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**UW**  
**Extension**  
Cooperative Extension  
Eau Claire County

**January  
2014**

### Inside this issue:

Landscape Pesticide Registration	2
Sage, Salvia Officinalis	3
Gardening Tips	6
Upcoming Events	8

# Green Pages



A newsletter for people interested in horticulture and  
natural resources in Western Wisconsin

## FROM THE DESK OF THE HORTICULTURE EDUCATOR



The Ready, Set, Grow! Winter Garden Seminar schedule is out. The brochure can be found at our [website](#) or call us and we'll send you a paper copy (839-4712).

Click [HERE](#) to register on-line!

### Keynote Speaker - Bill Hogseth "Putting the Pieces Together: Preserving the Chippewa Valley Ecosystem"

#### Breakout sessions include:

- ★ Bill Hogseth: "What We Can Do As Gardeners To Preserve Our Local Environment"
- ★ Judi Robison & Mary Zellmer: "Maximum Gardening In A Minimum Space"
- ★ Jim Schwiebert: "Wild Edibles"
- ★ Faye Ryszkiewicz: "New Invasive Species List"
- ★ Jerry Clark: "Growing Strawberries and Blueberries In Your Garden"
- ★ Steve Horan: "Landscaping With Ornamental Grasses In Your Garden"
- ★ Jerry Clark: "Effects Of The Recent Drought On Our Gardens"
- ★ Erin LaFaive: "Growing Herbs: Garden To Table"
- ★ Patty Marten: "The New Trends In 2014 In Your Garden"

*Erin LaFaive*

# Pesticide Notification Sign-up 2014

It's time to sign up for the Landscape Pesticide Registry for the 2014 growing season. You can request that companies notify you when they are going to apply pesticides to lawns, trees and shrubs on the block where you live, or on blocks immediately adjacent to yours.

Participation in the registry is free. ***If you are new to the registry***, signing up is a two-step process:

- You will register, providing your email address, street address and telephone number, and set up a password.
- Enter the addresses for which you want notification. Unless you complete both steps, businesses will be unable to notify you. The password will provide you access to see what addresses you've entered and edit that information.

***If you have already signed up for the registry***, you will receive an email from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection reminding you to renew their participation. You will not have to re-enter addresses that you entered last year, but you will have to indicate that you want to keep them on your notification list. You may continue adding addresses until Feb. 1, when the registry will be closed to the public so department staff can review it for incorrect and ineligible addresses. It will take effect March 15, when pesticide applicators will be able to search it to find out if any of their clients' addresses have been listed.

The registry applies only to professional landscape applications. Homeowners or landlords who do their own applications are not covered by the notification requirements, nor are applications to the inside or outside of buildings. The registry does not allow for notification of pesticide use in agriculture, or for you to be notified about applications around your workplace or your children's school or day care center.

The registry has been in use since 1993. It first went to an online system in 2011, saving taxpayers about \$35,000 a year in printing and mailing costs. Last year, about 569 people registered and requested notification

of pesticide applications on about 6,450 properties.

Dane County and Milwaukee County have the highest participation levels. In Dane County, about 191 people listed nearly 1,950 properties for notification last year. In Milwaukee County, 98 people registered and listed almost 1,500 properties.



## REGISTER

From Nov. 1 through Feb. 1, you can register online at :

[datcpservices.wisconsin.gov/landreg](http://datcpservices.wisconsin.gov/landreg)

# Sage, *Salvia officinalis* - Susan Mahr, University of Wisconsin - Madison



Sage may be best known as a flavoring for stuffing at Thanksgiving, but there's much more to this aromatic plant. With attractive foliage and interesting flowers, this short lived perennial is a great addition to herb gardens, perennial borders or

containers.

*Salvia officinalis* is an aromatic, rather woody perennial shrub in the mint family (Lamiaceae) native to the shores of the northern Mediterranean. Its common names include culinary sage, common garden sage, or garden sage. The word "sage" has come to mean "wise" or "a wise or learned person." It's scientific name, *Salvia*, means "to be in good health", "to save", or "salvation" while *officinalis* is an old reference to an herb store, pharmacy, or drugstore. Sage is often mentioned as the herb of immortality, domestic virtue, health, and wisdom. Sage was a sacred ceremonial herb of the Romans. It has been cultivated for both culinary and medicinal purposes for many centuries in Europe. It is hardy in zones 4-10.



