



# Perennial Notes

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society, Inc.

June 2023



*Amsonia illustris*

## Amsonia for Southern Wisconsin Gardens

by Steve Lesch, Landscape Designs, Inc.

*Amsonia* is principally a native genus of North America, with one species each in eastern Asia and the eastern Mediterranean area. *Amsonia* commemorates Dr. Charles Amson, an 18th century Virginia physician. There are about 22 species ranging from 1'-3' in height with prostrate to erect stems. *Amsonia* belongs to the Apocynaceae family of which *Asclepias*, milkweeds and *Vinca*, also belong. Their seed pods are long and slender and open similarly to milkweeds. Rarely, some people may react to the plant's latex sap.

**Foliage & Form:** The very narrow 1/2" to 2" wide, 3" long lanceolate to elliptic leaves are alternate and range from rich green to bluish-green. Most turn an impressive

(continued on page 10)

## WHPS coming events!

Questions about our events?  
Email [wisconsinhps@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinhps@gmail.com) for specific info.

NOTE: In-person meetings are held at Olbrich Gardens, links to Zoom meetings are sent the week of the scheduled meeting.

**Saturday, June 10, WHPS Member Workshop and Tour (2 opportunities -10 am and 1 pm) of Landscape Designs Nursery, 3290 Elvehjem Road, McFarland, WI.** The nursery carries woody trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials suitable for southern Wisconsin. [Landscape Designs Nursery](#) Owner Steve Lesch will give members two opportunities that day to have an introduction to his nursery and staff and will explain what Landscape Designs does and how they differ from a typical garden center. Workshop discussion will be held in the check-out Green Quonset, followed by a tour of the nursery, introducing us to plants that we may or may not have heard of or grown before. For those with mobility issues, please be aware that there are no asphalt paved paths along the tour route, but they are paved with compacted wood chips; everyone should plan to wear comfortable walking shoes. The workshop/tour will take about one hour, followed by an opportunity to browse and shop. NOTE: WHPS members shopping during these two tour times will be offered an exclusive 20% discount on purchases. [Excellent directions, prices and availability](#) and other info can be found on the nursery website. Overflow parking will also be available along Elvehjem Road. Please plan to arrive prior to start time for either the 10 am or 1 pm workshop/tour.

**June 15-23, WHPS Trip: English Garden Tour - Southwest England (Wiltshire, Somerset, and Devon) - this trip is **SOLD OUT!****

**Wednesday, June 28, 4-8 pm - WHPS/MAMGA Monona Garden Tour.** Featuring the gardens of Debra Desmidt, Ann Munson, Julie and Andy Witherell. Full info and garden descriptions are on p. 5.

**Tuesday, July 18, 4-8 pm - WHPS/MAMGA West Madison/Middleton Garden Tour.** Featuring the gardens of Barbara Borders, Linda Grosz, Sue Niesen, and Rick Petran. Full info and garden descriptions on p. 6.

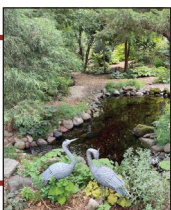
**Wednesday, August 16 - 5:15 p.m. for setup, WHPS Member Potluck, Garner Park, 333 Rosa Rd, Madison.** A great chance to share a beautiful evening with fellow members. Bring a dish to share, along with your own utensils and plate. Lemonade/juice/water will be provided.

**Friday-Sunday, August 25-27, Bus Trip to Northern, IL Gardens and Nurseries.** See box info on p. 3.

**Wednesday, September 20, 6:30 pm social time, 7 pm presentation, WHPS Meeting (IN PERSON and VIA ZOOM): How Trees Get Their Names, with speaker Guy Sternberg.** Follow an oak tree from its first recognition as a newly identified species or nothospecies through discovery, assignment, typification and registration of a formal specific epithet recognized worldwide. (It's complicated – let us make it simple for you!) The



(continued on page 2)



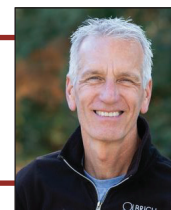
### Garden Tours

see p. 5, 6.



### Bus Tour

see p. 3.



### Jeff Epping's retirement

see p. 8

## WHPS Events (cont. from p.1)

process began with the first publication of a proposed tree name in 2006 through the ultimate typification of that name, finally completed in 2022 and published in an international scientific journal in 2023. The tree is *Quercus x sternbergii*, and the story involved collaboration among some of the top oak scientists and field botanists from Illinois, Texas, Germany, France, Mexico, and Uruguay. It has become the first oak ever recognized in honor of a member of the International Oak Society. Guy Sternberg is the co-founder of Starhill Forest Arboretum in Petersburg, Illinois and the author of many articles and several books about trees. Starhill Forest includes the most compre-

hensive oak research collection in North America and also grows more than 2,000 other types of trees and shrubs. Guy was the founder and first president of the International Oak Society and also holds life memberships in the International Dendrology Society, the Illinois Native Plant Society (co-founder), American Forests, and the International Society of Arboriculture. He has been recognized with an adjunct faculty appointment in Biology with Illinois College and is an adjunct research associate in Botany with the Illinois State Museum. Guy will be bringing copies of his book, *Native Trees of North America from the Rockies to the Atlantic* (2021) to sell and sign.

