Racine Kenosha
Master Gardener Association

Mission
To educate, beautify and preserve the community through trained horticulture volunteers

Herb Container Gardens by MG Sher Nudi

Growing herbs can be a fun and rewarding experience. A container herb garden is both attractive and useful. Containers can be placed on a patio, balcony or at the doorstep. The keys to successful herb container gardening is selection of appropriate:

A) Container garden site
B) Container size
C) Potting media
D) Container-friendly herbs
E) Planting procedures
F) Care and harvest methods

Container Garden Site

Herbs produce more harvestable leaves and flowers when they are grown in a sunny garden site with late afternoon and evening shade.

Proper Size Container

At maturity, herbs have a root system slightly larger than their top growth. A general rule of thumb is to grow one herb per one gallon of potting media. Make sure the planter has an adequate drainage hole.

Potting Media

Potting mix should be a sterile mix, usually containing sphagnum peat moss, perlite or vermiculite. If a slow release fertilizer is used the next fertilizer application should occur in two months. Recommended rate for water soluble fertilizer is every three to four waterings.

Container-Friendly Herbs

Choose herbs that grow in a compact habit. Tall herbs, such as dill and fennel are top heavy, therefore should be grown in a large enough container to prevent toppling.

Planting Procedures

When planting the top of the root ball it should be level or slightly below the dirt. If transplanting the new container should be approximately one to two inches larger than the existing one. Be sure the soil is approximately one inch below the rim of the container. This allows space to prevent water from spilling over while watering.

Care & Harvesting Methods

The most common problem with any container garden is watering. Too much water may cause fungal infection, fungus gnats and root rot. Too little water will cause wilting and scorching. Repeated wilting can stunt the growth and reduce the flowering quality. Ideally, you should feel the soil 2 to 3 inches below the surface.

Harvest herbs when their oil content is at it's peak. This is in the late morning, after the dew has evaporated. Pinching off blooms will encourage a bushy growth habit. Remember since you will be eating the leaves of your herbs, use one teaspoon of liquid soap (not detergent) per gallon of water, applied with a sprayer rather than insecticide.

The following is a list of herbs that can be used in containers and their preferences to guide you in selection:

Shade: Angelica, Chervil, Chives, Costmary, Lemon Balm, Lovage, Mint, Parsley, Sweet Cicely, Sweet Woodruff, Tarragon

Wet: Angelica, Comfrey, Lovage, Marsh Mallow, Mint, Sweet Woodruff, Pennyroyal, Valerian,

Sun: Artemisias, Basil, Chives, Dill, Fennel, Oreganos, Sage, Savories

2006 Program Schedule

Potluck 6:30 p.m.
Presentation 7 p.m.
Business meeting 8 p.m.

January 23
Kenosha County Center
Phenology
Cathie Mann
Master Gardener and Master Naturalist

February 27
Racine County Office Bldg
All American Selections
Patti Nagai
Horticulture Educator
New Trees & Shrubs
Barb Larson
Horticulture Educator

March 27
Kenosha County Center
Project Fair

Therapeutic Horticulture Workshop: The Science Behind Horticulture Therapy and How it is Being Used Today Roma Lodge in Racine—January 31st, 2006

Candace Shoemaker, Ph.D.

Dr. Candice Shoemaker, Associate Professor of Horticulture and Horticulture Therapy from Kansas State University will present a detailed view of horticulture therapy in today's world—what research is being done and how the science is being applied.

Dennis Lukaszewski, Horticulture Educator for UW-Extension Milwaukee County will be presenting an applied view of horticulture therapy, allowing each participant to "get their hands dirty" with a multitude of therapeutic activities.

This program is being offered to educators , MG volunteers , and allied professionals and those interested in learning more about therapeutic horticulture and its many uses in community programs. There is no cost to active participants thanks to the Urban Horticulture Team and a Kohl USDA grant. Pre-registration will be required so materials, lunch and other refreshments can be prepared. Brochures with registration cards will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions please call Patti Nagai's UW-Extension office at (262) 886-8460.

