

San Diego, California December 5th

For those of us who are tired of the snow!
These are some pictures of my recent trip to California.



"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."
- *Barbara Winkler*

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Bagged Spinach and Lettuce

As a gardener, you feel good about the lettuce, spinach, and other greens you grow in your garden. But what about supermarket produce?

Recent deadly E. coli outbreaks in bagged supermarket spinach heightened consumer concerns. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration reports that since 1995, fresh lettuce and spinach have been associated with 20 E. coli outbreaks.

Luckily for consumers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service is working on better, safer, more sanitary methods for washing fresh-cut greens. The greens are thoroughly washed, then run through ultrasound, which further kills bacteria.

Until green cleaning methods enter the market, here's what to do if you're concerned about the produce you buy at the store:

Buy Local When you know where your food is coming from and who's growing it, it's more likely to be handled carefully. Cook it. The heat of the cooking process will kill harmful bacteria. Wash it one more time. The recall on certain types of raw spinach is over, but it's a good idea to wash greens at home, even if the package says they've been pre-washed.. ...

For more information on buying, cleaning, and storing produce safely, check out these great tips from Ohio State University Extension.

A Note From George

I would like to thank all the volunteers that did fair pots this year, also all the volunteers that worked in the barnyard adventure.

A special thanks to Pesche's Greenhouse, Milangers Greenhouse, Jurgs Greenhouse and Sheldon Landscape for the excellent job on the containers of plants and flowers for the butterfly house. Thanks also to Bill Grunow for his work in getting these to the fair.

Thanks Again- George Mroch
Barn Yard Adventure
Walworth County Fair

Don't Be A Couch Potato! Build a Birdhouse!

While this birdhouse is as simple as it gets, it has a lot going for it. It can be made very quickly...uses minimal materials and tools...and boasts a sleek look that will make any budding woodworker proud to say, "I built it all by myself!".

Here's What You'll Need

One 5-foot 1- x 6-inch No. 2 pine board, 1 5/8-inch galvanized deck screws, 2-inch galvanized finishing nails
Recommended Tools Power drill Appropriate- size spade bit Hand saw

Let's Saw That Board!

Using the full width of the 1-inch x 6-inch board, cut out the pieces. Drill a centered entrance hole about 2-1/2 inches from the top of the front piece. For eastern and western bluebirds, the hole should be 1-1/2 inches (for areas with mountain bluebirds, use a 1-9/16-inch hole). Chickadees and tufted titmice prefer entrances of 1-1/8 and 1-1/4 inches, respectively. Attach the front to the sides with 1-5/8-inch deck screws. Pre-drill the holes in the front piece to prevent the wood from splitting. After nesting season when it's time to clean out the birdhouse, remove these screws for easy access. Attach the back to the sides with 2-inch finishing nails. Pre-drill the holes'; making sure each one is straight. Cut about 1/2 inch off each corner of the floor for drainage. Recess the floor 1/4 inch up from the bottom of the house, and then attach it with 2-inch finishing nails from the sides and back. Do not nail the floor from the front or you won't be able to open it for cleaning. Attach the roof to the sides with 1-5/8-inch deck screws.

You're finished! Your board is a birdhouse. Nice job!



This lucky frog lives on Coronado Island.

An Empress, a Rival, And Four Studs

In 1799, while Napoleon was off campaigning in Egypt, Empress Josephine Bonaparte purchased 'Malmaison', a château on 650 acres located 40 miles outside of Paris. Although the empress claimed she wanted to live there (rather than with her husband in his Parisian residence), her secret scheme was to have the first garden devoted to a single genus - Rosa. Josephine was passionate over roses, and she vowed that her roseraie was to house the best varieties of roses from every part of the world. To make her dream garden a reality, and because money was no object, the empress retained the services of three important men to further her cause.

First, Louis Berthault was commissioned to landscape the property. His design not only allowed for a commodious sunny location for the cultivation of roses, but also for a lake fed by cascading streams, a fine collection of trees, and a classic 'Temple d' Amour' built on a rocky knoll with a commanding view.

