

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2019



BARRON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Encourage, foster, support, and promote horticulture for all Master Gardener Volunteers and residents of Barron County and to promote the UW-Extension from which we are founded.

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Barron County Will Hold a Master Gardener Volunteer Training This Fall

From its beginning, the Wisconsin Master Gardener Volunteer program has excelled as a premier community service-learning program connecting gardening with volunteer opportunities in our area. Volunteers are trained to aid University of Wisconsin Extension staff by helping people in the community to better understand horticulture and their environment. Any adult interested in gardening can participate in the Master Gardener Volunteer Training with no previous experience or training is required. Acceptance is contingent on passing a criminal background check.

Classes will be held from 6:00—9:00 pm on Tuesdays from September 3 to November 19th, in Rice Lake. Students receive 36 hours of training, and in return are expected

to volunteer a minimum of 24 hours annually. Each week a different horticulture subject will be explored. Students watch video lectures at home and read from their manual, and participate in hands-on activities in class. Some topics covered: annual, perennial, and native plants, fruits and vegetables, soils, weeds, wildlife, insects, plant diseases, and basic landscape design. Registration is due by August 6th, and has a fee of \$125/person, or \$200 for two people willing to share printed materials.

For more information contact: Becky Schley, Agricultural Educator, 715-537-6252 or becky.schley@wisc.edu or Kim Grover, Administrative Assistant, 715-537-6256 or kim.grover@wisc.edu.

Master Gardener May Meeting

The topic for the May meeting of the Barron County Master Gardener Volunteers is "Weather and Climate Determines What We Can Grow and How Well it Grows."

Jerry Clark, UW Extension Crops and Soils Educator from Chippewa County is the speaker. This session looks at how changes in weather and climate affects gardening. The meeting is at 7:00 pm in the Barron County Government Center and is open to the public.



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Barron County Fair—Is this your year to enter a Plant, Flower, or something else in the fair?

Have you ever walked through the buildings at the Barron County Fair and thought: “I could do that,” or said to yourself: “I have flowers that look that good?” Maybe it’s time you entered something. The mission of the Barron County Fair Association is to provide for people of ALL AGES opportunities to exhibit their talents or products and to enjoy and participate in the entertaining, educational and affordable activities in a safe, wholesome environment.

The Barron County Fair Book for 2019 can be found online at barroncountyfair.com. You can pre-register to enter flowers and plants, but you do not have to. Take a look at the book and see the dozens of ways you can enter a plant, a flower, an arrangement, a miniature garden, and so much more. It might seem a little intimidating if you have never done it, but it really is easy. There is an entry fee of \$10 for Open Class. The fee is the same whether you enter one or 50 items.

Barron Community Garden—Looking for Volunteers—Kathy Splett, Food Wise Coordinator, Barron/Rusk Counties.

Are you looking for a way to be involved in gardening, and help your community at the same time? The Barron Community Garden (BCG) is looking for people to help out in a variety of ways.

The BCG is located behind the Barron County Developmental Services, Inc. building at 175 Lake Street, in Barron. It was instigated in 2015 by UW-Extension, Master Gardener Volunteers, and others within the county and community who were interested in the concept of developing a garden. The mission of the garden is to enhance the well being and beauty of the community by assisting people in growing fresh produce, encouraging cross-cultural relationships, and creating an educational and accessible garden in an attractive setting. The garden is used as an educational opportunity to encourage families and individuals to learn how to garden. This provides a means to become more food secure, increase the opportunity to economically eat more fresh vegetables and fruits, and provide a place to garden for those who do not have land available.

The produce from the community plots is donated to the Barron Food Pantry and the B.C. Senior Nutrition Program. 732 pounds of vegetables and fruits were donated in 2018, which was an increase from 2017. The remaining plots are rented out to individuals and families to raise their own healthy foods.