Viburnum Borer Study

Viburnum borer larvae

The following is a summary by Paul Hartman, Horticulture Agent for Brown County UW-Extension of a viburnum borer study that was conduct in that county.

"David Parsons, investigator for Brown County UW-Extension, did a great job over the last three years on his viburnum borer research. In 2002 he planted viburnums in a random test plot to find out (1) if viburnum borers could be deterred by using chemicals at the base; (2) if viburnum borers had preferences in the type of viburnum they liked; and (3) if protection at the base of plants would be helpful.

The viburnums used included:

Viburnum trilobum; Hahs; Alfredo; Wentworth

Viburnum sargentii Onodonaga

Viburnum opulus; Compactum; Roseum

Viburnum lentago (Nannyberry)

Viburnum x. rhytidophylloides Alleghany; Emerald

Viburnum lantana Mohican

Viburnum dentatum; Autumn Jazz

Viburnum Carlesii

All plants were grown for three years. They were dug up and dissected on Sept. 23, 2005. Dissections included looking for larvae in the stems and roots using a knife and other tools. Plants that were damaged by viburnum borer were in the areas where Permethrin was not used. They included V. trilobum (75% of plants damaged; 6 of 8), V. lantana (50% of plants damaged; 1 of 2), V. dentatum 25% of plants damaged; 1 of 4), and V. opulus (50% of plants damaged; 1 of 2).

No viburnums were damaged that were treated with Permethrin. Permethrin was sprayed every other week during the period the males were flying. Plants that were protected at the base with tape and other materials suffered from the difficulty of keeping the protectors on with the constant growth of plants. Some protectors also girdled the plants. Of the 10 plants that were protected with physical protection, four plants had viburnum borer and six did not.

Dave also found viburnum borers in plants dying in yard and park settings. Viburnum borers were also found in potted stock in nurseries. From this data it looks like viburnum borers have preferences for types of viburnums, but if they only had one type to attack, they would get into virtually any viburnum.

More investigation could be done on preferences as well as how well different viburnums withstand the attacks of viburnum borer. More investigation could also be done with number of applications of Permethrin necessary to get control."

For a copy of the research report and pictures, send an email request to BLONDIN_LL@CO.BROWN.WI.US or send a check for $2.00 (payable to Brown County Treasurer) to: Viburnum Report, UW-Extension, 1150 Bellevue St., Green Bay, WI 54302.

Racine/Kenosha Master Gardener
Chicago Flower Show Bus Tour

As I sit at my computer just two days before Thanksgiving, what does my mind wander too? Turkey and dressing? Christmas shopping? A crystalline first-snowfall? Hardly! I am, after all, a card-carrying Master Gardener. I skip all these immediate delights and focus on heady scents carried on warm, moist air, gardens immersed in exotic blooms, booths crammed with seeds, orchids, garden tools and delicious food specialties. It's almost too much to contemplate. Of course, my effulgent fantasy centers on the 2006 Chicago Flower Show, and the luscious must be preceded by the mundane. And so, preparations for that most eagerly-awaited event begins.

We will head south to Nary Pier on Monday, March 13, 2006.

Prices for the show and the bus have escalated rather sharply this year so, unfortunately, our costs will rise also, although I have tried to keep the increase minimal: Certified Master Gardeners, interns from recent classes and UW Extension staff—$28.00; Guests, non-certified MGs (and everybody else) - $33.00.

Please sign up soon. Oh, and, just for a minute stop and smell that wonderful fragrance that I swear is already drifting up from south of the border.

MG Viv Stetler

Monday, March 13, 2006

Bus will leave promptly from:

Racine—Ives Grove parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

Kenosha—Brat Stop Restaurant at 8:20 a.m.

Chicago—Navy Pier at 3:00 p.m.