The species can grow to 2½ feet tall, but many cultivars are much shorter. The opposite leaves vary in color from gray to gray-green, or may be purple or golden. They are pebbly, slightly fuzzy, and up to 5" long. The stems are green at first, but become woody in the second year. It tends to be a short-lived perennial and is often best replaced every few years.

Common sage blooms in early summer. The camphor-scented, bluish-lavender to pink-lavender flowers are borne in whorls on short, upright flower spikes. Each flower

has two lips. The flowers are attractive to bees and butterflies and occasionally to hummingbirds.



Sage's soft-colored foliage and profusion of lovely purple-blue flower spikes blend beautifully into any herb garden. The gray leaves of the common varieties contrast nicely with the green of many other plants, so sage doesn't have to be relegated to the herb or vegetable garden. It mixes well in perennial borders and in cottage gardens. Try planting sage in the border, especially intermixed with pink flowering plants. The smaller varieties can also be grown as container plants to be brought inside for a supply of fresh sage through the cold winter months.



Sage grows best in a sunny location with well-drained soil. It will tolerate drought and poor soil fertility, but will produce better with consistent water. Prune the plant in the spring and a few times through the growing season to encourage young shoots with a strong flavor and to prevent it from becoming leggy and twiggy (and going to flower which isn't desired if using as a culinary herb). Space plants 18 to 24 inches apart and divide every couple of years to rejuvenate the plants.



Sage is easy to start from seed (although most named varieties are not available as seed) and it can also be reproduced by layering, by division, or from stem cuttings. To grow from seed, either plant directly in the ground on the average date of last frost or start indoors 6 to 8 weeks before then. Either way the plant may not flower the first year. Layer established branches in the



# Sage, *Salvia officinalis* – Susan Mahr, University of Wisconsin - Madison

(Continued from page 3)



spring and fall, or divide large plants in the spring. Take softwood stem cuttings in summer and root in a sand-peat mixture.

Sage takes 75 days from planting to first harvest. At least twice during the growing season, cut 6-8" from the top of the plants. Pick the leaves as desired as long as you don't cut back more than half the plant or it will stop producing. Harvest before the plant flowers.

Although fresh sage has a richer and more balanced flavor than dried, it's usually not available during the winter. To preserve fresh sage, chop the leaves, place in an ice cube tray with water, and freeze to use later. To dry sage, tie sprigs in loose bundles and air-dry in a cool place or place branches on wire racks out of direct sunlight. When dry and brittle, remove the leaves from the stems and store in an airtight container. Hang bunches of sage in the kitchen for a nice herbal ambiance. You might even try using sage in an herbal wreath.

Sage has few pests when grown in well-drained soil. Good air circulation will reduce potential problems with foliar diseases. Some possible problems include slugs, spider mites, spittle bugs, root rot and wilt.



There are many different cultivars of sage which differ in leaf size, plant habit and leaf color. The purple or golden varieties make delightful ornamental houseplants. They're smaller plants than the green or gray varieties, but the flavor of

the leaves is just as good. Some of the more commonly offered varieties include:

- ♦ Golden sage 'Aurea' –has chartreuse-yellow leaves enhanced by dark green areas around the veins. Only hardy to zone 6.

- ♦ 'Berggarten' – was discovered growing at the Berggarten Mansion in Germany. It has larger-than-average, gray-blue silvery, round leaves and a bushy habit that stays full down to the base of the stems. It is mildew resistant. Hardy to zone 5.



'Berggarten'

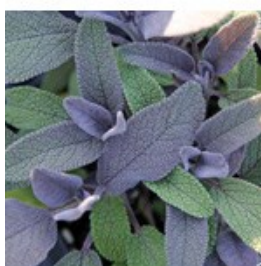
- ♦ 'Icterina' – has golden variegated leaves and is used mainly as an ornamental.



'Icterina'

- ♦ 'Compacta' – has smaller leaves and more compact habit than regular sage, growing only 10 inches high, but with the same sage flavor. It is excellent for small areas, rockeries, and borders. It is propagated by cuttings only; seeds are unavailable.