Next, Josephine hired Claude Antoine Thory, the most famous botanist then in France, to assemble her massive collection of roses - several plants each of 167 Gallicas 27 Centifolias, 9 Damasks, 8 Albas, and more than 20 species roses.

Finally, the empress appointed Pierre Joseph Redoute, the most famous botanical artist ever, to immortalize her roses in paintings. With a text by Thory, Redoute published 117 colored drawings of Josephine's collection in Les Roses.

Living just close enough nearby for gossip to spread with annoying regularity was Josephine's arch rival, the Comtesse de Bougainville, who also vowed to amass rare plants, particularly roses. The two ladies were determined to outdo each other, especially when they heard about the availability of four virile stud roses from China.

Two of these, 'Slater's Crimson China' and 'Parsons' Pink China', had reached Europe in 1792. Although talk of their supposed virility had preceded them, early hybridizing efforts were disappointing. We now know, of course, that this was because these roses had simply been crossed with existing European varieties, and the hybrids that resulted were nothing spectacular. Then it occurred to someone (probably Thory), to recross these unexceptional hybrids with the original Chinese varieties, and, at last, the remontant mystery unfolded.

In 1809, word reached France that a new stud rose had been discovered in the Orient. 'Hume's Blush China' was reputed to be of such promise that Empress Josephine and Comtesse de Bougainville resolved to get it to France posthaste, whether or not the Napoleonic Wars were also raging. Josephine, of course, held the upper hand, and she exercised her waning influence (Napoleon divorced her the following year, apparently because of her inability to produce an heir, though some say because her devotion to roses outweighed that to him) to gain diplomatic immunity for the ship delivering 'Hume's Blush China' to Malmaison.

Ten years later, the fourth Chinese stud rose arrived. Unfortunately, Josephine was dead, never to see the fruits of her labors or to revel in the lovely rose named after her. 'Empress Josephine', or the magnificent variety that bears the name of her chateau, 'Souvenir de la Malmaison'. Empress Josephine Bonaparte remains, however, the greatest benefactress of roses, ever.

Before the four studs were returned to pasture, they sired five new families of roses: Chinas, Portlands, Bourbons, Hybrid Perpetuals, and Teas.

Blue Flag Iris Filters Pesticides: It might be worth putting in a few of these ...

Our native blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*) is a beautiful perennial that grows well on lakeshores, swamps, wet meadows and along stream beds. Now it appears this iris can be effective in controlling pollution as well. Researchers at the USDA and University of Massachusetts grew 10 different water-loving plants in a greenhouse setting. Over a three-month period, they measured how much of four common pesticides were absorbed by each. The top performers were blue flag iris, eastern gamma grass, and big blue stem. Blue flag iris also had the added benefit of being an attractive ornamental. If you are concerned about pesticides running into your property from your neighbor's yard, local farm, or golf course, consider planting a vegetative filter strip of this iris to help keep your groundwater clean.

For more information on this research, go to: [Journal of Environmental Quality](#).



A Note from Our Program Director:

If anyone has an idea for March and April, please let JoAnn and I in on it. Does anyone have a spring bulb garden they would like to share?

Thanks! Barb

Weed Killers; Have you gone 'Organic' ?

Organic gardeners often struggle to control annual weeds in their gardens.

While there are many organic products on the market touted as helpful in controlling weeds, there has been little research testing them against each other. Researchers at the Organic Farming Research Foundation and Purdue University tested four different organic weed control sprays, plus flaming with a hand-held flamer, on seedbeds to be planted in greens. Weeding greens and lettuce beds can be very time consuming, especially for organic growers, so finding an effective alternative to reduce weeds will save growers time and money. Researchers tested Burnout II (contains acetic acid), Matran 5 (contains clove and other essential oils), 10% vinegar solution, 13% vinegar solution, and an LP gas hand-held flamer. They were particularly focused on controlling chickweed, purslane, galinsoga, and grasses. Seedbeds were tilled and allowed to sit for 2 weeks so the weeds could germinate. Three applications of each treatment were made on the 3' by 5' test beds in May, June, and August. It turns out organic sprays weren't the best solution. Although Burnout II reduced the weeding time the most overall, the hand-held flamer was more convenient to use and more effective in controlling tougher weeds, such as grasses and purslane. Matran 5 was the next most effective weed killer. All treatments worked best if the weeds were treated when less than 4 inches tall.

