

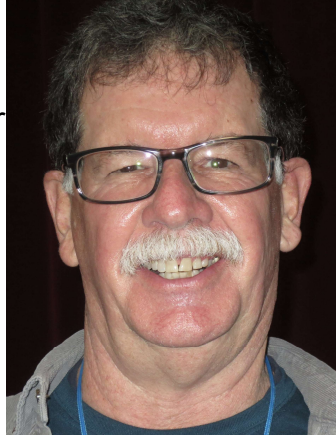


# Racine / Kenosha Master Gardener Association

Newsletter  
Spring 2023

## From The RKMGA President.... Why We Garden Together

Gardening does not need to be a solo endeavor. Undoubtedly, many gardeners spend all of their time in their own gardens—large and small and there is certainly nothing wrong in that. The world definitely needs more gardeners! However, gardening together can be about something “bigger” than just the individual’s efforts.



Gardening together can have so many more benefits and impact than our solo efforts. It is a great way to make new friends. A chance to meet folks that you might not normally encounter. Gardening together may be a way to “think outside of the gardening box.”

Gardening together is a great way of sharing an experience. And in so doing, we get a chance to share so much more. Working side by side, we get a chance to share our life experiences and life stories. We also get a chance to share our knowledge and a chance to learn from others—maybe it’s someone’s favorite plant or maybe it’s information on healthcare insurance. Conversation can range from the general to personal or a comfortable silence while working side by side in the garden.

Another advantage in gardening together is sharing your skills and experience with others. Seems like everyone has had a favorite positive experience in the garden (like how to save your garden from deer or how keep the asters from flopping over) or a gardening mistake (like planting the wrong plant in the wrong place) that we can all learn from each other. (Remember the old adage: there are no mistakes in the garden, only experiments).

*More “From The RKMGA President-Page 2*

## In This Issue

- Page 3 Wind Point Lighthouse garden
- Page 4-5 What We Learned
- Page 6 Spring Into Gardening
- Page 7 Kenosha County Arbor Day
- Page 9 WIMGA briefs

## Important Links and Contacts-RKMGA

Register your volunteer and education hours  
<https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/report-your-hours>

Racine Kenosha Master Gardener Association  
<https://Kenosha.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/rkmga>

RKMGA Facebook Page  
[www.facebook.com/Racine-Kenosha-Master-Gardener-Association-151441411616919](http://www.facebook.com/Racine-Kenosha-Master-Gardener-Association-151441411616919)

Racine-Kenosha County Master Gardener Activities page  
[www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersKenoshaRacineCounties](http://www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersKenoshaRacineCounties)

Kenosha-Racine University of Wisconsin-Extension web hub  
[Kenosha.extension.wisc.edu](http://Kenosha.extension.wisc.edu)

Plant Health Advising resource page  
<https://Kenosha.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/plant-health-advising>

### Key Contacts

Leon Potter, RKMGA President  
[leon.michael.potter@gmail.com](mailto:leon.michael.potter@gmail.com)

Vijai Pandian, Horticulture Educator  
[vijaikumar.pandian@wisc.edu](mailto:vijaikumar.pandian@wisc.edu)

## Newsletter thoughts?

Please email Jayne Herring at  
[jdhering@jayneherring.com](mailto:jdhering@jayneherring.com)

**From The RKMGA President... *continued***

And sharing something we've learned from an article or book that we've read, or from a YouTube video or from a gardening lecture that we've attended.

And let's not forget the power of gardening together as a means of giving back to our communities. Many Master Gardeners have arrived at a point where they can devote some time out of their week to share their knowledge and skills in the garden of a public organization. Most of us don't have to worry about working the 9-5 daily grind (wow, now I have Dolly Parton's song in my head...I'm hoping it will pass).

But, perhaps one of the main benefits of gardening together is working as a team. There is something powerful about a group effort. It's one thing to congratulate yourself on beautifying your home landscape. It's a similar, but different (maybe more intense?) feeling when as a group you look back on your toil and efforts and feel like you've all accomplished something!

Or even better when the member of an organization comes out to express their thanks for your gardening efforts. Likewise, the gratitude of an unknown person who happens to be walking by is appreciated.

RKMGA is looking forward to a new season of Gardening Together! We want to move forward. We have received input from our group about returning to some fun Field Trips and folks have indicated that if that involves a bus ride so be it—I think everyone wants to put the Pandemic in the rearview mirror. We are looking at ways to expand our volunteer base and exploring new ways to partner with other organizations.

So, now that Spring is finally here, let's all looking forward to Gardening Together!

*Leon Potter,  
President-RKMGA*



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**Don't forget to record your volunteer and education hours**

With ORS volunteer hours reporting system out of commission for a while, it is easy to forget to log all those great education hours we accumulated over the winter. It is up and operating again. Use the link below and expect to have to agree to a number of statements and then you will be sent to the hours section. (Good to get it over with before the work of summer gardening takes our time.)