**Saturday, September 23, noon-3 pm – WHPS Hosts Open Garden Day at Will Radler's Rose Innovations, 10020 West Meadow Dr., Greenfield, WI.** For the second year, WHPS will have a display table and volunteers will be welcoming guests at [Will Radler's Rosarium](#) in Greenfield, WI. At first glance you'd never know that hidden within the two-acre garden, the rigorous business of breeding and testing roses is well underway. By all appearances, the Radler Rosarium is a tranquil escape full of interesting perennials, shrubs and trees. A bit of exploration reveals unexpected water features, fireplaces and unique statuary. If you take a closer look, the complex research and development of new roses is revealed. Other dates that the Rosarium will be open and hosted by nonprofit organizations: Saturday, June 10, 9 am – noon, Greater Milwaukee Rose Society; Saturday, July 15, 9 am – noon, Greenfield Beautification Committee; Friday, August 25, 6-9 pm, Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens. **WHPS is looking for one or two volunteers as we greet guests** on September 28, starting at noon, and perhaps enjoy a nice meal together after (carpooling encouraged). If you are interested in volunteering, contact us at [wisconsinhps@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinhps@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, October 18, 6:30 pm social time, 7 pm presentation – WHPS Meeting (IN PERSON and VIA ZOOM): New Plants and Where They Come From, with speaker Ryan McEnaney.** This topic shares the path of a new variety of plant from discovery or breeding into the home garden. Take a trip behind the scenes at Bailey Nurseries, one of the

country's largest nurseries and introducers of shrubs and trees, to see all the work that goes into selecting and bringing a new cultivar to market.

Throughout the discussion, speaker Ryan McEnaney will share some of the best new – and future – introductions, what makes them unique, and why you should consider them for your landscape. Ryan McEnaney is a garden designer, author, and fifth-generation family member-owner at Bailey Nurseries. He also serves as spokesperson for Bailey's consumer brands: Endless Summer® Hydrangeas, First Editions® Shrubs & Trees, and Easy Elegance® Roses. He has the privilege of traveling the country to help people have success in their gardens by speaking at events, offering tips and tricks on TV, and doing hands-on workshops at garden centers and public gardens. He has a deep passion for connecting people to nature, especially breaking down barriers to encourage "non-gardeners" to dig in the dirt. *Field Guide to Outside Style*, McEnaney's first book, was released in December 2022 and takes home gardeners on a journey of discovering their own style and how it impacts designing their outdoor space. The book was celebrated by publications like *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Real Simple*, *Woman's Day*, *PEOPLE* and more.

**Wednesday, November 15, 6:30 pm social time, 7 pm – WHPS Meeting (IN PERSON and VIA ZOOM): Horticulture at Lincoln Park Zoo, with speaker Katrina Quint.** Join Katrina Quint, Director of Horticulture at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, IL, for a talk about public horticulture at the zoo, including the management of a garden that sees over 3.5 million visitors a year. Learn all about the zoo's arboretum and plant collections, as Katrina shares her passion for horticulture and plants with you.

Under her direction, the Horticulture team creates beautiful landscapes inside and outside animal exhibits for both the animals and the public to enjoy. The zoo is home to more than 330 species of woody plants and became an accredited arboretum in 2019. Overall, the zoo's gardens have over 1,000 species of plants under the Horticulture crew's care. The zoo also has special collections of hardy

(continued on page 3)



2545 Dahle St, Madison, WI 53704

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WHPS Board members can be contacted at [wisconsinhps@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinhps@gmail.com)



## WHPS Events (cont. from p.2)

hibiscus, North American native hydrangea, and ninebark. Katrina's years of public garden experience influence her dedication for providing the highest quality care and maintenance of permanent plantings and annual displays on the zoo's grounds, as well as creating opportunities for the Horticulture team to continue to develop professionally.

Prior to coming to Lincoln Park Zoo, Katrina worked at The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL, for nine years. As the horticulture coordinator, Katrina was in charge of the annual display program, designing and implementing four seasonal displays throughout the display gardens, as well as organizing projects, procuring plants, coordinating staff and contract work, and hiring and training seasonal workers. Her passion for plants and the natural world was sprouted in small town Iowa, where she grew up working with her mother's landscaping business, Ingrid's Landscaping, out of Ryan, Iowa.

**Wednesday, December 6, 6:30 pm - social time, 7 pm WHPS Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange and Party, Olbrich Commons.** We are also welcome to tour Olbrich's Holiday Express from 6-7 pm.

## WHPS August Bus Trip to Northern Illinois

WHPS is presently working to confirm and offer a three-day bus trip to Northern Illinois for members August 25-27, 2023 – our first since 2019.

Plans currently have the bus leaving Friday, August 25 at noon, returning Sunday, August 27 at 6:00 pm, with two overnight stays at The Westin Chicago Lombard in Lombard, IL.

The itinerary includes: planned visits to Anderson Japanese Gardens (Rockford, IL), The Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL), Cantigny Gardens and Park (Wheaton, IL), as well as nurseries – Growing Place (Aurora, IL), Wannemaker's Home and Gardens, and additional gardens, with more retail TBD.



The current cost is expected to be \$350 per person double occupancy; additional \$200 for single supplement.

When details are confirmed, an email will be sent to members and a brochure and information will be posted for the trip on the WHPS website for sign-up (as early as mid-June).

For any questions you might have in advance of the official posting of the trip, contact JoAnne Kriege – [jmkriege@yahoo.com](mailto:jmkriege@yahoo.com). We are excited to once again be able to offer a fun and immersive visit to some great garden locations.

## Upcoming Plant Sales

**Friday, June 2 and Saturday, June 3, 2023 Spring Plant Fair,** Door County Master Gardeners Peninsular Agricultural Research Station, Sturgeon Bay, WI.

**Saturday, June 3, DSSEW Annual Plant Sale,** The Daylily Society of Southeast Wisconsin, Brookfield Farmers Market, Brookfield Central High School, 16900 W. Gebhardt Rd., Brookfield, WI.

