

# GREEN PAGES

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

April 2015

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## Gardening Fun Facts:

- The earth has more than 80,000 species of edible plants.
- 70,000 plant species are utilized for medicine.
- Small pockets of air inside cranberries cause them to bounce and float in water.
- The first potatoes were cultivated in Peru about 7,000 years ago.

## From the desk of the Horticulture Educator

Maple trees and lilac bushes are showing signs of waking up as their buds begin to swell. Some people are seeing daffodils peeking through the soil too.

As I write this on March 27, it's still too soon to plant grass seed or crab grass preventer. It's just too cold for those seeds to do much germinating. For those racking their lawns already, be very careful not to pull up existing grass since the soil is moist and allows roots to come up a bit easier.

There are a few upcoming classes I will be teaching.

**Seed Starting workshop** is scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 6:30pm. This workshop is intended for those with little to no

experience starting seeds.

We will cover the basics of seed starting. We will also plant seeds and transplant seedlings which

will be taken care of at the Extension office and later used for the North Riverfronts and McDonough Park Youth Gardens.

**Registration is required. Space is limited to 25 participants.** To register, contact Eau Claire County UW-Extension at (715) 839-4712.



## Make-and-Take Vegetable Garden Workshop

is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, at 10-11am or 1-2pm at the Mayo Clinic Health System's Outdoor Courtyard located at 1221 Whipple Street Eau Claire, WI. Each participant will take home an Earthbox® full of soil and plants. **Registration required \$20. Scholarships available.** Please see [FLYER by clicking here.](#)



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## Green Pages

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### Beaver Creek Reserve: Getting to know mosses!

April 26 | 2 until 4 pm | Citizen Science Center  
\$5 for Friends, \$8 for Nonmembers  
16 spots available.

Wisconsin is loaded with different kinds of moss and here's our chance to learn about them.

UWEC Professor, Dr. Joseph Rohrer, has spent years studying moss and he will describe what makes mosses different from other plants, how they reproduce and spread, where they grow, their value in the world, and how to identify common species.

The workshop will include an indoor classroom period, followed by a trip outdoors to observe and identify local mosses around the Reserve. Register early as there will be space for only 16 attendees,

allowing Dr. Rohrer time to help each participant with moss identification.

The workshop will be based largely on the recently published field guide, *Common Mosses of the Northeast and Appalachians*, which is for sale in the BCR Nature Center. Copies will be available for participant use.

Registration and full payment required by April 22.



***“Look at the bark of  
a redwood, and you  
see moss . . . a whole  
host of life that  
prosperes in that  
miniature  
environment . . . I  
see a living city.”***

***~Sylvia Earle***

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### “I’d like some more information, please!”



If you are looking for information on gardening, remember you have FREE

access to UW-Extension publications at The Learning Store.

[learningstore.uwex.edu](http://learningstore.uwex.edu)

Most publications are available to download as a PDF, some are in Spanish, most are available to

purchase as hard copies via the on-line payment system, and some are available to purchase at the Eau Claire County Extension office.

In addition, The University of Wisconsin Horticulture website [wihort.uwex.edu](http://wihort.uwex.edu) has gardening factsheets.

If you can't find your information there, a call to the Eau Claire County Extension office (715) 839-4712 will connect you to the Horticulture Educator or a Master Gardener Volunteer who will assist you in finding the answer.

## Horticulture Quiz

Test your knowledge of plant term or simply look at the answers and learn some terms!

Match the answers to the question. Correct Answers are on the bottom of the page. Information obtained from the Wisconsin Master Gardener Volunteer Program Training Manual.



### Questions

1. Insects are the most successful type of animal on \_\_\_\_\_.
2. They have been around for at least \_\_\_\_\_ million years.
3. There are over \_\_\_\_\_ species in the U.S. and Canada.
4. Only about \_\_\_\_\_% of the species of insects cause serious injury to crops, animals, stored products or structures, or spread disease.
5. Beneficial activities of insects have been estimated to be worth \$\_\_\_\_\_ in the U.S.
6. Spiders, ticks, mites, millipedes and crayfish belong to this group.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the hard outer shell on insects and is their skeleton.
8. An insect that hatches from an egg is a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a non-mobile stage, during which the larval structures are disintegrated and reconstructed into a very different looking adult.