$28 Certified Master Gardeners

$33 Non-certified Master Gardeners and guests

To make a reservation send a check made out to Racine/Kenosha Master Gardeners

c/o Vivian Stetler

3315 Ruby Avenue, Racine, WI 53402.

Deadline for reservations is February 13th.

Non-refundable after March 6th

If you have any questions call Vivian at (262) 681-9197

U.S. still using banned pesticide
Submitted by MG Rose Woodruff

The following information is extracted from an Associated Press article that ran in the Journal Times, Monday, November 28, 2005. I wanted to share it with everyone because I believe it is important to think about our pesticide use on a local, national and global level especially when the pesticide is banned and known to be detrimental to our environment.

"Cheri Alderman, a teacher whose classroom borders a farm, fears her students could inhale a dangerous whiff of the fumigant as it drifts from the adjacent strawberry field...The concerns stretch globally.

Other nations watch as the United States keeps permitting wide use of methyl bromide for tomatoes, strawberries, peppers, Christmas trees and other crops, even though the U.S. signed an international treaty banning all but the most critical uses by 2005.

The chemical depletes the earth's protective ozone layer and can harm the human neurological system, an increasing concern as people settle further into what was once just farm country.

The Bush administration, at the urging of agriculture and manufacturing interests, is making plans to ensure that methyl bromide remains available at least through 2008 by seeking and winning treaty exemptions.

A provision allows for exemptions to prevent "market disruption." The U.S. has used it to persuade treaty signers to allow U.S. farmers to continue using the chemical. This is not what the treaty envisioned, said David Doniger; senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Odorless and colorless, methyl bromide is a gas that usually is injected by tractor into soil before planting, then covered with plastic sheeting to slow its release into the air. It wipes out plant parasites, disease and weeds.

Workers who inhale enough of the chemical can suffer convulsions, coma and neuromuscular and cognitive problems. In rare cases, they can die. Less is known about the long-term effects of low levels of contact.

"When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect"

-Aldo Leopold

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, placed to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike."

- John Muir

Winter Plant Health Advisor Update
By Tiana Wood, Horticulture Resource Coordinator

Here is the winter schedule of the Plant Health Advisor Classes. The classes will be focusing on one main topic for a majority of the time and diagnostic updates as I receive them. The meetings will be held only once per month in either Racine or Kenosha county. The meetings will be 2 hours long and will still count as education hours for the Master Gardener program. All the classes have a required minimum of 8 people or we will have to cancel. Please contact Tiana in advance if you plan on attending.

tiana.wood@ces.uwex.edu

(262) 886-8467 Racine

(262) 857-1942 Kenosha

January 10th, Tues., 1-3 pm

Kenosha County Bldg. (Rm A)

Conifer ID with Barb Larson

February 9th, Thurs, 12-2 pm

Racine County Bldg. (Conf A)

What's in a Name?

The meaning of plant names with Patti Nagai

Tiana's schedule

Mon—alternate counties

Tues & Thurs—Racine Co.

Wed & Fri—Kenosha Co.

Why WIMGA by MG Mike Iselin

WHY BELONG TO WIMGA? (or *why* is it important to support WIMGA through our dues?)

As most of you know, $5 of our $12 annual dues goes to WIMGA (Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association). What you may not know is that the vast majority of the $5 goes toward publication and dissemination of the State MG newsletter. The estimated publication cost for 2005 was $9,000 while the total dues collected were about $9,500. Comparable somewhat higher figures are projected for 2006. Starting in 2006 the WIMGA newsletter will be published 6 times a year versus the current 4 times a year. Where then does WIMGA get its money? The answer is that most of it comes from the annual state MG conference. When RKMGA hosted the annual conference in 2004 for example, over $12,500 of the profit went to WIMGA.

WIMGA was formed in 1992 by MG organizations from around the State and is the collective voice for all of the state organizations who belong to WIMGA. WIMGA works closely with the UW-Extension Program Office (headed by Dr. Susan Mahr), and UW-Extension Horticulture specialists and agents from throughout the State to recommend policy and procedure for the State MG programs.