**Saturday, August 19 and Sunday, August 20, 9 am - 4 pm, WDS Annual Plant Sale,** Wisconsin Daylily Society at Olbrich Park, 3527 Atwood Ave, Madison.

# BREEZWAY IRIS GARDEN 2023 Events



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BLOOM SEASON OPEN HOUSE: 9 AM – 5 PM, JUNE 2-4, 2023

2023 SUMMER SALE: JULY 28-29, 10 AM. - 4 PM.

ORDERS BY WEBSITE: MAY 1-JULY 15, 2023

4600 ROME CORNERS RD, BROOKLYN, WI 53521

## 2023 – Other gardening events of note

Key events of interest listed but please visit the following websites for more info on events:

- [Allen Centennial Garden in Madison](#)
- [Boerner Botanical Gardens in Milwaukee](#)
- [Chicago Botanic Garden in Chicago](#)
- [Green Bay Botanical Garden in Green Bay](#)
- [Lynden Sculpture Garden in Milwaukee](#)
- [Mitchell Park Horticultural Park \(The Domes\) in Milwaukee](#)
- [Monk Botanical Garden](#) in Wausau
- [Morton Arboretum](#) in Lisle, IL
- [Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison](#)
- [Paine Art Center and Gardens in Oshkosh](#)
- [Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville](#)
- [University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum](#)

**Wednesdays, June 7 thru August 30, 9 am-8 pm, Getaway Wednesdays: Buy One Get One Admission**, Green Bay Botanical Garden.

**Wednesdays, June 7 thru August 30, 10-11 am, Getaway Wednesdays: Express Garden Tour**, Green Bay Botanical Garden. An hour long, guided tour through Green Bay Botanical Garden. Tour guides will share stories about the Garden and its special features.

**Wednesdays, June 7 thru August 30, 10-11 am, Getaway Wednesdays: Discovery Station**, Green Bay Botanical Garden. Explore the Carol & Bruce Bell Children's Garden and enjoy free, fun, hands-on nature activities.

**Saturday, June 10 thru Sunday, September 10, 9 am - 5 pm, Summer Show: DinoDomes**, Mitchell Park Domes, Milwaukee.

**Tuesday, June 13 - Friday, August 18, 11 am - 4 pm, The Wonder of Monarchs**, The Paine Art Center and Gardens, Oshkosh. This summer, the Paine is hosting a monarch waystation in the gardens. Located in the Children's Garden on the south side of the estate, the monarch waystation features monarchs in various stages of life cycles on display.

**Thursday, June 15, 10 am, What's in Bloom? Tour**, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville. Cost: Members free, others \$10.

**Friday, June 23, 6 pm, Pike River Concert Series: Yves François & Rhythm de Vie**, Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary & Arboretum: 880 Green Bay Road (Highway 31), Kenosha.

**Friday-Saturday, July 7-8, 9 am - 3 pm, Olbrich Gardens Home Garden Tour** in Shorewood Hills, Madison. Tickets available at the event or for pre-sale purchase starting June 12 in the Olbrich lobby.

**Sunday, July 9, 9 am - 4 pm, Faire on the Green, The Paine Art Center and Gardens**. Experience the largest art and craft fair of the summer in Oshkosh.

**Wednesday, July 12, 7 - 8:30 pm, Plants for Pollinators Garden Tour, UW Arboretum**, Madison. Learn more about summer-blooming native and ornamental species in Arboretum gardens. Susan Carpenter, Native Plant Garden curator, will highlight plants and gardening practices that support essential pollinators in urban/suburban landscapes.

**Thursday, July 13 - Sunday, August 6, 10 am - 4 pm, Blooming Butterflies, Olbrich Gardens**, Madison. Blooming Butterflies features up to 19 different species of free flying butterflies in the tropical Bolz Conservatory.

**Saturday, July 15, 9 am - 3 pm and Sunday, July 16, 10 am - 3 pm, WGCF - Madison District Garden Clubs 2023 Home Garden Tour**. Self-guided tours of eight unique and exciting gardens in Madison and Verona. Tours begin at Hometown Junction Park, Railroad St., Verona, WI or 1030 Middleton St., Madison, WI. There is a charge for the tour.

**Thursday, July 20, 10 am, What's in Bloom? Tour**, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville. Cost: free to members, others \$10.

**Sunday, July 23, 1 - 2 pm, Garden Stroll, UW Arboretum**, Madison. Free, no registration required. Meet at the Visitor Center.

**Friday, July 28, 6 pm, Pike River Concert Series: KR Bluegrass, Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary & Arboretum**, 880 Green Bay Road (Highway 31), Kenosha.

**Wednesday, August 2, 7 - 8:30 pm, Native Grasses Garden Tour, UW Arboretum**, Madison. Free, no registration required. Meet at the Visitor Center.

**Thursday, August 10, 10 am, What's in Bloom? Tour**, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville. Cost: free for members, others \$10.

**Friday, August 18, 6 pm, Pike River Concert Series: Ben Mulwana, Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary & Arboretum**: 880 Green Bay Road (Highway 31), Kenosha.

**Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, August 26 - October 28, 7:30 - 10:30 pm, GLEAM, Olbrich Botanical Gardens**, Madison. Take an enchanting stroll through Olbrich's 16-acre garden and tropical Bolz Conservatory after dark and see the Gardens in a whole new light! Tickets will be available closer to the event.

**Sunday, August 27, 1 -2 pm, Garden Stroll, UW Arboretum**, Madison. Free, no registration required. Meet at the Visitor Center.