For more information on this research, go to: [Organic Farming Research Foundation](#)



Pictures from Master Gardeners November Pot Luck and Seed Exchange

Thanks Barb!



My First Year of Beekeeping

By Annette

I was so excited about getting a beehive last spring I couldn't stand it! I read 2 books on beekeeping and watched numerous videos on UTUBE. I thought I had it down.

The big day came when I picked up my bees up at Dadant in Watertown. There were hundreds of packages of bees. These bees attracted thousands of local bees flying around wondering where all these foreigners were coming from. At least a dozen beekeepers with a significant amount more experience than I had were milling around waiting to pick up their bees.

My hive was already set up. I picked up my 3 pound package containing around 3000 bees and a queen. When I got home I put on my bee suit and I carefully shook the cage so the bees would fall to the bottom and poured them into the hive. That actually went well.

I checked on the bees all summer, feeding them a sugar/water combination in case they couldn't find enough nectar. They are fascinating! I learned so much.

I met a guy at the Whitewater's Farmers Market named Tony who has been a beekeeper for decades. I stopped by there most Saturday's gleaning what I could from him.

The day came when I was ready to harvest my honey. I was so excited. It looked like a cinch! What the heck? I had watched videos on UTUBE and those guys didn't even wear bee suits and they never got stung. Well, I wasn't going suit less so I donned on my suit, grabbed my smoker and headed out

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"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour."

John Boswell



WCMGV December Meeting

Master Gardeners!

Always feel free to send me pictures, ideas, articles to include in this newsletter! I would be happy to add them. You must be getting tired of the stuff I make up!!! ☺

Send to mayfields22@yahoo.com

Or call me at (262)495-8899

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out to my beehive. No problem... Well I started to take my supers (where the honey is stored) off and the trouble began. According to the books and UTUBE you only needed to use a couple of puffs of smoke to calm the bees. Ummm right. The bees started going crazy and swarmed my face. Of course I had my suit on but unfortunately I didn't have my veil zipped, only Velcro-ed. At least a dozen bees crawled under my veil and started stinging my face.

There were about 30,000 bees swarming around me so there was nothing I could do but run! I ran down to the water pump in front of the chicken coop, ripped my veil off and stuck my head under the water pump drowning the stinging bees. I ended up with a dozen or so stings on my face and underneath my hair! It was awful! My eye swelled up and was red.

I was so disheartened. I called another beekeeper who I found on the web. He is the head of the Midwest Beekeepers Association and his name is Bill. I told him what happened and he graciously offered to help me.

A couple of days later, Bill and I harvested 30 pounds of honey without getting stung once. I found that you need to smoke the dickens out of the bees before taking the honey out.

Now we are enjoying 30 pounds of beautiful light colored honey. It is so delicious and satisfying.

I am so happy that I decided to get a beehive. Next year I am expanding and getting another hive.

It will take years for me to become as knowledgeable as some of the beekeepers I know but I have found that they are always happy to help if you just ask.

Fun Things to Do

January

Rotary Gardens Visitor Center open 8:30am - 4:30pm weekdays; 10:00am - 4:30pm weekends

Dane County UW-Extension -2009 Winter Seminar Series

Jan 8th

8:45-10:15 AM Organic Lawn Care: Doug Soldat, of the UW Soils Department, will discuss organic lawn care methods and products.