<https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/report-your-hours>

- If you accepted the Terms and Conditions in the Online Reporting System (ORS) on or before May 15, 2023 you will receive a new name badge in the 2023 calendar year.
- If you accepted Terms and Conditions in the Online Reporting System (ORS) after May 15, 2023 you will receive a new name badge in the 2024 calendar year.

## FEATURED GARDEN—Wind Point Lighthouse

It has been six years since Susan and Mike Arts retired from serving as the Windpoint Lighthouse onsite caretakers. However Susan continues her caretaker role as leading the Master Gardener volunteers who maintain the beautiful gardens there.

Susan and Mike were caretakers from 2007-2017. In 2014 Susan became a Master Gardener. Susan says, "I wanted to learn more. I had been tending the gardens but realized that I really wanted and needed more education."

At the time, Ruthann Smithers was the project coordinator. When she needed to step away from the leadership position in 2018, Susan agreed to take over. An active core of volunteers work the majority of time with others coming in to help occasionally. The core group includes Sally Brown, Janine Jansen, Vicky Chekouras, Ruth Ann Smithers. Others who help when able include Lynette Crowder and Sarah Anderson. Susan says they try to work one day a week—generally the last Saturday of the month—from the end of April through the end of October. The 1880 lighthouse is decommissioned, but hosts 25,000-30,000 visitors a year. Whether they come because of their interest in lighthouse history or to enjoy the beautiful grounds, visitors report "an amazing experience". Two large gardens are located on the 4.5-acre property, which used to be a working farm to support the families of the head and assistant



Susan says the "Brick Garden", as it is known, contains well-established perennials—very few annuals. It could be considered a cottage garden. Susan describes it as very full of perennials, many of which are Natives. Susan reports, "We are often out there weeding with screwdrivers to get weeds out from between memorial/honor bricks. They also maintain an herb garden—Again, mostly perennial herbs."

Other gardens are on the property, but not maintained by Master Gardeners. The current caretakers oversee those gardens.

"It is very rewarding to be involved with such a public garden as this," says Susan. "With so many visitors during our workdays, we get immediate, positive feedback. The most common comments? 1. Thank you, this place is fabulous. 2. Can you come to my house?" Susan laughs, "And my reply is, 'You can't afford us!'"

Volunteers who would like to be part of this "priceless" group can contact Susan via email at [srinarts@aol.com](mailto:srinarts@aol.com).



## WHAT WE LEARNED

Thank you to Sharon Tilton ([stilton44@yahoo.com](mailto:stilton44@yahoo.com)) and Susan Schlieve ([mermystique@hotmail.com](mailto:mermystique@hotmail.com)) for serving as the Program Committee Co-Chairs. If you have program suggestions please contact one of them.

We've had some great educational opportunities during the first 4 months of 2023. Here are some snapshots.

**April 2023-Custom Grown Greenhouse, Milwaukee area.** RKMGA members received a pre-season-opening tour of the greenhouses and were introduced to the life of running a long-time, privately owned operation.

We learned that "slowing down" for owner Paul Budzisz means starting late: 7:00 am and only working about 12 hours.

We were also introduced to beautiful, healthy plants and some interesting equipment. We saw a demonstration of the machine that adds the potting mix to flats of plants (who knew!?) and a machine, although not often used anymore, that sifts seeds and place them in the seed starting trays.

Thank you to Paul and MGV Susan Schlieve, who is employed by the center, for the tour.



## February 2023-Richard Hawke, The Chicago Botanical Garden

This virtual presentation featuring the Director of Plant Research shared photos of their wonderful gardens. They are always building, changing and evaluating plants to provide the best gardening experience.

When evaluating a plant, they measure its:

- Adaptability to the soil and environment.
- Winter hardiness
- Resistance to disease and pests
- Ornamental traits.

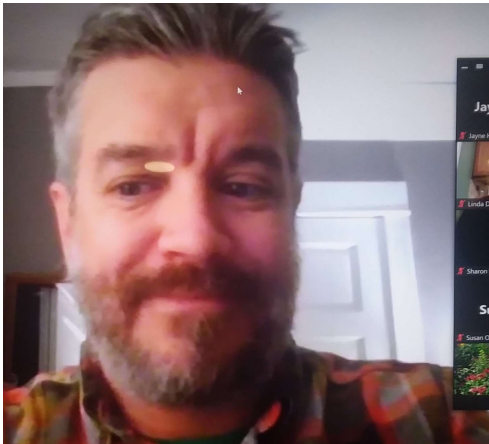
Perennials are evaluated for 4 years. Shrubs and vines for 6 years.



