



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

Greetings!

It's one of my favorite times of the year- planning for the upcoming growing season! The potential for this coming growing season is full of hope and excitement. We haven't been burdened with wildlife stealing directly sown seeds, insects ravaging our vegetables and perennial flowers, or diseases obliterating our plants right before harvest. 😊



In the spirit of garden planning season, I've shared a couple resources I think you'll find useful. Check out the garden journal article for tips on record keeping. And don't miss the UW Spotlight Resource- native plant nurseries map.

I hope your gardening season is full of giant yields and beautiful flowers. Taking the time now to plan ahead will go a long way towards managing problems over the season.

Best,
Janell

Calls to the Marathon & Wood Extension Office

With the warmer weather, is it okay to trim oak trees?

I reached out to the director of the Plant Disease Diagnostic, Dr. Brian Hudelson, for this one. Here's his answer:

You can certainly prune, but do it when there is going to be a period of dry weather. Also, given the warmer temperatures we've been having, I would

plan on painting over the pruning wounds on oaks (and elms). This needs to be done IMMEDIATELY after making the cut. Sap beetles (the insects that transmit the [oak wilt fungus](#)) have been documented visiting pruned oaks within about 10 minutes of wound formation. So, timing of painting is critical. You don't need to use a professional pruning paint. Something like leftover latex paint from painting a room in your home will work. You just need a physical barrier on the wound that makes it less attractive to insects.

Check out <https://agweather.cals.wisc.edu/thermal-models/oak-wilt> for a useful tool in accessing the risk of oak wilt fungus transmission based on degree days and the likelihood that sap beetles will be active to serve as vectors. Keep in mind that no model is perfect, but this tool can be a useful guide.

Timely Articles

Gardening with Native Plants: Short Gardens

UW-Madison Arboretum Native Plant Garden Coordinator, Susan Carpenter, discusses adding native plants to small garden spaces.

Gardening with Native Plants

Garden Journals - A Power Tool for Success

This NC State Extension article explains record keeping for gardeners. Capturing information about the site, seasonal factors, plants, pests, projects, and expenses will provide the data necessary to make informed decisions and have a successful thriving garden now and in the future.

Garden Journals

Shamrocks

Around March, 'shamrock' plants are sold in grocery stores, discount stores and floral shops as a decoration for St. Patrick's Day. There really is no such thing as a shamrock plant; shamrock is just a corruption of an Irish word that means 'little clover' and generally refers to white clover (*Trifolium repens*). The plants marketed for this holiday are actually species of *Oxalis*, also known as wood sorrels, that have clover-shaped leaves.

Shamrocks

Mealybugs

Mealybugs are common pests of houseplants. They are pink, soft-bodied insects covered with a white, waxy, cottony material. The white “fluff” helps protect them from excessive heat and moisture loss.

Mealybugs

Podcast

[Parts of Wisconsin will be a lot louder this summer. The culprit? Cicadas.](#)

PJ Liesch, Director of the UW-Madison Insect Diagnostic Lab, discusses the two rare cicada broods that will emerge this year. This event happens once every 221 years, and has not occurred since Thomas Jefferson was president!

UW Resource Spotlight

[Wisconsin Native Plant Nurseries Map](#)

Wisconsin DNR maintains a list of native plant nurseries in Wisconsin and neighboring states. WIFDN has adapted the list into an interactive map where you can use the dropdown menus to search for the types of plants or services you need.

First click on the image in the middle of the page to launch the Tableau site. Then use the filters on the right to narrow down by plant type and plant form (seeds, plugs, and bare root).

Upcoming Programs

IN-PERSON LOCAL

Seed Starting

In this program we will cover everything you will need to start vegetable and flower seeds indoors. We'll discuss things to consider when purchasing

seed, containers, and growing media. We will learn how to apply important techniques in the sowing and growing of seedlings, and how to successfully plant the seedlings outdoors.

Marathon County Public Library - Stratford Branch Community Room

Tuesday March 5

5:30-6:30pm

This program is free, but registration is required. [Register here.](#)

WFHR Radio

I will be on Mid-day Magazine on WFHR Thursday March 7th at 3:30pm.

Catch me live on air or [listen to the archive after it airs.](#)

Hands on Programming! Lettuce Bowls

In this hands-on activity, we will learn techniques for starting seeds indoors, including proper containers and growing mediums, as well as germination requirements. Participants will plant containers with lettuce seeds and will take their containers home to grow over spring.

Marathon County Public Library - Wausau Branch

Tuesday March 19th at 10am and 6pm

Registration is limited to 10 participants. [Friends of the Library](#) have generously donated the take home materials. If you are unable to make the program, please contact the library and let them know so someone else may take this spot. [Register here](#)

Woodson YMCA-The Landing

Ages 55+

Wednesday March 20th, 1pm

Fee: \$10 members; \$25 for non-members

Call 715.841.1855 to register.

Adventure Camp- Spring Equinox Retreat!

More programming adventures with the **young at heart crowd (55+)** at YMCA Camp Sturtevant with The Landing!