Some of the functions of WIMGA are to:

- Act as a voice for ideas and issues throughout the State, representing all of the association members. This includes communication and interaction with UW-Extension , the national Master Gardener program, and State government.
- Assist in formation of new Master Gardener organizations by defining common organizational methodology and structure for those groups.
- Do long range planning (i.e. set goals and strategies)
- Help strengthen and improve MG training through representation on the UW-Extension MG Advisory committee and close coordination with the State MG Coordinator (Dr. Susan Mahr).
- Help define Master Gardener duties and responsibilities
- Support and provide leadership to local organizations.
- Sponsor the Annual State Conference and the Tri-State Conference.
- Give out educational grants to State MG organizations.
- Make contributions to further our horticulture goals.

Some specific items of expenditure by WIMGA for 2005 were:

- Educational grants—$2,000
- National Junior Horticultural Association—$500
- Wisconsin Gardener Television —$4,000
- WI MG Foundation — $2,500
- Wisconsin Public Radio's Garden Talk — $1,000

In summary, WIMGA does many things for us in assisting RKMGA in our "mission to educate, beautify and preserve the community through trained horticulture volunteers."

Respectfully submitted,
Michael R. Iselin
RKMGA Local Representative
& District Director

Racine Dominican Sisters' Eco-Justice Center

If you are looking to discover something new, you might want to visit the Racine Dominican Sisters' Eco-Justice Center located at 7133 Michna Road in Racine between 6 Mi. and 7 Mi. Roads, south of Cliffside County Park.

There you will meet Sister Janet Weyker who will welcome you with enthusiasm and vision. She will happily tell you all about the great volunteer efforts that are being made on the 15-acre site, the fascinating history of the property, and their future plans.

Founded in 2004, the Racine Dominican Eco-Justice Center is dedicated to environmental education and care of Earth in a context of community, contemplation, creativity and cultivation.

Protecting the land, as well as the plant and animal species that live on the property, is vital to their mission. So too, is preserving the farm buildings which date from the 1870's onward.

The Eco-Justice Center is a sponsored ministry of the Racine Dominican Sisters. It is a public witness of the congregation's commitment to care for Earth and reverence all creation.

It offers visitors and volunteers the opportunity to experience their connection to the land. Whether walking in the woods, observing the many species of wild birds, noticing the diversity of vegetation, admiring the alpacas, or collecting colorful eggs from the Auracana chickens, one can find enrichment and give thanks for the bounty of the Earth.

Persons wishing to volunteer can arrange to share their time and talent by calling (262) 681-8527.

Sister Janet Weyker standing next to the tree dedicated to the late Dennis Kornwolf. Mr. Kornwolf donated the property to the Dominican Sisters.

One of the picturesque buildings accented by a fall flowering of Cosmos.

Jan 27, 2006 (12:00 noon)
2005-Fruit Production Update: The Year In-Review
Brown Bag Program
(contact your local UW County Extension Office for access)
Dick Weidman, Superintendent Peninsular Agricultural Research Station will share his observations on the performance of various fruit crops during the 2005 growing season. He will also share the observed effects and impacts of the open-winter of 2004/2005 on certain fruit cultivars. The Peninsular ARS has been testing and evaluating cultivars for Wisconsin for years. Join us for an update on fruit crop performance.

Feb 24, 2006 (12:00 noon)
Biological Control of Garlic Mustard
Brown Bag Program (contact your local UW County Extension Office for access)
Garlic Mustard is a rapidly spreading woodland weed which is displacing native woodland herbaceous perennials. As it dominates the forest floor and it can displace most native herbaceous species within ten years. This plant is a major threat to the survival of Wisconsin's woodland herbaceous flora and the wildlife that depend on it. Until now, control methods included physical, mechanical, and chemical. New biological control effort are being researched and demonstrated. Join Brock Woods, DNR/UW-Extension Biocontrol Coordinator for an update on evolving biological control methods.