**Saturday, September 9, 10 am- 4 pm, Walk in the Woods Art Fair, Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary & Arboretum**: 880 Green Bay Road (Highway 31), Kenosha.

**Thursday, September 21, 10 am, What's in Bloom? Tour**, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville. Cost: free for members, others \$10.

**Saturday, September 30, 12-5 pm, Harvest Folk Festival: Celebrate 'Seeds of Change,' Allen Centennial Gardens**, Madison. This event will celebrate the harvest of the kitchen garden, showcase performances of folk music, folk dance, and storytelling, offer hands-on learning opportunities in the Garden and feature displays of student research.

*Gardening simply does not allow one to be mentally old, because too many hopes and dreams are yet to be realized. – Allan Armitage*

# Monona Evening Garden Tour- WHPS/MAMGA

Wednesday, June 28, 2023 – 4-8 pm The gardens may be visited in any order; maps are here.

**Debra Desmidt – 1007 Progressive Ln,  
Monona**

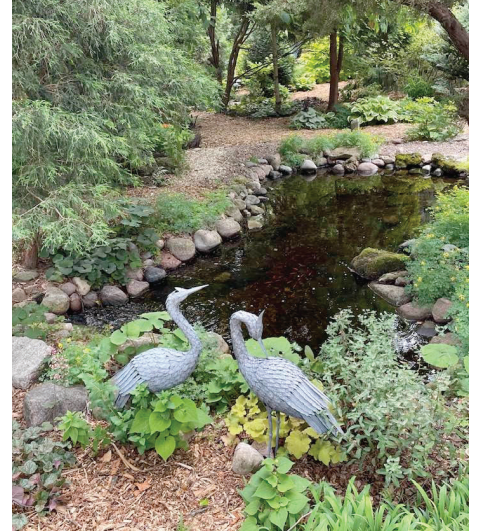
The best of both worlds, sun in the front yard and shade in the back. Over time our front yard has become a cottage style perennial garden, but six large white oaks in the back and tall pine trees on the side required a totally different approach. We concentrated on developing an understory of white pines, hemlocks, Japanese maples, hydrangeas, and pagoda dogwoods. Spring is when the back garden bursts with the color of native wildflowers. Later it's a subtle beauty that depends on the form a plant takes, its leaves and texture. Paths wander through the garden floor filled with hostas, ferns, astilbes, and a variety of interesting plants that thrive under these conditions. Our gardens have been on the Olbrich Garden Tour twice, in 1994 and 2006. A garden is never static, continually changing, and ours certainly has.

**Ann Munson – 5304 Midmoor Rd, Monona**

My Monona gardens, on a 3/4 acre lot, have evolved in 44 years from all lawn to no lawn. My gardens consist of perennials in beds of shade and sun connected by wood chip paths and 2 ponds connected by a stream. I am trying to reduce maintenance and create more wildlife habitat by planting thickly in the beds and adding more native plants. Groundcovers, both native and non-native, cover areas to create green space without having lawn grasses. I use white pine needles from the 7 white pines in the yard as mulch. Once a year I renew the wood chip paths, using wood chips delivered by a local arborist. All the organic matter from the gardens is recycled (except the largest branches which are collected quarterly by the City of Monona). Fallen and pruned branches are used in "dead hedges" and scattered stick piles. Select birch branches are made into "wattle" bed edging. Weeds are placed in compost piles at the rear of the yard. We added a sunroom/greenhouse last winter to extend the gardening season and are redoing our decks this spring. I will develop new gardens in the areas adjacent to the new decks. To see photos of the garden last year, go to moorgardens on instagram.

**Julie and Andy Witherell – 306 W Dean Ave, Monona**

We started gardening on our small city lot 35 years ago. The garden was a blank slate when we began. There were two large maples which had to be removed over the past 10 years. We have added trees, a fenced patio area, perennial beds, raised vegetable beds and a garden shed. I am trying to add more native plants, rain barrels and a compost area to be more environmentally friendly. Our garden tends toward a cottage garden style, it is full of lots of colors and types of plants. Parking is available on Schofield and most of the garden is on that side of the house.



Above, Ann Munson's garden from a Facebook post.

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# Middleton/West Madison Evening Garden Tour – WHPS/MAMGA

Tuesday, July 18, 2023 – 4 - 8 pm The gardens may be visited in any order; maps are here.

## Rick Petran – 6109 Quetico Dr, Madison

My groundskeeping of this property began in 2002. The Wright styled limestone house was built in 1981, with garage and garden house added later. The lot is about 2/3 an acre, a deep lot that narrows and rises as it moves away from the street. The garden is very private, being mostly hidden behind the house, making for a quiet peaceful space. Limestone retaining walls add contrast, with several outdoor seating areas from which to enjoy the view. After moving to this property (my first house, after several condos), I found myself overwhelmed by the scale of the yard. I turned to Steve Lesch for advice, which has continued as I've taken on garden projects over the years. The focus has been low maintenance perennials, including a variety of yew, holly, peony, hydrangea, hosta, and hellebore. Trees include Amur cherry, Korean arborvitae, Japanese stewartia, pagoda dogwood, Japanese maple, hemlock, paperbark maple, ginkgo, weeping beech. At the far upper end of the garden is a fenced off orchard area, including raspberries, and peach, apple, cherry and apricot trees. Behind the garden house are a variety of pear trees espaliered along the fence (which refuse to blossom - not enough sun?).