10:30 AM-12:00 PM: Ash Yellows and Ash Decline Glen Stanosz, forest pathologist, will talk about these ash diseases that may be mistaken for EAB damage or may occur with it.

Jan 15

8:45-10:15 AM Garden Trends: Ed Lyon, director of the Allen Centennial Gardens, will update us on the latest garden trends to keep us ahead of the curve.

10:30 AM-12:00 PM EAB Update: Jennifer Statz of DATCP will give a presentation on the latest EAB finds, facts and DATCP plans for dealing with pests

Jan 22

8:45-10:15 AM Top 10 Insects of 2008: Phil Pellitteri, entomologist and director of the Insect Diagnostic Lab on campus, will comment on the top 10 pestiest pests of 2008.

10:30 AM-12:00 PM Please Don't Feed the Trees: Tree Fertilizers Laura Jull, woody ornamental specialist, will be speaking on the use of tree fertilizers in urban settings.

Jan 29

8:45-10:15 AM How Herbicides Work in Practical Terms: Dr. Jed Coloquhoun will talk about weed control strategies in landscape situations and update us on new products.

10:30 AM -12:00 PM EAB Insecticides and Tree-age: Chris Williamson, turf and entomology specialist will give a report on insecticides registered for EAB, and their use.

Jan 15, **Horticulture IS Therapy** with Mike Maddox, Rock Co. UW-Extension Horticulture Educator

February

Feb12 Water quality and the landscape with Suzanne Wade, Rock River Basin UW-Extension Educator

Feb 14 Be Your Own Plant Doctor Boerner Botanical Garden

Feb 28 Gardening By Natures Clues Darlene Lochbihler Wisconsin Master Gardener 8:30 - 10:00am

For more information: www.rotarygardens.org,

www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/walworth/flp/mastergardeners.html

www.boernerbotanicalgardens.org

www.http://kenosha.uwex.edu

WALWORTH COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

2009 CALENDAR

<p><u>JANUARY</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Jan 14 6:30 Business and Awards</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u></p>	<p><u>FEBRUARY</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Feb 11 6:30</p>	<p><u>MARCH</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Mar 11 6:30 PM Chrissy Register Victory Gardens for today's gardener.</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u></p>
<p><u>APRIL</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Apr 8 6:30 PM</p>	<p><u>MAY</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting May 13 6:30 Larry Plapp at Badger High School</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u></p>	<p><u>JUNE</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Jun 10 6:30 Rockford Japanese Gardens</p>
<p><u>JULY</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Jul 8 6:30 Garden Walk in Whitewater with Nancy Dynkowski and friends</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u></p>	<p><u>AUGUST</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Aug 12 6:30</p>	<p><u>SEPTEMBER</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Sep 9 6:30 PM</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u></p>
<p><u>OCTOBER</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Oct 14 6:30 PM</p>	<p><u>NOVEMBER</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Nov 11 6:30 PM <u>Newsletter</u></p>	<p><u>NOVEMBER</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Nov 11 6:30 PM</p>
		<p><u>DECEMBER</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Dec 9 6:30 PM</p>
		<p><u>DECEMBER</u></p> <p>Membership Meeting Dec 9 6:30 PM</p>

2009 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Class Schedule
Classes are from 5:30pm to 8:30pm
at Lakeland School W3905 County Road NN Elkhorn, WI 53121

Reminder: Each class attended will have a \$2.00 audit fee and is eligible for 3 hours of continuing education

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
January 8 th	Introduction to MGV Program Botany part-1
January 15 th	Botany cont.
January 29 th	IPM & Pesticide Safety
February 12 th	Houseplants
February 26 th	Fruits
March 12 th	Vegetables
March 19 th	Entomology
April 2 nd	Plant Pathology
April 16 th	Compost & Soils
April 30 th	Herbaceous Plants & Lawn Care
May 14 th	Woody Ornamentals & Tree Identification
May 28 th	Weed Identification, Invasive Species
June 11 th	Plant Propagation
	Final Exam Review
	Evaluations