Being a community garden and supported by outside funds, it is hoped that the BCG will inspire community members to be involved and volunteer, be a neighbor to those in need, and assist in making the community a better place for everyone. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact Kathy Splett at the Barron County Govt Center, 715 537 6381, or email her at Kathy.splett@wisc.edu.

VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN THE BARRON COMMUNITY GARDEN IN 2018



The community plots of the BCG are managed and maintained by volunteers, Barron County UW-Madison Extension FoodWise, and Master Gardener Volunteers.

Barron Co. Master Gardener Volunteers Service and Education Projects.

Barron County Master Gardener Volunteers are involved in many projects throughout the year. The Master Gardener program is a service-learning program, and requires a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer time per year. These are just a few of the ways these volunteers are involved locally:

- Barron Community Food Garden – Master Gardener Volunteers assist with some of the community plots.
- Barron County Fair – Master Gardeners assist with the Horticulture building and are on hand throughout the fair to answer questions.
- Pioneer Village Museum – Master Gardeners created a rain garden with native plants and have an annual theme for the vegetable garden related to local history.
- Rice Lake Farmer's Market "Plant Docs" – people who visit the market can often find a volunteer ready to answer questions about plants.
- Plant Advisors – anyone can call the UW Extension Office in Barron and ask a question relating to horticulture. Master Gardener Volunteers provide answers and sometimes do research to find solutions to problems.

- School Sunflowers – each spring, 2nd or 3rd graders in county schools are given sunflower seeds with instructions about planting and growing. In the fall, Master Gardener Volunteers return to the schools to talk about the successes and failures, and measure the largest sunflowers.

A CHILD PICKS BEANS IN THE PIONEER VILLAGE MUSEUM'S HERITAGE GARDEN. **THIS IS ONE OF MANY PROJECTS OF THE BARRON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS.**



Plant Sale

Mark your calendars:

The Master Gardener Volunteer Annual Plant Sale will be held on May 18th, 2019, at the Barron County Fairgrounds in the Youth Building in Rice Lake.

Start time: 8:00 am

Many perennials will be for sale and Master Gardener Volunteers will be on hand for advice and to answer your plant questions.

For Master Gardener Volunteers

Diana Alfuth, Horticulture Outreach Specialist reminds us,

You are NOT expected to know everything. No one does.

Gather all the information, do some research, and get back to the person who asked.

Every question you get is a learning experience for YOU.

If you feel you can't help, refer them to someone who can.

No answer is better than a bad, un-researched answer.

You are not alone—you have all of UW-Extension behind you!!

Growing Potatoes—How to Choose the Best Variety—Carol Kettner, Barron County Master Gardener Volunteer

Potatoes are one of the earliest crops many gardeners plant each spring. But with all the choices in stores and catalogs, how do you know which is the right one for you? It all depends on how you use potatoes. They can vary by taste, texture, color, size, and how they behave when cooked. Have you ever made soup and the potatoes disintegrated? That has to do with the starch and moisture in the potatoes. Those that hold their shape when cooked are in the waxy variety and the ones that fall apart are in the category of mealy.

Let's take a look at some of the things to consider when choosing potatoes to plant this year.

Russet potatoes are white with a brown skin and are considered a dry/mealy variety. They are great for baking (the skin gets nice and crisp), mashing, and frying. But they will fall apart in soup or stew. You would not use a russet potato if you want firm chunks, but if you are going to puree the soup, or want the potatoes to thicken it, russet will work.

White potatoes are generally successfully used in almost any recipe. In fact, for many gardeners, the Kennebec variety in this category is often the favorite choice.

Many people love Yukon Gold potatoes, because they are in the **Waxy**, or yellow-fleshed group. They also can be used in a variety of recipes. In recent years, many **Colorful** potato varieties have hit the market. Some of these are old heirloom varieties, and some are newly developed. They add interest to your meals and their taste and behavior vary. **Fingerling** potatoes are fun because their skin is thin, and thus do not need peeling. You can use them for roasting or boiling.