## Barbara Borders – 6 Rough Lee Ct, Madison

When I moved to Madison in 2016, my yard and garden was pretty much a blank slate. Two areas in front of the house were covered with ground junipers. Between the ground junipers an area contained four rose bushes surrounded by cobblestone. When the house was built in the mid-80s a rock wall was built at the west end of the house. I've created one large sunny bed by removing the ground junipers and rose bushes. I've also created a bed extending the length of the rock wall. That area just barely grew grass since it was shady and primarily clay. I continue to add lots of soil amendments to all beds since the soil is predominantly clay. In the sunny area I have added some benches to display my Bonsai trees. On the north side of the house I removed grass to make a bed for tomatoes, zucchini and okra. I've created some beds because I continue

to add new plants every year and I've expanded other beds because mowing is not high on my list of fun things to do. Someday, I might even be able to retire my lawnmower!

## Sue Niesen – 6613 Old Sauk Rd, Madison

Gardening began in the 70's with the love of colors in a small garden. The garden grew each year once I convinced my husband I could take care of what I already had. We have added curbing so I am not tempted to make them larger. The garden is about 80% perennials and 20% annuals. I start planting seeds I have collected from my gardens in February under grow lights, hoping for germination of more than 40 flats. Some seeds stay true and some are a real pleasant surprise. I choose not to use mulch and enjoy weeding. Maybe some of my Brugmansia will be in color during the tour. You will be able to walk through on homemade pavers my husband and I made in our garage and rolled to their permanent spot. Each one weighs 80 pounds and was a challenge to only move ONCE. What is there to say about a garden? The visual view expresses my love of color and texture – mother nature does it all, I am just the caretaker. Welcome to all.

## Linda & Phil Grosz – 4258 Blackstone Ct, Middleton

When we built our home 25 years ago, our goal was to transform our large, vacant lot into a beautiful, tranquil, and wildlife-friendly environment. Our first project was planting nearly an acre of native prairie with species tolerant of heavy clay. Featured in the August 2022 issue of *Garden Gate* magazine, the prairie now surrounds our yard with an abundant and colorful mix of wildflowers and grasses that sustain many pollinators. A stream cascading into a large pond was the next landscape feature we installed, and it has become the focal point of the back yard and a magnet for visiting birds. Over the years, we've added thousands of spring bulbs and perennials, large shade and hosta gardens, as well as a rock garden, herb and vegetable gardens, and a whimsical miniature garden. We've also assembled a diverse collection of conifers, Japanese maples, and garden art. Join us for a glass of wine on the back deck, and enjoy the view of our pond, prairie, and the adjacent Pleasant View Golf Course.



# Toad Hollow

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# Another Successful Plant Sale

Once again we had beautiful weather and a great turnout for the annual Plant Sale. The native plant plugs were again a hit. We added another vendor and increased both the number of species and number of plants. Two vendors, Agrecol and Taylor Creek, supplied low cost native woodland and prairie plants in 2" plugs. Brent Horvath brought many of his amazing garden ornamentals from Intrinsic Perennial Gardens. Gardeners started lining up at 9:30 to buy these wonderful plants. (Special shout-out to Rebecca LaRose and Chris Neumann for coordinating the creation of the plant lists posted in advance of the sale.)

We thank all the volunteers, the staff at West Madison Agricultural Research Station, and the plant sale committee who made this possible:

## • [West Madison Agricultural Research Station](#)

- WHPS Plant Sale Committee: Caroline Bohler, Anna DePauw, Mark Dwyer, Rebecca LaRose, and Chris Neumann.
- WHPS Volunteers: Wendy Adams, Sally Averkamp, Suzy Bowditch, Emily Buckingham, Jane Gahlman, Connie Hansen, Margaret Henzler, JoAnne Kriege, MaryEllen LaChance, Phyllis Lathrope, Monica Macarra, Barbara Mathis, Linda Marx, Margaret O'Connor, Alice Page, Delores Robillard, Sarah Schaffer, Julie Sparks, Jayne Squirrell, Joan Sullivan, Rita Thomas, and Mary Tremaine.

Thanks for supporting WHPS through the Plant Sale - your purchases allow us to make donations in support of garden entities in our community.

## WHPS new members

The following members have recently joined WHPS:

Becky Berg, Fitchburg, WI; Sandy Conrath, Inverness, IL; Barbara Drake, Madison, WI; Sophia Driessen, Madison, WI; Cathy Hurst, Madison, WI; Dana King, Cottage Grove, WI; Patty Kriege, Verona, WI; Kathleen Lyngaas, Fitchburg, WI; Jamie Massey, Madison, WI; Lis Nelson, Madison, WI; Denise Nolden, Waunakee, WI; Julane Schneller, Pardeeville, WI; Debra Schrotz, Madison, WI; Ann Simon, Madison, WI; Sarah Brodnick, Toad Hollow Nursery, Middleton, WI; and Laura and Eric Wills, Sun Prairie, WI.

Welcome!



Above, WHPS 2023 Plants Sale volunteer crew.  
Below, WHPS volunteers setting up.



Above, busy sale in the morning.  
Below, WHPS shoppers.



Photo by Mark Dwyer

Photo by Chris Neumann

Photo by Mark Dwyer

Photo by Chris Neumann

# A letter from Jeff Epping on his retirement from Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Yes - the rumor is true! After 28 fantastic years at the Garden, I will be leaving soon. It wasn't an easy decision - very bittersweet. Olbrich is my baby, and taking what was pretty much just a park and turning it into a full-fledged botanic garden was my life. A labor of love to be sure. I'm proud of what I was able to accomplish with the help of so many great people over the years and know my team will keep moving the Garden in a positive direction. I'm not sure what I feel best about - designing and growing the gardens or growing the careers of so many great people. I'll miss mentoring them and potentially others in the future if I were to stick around, but I must admit that I won't miss the responsibility of supervising people on a daily basis.