### Possible Answers

pupa  
exoskeleton  
earth  
350  
arthropods  
1%  
20  
nymph  
87,000

## How to Take a Soil Test

Looking to find out what kind of elements make up your soil? Eau Claire UW-Extension can help you!

Bring your soil samples to the Eau Claire County Extension office. These samples are analyzed through a soil lab in Madison. Soil testing costs \$20 for a garden or yard sample.

To make your soil samples, use a small shovel or trowel. Put the shovel in the soil down about 6-inches and take out about 1/4 cup from at least five to ten sites in your lawn. No need to keep any grass or

large debris that might be on the top of the soil. Put the samples together in a clean pail and mix the soil to form a single composite sample. Bring two cups of this mixture to our office for a soil analysis and fertilizer recommendation.

Results are sent to your house in 10-14 days and a duplicate copy is sent to the Extension office. Results show Phosphorus, potassium, and pH levels. Other nutrients and issues can be tested for with the additional fees.

***“The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness.”***

***~Dalai Lama***



**Gardening Tips:** Courtesy of: Sharon Morrissey, Consumer Horticulture Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension in Milwaukee Co.

◆ On your marks, get set, grow! In April, the race is on. It seems like we deserve this month more this year than in other years. We have earned it throughout this long, hard winter. So now, enjoy it.



◆ Finish the pruning, rake and aerate the lawn, and hope the sun and wind dry out the soil enough to sow seeds in the vegetable garden by the end of the month.

◆ Do not get too zealous about cleaning up beds with perennial flowers. That leafy debris around the bottom of the stems serves to protect the emerging, tender shoots from the inevitable frosty episodes yet to come this month.



◆ You can dig and divide perennials now as long as the soil is dry enough to work without being sticky. Working soil when it is wet will create concrete-like chunks that will plague you for months to come. Maybe even for a couple of growing seasons. And it won't do your plants any good either.

◆ Also control the urge to plant tender flowers no matter how springy it seems. The average frost free date in southeastern Wisconsin is not until the first week of May and even later in the remainder of the state. That means there is still a fifty percent chance there will be more freezing temperatures after that.



◆ Instead, clean out the shed, sharpen the tools and get the compost pile going again. And don't forget to stop and smell the hyacinths.

◆ Finish up your pruning chores this month. Pruned

branches of spring flowering trees and shrubs like forsythia, pussywillow, apple, crabapple, cherry, plum, and flowering almond can be brought indoors to force into bloom.



◆ Prune oak trees before April 15th. Trees pruned later are more likely to contract oak wilt disease from infected beetles feeding on the sap of fresh wounds. If you have an oak tree that died of oak wilt last season, have it removed and the wood processed (burned, chipped, or at least the bark stripped) before April 15th.

◆ Keep Easter lilies well watered. Cut out the bottom of the decorative foil and set the pot onto an inverted saucer or jar lid inside of another saucer to catch the drainage water. As buds continue to open, remove yellow pollen sacs from the stamens before the dusty pollen drops. It not only stains tablecloths and clothes but removal prolongs the flowers.



◆ If you haven't already done so, sow seeds indoors of broccoli, early cabbage, cauliflower, celery, eggplant, and head lettuce. Peppers may be sown from seed indoors now, too. Wait a week or so for the tomatoes.

◆ Plant a pot of pansies and put them outside. Pansies can tolerate frost, freezing temperatures and even some snow (heaven forbid). If they are greenhouse grown, expose them to the cold a little at a time.

◆ Regularly check rose cones and other heavily mulched or protected plants, such as chrysanthemums. Temperatures can get quite high around these plants on sunny, warm days but it is still cold enough at night





## Gardening Tips: Continued

to damage new growth. Remove or vent cones only during the day and replace them before the sun goes down.

