

THE SAUK COUNTY GARDENER

Pass-along plants

Jeannie Manis, Wisconsin Certified Master Gardener

*"It's exciting to see things coming up again, plants that you've had twenty or thirty years. It's like seeing an old friend."
- Tasha Tudor*

I was excited to see my white peony bush finally bloomed this year. It was a piece of a peony that our former horticulture educator, Phyllis Both, gave me the summer before she passed away. It came from the plant that originally was a division of the peony bush her grandmother brought over from Poland. This is an example of a pass-along plant – one that is easy to propagate from seed, cuttings, or divisions and typically hard to kill.

The idea of the pass-along plant is not new. Most gardeners dislike tossing a perfectly good plant into the compost pile if they have too many; they'd rather "pass along" those plants

with others. Pioneer women would bring seeds, cutting, and bulbs from home to help them establish their new gardens and to remind them of home. During the Civil War, Southerners had to rely on pass-along plants due to the blockade the North imposed on the Southern ports. For many of us today, a pass-along plant in our garden is a reminder of a particular person.

I have numerous pass-along plants in my garden. I have evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*) in my garden and every time it blooms, it reminds me of my grandmother – the one who first introduced me to gardening. The purple iris that smells like grape bubble gum are from my mother-in-law. Master gardener friends from Missouri gifted me with a Black Gamecock Louisiana Iris, pink Japanese Anemone, and several unique daylilies. I have daffodils and beautiful lavender mums from my sister, Shelly. My friend, John, gave

me numerous huge cannas that are planted throughout my garden. I have a huge blue-green Hosta that was pass-along to me from my friend, Kent. Of course, the white peony is a reminder of my dear friend and mentor, Phyllis Both. As I don't know exactly what the variety is of the Hosta or the peony, I simply named those plants Kent and Phyllis. These are just a few examples of the pass-along plants in my garden. Every time I see those plants, it reminds me of those people who I share a love of gardening with me.

I'm not just the recipient of pass-along plants; I also like to share my plants with garden visitors. It's not unusual for me to walk through the garden with a shovel and pail in hand, ready to dig something my visitors have admired. Last year, I passed-along a piece of an orange iris to my daughter, that was originally passed-along to me from a fellow master gardener. It bloomed beautifully this year for my daughter, she called it her "crown jewel". Mine didn't bloom; it

was too crowded by the yellow false indigo (*Baptisia*) and Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*).

There are some "rules" to follow regarding pass-along plants. If you receive a pass-along plant, you shouldn't say "thank you" or the plant will fail to thrive. Instead, you promise to take good care of the plant. If you are the one passing along a plant, especially to newer gardener, be careful not to pass along something that is considered invasive or aggressive in the garden. That makes me think of spider wort, clustered bell flower, or trumpet vine. I know their nature, so I'm very careful not to share them with "newbies". Also refrain from sharing plants if your garden is plagued with jumping worms or other problems.

If you visit my garden during the Sauk County Master Gardeners Association's 2022 Annual Garden Tour on July 30th, who knows – you just might get a pass-along plant as well. To purchase tickets, visit Eventbrite.com and search for SCMGA Garden Tour.

July's arrival creates a new gardening to-do list

Jeannie Manis, Wisconsin Certified Master Gardener

*"Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it."
- Russel Baker*

It was a busy weekend at our house – at least from a gardening standpoint. I wanted to finish planting my cutting garden, so I ended up working in the rain all Saturday afternoon. I haven't been happy with our front perennial bed for quite some time, so I just decided to tear the whole thing out and started over. It's all planted and mulched, now I just have to keep it watered. Let's hope this second attempt does better.

It's not like there isn't enough other gardening tasks that I had to go looking for a new project. With July's arrival, there are more new things to do. It's time to mulch the peonies and remove the seed pods. Doing so will help keep them looking like a nice shrub in the garden. Pinch back new growth on late-blooming mum

a half inch to encourage bushiness and prevent flopping over. I didn't get some of my sedum pinched back in time and now one has flopped over, leaving the center exposed. The plant isn't damaged, but it doesn't look as nice as it could. Remove infected leaves from hollyhocks to control rust. The chicory is starting to bloom alongside the roads so the Japanese beetle scouts should be arriving soon. Inspect your plants daily, especially those that are susceptible to the beetles (my cannas) and be prepared to pick and toss them into a bucket of soapy water. I like to do my inspection in the morning – I walk around my garden with a cup of coffee in one hand, a bucket of soapy water in the other, and search for beetles. Hopefully, the beetles hit the bucket and not my coffee cup.

It's a busy time in the vegetable garden. My lettuce is just about done, my spinach has started to bolt, and my peas need to be picked. If you grow garlic, cut off the scapes so they

produce larger bulbs - added bonus, scapes are delicious. Throughout the month, harvest potatoes, onions, and garlic when the tops start to shrivel. After harvesting these early crops, plant lettuce and spinach for fall. Pre-germinate them on a moist paper towel or simply plant them just a little deeper than you would have in the spring and mulch lightly. You can also plant collards, kale, and even cucumbers for fall harvest. Replace any mulch that has broken down and keep weeds in check, so they don't go to seed. As for garden pests, be on the lookout for the dreaded squash vine borer. I try keeping my stems near the base of my plant wrapped so they can't easily attack my plants. The imported cabbageworm moth made its appearance in my garden, so I had to break out the Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*).

Keep an eye on your rain gauge. Newly planted trees, fruit trees, and grass need about an inch of water a week during hot summer months. Apply mulch around tree bases to help retain moisture – just don't put it right up against the tree. Mow no shorter than

two inches and fertilize around July 4th if you follow the holiday schedule (Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Halloween.) Remove suckers from fruit trees and remove old canes from summer-bearing raspberries after harvest is complete.

The Sauk County Master Gardeners Association's 2022 Annual Garden Tour is fast approaching. For only \$10, visit ten local gardens on July 30th. Visit Eventbrite.com and search for 2022 Annual Garden Tour to purchase tickets. Have a safe and happy 4th of July weekend!

Annual Wisconsin River Canoe Race slated for July 10th

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area communities. The Lions Challenge takes place on the 8-mile course from Gotham to Muscoda with race time at 11:00 and canoes crossing the finish line at noon or a little after. Spectators are invited to cheer on the racers as they cross the finish line at Muscoda.

The Lions Club will serve a delicious pulled pork sandwich plate prepared

by Chef Michael Ernst. Sides include potato salad, baked beans and coleslaw. The cost of the meal will be \$10 and will be served from the shelter east of the Veterans Memorial from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Sunday. Eat at the shelter or carry out. Cold beverages also will be available. Proceeds from the food stand will support a variety of Lions Club projects.

Cupp said, "The new twist of using the 25-foot long voyageur canoes in the Cupp vs. Schneider format should make for an interesting and fun event. I know James has been in training for the last year to exact revenge after losing a tough battle in 2021 so the paddlers in my boat will have to bring their 'A' game."

For more information, call Mark Cupp at (608) 739-2179.

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Whippoorwills and Words: An Evening on the Wisconsin River 2022

JULY 06, 2022
7:30 PM - 9:30 PM
FERRY BLUFF STATE NATURAL AREA
E9974 STATE RD 60
SAUK CITY

REGISTRATION REQUIRED - \$45



Please bring your own water/beverage. You must be able to hike up a steep hill a short distance (about 15 minutes) to participate in this event. Unfortunately, there is no accessibility for those with movement restrictions.



To register contact Diane Schwartz at 608-358-8314 or go to Eventbrite and search "Whippoorwills and Words"

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