**WHAT WE LEARNED...continued****January 2023-Jumping Worms by Brad Heric**

Most of us who were fortunate enough to tune in to the January 23<sup>rd</sup> RKMGA presentation on Jumping Worms learned an incredible amount about ALL worms and Jumping Worms in particular.

“Invasive Jumping Worms: The Impact of a New Soil Invasive” was delivered by Brad Heric, ecologist and Research Project Manager at the UW Arboretum. Jumping Worms were first detected in Wisconsin at the UW Arboretum.



Participants were shown photos of other earth worms compared to Jumping Worms. The most distinctive differences are the smooth, milky white band and the way they move. Jumping Worms have a snake-like movement and thrash and whip around, giving them their “Jumping” worm name. The one-year lifecycle has the worms dying in winter, but leaving behind cocoons that hatch babies in spring.

Their cocoons look like soil—about 2mm brown “berries”. It is the transport of cocoons causing the spread and invasiveness—most likely on the tires of vehicles (vs. migration) and through mulch (wood in particular).

The worms harm the natural ground cover—most notably deciduous forests or gardens and lawns. They eat off the ground cover exposing soil which causes erosion. Roots have a hard time establishing. Plants are destroyed.



Heat treatment does kill the cocoons at 104 degrees Fahrenheit. So controlled burns in appropriate locations works. Purchasing mulch from trusted commercial sites is best because, by statute, their compost needs to reach temperatures above 104 degrees during their processes.

Other control methods are currently being tested.

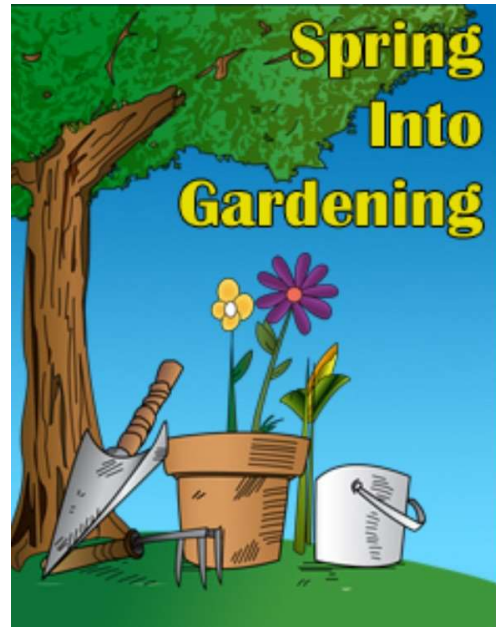
For more information, see [greatlakeswormwatch.org](http://greatlakeswormwatch.org)



## Spring Into Gardening 2023

The March 18<sup>th</sup> Spring into Gardening event, in-person for the first time in a couple of years, informed and educated a full-house crowd of Master Gardeners and gardening friends.

Held this year in Founders Hall of Kenosha's Kemper Center along the Lake Michigan shore, gardeners learned gardening tips and tricks and about national organizations which support gardeners by evaluating new plants and much more.



Each of our fabulous, renowned speakers gave two presentations.

**Melinda Meyers:** Melinda first spoke on "Gardening Renovations for Any Size Landscape." She urged gardeners to start with a plan that takes into consideration what the family wants to keep, what they've liked in other gardens and to pick a style. She offered quick and affordable fixes and reminders on the many, MANY things to keep in mind when developing your new space.

After lunch, Melinda returned to share "Plants for Problem Areas". She divided the presentation by typical problem areas such as Sunny/Dry, Dry/Shade, Clay soil, Deer, Black Walnut Tree, Wetland, De-icing Salt. Lovely photos of plants to consider planting were presented for each of these tough areas.



**Diane Blazek:** Diane first addressed, "How Your Garden Can Help Your Health and Well-Being." While most of us could discuss our reasons for gardening and how it makes us feel better, Diane had results of some great studies.

The three primary benefits are: Improved Diet/physical activity/fights disease; Social interaction/mental health; and Scientific knowledge and Earth awareness.



## Spring Into Gardening 2023...Diane Blazek *continued*

She directed us to the website of the National Garden Bureau (whose slogan is Inspire, Connect, Grow) at NGB.org.

She also talked about the National Garden Bureau's Therapeutic Garden Grant program, which has supported therapeutic gardens around the country with over \$100,000 of grants.

In an afternoon presentation, Diane spoke about All-America Selections (AAS). AAS is North America's premiere and only national plant trialing organization. Diane helped us understand the trial and selection process. Judges offer their score and answer the questions: Should it be an AAS Winner? And does it deserve a gold medal? She then shared slides featuring winning vegetables and flowers.



