mailto:hfrater@uwsp.edu)) for information.



Chippewa Valley Growers

7825 Prill Road  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
(715) 839-8448

<https://chippewavalleygrowers.com>

#### ***Events:***

***Eau Claire Master Gardeners  
Educational Tour  
May 20, 2019 – 6:30 pm – 7:15 pm***

*CVG's annual Master Gardener tour will focus on growing flowers and vegetables in containers for small/urban settings. Grower Josh Kohlbeck will offer suggestions for successful planting in containers as well as the best varieties for container gardening. Please contact the Eau Claire Master Gardeners to register (UW-Extension Office at 715-839-4712)*



S1 County Road K, Fall  
Creek, WI 54742

[beavercreekreserve.org](http://beavercreekreserve.org)

Phone: (715) 877-2212

### Native Plant Sale at Beaver Creek Reserve.

Saturday, May 11,  
8:30am-1:00pm.

A wide variety of native flowers, grasses and herbs  
will be available.

All proceeds benefit Beaver Creek Reserve.

Also "Baking for the Birds"-Bird Banders Bake Sale



Beaver Creek Reserve is four miles south of Fall  
Creek, S1 County Rd K

There is construction on CTY Rd K and the bridge is  
closed so be prepared for a longer drive and a  
detour if coming from the south.

Check website for directions and updates

[https://www.beavercreekreserve.org/about/DETOUR\\_Directions/](https://www.beavercreekreserve.org/about/DETOUR_Directions/)

### Clean Boats, Clean Water May 18, 2019

10:00 am until 12:00 pm

Clean Boats Clean Waters is a statewide  
volunteer program for citizens who care about  
their lakes to help educate boaters about the  
impact of aquatic invasive species and the  
importance of cleaning off our equipment.

This training session will go through everything a  
volunteer needs to know to participate as a  
watercraft inspector in the CBCW program. The  
training will include AIS identification, how to  
approach and interact with boaters, and outreach  
messaging of why this matters.

Free to public



### Container Planting Class Dates:

Saturday, May 4 at 10:00 am

Thursday, May 16 at 6:00 pm

Saturday, May 18 at 10:00 am

Tuesday, May 21 at 6:0 pm

Also: Saturday, June 1 at 10:00 am: Succulent Mini  
Garden Class.

Call to register or register online at  
[Maysfloralgarden.com](http://Maysfloralgarden.com).

May's Floral Garden Inc.

3424 Jeffers Road

Eau Claire, WI 54701

715-836-8220

[www.Maysfloralgarden.com](http://www.Maysfloralgarden.com)

### Happy Spring Master Gardeners:

The plant sale committee are excited about the June plant sale.  
Here are a few things members can plan for to help make this a  
successful sale. **First**, we will be selling donated perennial and  
annual plants as usual. Also, we will sell herbs, lily bulbs, native  
plants and houseplants. If you are starting some flower,  
vegetable or herbs, plant a few extra for the sale! We would like  
each volunteer to donate 10 plants if possible. It is suggested  
that the donated plants be planted or repotted in sterile soil  
purchased at a store if possible.

**Second**, if you have jumping worms in your yard or think that  
you might have, please consider donating other things than  
plants from your yard.

**Third**, we will be accepting lightly used and in good condition  
garden related items to sell such as garden tools, flower pots and  
garden décor. Magazines will be free. **NO BOOKS!**

**Fourth**, we will take houseplants. Please make sure they are in  
good condition, pruned and potted in an appropriate pot.  
Make sure that you keep track of the time that you spend for  
your volunteer hours. The planting, digging maintenance of the  
plants, and travel time to the sale can be counted toward your  
volunteer hours. Also we are looking for volunteers to help at  
the plant sale. If you can help, please phone, text or email. See  
below for the information. The plant sale is Eau Claire Master  
Gardeners only fund raiser. Your donations are very important  
for the success of the sale and are deeply appreciated!

Mary Jane Griffin and Susan Merten,

Plant Sale Co-Chairs

715-590-3742 cell/text

[mgriffinhlaa@gmail.com](mailto:mgriffinhlaa@gmail.com)



## Classes and Events:

### **Thursday, May 2: Spring Hanging Basket Workshop** from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm:

Personally design your very own hanging basket. We will walk through the greenhouse to choose and pick out plants that will fit your specific sun needs and fill out your basket. Then you'll get to plant your basket and take it home with you to enjoy all season long. Cost: What you take home with you.

**Thursday, May 16, 2019: Thrillers, Fillers & Spillers Workshop** from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm: Discover how to create porch pots that are sure to dazzle! Learn the basics of how to design and plant annual containers using three types of plants that perform different functions but work together to create luscious porch pots.

**Saturday, May 18, 2019 Giant Pumpkin Growing for Beginners** from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Engel's Great Pumpkins and Carvings will be presenting a "How to Grow Giant Pumpkins for Beginners" Seminar at Down to Earth Gardening Center. In this class we will be going over the basics of giant pumpkin

**NOTE:** Pre-registration is preferred for all classes and workshops.

6025 Arndt Lane  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
715-833-1234  
[www.dwntoearth.com](http://www.dwntoearth.com)



## Bits & Pieces



## Eye Candy



What to do with those broken pots –  
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/528750812482766938.jpg>



From Pinterest at <https://p.homedecornew.club/wsijd.jpeg>

## Planting Conifers

It has been a tough winter with snow and other winter damaging a number of our garden shrubs and trees. Many of us will be looking soon for some replacement shrubs. One great choice is to plant a conifer.



