

Eau Claire Area Master Gardener News



**Keynote Speaker -
Tim Johnson**
Seed Savers Exchange



Winter Garden Seminar: Ready, Set, Grow!

When. January 28, 2017 (9AM-3PM)

Where. Chippewa Valley Technical College,
Eau Claire, WI

What. Speakers, vendors, door prizes,
camaraderief

LET'S GET STARTED.
\$35 pre-register*
\$40 at the door
Meal included
www.eauclairerastergardeners.weebly.com
715-839-4712



Breakout session topics:

- "Tomatoes: Saving Seeds from America's Favorite Vegetable (or are they fruits)"
- "The Cutting Edge of Landscape Roses"
- "Water: Use it Wisely"
- "Planting & Maintaining Wildflower Plots"
- "Make-and-Take Garden Wind Chimes" (\$15)
- "Rare & Unique Edibles for the Home Garden"
- "A Year in the Life of a Bat"
- Invasive Plant Species in Wisconsin
- Water Features in the Garden

**REGISTER
TODAY**

(see
website at
bottom of
the poster
and click on
the "Ready
Set Grow"
tab!)

**AND
BRING
A
FRIEND
ALONG!**

INSIDE:

Local Master Gardener News - 2
Bits and Pieces

- 4

Upcoming Events

- 3



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 Or notify her by snail mail at 1908 Hogeboom Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701 (or call her at 715-861-4495).



Bulletin Board Postings
Stories and
Opportunities!!!!



ECAMGA BOARD MEMBER CONTACT INFO		
NAME/TITLE	E-mail address	Phone number
Erin LaFaive	Erin.lafaive@ces.uwex.edu	715-839-4712
Mary Jane Griffin	mgriffinhlaa@gmail.com	715-835-6979
Dick Lienhardt	dicklienhardt@yahoo.com	715-286-9917
Nancy Spak	nancyspak@gmail.com	715-835-6546
Ede Strand	edestrand@aol.com	715-8326775
Jerry Richards		715-
Carla Pelzl	jcpelzl@gmail.com	715-835-6628
Nina Logan	ninalogan@centurylink.net	715-878-4585
Ellen Terwilliger	terwilset@gmail.com	715-
Lori Kempen	lorikempen@charter.net	715-832-8088

NOTE: The ECAMGA Board minutes no longer appears in the newsletter. You may access them by going to the website at eauclairemastergardeners.weebly.com

HELP!!!!!!!

We are currently looking for volunteers for a variety of roles during the **2017 Ready Set Grow seminar**. We need people to introduce speakers, help set up and take down, and man tables. Get a head start on your volunteering hours and sign up online at <http://tinyurl.com/ecmgv-grow>.

If you have any questions contact Kevin Hite at kevin.r.hite@gmail.com or reach him by phone (715)-688-9184.



New 2017 Board. Pictured from left to right are: Nina Logan, Jerry Richards, Nancy Spak, Carla Pelzl, Lori Kempen, Ede Strand, Mary Jane Griffin, Dick Lienhardt. Not present was Ellen Terwilliger. In the front row is outgoing Board Chair, Amy Boetcher and Extension Horticulturalist, Erin LaFaive.

Picture by Jo-Ann Clark



ECAMGA
2016
Calendar

All meetings at UW-Extension Office unless otherwise noted

January 2017 – NO Educational meeting as the Ready, Set, Go... garden seminar will be in the works.

January 28, 2017: ECAMGA Ready, Set, Go... Winter Garden Seminar

February 2017: on raising chickens. Watch for details.

March 2017 - November TBA

December 2017: Annual Potluck, Christmas Party and Election of Board Members.



Annual ECAMGA Christmas Party Highlights by Nina Logan

Our December Christmas party, held on December 6, at the Eau Claire County UW-Extension Office in Altoona, was a great success and was well attended. Everyone enjoyed a huge potluck dinner with all the trimmings. Door prizes were awarded and attendees all had a good time with the white elephant gift exchange. Many white elephant gifts changed hands during the evening (some more than once). Some were happy with exchanging gifts and some were not, but all those in attendance had a great time bartering the numerous exchanges that transpired.

Board members were elected. Those members who were running for a second term were reelected and two new members were elected, Jerry Richards and Ellen Terwilliger. For a picture of the new board see page 2.

Gary Mathis was awarded the digger award this year for his outstanding contribution to our organization over the years. Prizes for the photo contest were awarded. You can check out the winning pictures in the November issue of the newsletter and the other entries will be featured in upcoming newsletters. The winning photos will also be on display for all of 2017 at the extension office meeting room.



Far left picture shows the sumptuous buffet spread enjoyed. Then, some of the white elephant gifts that were exchanged.

We all had a wonderful evening.



Photos by Jo-Ann Clark.