- ♦ 'Holt's Mammoth' – is similar to the standard variety, but the leaves are larger.



'Purpureoens'

- ♦ Purple sage ('Purpurea' or 'Purpureoens') – has purple leaves that are strongly flavored and grows 18 inches tall. It is also nice as an ornamental to complement yellow blossoms in the garden. Not as winter hardy as common sage (only to zone 6).



'Tricolor'

- ♦ 'Tricolor' – has green leaves edged in white and with rose streaks. It can be grown as a houseplant and is not as hardy as common sage (only to zone 6).

Besides these cultivars, there are many other closely related species of sage that can be used as herbs. Clary sage (*S. sclarea*) is a biennial or perennial with long spikes of white, purple, or blue flowers that can reach four feet high. *S. viridis* is an ornamental annual sometimes sold as clary. It produces pink bracts that resemble flowers and make excellent cut or dried flowers, but it has no herbal use.

# Sage, *Salvia officinalis* - Susan Mahr, University of Wisconsin - Madison

(Continued from page 4)

Pineapple sage (*S. elegans*) is an annual north of Zone 8 with pineapple-scented foliage and spikes of red flowers in late summer and fall. Its leaves can be used for teas and in fruit salads. Other related herbs include blue sage (*S. clevelandii*) and [silver sage](#) (*S. argentea*).

There are a multitude of uses for sage including culinary, medicinal, craft and ornamental. In the U.S. most people are familiar with sage in the stuffing for turkeys at Thanksgiving, but it shouldn't be restricted to this use. In other countries sage is used in a variety of sauces, especially with fatty meats. In Italy, the fresh leaves are lightly fried with liver, and rolled up with ham and veal in saltimbocca. In Germany and Belgium, the leaves are added to eel and other oily fish dishes. And in Middle Eastern countries the leaves are used liberally in salads.



Try using fresh sage with cheese or chicken dishes, or use it as a dry rub on pork chops before grilling. Use the flowers in salads, or make sage vinegar and sage



butter. Dip and fry whole leaves in batter or young leaves in cream, and eat with sugar and orange. Shelley Ryan of the WI Gardener program on WI Public TV offers this recipe for fried sage leaves:

While sage is more commonly thought of as a culinary herb, it also has medicinal and cosmetic uses. Sage tea is purported to have antiseptic qualities good for sore throats, aid in digestion, and may boost insulin action. A poultice of sage leaves mixed with saliva supposedly provides relief from the itching and swelling of insect bites, a strong infusion can be used to darken gray hair, it is frequently mentioned as an antiperspirant, and it has been reported to relieve a plethora of other ills, such as diarrhea, coughs and colds, snake-bite, and for wart removal.

## Additional Information:

[Salvia officinalis](#) – on the Missouri Botanic Garden's Kemper Center for Home Gardening website

[Salvia officinalis](#) – on the Floridata website

[Botanical.com, A Modern Herbal: Sages](#) – more info than you probably want!

## Deep Fried Sage Leaves

½ cup white flour  
salt  
½ cup sparkling mineral water  
1 tbsp vegetable oil  
1 egg white  
15 large sage leaves  
oil for frying



Mix flour with a speck of salt. Add mineral water and oil; blend. Gently stir in one egg white that has been whipped until almost stiff. Dip sage leaves in mixture and fry in hot oil (about 350 degrees) until browned. Watch carefully, as the light batter browns quickly. Remove from the oil, drain on paper towels, and serve warm. This recipe can easily be doubled.



## Gardening Tips

Sharon Morrissey, Consumer Horticulture Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension in Milwaukee Co.

### HOUSEPLANTS, PERENNIALS, AND ANNUALS

- ★ Fresh cut Valentine's bouquets should be placed in warm water with floral preservative after having the stem ends recut. Wash vases with soap and water every time you replace the water. Remove any foliage that is below water level to prevent rot and clogging of stems. Place vase in a cool location (down to 35 degrees) for at least one hour or overnight so that they can rehydrate before bringing into room temperature.