So, now I'm looking forward to working on my current design projects outside of Olbrich on a full-time or maybe not so full-time basis -- I like to think I have that choice. Epic wants me to get more involved, since they are growing by leaps and bounds again and are having a hard time keeping up, so I'm looking forward to that. All of my current clients in Lake Geneva and the Northern suburbs of Chicago want me to do more design work, so now I'll have more time for that. Roy Diblik and I are having a lot of fun teaming up on projects together and also working with and learning a lot from Jens Jensen and Gerould Wilhelm, among others. Really exciting stuff that will become more fun when I have more time without having to work every weekend and stay up till 1:00 in the morning to meet deadlines.

Will I regret my decision? I'm sure I will at times, I think that comes with the territory, but I'm hoping the new adventures will trump that. I'm looking forward to traveling more to see others in the field across the U.S. I already have trips planned for both goofing off and lecturing to Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Albuquerque, Kansas State (where my son just started grad school), Philadelphia, Delaware (fall trip) and Costa Rica (a couple weeks after I retire), and I'm just getting started. Steve Uelner at Country Travel Discoveries wants me to plan and lead garden tours in the future, so I'm looking forward to that too.

A few people reached out to me with concerns about my depart-

## Members in the news

In the news:

*Fine Gardening*, August 2023

Page 12, Mark Dwyer, "Garden Shed - Tough Hoses That Will Last: A durable, expandable hose that is easy to use"

Page 16, Mark Dwyer, "Smart Watering Strategies"

Page 76, Mark Dwyer, "Peak Season Perennials for your Region - Midwest"

ture from the Garden - thinking that I was leaving because I was unhappy with our new Director, Tanya Zastrow. Nothing could be further from the truth! All is good and I am leaving on the best of terms with everyone at the Garden and in the Parks department. I am very impressed by Tanya and feel good about the future of Olbrich under her leadership. She's a smart cookie and has worked in public horticulture her whole career and she gets it. Her time at the U.S. National Arboretum and especially the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center gave her some great experience, and though she's never been an executive director, her experience as education director has helped her out so far. What she doesn't know, she's figuring it out in a thoughtful way and is a genuinely good person, so I am confident she'll treat my team well, as well as everyone else at the Garden. She will take Olbrich to the next level - I have no doubts about that!

So, for now, I'm not retiring, just working one job instead of two, like I have been for the last 20 years - more like 1 -1/2 really, but at times it seemed like three. I do hope to spend more time attending WHPS events and help out as I can between what I'll be up to. Thanks to WHPS for all of your support over the years. Without you and so many others helping us out, we never could have done what we have.

The WHPS wishes Jeff so much pleasure, success and enjoyment in his "retirement." We are grateful to have Jeff as a member and someone we can call on to keep us informed and up-to-date on all things gardening.

Plans are underway at Olbrich for a retirement celebration for Jeff on Thursday, June 15, at the Garden. We will email information to members as soon as details are known.

## Your Shopping Matters

Bloomin' Bucks with Brent and Becky's Bulbs is a progressive fundraising program designed to earn select nonprofit organizations cash for every order received through the Brent and Becky's Bulbs website! WHPS is one of the participating 387 organizations, and last year we received \$343.49 in donations. Thanks to our members and other shoppers for shopping at Brent & Becky's and for selecting WHPS for your support!



Tulipa Foxtrot

To participate, simply visit [bloominbucks.com](https://bloominbucks.com) and select "Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society" and hit "GO" to be sent to the Brent and Becky's website Bloomin Bucks.

**Help Us Raise Needed Money!**  
**Bloomin' Bucks**  
with Brent and Becky's



# *We want to see your garden!* **WHPS Grants Program update**

— Jane LaFlash

Each year, the WHPS offers organized evening tours of a group of member gardens in selected areas. We also provide the opportunity for individual members to open their garden to visitors, which is always a positive experience for host and visitor. Hosting an open garden gives you the opportunity to invite people to visit your garden at very short notice, when you think it's looking especially good.

All you have to do is contact us a few days to a week (or more) ahead at [wisconsinhps@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinhps@gmail.com) with your name, address, a short description of your garden and the date and times you will be open, and we will send out an email invitation to our members.

Feel free to email us with any questions. We know we have many members with lovely gardens and we'd like to see them!

The Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society will award up to \$1500 to a community group, school, or other organization for a project in the State of Wisconsin and adjacent states that promotes the use of hardy plants in the landscape. Grants can only be awarded to a nonprofit organization or a group that is associated with a nonprofit organization.

Funds may be used for educational purposes and plant material. Priority will be given to projects that are supported by WHPS members and to nonprofit organizations who have not received previous donations or grants from WHPS. Grant requests can be submitted at any time and will be reviewed by the board members of the WHPS or a designated subcommittee of such group. If the grant is awarded, a progress report is requested six months after the award funds are received. A verbal report of your project may be requested at the December annual business meeting of the WHPS.

To apply, complete the form on our [website](#). If landscaping is involved, you will need to supply supporting documentation - an outline of the plan, site map, photographs, etc.

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## *In Remembrance -*



**Margaret Ellen McEntire - March 10, 1948 - February 26, 2023**

Margaret McEntire was born in southern California and put herself through college, earning her BA in Women's Studies from San Francisco State University after nearly a decade of hard work. Her determination and love of learning continued for the rest of her life; she earned a certificate in Folklore Studies from UW-Madison, and audited dozens of classes there, including several science courses she was taking at the time of her death. She was actively involved in Democratic politics throughout her life and spent her later years working alongside her good friends, Betty and Corkey Custer, at their financial firm, while continuing to be involved in countless political and community organizations – she is said to be least partially responsible for electing nearly ev-

ery Democratic official in Dane County and many beyond.