One of the joys of gardening is to have **New Potatoes** early in the summer. This is not a variety, but simply an immature potato. They are great boiled, steamed, or put in soup. You don't even

need to peel them; just brush the dirt off and cook them whole.

Some potatoes store well and some should be eaten soon after harvesting. If you want to store potatoes through the winter, white and yellow ones are the best, with Kennebec and Yukon Gold high on the list. Once you have harvested potatoes, it is important to keep them in a dark place. Light will cause them to turn green, and that green area can make you quite sick. (Cut away the green and the rest of the potato is still safe to eat.) The ideal storage

temperature for potatoes is 35 to 40 degrees, though they will usually keep for several months at 45 to 50 degrees.

Washington State University's website lists dozens of potato varieties with details of the characteristics of each. Not all of them will grow successfully in Wisconsin, but for someone who wants to know as much as they can about each potato, you will find lots of information at: potatoes.wsu.edu/varieties

The UW Extension publication Vegetable cultivars and Planting Guide for Wisconsin gardens recommends these potato varieties for Wisconsin:

Red skinned: Chieftain, Dark Red Norland, Red LaSoda, Red Pontiac, Rideau, Sangre

Russet: Freedom Russet, Gold Rush, Russett Burbank, Russett Norkotah

Specialty: All Blue, French Fingerling, Princess La Ratte (a.k.a. Ratte), Russian Banana

White: Kennebec, Onaway, Superior

Yellow fleshed: Carola, German Butterball, Granola, Nicola, Yukon Gold

When you choose your potatoes for planting, be a little creative this year. Try something new.

(Information from UW Extension, Washington State University, and Gardener's Supply [whose articles are produced by professional horticulturalists])



Barron County Master Gardener Volunteer Student Scholarship and Grant Programs - 2019

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA: \$500.00 Award

Must be a Barron County high school senior or have graduated from a Barron County high school and are attending an accredited 2 or 4 year school. Must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Must be in a horticulture related program. Should be or have been an active participant in school and community activities. Contact your school's Student Services Department staff for more specific criteria to include in the application. **Deadline for submittal - April 26th.**

Submit your final application to your school's Student Services Department.

BARRON COUNTY GRANT APPLICATIONS: Two \$150.00 grants

Applicants must be a non-profit group or organization. Applications should include;

Name and location of the group or organization (2) Contact person (3) Phone number & email if appropriate (4) Description of project - reasons for the project, simple plans and expected accomplishments. **Deadline for submittal of application - April 26th.**

Mail to: Becky Schley, Agricultural Educator, Barron County UW Extension -MGV, Barron County Government Center, 335 E. Monroe Ave. Barron WI



Colors Make A Difference!

Have you ever wondered why you sometimes look at a group of plants and say to yourself, "Wow! That really looks great!" And then you see another group that has lots of pretty plants but something seems to be missing? It could be the choice of colors. According to Mark Dwyer, from Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville, how you apply color to plant groupings, makes a big difference. Colors such as **yellow and red** attract your eyes, and draw your attention. Colors such as **blue, green and maroon** will help bring balance to a group of plants. **White** is the color that brings unity to the whole grouping.

Hydrangeas—Marilyn Saffert, Barron County Master Gardener Volunteer

Hydrangeas have been a favorite shrub in our northern gardens for years. We have had much success with both the PeeGee and Annabelle hydrangeas. And the care and pruning of these shrubs is quite easy. All hydrangeas prefer well-drained, moist soil. But they do not want to be planted in soggy wet soil. They do like some mulch to keep the soil at a constant and even moisture content. They also like to be fertilized in early spring with a 15-30-15 fertilizer or a rose fertilizer.

