North Country Master Gardener Volunteer Association (NCMGVA)

Membership Meeting Minutes of February 22, 2018 at Spooner Ag Research Station

Submitted by Vicki Gee-Treft

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING: March 22, 4 pm at SARS

Attendance: Donna Amidon, Pam Davies, Vicki Gee-Treft, Ed Jacobsen, Russ Parker, Sue Reinardy &Tony Webber; via Wisc-Line Anytime Teleconference Cindy Lawson, Janet Mangold, Deb Studley & Kevin Schoessow

1. Meeting was called to order by President Amidon at 1:08 pm.
2. Approval of meeting minutes of January 25, 2018, was postponed until next month when Secretary Roseann Meixelsperger returns.
3. Treasurer’s January report was presented by President Amidon:

$1,792.05 Beginning balance

- 122.23 Plant sale seeds

- 180.00 WIMGA annual dues for active MGVs

$1,489.82 Ending balance

1. Two applications have been received for the April-June MGV Level 1 training. For a viable class, a minimum of 10 applicants is needed; application deadline is March 2. Newspapers printed another recruitment article this week. If the class is not conducted, the group discussed the possibility of planning CEU trainings, e.g., seed saving, social media, and Level 1 & 2 online MGV videos. Scheduling a CEU training before or after existing MGV activities was suggested to maximize volunteer’s time and travel.
2. Children & Youth programming was presented by Russ: the children’s Mini-Masters event is scheduled for March 24, 9-noon, at Bashaw Valley Nursery, and plans are to continue with these children on a to-be-determined basis throughout the summer in the Teaching & Display Garden. This summer the Spooner Elementary School will be conducting a three-week horticulture class, which MGVs will be invited to assist. Last year, the summer class was two weeks long, and supported by MGVs Mark Fox, Jane Lauterbach, Roseann Meixelsperger, Nancy Reis & Russ.
3. With regard to signage, Vicki suggested adding QR (quick-response) codes to garden signage. Sue offered that codes are easily generated from a free downloadable application. A code could be assigned to each plant or subjects in the garden, which could be connected to a description, text with photos, or to a website. A visitor can connect to the information via the QR by scanning with their phone—the “reader” is also a free downloaded application. Vicki has inquired if the All-America Selections (AAS) organization has already generated QR codes for their AAS Winners. Russ noted that the organization sends preprinted signage for each plant.
4. Russ reported that an inventory of seeds has been done. Starting tomato seeds on April 3 (as part of the MG training) will depend on whether the Level 1 training happens. If the training is not held, shifting the seed starting date (to possibly April 9) will be finalized at the March membership meeting. This year native plants will be included in the plant sale, e.g., two Milkweeds (Incarnata & Butterfly Weed), Liatris, Lupine, New England Aster & Black-eyed Susans. Cindy Lawson offered availability of her new greenhouse.
5. Vicki described creating subgroups to plan and maintain the 8 perennial & 8 (AAS) annual beds and the vegetable garden in the Teaching & Display Garden, as well as the Twilight Garden Tour. Kevin estimates Mitch will be returning to work in the garden.

With input and feedback from Terrie Strand & Sharon Tarras, and Roseann’s assistance with the application, we plan to participate again in the AAS competition. An inventory of the received AAS flower seeds has been completed with a description of the flower size, flower & foliage color, height, width, habit & deadhead. Vicki will share the inventory with Cindy & Carla, who will be planting flowers (in a former vegetable bed) for their Twilight Garden presentation.

To promote this year’s AAS theme, *Get Social in the Garden*, she suggested MGVs consider completing the Social Media Training (3 CEUs) for basic-level knowledge of how to use social media to share research-based gardening information through social media conversations with the gardening public. The AAS organization is sending a 12” x 18” sign that invites visitors to take photos in the garden and post with “#AAS Winners”.

Not just focused on social media, having social gatherings and opportunities will be encouraged. For example, if we continue, as in years past, to gather in the garden on Monday evenings (4-7 pm) and Tuesday mornings (8-noon) from June through August (weather permitting) to keep the gardens in top shape, we will emphasize social engagement with each other--as well as the public. A list of tasks needing attention will be posted in the shed. Planting usually takes place the first week in June, and announcements come via email.