March 31, 2006 (12:00 noon)
Phenology: A Component to Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
Brown Bag Program
(contact your local UW County Extension Office for access)
Join Karen Delahaut, Cathy Mann and others for a discussion on phenology. Phenology is a branch of science that studies the relationships between periodic biological events—usually the life cycles of plants and animals—and seasonal environmental changes. Phenology, when applied, can be very useful as part of an integrated pest management (IPM) program because it helps to properly time controls to target the most susceptible life stage of the pest. 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.

You must let the Horticulture Educators in your community know that you plan on attending so they can make technological arrangements.

Kenosha—Barb Larson

(262) 857-1945

Racine—Patti Nagai

(262) 886-8460

Major Accomplishments/Projects for RKMGA By MG Kate Johnson

1. The Garden of Eatin' is a certified MG project for approximately 25 volunteers and includes 34 raised beds and four ground beds containing a wide variety of vegetables. All food raised in the garden is done so organically and is donated to the Racine County Food Bank for distribution to area food pantries and shelters.

2. The Shoop Park Gardens include terrace, perennial and annual gardens at a public golf course owned by the City of Racine. These easy to care for, beautiful gardens are planted and maintained by 8 MG volunteers.

3. The Community Library in Salem serves as a rural garden with several raised beds and gardens around the building. 11 volunteers care for these gardens, which have earned certification as a National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat.

4. The Racine and Kenosha County Plant Health Advisors is a group of more than 40 MG volunteers that conduct numerous diagnostic outreach events at area farmers markets, County fairs, Garden Centers and gardens. This group of volunteers has helped area homeowners by answering their plant, garden and pest questions backed by UW research based information.

5. Approximately 30 MG volunteers have served the youth in the Racine Unified School District through a wide variety of programs, including Youth Education, the Gifford Summer School Program, the Unified School District Science Fair and through classroom presentations.

6. Four MG's with the help of volunteers are responsible for maintaining the grounds of the Kemper Center in Kenosha. Responsibilities for this group include the planting and maintenance of annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees and other plants.

7. The Harvest of Hope located at the Burlington Garden Center is a collection of raised vegetable beds that is cared for by 9 MG volunteers. Approximately 210 pounds of vegetables were grown and distributed through Love, Inc.

8. The Southern Oaks School for Girls in Union Grove is the site of a garden project aimed at teaching troubled young women about gardening. This program, coordinated by 2 MG volunteers, is also part of the Girl Scouts.

9. The Graham Public Library in Union Grove received a renovated landscape courtesy of 12 members from the MG program.

10. The Racine/Kenosha MG Purple Loosestrife Eradication Project was facilitated by approximately 9 MG's and is designed to inform, educate and work toward the control of Purple Loosestrife through manual and biological means.

11. The Kenosha County Courthouse continues to benefit from the dedication of the MG program. MG volunteers are responsible for planting and maintaining surrounding gardens.

12. In 2005 the Sturtevant Beautification Committee was responsible for the continued maintenance and publication of the South Park gardens, the preparation of a flower bed in front of the Fire and Safety Building and planting several perennial beds along Durand Avenue.

13. The Kenosha County Fair was once again the site for a demonstration plot for annuals and vegetables. It was visible to 100,000 people during the week of the fair and thousands of other visitors during other summer events. All plants and materials were donated and Master Gardeners were on hand during the fair to answer questions and educate the public.

"Some startling Facts: By the 1990s the radius around the home where children were allowed to roam on their own had shrunk to a ninth of what it had been in 1970. Today, average eight-year-olds are better able to identify cartoon characters than native species, such as beetles and oak trees, in their own community. The rate at which doctors prescribe anti-depressants to children has doubled in the last five years, and recent studies show that too much computer use spells trouble for the developing mind.