Margaret was interested in everything – from folklore to microbiology to poetry to Jewish history to anti-racism. She was a voracious reader, a lover of film, theater, music, and art, and a cultural epicure. Margaret was also a dedicated environmentalist, bike commuter, wonderful gardener, and professional-level reducer/reuser/recycler.

A member of WHPS since the early 2000s, Margaret was a regular attendee at WHPS programs and volunteered for many years at the WHPS Plant Sale, where her sometimes prickly questions and suggestions and love of plants always helped to improve and make the Plant Sale a success.

We offer our sincere condolences to her sisters Anne (Ted) Reed and Barbara (Arnold) Tucker, forever stepdaughters Kelda Roys (Dan Reed) and Claire Thexton, and many nieces and nephews.



**Gene Lawrence Dewey – July 19, 1938 - April 21, 2023**

Gene Dewey was born in Malone, NY, and graduated from the State University of NY (SUNY) at Geneseo in Library Science, and received a master's degree in Library Science from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. After serving as Head of Acquisitions at SUNY Buffalo, Gene became Head of Acquisitions at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, until his retirement in 1996. Always active, he held various board and committee positions for many community organizations. Gene received the Librarian of the Year Award for 1991 by the University of Wisconsin and received a Governor's Special Award in 1996 for 27 years of dedicated service to the State of Wisconsin.

his home by planting an abundance of flowers, with an emphasis on daylilies. It is said that he had the "Best Looking Garden on Fox Avenue." He was an active member of the Wisconsin Daylily Society and the American Hemerocallis Society. Gene was especially proud of the hybridized daylilies 'Beth Dewey' and 'Fox Avenue Favorite'. He loved his church family at First Baptist Church, where he shared his gardening talents by caring for the flowers. Other favorite activities were camping, concerts, hosting international visitors, and traveling.

Gene was a member of WHPS for over 20 years, volunteering for many events, enjoying programs and tours, and was a great resource of information and a generous donor of daylilies. He lost his college sweetheart and loving wife Bea in 2021 and is survived by his daughter Janet, son David, and grandchildren Sara and John. To them we offer our condolences and our appreciation of his friendship.

An avid gardener, Gene always enhanced the curb appeal of

## Amsonia (cont. from p.1)

glowing yellow to golden color in the autumn. They are all upright herbaceous bushy, long-lived perennials. Some species and cultivars have a growth spurt of foliage atop the flowers once the flowering is finished. Post flowering, most taxa may be cut back to just below the flowering panicles – or by about 1/3. I have not noticed any reblooming from this type of pruning.

**Soil:** Tolerant of almost any moist, well-drained soil, with some species enjoying swampy conditions. This makes them ideal for rain gardens. Typical garden soils with a pH in the 6.5 to 7.5 range suit them just fine. Amsonia are also somewhat tolerant of de-icing salts; however, I would avoid heavily salted locations.

**Lighting:** Full sun to light dappled shade.

**Mulching:** Mulch in the autumn or very early spring with ½ to 1½ inches of mulch. However, mulch is seldom required.

**Flowers:** Terminal panicles of ½" to 1" starry five-petaled, funnel-form flowers in rich periwinkle blue (often fading with age) to nearly white and are held erect on sturdy stems.

**Winter:** They may be cut down to about two inches from the earth's surface in late autumn or very early spring.

**Fertilization:** Butterflies, carpenter bees, hummingbird moths, hummingbirds and many other pollinators visit Amsonia. *Amsonia tabernaemontana* foliage is a food source for the coral hairstreak butterfly larvae.

**Planting:** Planting may be at any time the earth is workable.

**Propagation:** While seed is wonderful for growing the species, the cultivars may not come true from seed. Seed must be sown in the autumn. The roots are very woody on most species and may require a reciprocating saw to divide them. This may be accomplished in the autumn, or as soon as the earth thaws in the spring. Cuttings are also a means of propagation.

**Pest and diseases:** All *Amsonia* are nearly pest and disease free. Very resistant to deer and rabbit browsing.

**Hardiness:** All of the following are hardy in our southern Wisconsin Zone 5 gardens, and all have also proven hardy in Madison, WI.

***Amsonia ciliata*** – Downy Amsonia is native to the Southern US and grows



*Amsonia ciliata* 'Georgia Pancake'

from 1'-3', with dark green leaves fringed with silky hairs on nice erect stems. Its light blue flowers are born later in spring in full sun or light dappled shade. It prefers good moisture during the growing season. If grown in too much shade, the stems may topple. Excellent autumn yellow foliage color. The epithet *ciliata* means marginally covered with fine soft hairs – referring to the foliage.

Cultivars include:

*var. filifolia* is a prostrate growing ground cover form with very fine leaves and light blue spring flowers.

'Georgia Pancake' is another name for *filifolia*.

'Spring Sky' grows with sturdy stems about 2' high with narrow green leaves and sky-blue flowers.

*var. tenuifolia* 'Verdant Venture' has large ephemeral flowers of light blue to violet that blanket the plant in May. Its thread-like lush, dark green foliage turns golden yellow late in the autumn. The fine-textured and wonderfully compact plants are 28 inches tall and 60 inches wide

***Amsonia hubrichtii*** – Threadleaf Amsonia is native to Oklahoma and Arkansas and grows 2-3' tall with thread-like 3" long green leaves that turn a brilliant spectacular golden-yellow in the Autumn. The light blue flowers may age to near white, providing a nice changing garden palette. The epithet commemorates Mr. Leslie Hubricht, who discovered it in 1942, when he was an assistant at the Missouri Botanical Gardens.