Most conifers need well-drained soil that's rich in organic matter. Some sand or gritty soil mixed with generous quantities of bark makes a good soil for our conifers. "Potting soil," is not such a good choice as it does not drain well and becomes "sludgy" over time. Also avoid peat moss, which will often cause root rot. Coarse bark, on the other hand, has "anti-root rot" qualities and will not become anaerobic over time.

Most conifers appreciate the improved drainage that a raised bed provides so if that is a possibility your conifers will reward you for it.

**You have choices with conifers** and it is helpful to know the terms used to describe conifers' rates of growth:

**Miniature conifers** grow less than 1 inch per year. A typical miniature will be 10 inches tall or less at 10 years and twice as wide.

**Dwarf conifers** grow between 1 and 6 inches per year, with most in this group reaching 2 to 6 feet tall in 10 years.

**Intermediate size** refers to conifers that grow 6 to 12 inches per year, with most being 6 to 15 feet tall.



**Large conifers** grow more than 12 inches per year, the majority reaching 15 feet tall or greater.

Conifers can add structure, color and texture to your garden environment as well as minimizing garden maintenance and are well worth giving some consideration to.

Select varieties that are zone hardy for this area and for the growing conditions they will occupy and enjoy their uniqueness and beauty in your garden and landscape.



*It's never too late to live happily ever after.*  
-anonymous





## **Fertilizing to Create more Blossoms on Your Flowers, Flowering Shrubs, and Trees**

by Mike McGroaty ([www.freeplants.com](http://www.freeplants.com))

The secret to making your flowering trees, shrubs, annuals, and perennials bloom more is in the numbers. All fertilizers have analysis numbers on the package. These numbers represent the percentage of each chemical the product contains.

For example, 12-12-12 is a typical garden fertilizer that would contain 12% nitrogen, 12% phosphorous, and 12% potassium. The quick explanation is; nitrogen produces vegetative, or top growth, phosphorous produces flower buds, fruit, and root development, while potassium builds strong healthy plants.

Most lawn grasses are vigorous growers and therefore require significantly more nitrogen than the other plants in your yard. A lawn fertilizer would have an analysis of 26-3-3, indicating a fertilizer high in nitrogen. You would not want to use a fertilizer containing such a high percentage of nitrogen on landscape plants because it would be very easy to burn them. You must also keep in mind that many lawn fertilizers contain broad leaf weed killers, and most ornamental plants have broad leaves. The fertilizer doesn't know the difference, and it will damage or kill ornamental trees and shrubs.

During the summer months the growth rate of most plants slows down, and when plants are not actively growing, they need very little nitrogen. Although not vigorously putting on new growth, many plants such as Dogwood Trees, Rhododendrons, and Azaleas are quietly working to produce flower buds for next year. Annual and perennial flowers are also busy making new flower buds.

To encourage flower bud production you can apply a fertilizer that contains a small percentage of nitrogen, a higher percentage of phosphorous, and a little potassium. I recently purchased a liquid fertilizer with an analysis of 5-30-5, ideal for flower production. Because the product is sold as a bloom producer, the manufacture also added a little chelated iron, manganese, and zinc, all good for your plants as well.

Most garden centers and discount stores carry similar products. I chose a liquid fertilizer because liquid fertilizers are absorbed both through the roots and systemically through the foliage, so they work quicker. I used a sprayer that attaches to the end of the garden hose to apply the fertilizer, but do not use the same hose end sprayer that you use for lawn fertilizers. There could be residual weed killer still in the sprayer. About those hose end sprayers. I purchased one that is supposed to automatically mix the proper ratio for you. I used it to apply a general insecticide, and it worked, but it sure seemed like I went through a lot more insecticide than I needed. When I used it for the fertilizer the screen on the little pick up hose inside the jar kept getting clogged with the tiny solids in the fertilizer. I recommend using a solution of one-part liquid fertilizer to one-part water in the sprayer jar, and applying at a heavier rate.

Watch the liquid in the sprayer jar, and if it isn't going down remove the lid and clean the little screen by spraying it with water from the garden hose. Read the application instructions on the container to determine how much fertilizer to apply, and how often. A fertilizer high in phosphorous will increase flower production. You will see a difference.

Remember the golden rule of applying fertilizers. "Not enough, is always better than too much."



*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? Consider how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these...*

*-Matthew 6:27-29*



**EAU CLAIRE AREA MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER**  
A newsletter for the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association members.

Unless otherwise noted, articles for this newsletter are submitted and/or written by ECAMGA members or the newsletter editor, Carol W. Cox. Unless otherwise noted, graphics are from clipart. Newsletter layout by Carol W. Cox

Happy  
Mother's  
Day!



For more Eau Claire County UW Cooperative Extension information go to our website:  
[www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/eauclaire](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/eauclaire)  
Phone: 715-839-4712  
Fax: 715-839-6277  
M-F 8AM-5PM



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**Eau Claire County  
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Altoona, WI 54720**