



Racine Kenosha Master Gardener Association

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2016

RKMGA Annual Meeting

Holiday Potluck

Graduation and Awards

December 12, 2016

Potluck begins at 6:00 pm, program to follow

Kenosha County Center, 19600 75th St, Bristol

NE corner of Highways 45 & 50)



Dues and Voting

RKMGA dues are increasing to \$20 per year. Please pay dues to the treasurer at the December meeting or mail them to:

Donna Deuster

33606 76th St, Burlington, WI 53105

The deadline for payment of the dues is December 31st.

Voting for officers and at large members at large will occur at the Annual Racine/ Kenosha Master Gardener meeting on December 12th. In accordance to Article VIII, section 7, Voting Members shall be allowed to vote by absentee ballot for officers and at large members in December. All written requests are to be sent to the secretary (Lisa Malikowski.) The absentee voter must return the ballot no later than Monday, December 5th.



With Care, Holiday Plants Can Bloom Again

Amaryllis, poinsettias, and Christmas cactus can be coaxed into another year's bloom, according to horticulture experts at the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Amaryllis

You can save amaryllis bulbs from year to year and if treated well the blooms will become more spectacular every year. If your amaryllis is still blooming now, you can prolong the flower's life by removing pollen-bearing stamens inside the flower with tweezers. When the flowers are finished, cut the flower stalk off with a sharp knife several inches above the bulb. Do not remove any leaves. Keep your amaryllis in a sunny south or west window, keep the soil moist and fertilize it once a month. You want to keep the plant growing to build up enough energy for next year's flowers. You can keep your amaryllis indoors all year, or you can plant it outdoors in late May. Choose a well drained sunny spot and sink the pot into the ground up to the rim. Water the plant regularly, and continue fertilizing right through summer. Bring the pot inside in early October, before the first frost, remove the bulb from the soil and wash it off. Lay it out carefully and allow the leaves to dry. The bulb needs a two-month rest to flower again. At the end of November, plant the bulb in a clean pot with new soil and wait for the blooming cycle to begin again.

Christmas Cactus

A Christmas cactus is relatively easy to maintain from year to year. This cactus likes a well-drained soil mix rich in organic matter -- one part potting soil, two parts peat moss or compost and one part sharp sand, perlite or vermiculite. Keep the soil evenly moist. Fertilize your cactus when new growth starts from the branch tips in late winter or early spring, and monthly through summer. Use a one-quarter strength solution of soluble plant fertilizer or an organic fertilizer. A strong fertilizer solution can damage your Christmas cactus's fine, scant root system. Give your Christmas cactus high light during winter, but indirect or filtered light during summer. Your cactus needs a rest in fall to encourage it to produce flower buds. In September, let the soil dry out thoroughly before watering. This is also the time to move your plant to a brighter location. Christmas cactus also needs cooler conditions in fall in order to set flower buds. Temperatures dropping to the 50s or 60s at night encourage flowers to develop. To avoid flower bud drop, keep the soil evenly moist.

Poinsettia

The brightly-colored poinsettia is one of the most brilliant decorations of the holiday season. With a little care, you can keep your poinsettia blooming well into the new year. And with patience you can make it turn crimson again next year. Keep your poinsettia in a bright, sunny location. Without bright light, the colorful bracts and green leaves lose their luster and fade quickly. In a good spot, they'll retain their color for months. Originally a Mexican wildflower, poinsettias do best with temperatures in the sixties. Extended periods of higher temperatures will shorten the life of the bracts. Extended periods of cooler temperatures will encourage root rot. Don't let any part of the plant touch cold windows. Poinsettias do not tolerate drafts so keep them away from radiators, air registers, fans, open windows and doorways. If possible, place your poinsettia in a cooler room at night to extend the blooming time. A nighttime temperature of 55 to 60 degrees is ideal. Examine the soil regularly and water only when it feels dry. Always water enough to soak the soil to the bottom of the pot and discard the excess water. Use a soluble houseplant fertilizer and feed the plant once or twice a month, following manufacturers' recommendations. If you'd like your poinsettia to bloom again next Christmas, follow these steps to produce colorful leaf bracts. Sometime between late September and mid-October keep your poinsettia in uninterrupted darkness from sundown to sunup everyday, for one to two months. These long dark periods stimulate the plant to produce colorful leaf bracts. You can put your plant in a closet each evening or cover it with a cardboard box. Whatever method you use, remember that even a little light for a little while can prevent flowering. This includes light from the corner streetlight or the occasional flash of room light when you open the closet door. Move the poinsettia into full sun during the day.