The old-fashioned hydrangeas that have lived in our gardens for years are the Paniculata PeeGees with cone-shaped clusters of blooms. Also the Arborescens Annabelles with giant globe-shaped clusters of blooms have been valuable assets in our shady gardens for some time. Both of these types are zone 3 hardy and as a surprise to many of us, they do best in full sun in our northern gardens. Pruning of PeeGees and Annabelles is relatively easy. You cannot make a mistake because they bloom on “New Wood,” which means they bloom on the stems that will grow anew each spring. So you can choose to prune the shrub back in early spring down to 2-3-feet in height, or maybe down to the ground. However, when cutting them all the way back to the ground, you may end up with new stems that are weaker and will not stand up well during the summer rainstorms. You might wish to let a few older stems remain there for a support system for the new stems coming up from ground level.



Another choice would be to just remove the old blossoms that were on the bush from last summer. The PeeGees can get to be 7-feet-tall, but of course they can be pruned back to an appropriate height in your garden.

Some of the newer PeeGees with cone-shaped blooms are ‘Quickfire’, ‘Pinky Winky’ and ‘Diamond Rouge.’ These new hydrangeas have

blossoms that start as a creamy white, but then begin to turn pink, dark pink or even a beautiful magenta as the summer progresses. They will achieve this color change all on their own, and do not need any special fertilizer for this to happen.

The Annabelles with their huge ball-like clusters have also made giant strides in the past few years. The typical white clusters are still great, but ‘Incrediball’ has clusters as big as basketballs. And now they have introduced ‘Incrediball Blush’ with pink clusters. This one looks quite interesting for a partially-shaded area in the hosta garden.

Proven Winners is also offering some mini-hydrangeas in the Annabelle family for those that have smaller gardens. ‘Invincibelle Wee White’ is a mini white one, ‘Invincibelle Limetta’ offers a green-tinted cluster of flowers, and the newest one, ‘Invincibelle Mini Mauvette’ is of course mauve-colored.

Hydrangeas continued . . .

A wonderful 4-foot-tall Annabelle that came on the market a few years ago is 'Invincibelle Spirit.' The flowers emerge a lovely pink right from the start, and continue reblooming for some time. If you deadhead it and take off the old blooms, new ones will take their place. Now there are 2 other ones available: 'Invincibelle Spirit II' and 'Invincibelle Ruby' with darker blooms.

The "problem child" in the hydrangea family is the Macrophylla 'Endless Summer' and all of her offspring. This hydrangea was introduced to us in 2004. The promise was that it would bloom for us on both "New Wood" and "Old Wood." The "Old Wood" would give us a spring bloom and the "New Wood" would give us the late-summer blooms. Thus we would have an "endless summer" of blooms each year. And they promised that if we fertilized it properly, we could have blue hydrangeas in our garden. This has been especially difficult to achieve in our northern gardens.

Two problems emerged quite quickly. The problem was that we had to find a way to overwinter the flowerbuds that were grown the previous summer. The flower buds on the "Old Wood" just do not stand up well in our harsh winters because they do not have very good protective "shells" for dormancy. They are called

"naked buds." And if these buds are killed over the winter, we end up with a nice green bush, but no flowers. So, to protect them over the winter, you

must make a frame around the plant using snow fence, and then perhaps cover the fence with some burlap before filling it up with clean straw, pine needles or shredded leaves. Be sure to cover all the way up past the tip of the plant.

The second problem with these 'Endless Summer' plants is dealing with that supposedly late-summer bloom on that "New Wood." This 'Endless Summer' hydrangea does not

seem to cooperate with providing buds on this 'New Wood.' Even the Chicago Arboretum was having trouble with this aspect. But if you are determined to have a blue hydrangea in your garden, there are some nice ones available. They are 'Bloomstruck Endless Summer,' and a new one that's going to be introduced this spring is

'Summer Crush Endless Summer,' which is a magenta-colored beauty. Just make sure you are willing to put some work into winter protection. Those gardeners that put forth the effort, do have some degree of success.



Floating Row Cover



Floating row covers protecting young crops.