- ★ Sow seeds indoors for impatiens, begonias, petunias, nemesia, dusty miller, and snapdragons.

- ★ Drooping roses can be revived by laying them, completely submerged in warm water and recutting the stem ends under water. Leave them in the water to rehydrate for a half hour before returning them to the vase.



- ★ Indoor foliage plants are still said to be "resting" because light levels are low, day length is short and temperatures are cool. Plants do not use as much water or fertilizer under these conditions so be careful not to over water. Cool, wet soil will cause root rot. Put off transplanting, too, until April when brighter conditions will promote more vigorous growth.



- ★ With two weeks left until Valentine's Day, its time to start forcing those spring flowering bulbs you've been keeping chilled. The little bulbs like crocus, hyacinth, and scilla should have received 8 weeks of chilling whereas tulips and daffodils need 12 - 14. If you chilled your bulbs without potting them up, do so now. Then keep

them at 55 - 60 degrees in a dark place for 2 weeks to allow roots to form. Then bring them out into a warmer, brighter location to start growth and flowering. If rooting and/or sprouting have already begun, simply pot them up, water them and place them in a sunny location. warmer, brighter location to start growth and flowering. If rooting and/or sprouting have already begun, simply pot them up, water them and place them in a sunny location.



- ★ Check stored cannas, dahlias, tuberous begonias, and gladiolus. Pot up ones that have sprouted and grown a couple of inches or find a cooler spot to hold them a little longer. Buy new tubers and roots now to start indoors for planting once the danger of frost has passed.



- ★ You can also delay pruning of spring flowering plants like forsythia, lilac, and crabapple until after bloom if you can't bear to lose flower buds through pruning.

- ★ Remove built-up dust and grime from the leaves of houseplants with a shower. Plants with large leaves can be wiped clean by hand with a cloth or a pair of clean, soft gloves. Use one hand on the upper surface and one below. Water works just fine to clean and shine leaves. Some leaf polish products contain oils which will clog leaf pores.



### VEGETABLES AND HERBS

- ★ Plan this year's vegetable and flower gardens especially now if you intend to start anything from seed. Order seeds early for the newest introductions since supplies are usually limited.

(Continued on page 7)





## Gardening Tips

Sharon Morrissey, Consumer Horticulture Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension in Milwaukee Co.

- ★ Start seeds for the very first vegetable crop now onions. Keep the foliage cutback to about 4" until time to transplant outdoors in April. Use what you clip off in salads to add some zip.
- ★ Prepare for starting seeds indoors by gathering supplies and equipment. The three most crucial elements for successful seed starting are using sterile media, arranging for supplemental light and providing bottom heat of about 70 degrees. Be sure fluorescent fixtures and bulbs are compatible since the newer low-wattage tubes will overheat in old fixtures. Lights should be adjustable so they may be moved to keep them within 4 - 6 inches of the tops of the seedlings as they grow.



### TREES AND SHRUBS

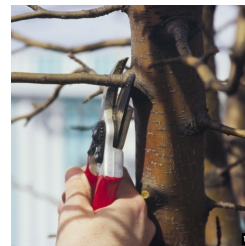
- ★ On nice days, get outdoors to survey your trees and shrubs looking for evidence of feeding of rabbits, mice, and deer. Check snow covered leaf litter and untrimmed grass at the base of young fruit trees and ornamentals. It is not too late to use spray repellents or to install tree guards or chicken wire cages around your plants.
- ★ Being the end of the dormant season, now is the best time to prune most woody landscape plants and fruit trees. You can delay pruning birch, maple, black walnut, and elm since these tend to "bleed" when sap starts to move again due to snow melt and thawing soil. The dripping sap does not harm the trees, however.



### MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

- ★ Keep feeding the birds until spring bloom since they have come to depend upon you for food. Even greater success at attracting

- ★ birds to your property can be assured by providing a fresh source of water at all times. This must be kept free of ice and available until spring thaw. Stake up a discarded Christmas tree near a feeder for protective cover but far enough away that dogs and cats can't hide there to ambush your feathered friends at the feeder.