Upcoming Events



Classes:

Saturday, January 21st at 10:00 am: Caring for Your Succulents and Air Plants

Succulents and air plants are all the rage these days. Come learn how to plant and care for these awesome plants and watch our experts demonstrate creative ways to display them. There are many different and unique ways these can be used for interior decorating. We encourage you to think outside the "container."

Saturday, January 28th at 10:00am: Terrarium Workshop. Come discover why terrariums are growing so popular and how they are a great way to get kids excited about gardening. A simple glass container can be transformed into a self-sustained tropical oasis! Learn how to properly put together a glass terrarium that creates a perfect growing environment for plants, and adds life to your office desk, the nook in your kitchen or a child's room. **Cost: *Build your own container or purchase one here; only pay for what materials you take home***

6025 Arndt Lane, Eau Claire WI, 54701
715-833-1234 or E-mail - home@dwntoearth.com
Website: <http://www.dwntoearth.com/index2.html>

Looking for your ideas... by Lori Kempen

The Education Committee is working on the monthly meeting schedule for 2017. We hope to get this finalized for the entire year in the coming weeks.

If members have or know someone presentation, us. We welcome us in knowing what



ny ideas, suggestions willing to give a lease contact one of suggestions, as it helps eople are interested in.

ECAMGA members who would like to do an educational session are welcome to do so. Prep time, presentation and travel can be counted in your MG Volunteer hours for the year. There are many topics of interest to our local gardeners.

If you want to get involved feel free to contact: Lori Kempen at 715-832-8088, Nina Logan at 715-878-4585 or Carla Pelzl at 715-835-6628. Your help with this plan will be greatly appreciated.

One of the worst mistakes you can make as a gardener is to think you're in charge. – Janet Gillespie

Garden

Dreams



Photo by Patti Soik Photography

**January 21, 2017
7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
at the Lettie W. Jensen
Community Center
Amherst, WI**

For more information Email: mhrice@charter.net or call or text 715-340-8378. You may also check out the information on page 4 of the December ECAMGA newsletter.
Registration deadline: Wednesday, January 18, 2017.

Sponsored by the Portage County UW-Extension and the Master Gardener Volunteers

Bits and Pieces



The things one finds on Pinterest.com! Anyone have an old changing table sitting around? Here is a cute idea for repurposing a changing table into a potting bench.

*For more ideas on up cycling old furniture go to:
<http://bit.ly/2iSeCUc>*

Tree Pruning Tips

by [Mike McGroarty](#)

(For more info and articles go to: <http://www.freeplants.com>.)

There are two kinds of winter gardening. The first method usually starts in January as the gardening catalogs begin to arrive in the mail. This type of gardening is as easy as sitting in your favorite chair, browsing the catalogs, and either dreaming about what you're going to do this spring, or actually drawing designs for the gardens you intend to work on.

The second type of winter gardening is to actually get out in the yard and do a little work. Of course if it were bitter cold, you'd be better off waiting for a good day. Winter is a good time to do some pruning if the temperatures are around 30 degrees or so. I don't recommend pruning if it's considerably below freezing because the wood is brittle and will shatter when you make a cut. One of the advantages of pruning during the winter is that you can see much better what needs to be cut out and what should stay. At least that's true with deciduous plants. The other advantage is that the plants are dormant, and won't mind you doing a little work on them.

Ornamental trees should be pruned to remove competing branches. Weeping Cherries, Flowering Dogwoods, Flowering Crabapples etc. have a tendency to send branches in many different directions. It is your job to decide how you want the plant to look, and then start pruning to achieve that look.

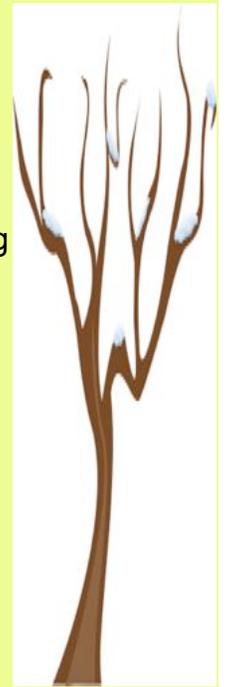
But first stick your head inside the tree and see what you can eliminate from there. This is like looking under the hood, and when you do you'll see a lot of small branches that have been starved of sunlight, that certainly don't add anything to the plant, they are just there, and should be cut out. Any branch that is growing toward the center of the tree where it will get little sunlight should be cut out. Where there are two branches that are crossing, one of them should be eliminated. Once you get the inside of the plant cleaned up, you can start shaping the outside. Shaping the outside is actually quite easy. Just picture how you want the plant to look, and picture imaginary lines of the finished outline of the plant. Cut off anything that is outside of these imaginary lines. It is also important to cut the tips of branches that have not yet reached these imaginary lines in order to force the plant to fill out.