Vicki met with a 6-member Spooner middle-school Girl Scout (GS) troop and their leader, inviting them to participate in one of the AAS garden beds. The conversation included engaging them in seed starting (March), touring the garden (April), preparing the bed (May), planting (June), maintaining (summer--with assistance), hosting the GS bed during the Twilight Garden Tour, and participating in fall clean-up. The layout and choice of the flowers would be created by MGVs with designs suggested by the troop (e.g., GS logo/pin). In addition, the troop would be invited to host their own social event in the garden. Feedback from MGVs has been positive with encouragment to engage additional groups/organizations in the garden.

The Twilight Garden Tour is scheduled for August 14, tentative start 4 p.m. Suggestions for the event are requested, e.g., speakers, demonstrations, exhibits, etc. Erin Silva of the UW-Ext plant pathology department has confirmed availability, and MG-program staff Mike Maddox and Susan Mahr may attend.

1. Sue reported Meet Me in the Garden educational sessions in the Teaching & Display Garden are scheduled for July 17, 6 pm, and September 8, 10 am.
2. Publicity/Marketing: Kevin is supportive of NCMGVA having its own Facebook account, and Lorraine is available to assist us and be one of the administrators. Twitter, Instagram & Snapchat may also be considered.
3. Communication to Members: Sue will distribute the NCMGVA handbook as soon as content is finalized, and encourages us to visit our website: [www.northcountrymgv.org](http://www.northcountrymgv.org). Julie Hustvet has again agreed to create our bi-annual (public) newsletter, which is distributed by May 1st to promote the May 19 plant sale. Please submit content ideas and articles to Julie during March: 715-939-1051, [hustvet@centurylink.net](mailto:hustvet@centurylink.net) or [mastergardenervol@centurylink.net](mailto:mastergardenervol@centurylink.net).
4. Vicki recommended NCMGVA purchase Wisconsin MGV name badges for out-of-state MGVs, who are transferring to us. Currently, NCMGVA pays the membership of each of our active MGVs in our state association (WIMGA). Since there is a rigorous process to transfer and become an active Wisconsin MGV, a gift of a name badge could be a token of appreciation. The current badge price is $9, and there are three out-state individuals who are in the process of transferring. Sue Reinardy motioned: that NCMGVA purchase a Wisconsin MGV name tag for an out-of-state MGV, after successful completion of transferring and becoming an active MGV; seconded by Vicki; unanimously passed.
5. Cindy Lawson was recently appointed as a flower judge for the county and district fairs.
6. Roseann Meixelsperger has expressed interest in serving as the NCMGVA’s representative on the WIMGA board. Sue Reinardy, who is the current representative, will follow-up with Roseann and assist in a transition, if Roseann accepts this position.
7. A $75 donation toward WIMGA’s silent auction for the annual fall conference was motioned by Vicki Gee-Treft, seconded by Pam Davies, and passed unanimously.
8. In consideration of applying for a WIMGA grant, there are three levels of funding, and ideas were discussed, such as signage and seating benches in the garden. Since the application deadline is this fall, there will be further discussions.
9. Upcoming educational opportunities:
   1. March 6, 10:30 am, “Cutting Gardens,” at Hayward WITC by Sue Reinardy
   2. June 14-16, Midwest MGV conference at Minnesota Arboretum in Chanhassen.
10. Russ reported on communication with Anna DeMers, 4H & Youth Development Educator in Washburn County, on geocaching in the Garden again this year, creating an event, providing year-round geocaching and promoting through the Spooner Visitor Center. Russ distributed a design he created for a souvenir geocoin, which read “Spooner Agriculture Research Station”. The garden being a geocaching site brings in new audiences, as well as fits into our AAS “Get Social in the Garden” theme.
11. In discussing a possible “tour day” for garden clubs, the end of July may work best as Meet Me in the Garden is July 17 and Twilight Garden Tour on August 14. MGVs will check with garden clubs in our three counties to identify any interest, possible conflicts, and contact information.
12. An overview of upcoming volunteer opportunities was given (see volunteer descriptions on www.northcountrymgv.org website). In addition, Joel (from the Spooner Market and Grill) approached Russ about the Spooner Humane Society wanting landscape ideas. (FYI: Pam Davies has agreed to contact past MGVs from Burnett County to invite them to re-engage.)

Meeting adjourned at 2:30.