- ◆ Treat pine needle scale on mugo, Scot's, Austrian, white, and red pines with dormant oil. Dormant oil should be used before bud break but when temperatures will be above freezing for at least 8 hours.



- ◆ Collect soil samples for testing. Sample vegetable gardens, flower gardens, lawns, and shrub beds separately. Each sample should consist of soil taken from 5 different spots within a particular area. Obtain soil sample mailers from your county UW-Extension office or do it on-line at [uwlab.soils.wisc.edu/madison](http://uwlab.soils.wisc.edu/madison)



- ◆ Begin the process of hardening-off seedlings that will be transplanted outside later this month. This includes broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, head lettuce, onions, and parsley. At first, place flats in a shaded place protected from the wind. Gradually increase their daily exposure to sun and wind. Bring them indoors each night until just a few days before planting.

- ◆ Repair bare spots in the lawn. Work up the soil well in these areas incorporating some granular fertilizer, too. Sprinkle on a good seed mix of bluegrass and fescue. Rake lightly to mix seed with soil. Tamp to assure seed-soil contact. Mulch lightly with straw. Keep well watered for 2 weeks until all the seed has germinated.



- ◆ Longer days and higher light intensity means indoor

plants will begin growing faster. Start fertilizing again using a half strength solution every other watering.

- ◆ Prune hard now to stimulate new, bushier growth.
- ◆ Fertilize grapes, raspberries, and blueberries before growth resumes in the spring. UW-Extension bulletin #A2307 specifies rates.

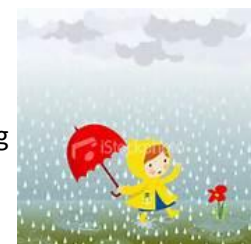


- ◆ Start tomatoes from seed indoors.
- ◆ Sow seeds outdoors for the following crops: asparagus, beets, carrots, chard, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, mustard, onion sets, parsnips, peas, potatoes, radish, spinach, and turnip.



- ◆ Prepare for apple tree pest control program. If insecticides and fungicides are going to be used, begin treatments as soon as buds begin to expand and grow. A few well-timed sprays early in the season may be all the chemical control necessary. Details are provided in UWEX publications A3565 "Growing Apples In Wisconsin" and A2179 "Apple Pest Management for Home Gardeners".
- ◆ Establish new plantings of grapes, strawberries, raspberries, asparagus, and rhubarb as soon as the ground can be worked. Proper preparation of the site including pre-plant weed control and the addition of organic matter and fertilizer will assure years of good growth for these perennial crops.

- ◆ Check upright junipers and red cedars for the brown galls of cedar-hawthorn/apple rust. They will be mingled with the leaves and resemble brown golf balls. Warm spring rains cause them to ooze orange gelatinous "horns" which spread spores to apple, crabapple, and hawthorn. Remove these galls before they erupt to limit the spread of spores.



## Write for the Green Pages!

### Would you like to write for Green Pages?

We at green pages are looking for articles about gardening, natural resources, and related events relevant to the Western Wisconsin area.

We'd love to share your experience with a rare bird sighting, gardening method, or maybe even a story about your favorite park.

Articles can range from 250-500 words, and will be chosen based on relevant content and available space. Please send your submissions to the

contact information listed at the end of this article.

Not sure of what to write, but have a particular topic you would like to see written about in the Green Pages? We will take your suggestions as well!

Feel free to ask us to publish information you are curious about, or even about events you are aware of that will be going on the following month.

We look forward to your articles and/or suggestions!



Eau Claire County  
UW-Extension

227 First Street W

Phone: 715.839.4712

Fax: 715.839.6277

E-mail:

Erin.LaFaive@co.eau-claire.wi.us

***“Writing means sharing. It's part of the human condition to want to share things - thoughts, ideas, opinions.”***

***~Paulo Coelho***



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