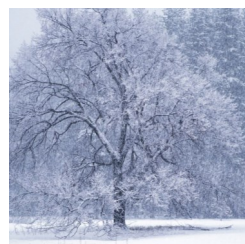


- ★ Plan to get your children into the garden this year. Start with projects indoors like a pan of grass for their Easter baskets or oats for the cat. Start a sweet potato or an avocado pit. If you have supplemental lighting, plant a tub of lettuces and garlic cloves and herbs. Visit your local library to begin researching that backyard pond you have been longing for.



- ★ Start garden woodworking projects like cold frames, trellises, arbors and benches. A makeshift but functional cold frame can be set up using a few bales of straw on which an old wooden storm window can be propped. Slide back the window to vent heat on sunny days being certain to close it again before sundown.

- ★ Snow and ice are still a reality. Use sand or cat litter rather than salt to melt ice along sidewalks and driveways to prevent soil and plant damage. Do not use granular fertilizer either because excessive amounts of it, too, can damage plants. It also pollutes lakes and rivers as it runs off paved surfaces and frozen ground. For this reason never fertilize on frozen ground or over the snow.



## Upcoming Events - Cont.



Happy New Year Prairie Enthusiasts,

The **Beaver Creek Reserve** and **TPE Chippewa Savannas Chapter** are hosting an informative free seminar on Saturday afternoon, January 18th.

The afternoon starts at 1:00 with a presentation by UWEC Biology Associate Professor, **Dr. Tali Lee**. Dr. Lee will present ***Role of Plants in Global Climate Change***. Her research involves plant physiological responses to environmental stress. She will discuss plant photosynthetic responses to elevated CO<sub>2</sub>, research that she has been doing for around 15 years in a tall grass prairie system as well as talking about the history of others' research of effects of CO<sub>2</sub>. Dr. Lee will include newer additions to her research involving increased temperature and reduced precipitation. This is an exciting opportunity to talk with someone who is doing important research on the impact of global change and to ask your questions of someone who can share what we know at this point and what we don't know about plant reactions to global change.

After Dr. Lee's presentation, author/ecologist/researcher/lecturer **Dr. Mark Leach** will speak about ***Pre-settlement Local Brush Habitat and its Implications for Today***. We all hear about and work on prairie/savanna as well as forest conservation, but seldom do we hear about preserving brush habitat. In fact we spend a fair amount of time trying to get rid of troublesome brush like buckthorn and honeysuckle. But what do we know about the brush habitat that used to be commonly found in our area many years ago? Dr. Leach will help us understand what our brush habitat was like in the past and what that may mean for our current ecosystems.

To round out the afternoon, Beaver Creek Volunteer, **Sherry Sprague**, will present ***Planting Native Seeds***. Perhaps you've collected or purchased native plant seeds and would like to pot those seeds for spring planting. Ms. Sprague will talk about how to plant those seeds as well as give us a tour of the Beaver Creek Reserve planting area. Many of us have frequented the BCR spring plant sale. . . Sherry is the woman who helps make those plants happen.

The presentations will be **held from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM in the Woodland Room of the Beaver Creek Nature Center**.

Please let your friends, interested youth, and organizations know about this free event. It covers current issues, research, history and hands-on plant topics. Bring your questions and your curiosity, there's something for everyone who cares about our locale.

**Need more information or have question contact Jeanette Kelly at BCR, 715-877-2212.**



**Eau Claire County  
UW-Cooperative Extension**

227 First Street W  
Altoona, WI 54720

Phone: 715.839.4712

Fax: 715.839-6277

E-mail: [Erin.LaFaive@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:Erin.LaFaive@co.eau-claire.wi.us)

Office Hours: M-F 8 AM - 5 PM

**Plant Clinic Hours**

To talk in person with your county UW-Extension Horticulture Educator or Master Gardener Volunteer, please visit the Eau Claire County UW-Extension office during office hours: Mondays 9:30am-1:30pm, Thursdays 9:30am-2:30pm, and by appointment.

Website: [www.yourcountyextensionoffice.org](http://www.yourcountyextensionoffice.org)

## GREEN PAGES

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FREE online at: [eauclaire.uwex.edu/horticulture-2](http://eauclaire.uwex.edu/horticulture-2)

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Eau Claire County  
Extension Office  
227 First Street West  
Altoona WI 54720