



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
MARATHON COUNTY

## Greetings!

Greenhouse season is one of my favorite times of the year. Hopefully you have already planned on the types of plants you plan to add to your landscape. If not, take a little time to look around the yard and patio before you hit the greenhouses and nurseries this spring. Even if you don't know exactly what you want to add, knowing the conditions you can provide will help you from bringing home new plant friends without suitable homes for them.



In another lifetime, I was a greenhouse manager for a retail greenhouse. I always made sure to place any and all blooming annuals and perennials near end caps, proving irresistible to excited shoppers. I'm sure you won't be surprised to learn that there is a lot of impulse shopping happening in garden centers in May. Even today, knowing what I know about marketing and shoppers, I sometimes can't help but bring home a new plant without knowing exactly where I plan to plant it.

Right plant, right place is an old gardening adage. It means you need to use the conditions of a location, like how much sun it gets or the location's soil texture, to the plant, not the other way around. So often people come home from shopping with a new plant, figuring they can always squeeze it in somewhere, without taking the conditions the plant needs to thrive into account. Experienced gardeners learn after time that you cannot substitute these basic conditions with inputs like more fertilizer or water.

You'll save money and heartbreak by planning ahead. Research plants ahead of time and match the conditions you can provide with plants that have those needs. Happy gardening!

Best,  
Janell

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# Calls to the Marathon & Wood Extension Office

*If I lower the pH of my soil, can I get rid of dandelions?*

The short answer is yes... but few other things will grow, either. Dandelions grow nearly everywhere for a reason. They tolerate pH between 4-8. 4 is extremely acidic, while an 8 is too alkaline for most plants. An ideal pH for grass is between 6-7, so if you did manage to lower the pH enough for the dandelions not to grow, you won't have grass growing either. A better approach to maintain a weed free lawn is to follow good cultural practices like only mowing  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the grass length at a time at 3.5 inches, using sharp mower blades, and utilizing herbicides at the correct time. Here's a Wisconsin Lawn Care Calendar for more timely tips on lawn maintenance. <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/wisconsin-lawn-care-calender/>

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## Timely Articles

### **Guinea Hen Flower, *Fritillaria meleagris***

Looking for an unusual spring flowering bulb? Guinea hen flowers sport a variable, checkered pattern on the nodding, bell-shaped flowers that are only about 2 inches long. The dark colored flowers (shades of red, pink or purple) are best sited where they can be appreciated up close.

Guinea Hen Flower

### **Safely Using Manure in the Garden**

Many vegetable gardeners swear by the benefits of manure as a fertilizer. Adding manure to soil improves the soil's texture and water-holding capacity while providing nutrients needed by growing plants. Unfortunately, fresh manure can also contain bacteria that can contaminate vegetables and cause human disease. Proper composting will kill these bacteria, but steps must be taken to ensure that the manure gets hot enough for a sufficient time during composting.

Safely Using Manure

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

Have you heard about "No Mow May?" Many people have committed to

not mowing their yards in May, allowing flowering plants to grow to help provide food for pollinators. Before you stow away your mower for May, let's look at what options you can take to help pollinators this Spring..

No Mow May?

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## Podcast

This month's audio delights come to us from **University of Illinois Extension's** podcast, **Good Growing. Episode 170: Gardening at night: Creating gardens to enjoy at night**

<https://extension.illinois.edu/podcasts/good-growing/ep-170-gardening-night-creating-gardens-enjoy-night-goodgrowing>

Do you enjoy spending your evenings outdoors? On this week's Good Growing Podcast, we talk about how you can create a garden to be enjoyed at night. Learn about night-blooming plants that can be incorporated into a 'night/moon' garden, landscape lighting, insects that come out at night, and more!

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## UW Resource Spotlight

### Wisconsin Online Pollinator Habitat Assessment

We are glad you are interested in evaluating a site to identify actions you can take to improve the abundance and health of your local insect pollinator community. Whether you have a single garden bed, a yard, or a multiple-acre property, this tool can support your planning.

<https://pollinators.wisc.edu/habitat/>

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## Citizen Science

The Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program (WTCP) is a citizen-based monitoring program designed and implemented by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

The main goals of the WTCP are to catalog species' statewide distributions more thoroughly and to document high turtle mortality locations along roads in order to promote effective management and conservation of Wisconsin's 11 turtle species. The WTCP was initiated in response to the increasing trend in highway collisions of migrating turtles and vehicles. Our ever-expanding dedicated volunteer base makes projects like these possible and allows for more efficient ways in which WDNR employees can productively manage turtle numbers.

<https://wiatri.net/inventory/witurtles/>

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## Upcoming Programs

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

### **Local (Marathon & Wood County) Programs In Person**

Join me locally for these learning opportunities!

5/1 HMoob Farmer Outreach Event

5/15 Grow tomatoes (almost) anywhere! @ Woodson YMCA-The Landing

5/23 Spotted Lantern Fly @ Mosinee Community Education, Creske Library (Mosinee High School)

### **Virtual opportunities for programs!**

Can't make it in person? There's other ways to tap into Extension programs!

The Buzz About Wisconsin's Periodical Cicadas, Wednesday, May 15, Noon-1 p.m.

Ask the Experts: A Monthly Garden and Landscape Q&A Series, Monday May 20 1-2pm

The Science and Art of Plant Disease Diagnosis; Wednesday May 22 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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Janell Wehr

Horticulture  
Educator

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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