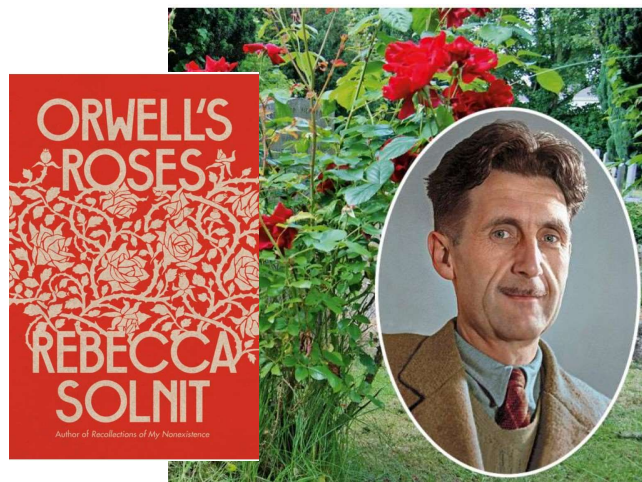
Thanks to Vijai Pandian, Horticulture Educator and the RKMGA event steering committee led by Julie Whyte, Sarah Anderson, and Sharon Tilton for another great Spring into Gardening. And thanks to Kemper Center for hosting us this year.

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## A book to consider... Orwell's Roses by Rebecca Solnit

I think many of us think of George Orwell and automatically think of him only as the author of "1984". I know I did not realize that gardening was one of his passions.

According to the Amazon.com book description, ' "In the spring of 1936, a writer planted roses." So begins Rebecca Solnit's new book, a reflection on George Orwell's passionate gardening and the way that his involvement with plants, particularly flowers, illuminates his other commitments as a writer and antifascist, and on the intertwined politics of nature and power.'





## Arbor Day 2023—A beautiful evening at the Kenosha County Prairie and Arboretum

Close to 50 participants—Master Gardeners, Kenosha County Employees, 4-H members and parents, and others gathered to celebrate Arbor Day. The event was co-hosted by the Horticulture Education and 4-H departments of UW-Madison division of Extension.



MGV Linda O'Connell helps plant the Arbor Day 2023 ceremonial tree.

Participants celebrated the one-mile looped path Arboretum, now numbering 94 trees with another 30 to be planted this Spring.

A ceremonial tree planting was held. Tree art was created by 4-H participants and was displayed in the County Center hallways. Educator Vijai Pandian explained how trees grow. And free saplings were distributed. Refreshments were provided by RKMGA.



Kenosha County Board Chairman Gabe Nudo

## Master Gardeners invited back to Kenosha Harbor Market By Cathy Brnak

Do you like interacting with people? Do you enjoy sharing your plant knowledge and listening to other people's gardening stories? Then working the MG booth at the Kenosha Harbor Market, would be a great project for you.

RKMGA would like to have a booth twice a month during the three summer months, June, July, and August. The actual market operates from 9am to 2pm on Saturday mornings. The MG's manning the booth usually need a half hour for set up and take down. Most work is done while seated under the tent, however MG are free to stretch their legs and shop the market for goodies or lunch. Bathrooms are nearby in the public museum.

There are generally two to four MGVs working the booth. If you are only available part of the time, that might work out also. Remember no one ever knows all the horticulture answers that is why we can refer people to Vijai or the link to the folks in Madison.

It would be expected that the people working the weekend would work out who will bring the tent and boxes. Most people bring their own chairs. You do not have to commit to every date to be involved in this project. We have not set dates with the Market officials yet as we want to gauge our staffing situation first. So if you are interested please contact me at [cbrnak@gmail.com](mailto:cbrnak@gmail.com).

Our new tent is being provided from a WIMGA grant. Thank you WIMGA.





**WIMGA News.....From Linda Graeper**

First, a reminder that I am your WIMGA District Director for Racine-Kenosha. If you have any questions, concerns that you want me to take to WIMGA, feel free to email me at [lindagraeper@gmail.com](mailto:lindagraeper@gmail.com). We have a monthly WIMGA Board meeting.

WIMGA is in process of updating their Standard Operating Procedures which will also lead to more changes to the By-Laws. As you know WIMGA represents all MG Associations in WI. For many reasons it is getting harder to find MGs willing to serve as Local Representatives (positions held in five districts because the districts serve multiple counties/associations). The thought is that WIMGA will reduce to four districts which will not affect Racine-Kenosha or Milwaukee-Waukesha. Long story short there will be more information coming about WIMGA updates.

WIMGA does represent all the Associations' concerns when they have meetings with the team at the Division of Extension Master Gardener Program. However, (Leon can attest to this) getting succinct information from them has been difficult.

WIMGA is planning another MG Association President's zoom meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.

WIMGA and RKMGA will continue to support the MG projects. Do not hesitate to contact for assistance.



***The next scheduled newsletter will be published in Fall. Please send suggestions or story submissions to Jayne at [jdherring@jayneherring.com](mailto:jdherring@jayneherring.com)***