Nature-deficit disorder is not a medical condition; it is a description of the human costs of alienation from nature. This alienation damages children and shapes adults, families, and communities. There are solutions, though, and they're right in our own backyards. "

— Richard Lou

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

Submitted by

MG Arlyn Olson

Conifers by Barb Larson, Horticulture Educator

If you look out the window in winter the showiest plant are conifers. These are the plants commonly called evergreens. The name conifer comes from Latin for cone bearing. Think of spruces and pines. But some conifers (junipers and yews) produce berry-like fruits. A better identifier of conifers is foliage. The leaves of conifers are needle-like (spruce, pine, yew) or scale-like (junipers and arborvitae). Most conifers in the northern Midwest are evergreen. But larch or tamarack, dawn redwood, and bald cypress loose their needles every fall and produce new ones in spring.

Conifers can be much more than a big green gumdrop or a gigantic blue cone. They come in a wide variety of shapes, colors, and sizes. Depending on the cultivar, conifers may be used as ground covers, structural elements in a flower or shrub bed, living sculpture, background tree, hedge, or windbreak.

Have you ever planted a cute little evergreen tree that in five to ten years has become a maintenance nightmare because it grew into the eves or over the sidewalk? That can be avoided by knowing the conifer size categories and, therefore, the plant's growth rate. With a little research you can select plants that will not overgrow their space in your yard.

The American Conifer Society recognizes four size categories based on yearly growth. Large conifers will grow in excess of 12 inches (up, out, or both) per year. For example, a healthy white pine will put on 12 to 18 inches of growth per year. Intermediate conifers (i.e. Colorado blue spruce) grow 6 to 12 inches per year. Dwarf conifers add 1 to 6 inches of growth every year. Miniature conifers grow less than 1 inch per year. Miniature conifers are great for railway, trough, and rock gardens. Be aware that the slower growing conifers tend to be higher priced because they require more years in the nursery to reach saleable size.

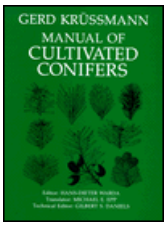
Not only is there a right sized conifer for every garden, there is a shape for every situation. Eight forms are recognized: globose or round, pendulous or weeping, columnar, conical, prostate or ground hugging, spreading, irregular, and culturally pruned or trained. I prefer the irregular and pendulous shaped conifers because they are living art in my garden. But the other forms are very useful too.

Garden designers know that foliage color is more significant than flowers as a landscape element. Conifers contribute color year round. In addition to all shades of green, conifers commonly are available in various hues of blue and yellow. Some cultivars have seasonal variation in color. For example, some junipers are purplish brown in winter and green in summer. In some conifers the underside of needles is lighter giving plants a two-toned appearance. Dragon's Eye Pine (Pinus densiflora 'Oculus-draconis') has variegated neeles. Some conifers, like Serbian Spruce, have showy flowers.

If you are thinking about adding conifers to your yard, check out the American Conifer Society website at www.conifersociety.org. It will give you a lot of information on hundreds of cultivars including photos.

Top 5 Conifer Books

The following are the top five books that the American Conifer Society's members identify as their top 5 books for conifer information.

1. 

Manual of Cultivated Conifers, Gerd Krussmann, Timber Press, ISBN 0-88192-007-X, 1985. Comment: It is the most comprehensive conifer book currently in print.

2. 

Conifers: The Illustrated Encyclopedia (Vols. 1 & 2), van Gelderen and van Hoey Smith, Timber Press, ISBN 0-88192-354-0, 1996. Comment:: Large book with over 2,300 color photos and more than a hundred line drawings.

3. No picture
The World Checklist of Conifers, Humphrey Welch and Gordon Haddow, Landsman's Bookshop Ltd., ISBN 0-900513-09-8, 1993. Comment: A very useful checklist and still the best when searching out correct nomenclature.

4. 
Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, Michael Dirr, Stipes Publishing LLC, ISBN 0-87563-800-7, 1998. Comment: The text is easy to read with plants listed by their botanical names and the most widely accepted common names.

5. 
A Garden of Conifers, Robert A. Obrizok; Capability's Books; ISBN 0-913643-08-4, 1999. Comment: A good book for beginners.