For more information about blooming holiday plants, contact your county UW-Extension office and ask about Extension bulletins on care of holiday plants.

Contact: Mary Ellen Bell, (608) 263-6260, mebell@facstaff.wisc.edu

<http://www.uwex.edu/news/read.cfm?id=662>

Racine Kenosha Master Gardener Project Observations

Dear Master Gardeners,

Time is flying by! I can't believe that it has been two months since I was out working with some of you on your projects. Each of you has been so welcoming. It has been wonderful to see the different projects that RKMGA has to offer and the members that make these projects successful.

In visiting your Master Gardener projects, a shared common concern was the lack of Master Gardeners or even community volunteers, helping with the projects. The lack of assistance was evident in many different tasks, like help in picking vegetables, creating signs, assisting in training people, designing and creating watering systems and the list goes on.

At one project that I visited, Master Gardeners voiced their concern about their partnership with the school where the project was located. "How do we (Master Gardeners) get the school, teachers and families to find value in the school's courtyard?" This question was difficult to answer because many different partners should be involved at the table. Some of the questions and comments I heard were:

- How do we voice the concerns being felt?
- How do we attract new members to want to help with this project?
- What happens when there is no longer support from the community partners?
- How do you respectfully dissolve a project?

These types of questions are hard to answer and take a lot of careful thinking. If your project is experiencing these same concerns, consider:

- Is the project following the Master Gardener Mission Statement?
- What type of horticulture education are you providing (maybe you noticed there isn't any being done)?
- Does the community partner want to be involved in the project anymore?

Maybe the project could have a one-time call out for help from the community partner and the whole RKMGA group, this would be all that was needed for a project.

The education happening in the projects is great! Students learn when to pick ripe vegetables and how to plant in a straight row. Watching the kids take their first bite of something they never ate before was interesting. I observed the Veterans come alive with excitement when the Master Gardeners came to their facility to teach how to plant, to explain what the plant will look like when it's mature, and how to care for the plants. I watched as family members stood back and witnessed the joy and love expressed in their loved ones eyes. All this is done thanks to you, the Master Gardeners, who have worked so hard on these projects.

- Bethany Sorce





RKMGA is on Facebook! Like the page to see RKMGA updates and gardening information.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Racine-Kenosha-Master-Gardener-Association/151441411616919>

Master Gardener Conferences

21st Annual Conference on Native Plants and Natural Landscaping

<http://www.towardharmonywithnature.org/>
 Saturday, January 28, 2017
 Oshkosh Convention Center
 Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Conference Fees for 2017

Pre-Registration

\$30 Member \$35 Non member \$15 Student

On-Site Registration

\$35 Member \$40 Non member \$20 Student

Presented by Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter

The mission of the Racine/Kenosha Master Gardener Association (RKMGA) is to educate, beautify, and preserve the community through trained Master Gardener Volunteers. We have about 200 members and more than 30 projects throughout Racine and Kenosha counties. Our diverse range of volunteer opportunities includes staffing a plant help line, creating and maintaining demonstration gardens, working with youth, teaching horticultural skills to adults with disabilities, and sharing information at special events.

International Master Gardener Conference 2017

This conference is held every other year in the US or Canada. The next conference will be in Portland, Oregon
 July 10-14, 2017.

<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/2017imgc/>



UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

Dec 12	Kenosha**	Holiday Potluck, Graduation, Awards	
		2017 meeting dates are being confirmed, watch for meeting notices.	

*Racine County Location:

Gateway SCJ iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Blvd, Sturtevant
 (Highway H, between Highways 11 and 20)

**Kenosha County Location:

Kenosha County Center, 19600 75th St, Bristol (NE corner of
 Highways 45 & 50)