For the most part plants have two kinds of growth. Terminal branches and lateral branches. Each branch has one terminal bud at the very end, and many lateral branches along the sides. The terminal buds grow in an outward direction away from the plant. Left uncut they just keep growing in the same direction, and the plant grows tall and very thin. That's why the trees in the woods are so thin and not very attractive.

When you cut a branch on a plant, the plant sets new buds just below where you cut. When you remove the terminal bud the plant will set multiple buds, this is how you make a plant nice and full. Don't be afraid to trim your plants, they will be much nicer because of it. The more you trim them, the fuller they become.

Lots of people have a real problem with this. They just can't bring themselves to prune. Especially when it comes to plants like Japanese Red Maples. It kills them to even think about pruning a plant like this. Just do it! You'll have a beautiful plant because of it.

Continued on page 6...



Pruning continued from page 5...

Look at the plant objectively. If you see a branch that looks like it's growing too far in the wrong direction, cut it. If you make a mistake it will grow back. Not pruning is the only mistake you can make. I hope this helps and doesn't get you in trouble with your significant other. Many a family feud has started over pruning.



Catmint

by Carol Cox

Nepeta or Catmint is one of my favorite, easy care plants to grow. This is a plant that will give weeks of bloom in the garden and,

when it is done blooming, I simply cut it back to the ground and it regrows and blooms again. Cutting it back and deadheading can also prevent the plant from seeding. Some varieties of catmint can be aggressive growers so it doesn't hurt to put some type of edging around them. I often plant them in a black nursery pot that I have cut the bottom off of. If you do this pick a pot about twice as big as the pot the plant comes in so that you do not have to divide it as soon. One variety that is supposed to be sterile is Faassen's catmint (*Nepeta x faassenii*). I have mostly planted Walkers Low but there are also some new varieties available.

Catmint is actually an aromatic herb that produces clusters of lavender-blue flowers amid a mound of gray-green foliage. This plant can be grown in full sun or partial shade and requires average, well-drained soil. It is drought tolerant and heat resistant which makes it an excellent choice for dry areas where it requires minimal care although overcrowding the plants can lead to powdery mildew and leaf spot in humid areas. To minimize this, plant about a foot apart.

Nepeta has been used for such diverse things as herbal tea and insect repellent. The herb's leaves and shoots can be used fresh, dried or frozen and are used in soups and sauces. Tea can be made from the leaves and flowers can be used to calm nerves and relieve coughs, congestion and menstrual cramps.

Always check a reputable website on any cautions for any herbal remedies that you use to be sure you do not use them inappropriately. Also, depending on the season and growing conditions, herbs can be much stronger or much weaker than what you would buy in a bottle from an herbal store.

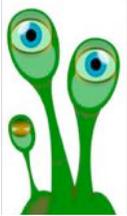
Catmint can be planted from seed or from divisions but often the seed grown ones are much more aggressive in their growth habits. The recommendation is to plant in the spring although I divide and move plants through out most of the spring and summer (except in the heat of July). Some recommended varieties are *Nepeta faassenii* 'Select Blue' and *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low.'

Catmint is also long lived and the deer and rabbits don't like it, which is a real plus. The genus is found across parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. Catmints are also an excellent source of nectar for honeybees.



Gardening is a kind of disease. It infects you; you cannot escape it. When you go visiting, your eyes rove about the garden; you interrupt the serious cocktail drinking because of an irresistible impulse to get up and pull a weed. – Lewis Gannit





Eye Candy



Pictured to the far left is a picture taken by Jo-Ann Clark of Carol Losey's Christmas cactus in full bloom.

The photo to the immediate left is photo contest entry by Sue Fiore. Her comment: "This is a photo of Scrophularia macrantha, Red Birds in a Tree... a very fitting name."



The photo to the left was taken by MG Paula Bonnin.

The photo to the right is from <http://bit.ly/2hXOdju>. The old birdcage makes a nice planter for the burro's tail and the other succulents.



EMPRESSOFDIRT.NET

A cloak of loose, soft material, held to the earth's hard surface by gravity, is all that lies between life and lifelessness."
-Wallace H. Fuller, Soils of the Desert Southwest, 1975.



The diversity one finds in the plant world is absolutely amazing. To the left is Eulychinia castanea spiralis, a rare cactus that actually originated from nursery stock that mutated.

To the right is the spotted kalanchoe or Penwiper Plant, Kalanchoe marmorata Baker. The plant is native to Central and West Africa. Kalanchoes are very easy to grow.



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



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



The University of Wisconsin Extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education, programming and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental, arrest or conviction record or veteran status." If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this program, activity or service, please contact Erin LaFaive at 715-839-4712 as soon as possible preceding the scheduled event so that proper arrangements can be made in a timely fashion

Eau Claire County
Extension Office
227 First Street West
Altoona, WI 54720