Debby will start the day with fun self exploration techniques of self care and letting go. It is a wonderful opportunity to see your future in a bright new light. We will take a break for lunch and transition into our afternoon fun with Janell.

What comes to mind when you hear the words “seed bombs”? Seed bombing, on a larger scale, is used to introduce new vegetation to an area. These seed bombs are typically made with packaged soil or clay and seeds of the plants they want to grow. They can be dropped from an aircraft or thrown by hand (on a smaller scale). Seed bombing is an easy

and fun way to spread new seeds. In this activity students will learn about local/native plants and learn what plants need to survive. Then we'll make seed bombs to take home and try to grow later.

Lunch includes pesto pasta with roasted chicken on the side and a tomato, mozzarella, basil salad with a bright vinaigrette.

Join us to welcome spring and start anew with the fun-filled day celebrating personal growth and growth within the earth.

Register soon- Space is limited.

The Landing Members \$42, Non-Members \$60

Call 715.841.1855 to register.

Vegetable Gardening Series: From the Ground Up! Fertilizers and Composting

Learn the basics of soil texture and how pH affects nutrient availability in the soil. We'll cover the benefits of adding compost to sandy and clay soils, and how to get started with composting this spring. We'll also learn about fertilizers and how primary nutrients (NPK) affect plant growth.

Mosinee School District Community Education @ Creske Library (Mosinee High School)

High schoolers are welcome, but this is intended for adults.

Thursday, March 28, 2024

6-7:30pm

Free but registration required. Call 715-693-2550, Ext. 3696

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Vegetable Gardening Series: From the Ground Up! Fertilizers and Composting

Learn the basics of soil texture and how pH affects nutrient availability in the soil. We'll cover the benefits of adding compost to sandy and clay soils, and how to get started with composting this spring. We'll also learn about fertilizers and how primary nutrients (NPK) affect plant growth.

Free. Presented by Marathon & Wood Horticulture educator, Janell Wehr

Wednesday, March 27th, 10am. [Register here for the Zoom link.](#)

Green Thumb Gardening with Dane County Horticulture Educator, Lisa Johnson

The [Green Thumb Gardening class series](#) will help you to keep your home garden thriving! UW-Madison Extension educators will provide in-depth,

practical information for the novice to the experienced gardener. Simultaneous interpretation can be requested. Classes are \$12 each. [Register](#) for the complete live online class series at a discounted price or for individual classes. Classes are recorded.

Thursday, March 7: Composting in the Vegetable Garden

Composting is a great way to dispose of leftover crop material and turn it into valuable organic matter that you can use later to improve the structure, water-holding capacity and nutrient content of your soil. Basic composting theory, troubleshooting and several methods of composting will be covered.

Thursday, March 14: Cover Crops for the Vegetable Garden

Cover crops bring extra nutrients to the soil and help control weeds. Some also attract pollinators, which can help increase your crop yield. Organic and Small Farmer Outreach Specialist Claire Strader will talk about different types of cover crops to use in different situations, as well as when to plant and remove them.

Thursday, March 21: Seed Saving, Harvesting and Storage

Learn how to successfully harvest and store seeds from a variety of crops. Success is more likely with some crops, and less likely with others. Learn which crops are easiest and most reliable for getting the results you want. We will also cover proper storage of seeds and seed viability testing.

Free Online Programs for Wisconsin Gardeners

Join Wisconsin Horticulture Extension for free online gardening programs — and watch from any device! Our topics are suitable for gardeners of any skill level. When you register for a program, you can attend the live presentation or wait to watch the recorded version at your convenience.

Plant Selection and Design — Using Native Plants to Support Pollinators
Wednesday, March 20, Noon–1 p.m.

[Register Now](#)

Presented by Lisa Johnson and Tim Ripp, UW-Madison Division of Extension Horticulture Program

Fundamentals of Plant Diseases with Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic
Director, Dr. Brian Hudelson

Learn about disease-causing organisms and the symptoms they cause, as well as information on environmental factors that favor disease development. Also, learn about disease-like disorders caused by non-biological factors such as nutrient imbalances, pesticide exposures, environmental pollutants and adverse environmental conditions.

March 27 6:30-9pm. Program is free, but registration is required.

Q&A with the Experts

Q&A with the Experts Join us for these FREE educational online sessions where you can connect with plant health experts to get answers to your garden and landscape questions.

These sessions are your chance to ask questions about your trees and shrubs, garden vegetables and ornamentals, and lawn. Whether it's about plant diseases, pesky insects, or the selection and general care of plants in and around your home, our panel of seasoned experts will provide you with insightful answers.

Join the Experts this month on March 18th. All sessions are from 1:00-2:00 PM. Registration is required for each webinar. Plan now to attend one or all twelve! This series is open to the public. To learn more and register:

<https://bit.ly/40VsyP8>

UW-Madison Extension Events

Stay up to date with virtual and in person programming across Wisconsin on our [Events Calendar](#).



Janell Wehr

Horticulture
Educator



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