Floating row cover is a spun-bonded or woven plastic, polyester or polypropylene material that is placed over plants to exclude pests, act as a windbreak or extend the growing season by retaining heat; all while still being permeable to light, water and air.

For Pest Control:

Covering crops can eliminate many pests on a variety of plants, including:

Caterpillars (imported cabbageworm, cabbage looper and diamondback moth) on cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower.

- Flea beetles on cabbage, potato, eggplant or salad greens
- Onion maggot on beans, corn and other crops
- Seed corn maggot on beans, corn and other crops
- Early season cucumber beetles on cucurbits
- Thrips on a variety of plants
- Aster yellows (a disease transmitted by aster leafhopper) on carrot, celery, lettuces', and many flowers.

The row cover prevents the insects from getting to the plants, so it must be put on at planting. Adult flea beetles and onion and seed corn maggots, however, emerge from the soil so you must be careful not to enclose plants over an infested area. It is therefore important to practice crop rotation and not plant related crops or those crops susceptible to a particular pest such as seed corn maggot, in the same location in successive years.

Also, you must remove row covers from insect-pollinated crops, such as cucumbers or squash, during bloom to allow for pollination—which obviously limits its use for pest exclusion on those crops.



Floating row cover is easy to use in the home garden.

As Season Extenders:

Depending on the weight of the covering you choose, you can gain between 2 and 8 degrees of frost protection, or warm the local environment sufficiently to harvest certain crops a week or two early. You'll get the maximum benefit if the crop is planted on a south-facing slope.

Floating Row Covers Continued . . .

TYPES OF COVERS



There are several weights of these covers for different uses. Lightweight covers tend to be the least expensive and are suitable for most crops. They will protect plants from desiccating wind, but there is only a minimal increase in temperature beneath the cover. Because of the light weight they don't require supports.

Medium weight covers help speed up crop maturation and increase yield. They are useful for extending the season in both spring and fall by retaining some heat. These types are suitable for use over cucurbits, lettuce, peas, carrots, radishes, potatoes, sweet corn and blueberries.

Heavyweight covers provide frost and freeze protection up to 4-8 degrees F, so are particularly good for early and late season extension for cool season crops. They can enhance crop growth, particularly for



warm-season crops, since they raise ambient daytime temperatures 10 degrees F or more. But be aware that tomatoes and peppers may get blossom drop if the temperature beneath the cover exceeds 86 degrees F. Also, transmission of sunlight and water is reduced by these heavy covers. They are the most expensive, but can be reused.

Different weights of floating row cover are made for different purposes.

USING ROW COVERS

Floating row covers can be laid directly over low-growing, flexible crops. Just be sure to leave enough slack when covering rows so the cover can "expand" as the crop grows. You have to bury the edges completely if you're using floating row cover for pest exclusion. If you are not using it to keep bugs out, you may use rough lumber or rebar to hold down the edges.

It may be necessary to support the cover materials on hoops for taller crops or sensitive plants, such as spinach, that can be abraded by the material if it sits directly on the leaves. PVC pipes are easy to bend and stick in the soil to create a framework over which to drape the row cover.



Rebar holding down a stretch of row cover.

Floating Row Covers Continued . . .



Broccoli plants covered with floating row cover stretched over bent PVC pipes.

Remove covers gradually to harden off the crop. Choose a cloudy day to do the final removal. Store row covers out of direct sunlight, as UV rays will cause breakdown of the material.

Row covers provide a mini-greenhouse for the plants that grow beneath—this includes weeds.

Floating row covers generally aren't used in flower gardens because of their utilitarian appearance, but you might want to consider using them over ornamental plants for limited uses, such as early in the season for starting seedlings outdoors, or for temporary protection of valuable plants.

Floating row cover can be purchased at larger garden centers or from specialty mail order catalogs.