Cultivars include:

'Butterscotch' has the same foliage as the species, but with reddish stems and intense butterscotch colored autumn foliage. Improved resistance to tip die-back. Steel-blue flowers atop 3' tall stems.

'Green Mist' has even finer deep green foliage with light blue flowers. Grows about 3' tall.

'String Theory' matures at 18-24" tall with light periwinkle blue late spring to early summer flowers, atop sturdy stems with narrow dark green foliage. Its brilliant copper-orange autumn colored foliage with carmine-red stems is a showstopper in the garden. 'String Theory' may be a hybrid of *A. hubrichtii*.



*Amsonia hubrichtii* 'String Theory'

'Seaford Skies' is a hybrid with *A. tabernaemontana* with ferny foliage on 36" sturdy vigorous stems.

## Amsonia (cont. from p.10)

**Amsonia illustris** – Ozark Blue star is native to South Central USA and is very similar to *A. tabernaemontana* but has thicker, leathery foliage and pendant fruits. The epithet *illustris* means bright or lustrous, referring to the foliage.

Cultivars include:

‘Seventh Inning Stretch’ is a hybrid of *A. illustris*. Initially glossy foliage emerges green but is smaller than a typical *A. illustris*. The habit on this hybrid is upright but more reserved and is bushier. Light blue flower clusters bloom at the top of the thin stems in late May - early June, eventually reaching three feet. Full sun to light shade.

**Amsonia tabernaemontana** – Common Blue Star is native to much of the mid- and eastern USA and grows 1-3 feet tall with wider linear leaves that turn a rich golden yellow in the Autumn. The ½ to ¾” - wide dark to pale blue flowers are held in loose terminal heads blooming in spring to early summer. This blue star enjoys full sun in moist soils. Hardy in zones 3-8. Larval food for the Coral Hairstreak Butterfly.

The epithet *tabernaemontana* commemorates one of the fathers of German botany. He was a physician, herbalist and botanist: Jakob Theodor Muller went by the name Tabernaemontanus – the mountain near his place of birth in 1525.

Cultivars include:

‘Blue Ice’ grows about 12-15” tall. Rich navy-blue buds open to rich periwinkle-blue starry flowers over a long period of time. Wider leaves than the species. May be a hybrid.

‘Fontuna’ – This red stem selection has slightly darker blue flower clusters at the end of May into June on 36” or taller plants. In August, the red seed heads are also showy. Zone 4-9. Full sun to light shade. Well drained to dry soil.

‘Halfway to Arkansas’ has foliage that is glossy deep green and uniformly needle-like. Pale blue flower clusters in May. Rounded mounds top out just over 48” tall and wide. Yellow autumn color arrives a bit later than other *Amsonia*. Full sun to light shade in well-drained to moist soil.

‘Short Stop’ is a compact 2’ + 2’ or larger plant that blooms end of May through early June with light blue, conical-shaped flower clusters. While most *Amsonia* have a growth spurt after flowering, this one is stopped short. Great yellow autumn color. Full sun is best. Average to well-drained soils.

‘Starstruck’ has sparkling star-shaped, sky-blue flowers with a full form of new olive-green foliage aging to vibrant green, with lighter midribs and 20” tall dark olive stems. Long-blooming. Full sun, average soil. Good yellow autumn foliar color. A hybrid with *A. rigida*.

‘Storm Cloud’ – is an exceptional form that emerges with dark, near black stems and foliage. This also gives the star-shaped blue flowers a deeper hue compared to the species. New growth often forms on top of the spent flower stems,



*Amsonia tabernaemontana* ‘Storm Cloud’

additionally growing to a total height of 30+ inches. Full sun, average soil. Autumn color progresses from a very attractive burgundy purple to golden yellow.

*var. montana* (from mountainous regions) - ‘Short Stack’ is a bushy, compact, excellent form, growing to about 10-12” tall. Yellow autumn color.

*var. salicifolia* (willow-like foliage) - ‘Midway to Montana’ has foliage around 3/8 – ½” wide on clumps maturing to 3’ tall and wide. Light blue flower clusters bloom at around 12-18”. It has a foliar growth atop the flower heads once they have finished blooming. These adaptable plants will grow in full sun to light shade and most any soil except wet. Autumn color is a striking golden yellow.

Other hybrid cultivars include:

‘Bases Loaded’ emerges with dark green shoots and foliage. These hybrid plants are heavy blooming, with large light blue flower clusters that begin to open at the end of May on 18-24” stems. These plants have a reserved growth spurt to 30 inches after the flowers fade. Average soil. Nice yellow autumn foliage.

‘First Hit’ has foliage that is exceptionally dark and glossy on red-purple stems in spring, quickly followed by clusters of light blue flowers. The habit is also more compact, growing to around 2’ high or more. Nice yellow autumn color too. Full sun, average soil.

**Conclusion:** *Amsonia* are wonderful garden plants that could have a location in nearly every garden. They are tough, long-lived plants with good wildlife benefits. *Amsonia* has just begun to be noticed by the perennial industry, with new cultivars being introduced on a regular basis. I don’t know of any double-flowering or variegated forms. With ‘Storm Cloud’s near-black stems, I think the future holds some good potential for persistent, very dark foliage and more intensely colored flowers.

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Have questions about your membership? Contact Chris Neumann at [wisconsinhps@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinhps@gmail.com) or see [membership information](#).