



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
MARATHON COUNTY

## Greetings!

One of my favorite aspects of my job is that I'm constantly learning new things. This month, a caller reached out about a pesky plant in their wooded backyard, Jump Seed. In researching the plant's life cycle, I came across a new-to-me term, "ballistic seed dispersal". I explain in detail one of the mechanics of Jump Seed's aggressive methods to spread below under Calls to the Extension office.



If you haven't gotten your soil tested before or it's been a few years, now is a good time to send in a sample. This month's UW Resource Spotlight walks you through how to send in a sample to the UW Soil Lab.

Looking for an excuse to get outside and enjoy the sounds of spring? The Wisconsin Frog and Toad survey kicks off in April. Look for the link to participate under Citizen Science.

I've collected a few interesting Timely articles and a recent episode of Garden talk with Larry Meillor under Podcasts to inspire you to think spring. We made it! It's officially spring in Wisconsin!

Best,  
Janell

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## Calls to the Marathon & Wood Extension Office

*I think I have Jump Seed in my woodland backyard. I think it's invasive.  
How can I control it?*

I can see why the caller thought [Jump Seed, also called Virginia knotweed](#)

(*Persicaria virginiana*) might be invasive. It spreads vigorously through rhizomes and explosive seed pods. The mechanism of seed dispersal is called “ballistic dispersal”.

First, small flowers produce pods that contain several seeds. As the seeds mature, they develop tension within the pod walls. When the seeds reach maturity, the tension within the pod walls becomes too great to contain. The pod suddenly ruptures or splits open, releasing the seeds held within. The rapid release of tension causes the seeds to be expelled forcefully from the pod. This expulsion happens with enough force to propel the seeds a short distance away from the parent plant.

The good news is that while Jump Seed is an aggressive neighbor in the garden, it is not invasive. It is native and offers nectar to a wide variety of pollinators, including bees, wasps. Many of these insects become food for larger animals.

If you'd like to control Jump Seed from overtaking a shady garden, cut off the stalk before it can disperse its red fruit containing seeds; remove the entire crown-shaped knot from below the ground in places where you do not want it to grow; and pull new seedlings when they first emerge in the spring.

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## Timely Articles

### **Phenology**

Natural events such as bird migration, the opening of local lakes, plant budding, flowering or fruiting, insect activities, and harvest dates of cultivated plants are all annual events that can be correlated with seasonal or climatic changes, particularly with weather or temperature, rather than specific calendar dates.

Phenology

### **Extending the Garden Season**

Cold frames and hot beds, hoop houses, cloches, and floating row covers allow gardeners to grow plants earlier in spring and later in fall. Get ideas that will work for you in this factsheet.

Extending the Garden Season

## Spring is Tick Season in Wisconsin

Warmer temperatures mean that Wisconsinites are spending a lot more time enjoying the outdoors with activities such as gardening, hiking, picnicking, and camping. However, spring also happens to be a season of peak tick activity in the Midwest.

Tick Season

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## Podcast

### Garden Talk with Larry Meillor - Stop micromanaging your soil!

<https://www.wpr.org/shows/garden-talk/garden-talk-stop-micromanaging-your-soil>

Sometimes less is more. We talk with retired UW Extension horticulture specialist Diana Alfuth about what to put in your soil that actually helps your garden. We also talk about the correct way to water in drought conditions.

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## UW Resource Spotlight

### [Soil Testing](#)

You should test our soil before adding fertilizer to lawns and gardens. Gardening magazines and handbooks and fertilizer product labels make general recommendations for applying fertilizer and other amendments to gardens and lawns. The recommended amounts often are in excess of what is necessary for plant health. Soil nutrient analysis will give you precise scientific information on your soil's ability to supply nutrients to your plants.

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## Citizen Science

### Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey

<https://wiatri.net/inventory/frogtoadsurvey/Volunteer/phenology.cfm>

Help WDNR learn more about how Wisconsin frogs and toads may be adapting to fluctuations in climate and weather patterns, including when they start breeding calls. Pick a wetland or waterbody near you, and listen

anytime after sunset for 5 minutes at least twice weekly from April 1 to June 15, and at least once weekly through August 1. Fill out the data sheet recording the calls you identify, the time, temperature and other conditions.

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## Upcoming Programs

[Click here for more information, including registration](#)

### **What's the deal with "No Mow May?"**

MCPL- Wausau Branch

\*\*Tuesday April 16, 10 am and 6pm

Woodson YMCA-The Landing

\*\*Wednesday April 17, 1pm

Tea & Tulips 2024 (South Wood County Historical Museum)

\*\*Saturday April 20, 10am

Virtual program via Zoom

\*\*Wednesday April 24 10am

Creske Library (Mosinee High School)

\*\*Thursday April 25, 6pm

### **Heirloom Biographies**

Dodge County Master Gardeners

Thursday April 18 6:30pm via Zoom

### **Understanding the Emerald Ash Borer: From Identification to Action**

\*\*Monday April 1st 1-2pm via Zoom

### **What's the deal with "No Mow May?" Panel Discussion**

\*\*Wednesday April 3rd 12-1pm

### **Establishing a Bee Lawn — Current Research and Practical Techniques**

\*\*Thursday, April 25, Noon–1 p.m.

### **Q & A with the Experts**

\*\*Monday, April 22 Noon-1pm

### **Plant Disease Management by Design: Preventing Plant Disease**

## Problems During the Landscape Design Process

\*\*Wednesday, April 24 6:30-8:30pm

[Click here for more information, including registration](#)

### UW-Madison Extension Events

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

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An EEO/AA employer, Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.





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