2019 - The Year of the Pumpkin

All-America Selections (AAS) is an independent non-profit trialing organization. They test new varieties for use in home gardens and containers. Their sister organization, the National Garden Bureau, has selected 2019 as the Year of the Pumpkin. Pumpkins are a staple for fall decorations and recipes and there are AAS varieties to please everyone.

Wee-B-Little is the first miniature orange pumpkin to win an AAS award designation. Weighing only 8-16 ounces, it is perfect for children to call their own. The plant is a bush type so it needs less garden space (about 8') to grow your own pumpkins. The deep orange skin is smooth, making it perfect for carving, painting or other craft projects.



Cinderella's Carriage is a dream come true for any princess-loving child who wants to grow their own fairy tale type pumpkin. This bright reddish-orange pumpkin is the first hybrid Cinderella-type pumpkin on the market that provides a higher yield as well as Powdery Mildew resistance in the garden. Robust and vigorous vines produce large fruits ranging from 25-35 pounds, creating a whole grouping of carriages.

2019 - The Year of the Pumpkin Continued . . .

Are uniquely colored pumpkins more your style?

Pepitas is a winner in both the decorative and culinary arenas. Pepitas is named for its hullless or naked seeds (pepitas) that lack the tough outer hull making them easy to eat after slow-roasting. Each high yield plant produces numerous, uniform medium sized (9 – 12 pounds) pumpkins on healthy, disease resistant vines. This confectionery type of pumpkin produces beautiful orange fruits that at maturity have decorative green stripes.



Love the look of white pumpkins for your fall holiday décor? Then you will love the first-ever white pumpkin AAS Regional Winner Super Moon F1. The



AAS judges loved the nice, eye-appealing

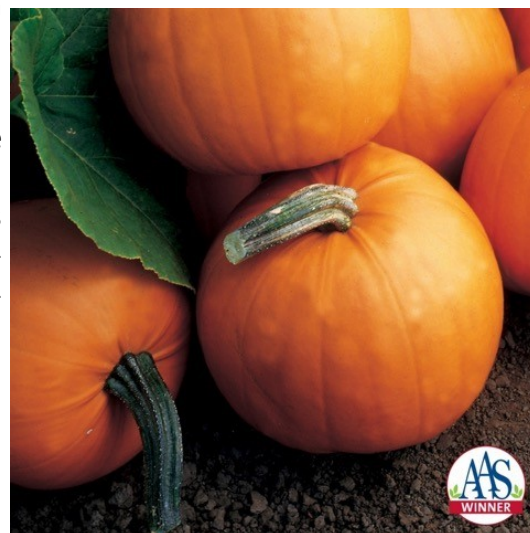
ghostly white coloration on the large, round pumpkins. Grown for their size, up to 50 pounds, and their clean white color, these hardy plants are known for their early fruit development and vigorous growth. When done decorating with these beauties, consider trying the yellow flesh for roasting or in your fall harvest soups.

Then there are the classic, medium-sized orange pumpkins that are AAS Winners because of their superior garden performance.

Hijinks, defined as lively enjoyment and unrestrained fun, is an apt name for this AAS pumpkin winner that offers loads of seasonal fun for kids. This variety produces 7 to 9-pound fruits of uniform size and shape. Smooth deep orange skin with distinctive grooves gives a very classy appearance to fall decorations and is ideal for painting or carving. A strong durable stem makes a great handle. Gardeners can

expect high yields, notable resistance to powdery mildew and easy fruit removal.

Orange Smoothie is a great pumpkin for children to grow. The dark orange, smooth skin is ideal for painting Halloween faces. The size is desirable for young hands, weighing 5 to 8 pounds with a strong, long handle. Orange Smoothie pumpkins will mature early, in about 90 days from sowing seed. Orange Smoothie's semi-determinate habit requires less space in the garden.





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Extension—Barron County
Barron County Government Center
335 E. Monroe Avenue, Room 2206
Barron, WI 54812
Advisor: Becky Schley, Agricultural
Educator
Phone: 715-537-6252
Fax: 715-537-6814

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