



Kewaunee County Garden Club Newsletter



January-February 2026

A New Year ... A New Garden!

A new year, a new garden is a perfect theme for planning and refreshing your garden space, focusing on resolutions like improving soil, starting seeds indoors early, understanding plant needs, managing pests naturally, and planting ground covers for weed suppression. It is a great time to learn about nature's cycles, prune existing plants like fruit trees, and set goals for a healthier more vibrant garden by focusing on soil health and natural processes.

Planning for 2026

- **Ideal Start Time:** January through March are the recommended months for planning your garden, ordering seeds, and starting seeds indoors.
- **Soil Preparation:** Experts recommend investing in premium topsoil or mulch like weed-free garden straw to feed soil organisms and maintain temperature.
- **The 70/30 Rule:** Allocate 70% of garden space to native plants for the majority to enhance resilience and reduce maintenance. Use the 30% for experimental or less common plants to diversify the garden.
- **Best Fertilizer:** Always have your soil tested first! Add compost as it builds healthy soil by feeding microbes, improving structure, and providing slow-release nutrients, supplement the soil with organic options like worm castings, aged manure, or balanced granular feeds (like 5-10-10 for fruiting plants), using balanced formulas like 10-20-10, or an all-purpose organic blend for general growth.

Gardening, by its nature, means getting your hands in the soil. Soil is an incredibly rich source of natural bacteria, minerals, and micro-organisms. Touching the earth regularly exposes the body to beneficial micro-organisms (*and small amounts of harmful ones*) that can boost your immune system.

A garden full of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and edible plants in general belongs to a person that is practical and self-sufficient. These gardeners are resourceful and intentional in the way they live and sustainability is more important to them than aesthetics.

Clinical studies show a positive correlation between being outdoors and participating in activities like gardening and mental health. Time in nature can lower mental fatigue recovery time, improve concentration levels, and reduce psychological distress, depression symptoms, clinical anxiety, and mood disorders.



Programs and Events

Tuesday, January 27—'Good Bugs—Bad Bugs' - Barbara Piechocki at ESI Hub
6:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 14—Home and Garden Expo, Madison

Tuesday, February 24—'Year in the Life of My Tomatoes' with Tom Zenner

Tuesday, March 24—Review of Garden Expo

Tuesday, April 21—Meeting with HCE—'Native Plants' with Marie Otto
Kewaunee County Highway Department at 6:30 p.m.



Program Ideas— A challenge to gardeners to choose a program and present to fellow gardeners at one of the meetings! Let Tom Z. know and what month you would like to present the same! Have a program already planned?

- 1. Community Service** (*community gardens, beautification projects, educating, volunteer options, etc.*)
- 2. Preserving without Canning**
- 3. Glitter in the Garden**
- 4. Sleep — Creep — Leap for Perennials**
- 5. Garden Tools** (*old to present*)
- 6. Garden Crafts—Floral Arrangements** (*fall*)
- 7. Plant Propagation**
- 8. Air Fryer Drying: fruits, flowers, herbs ...**

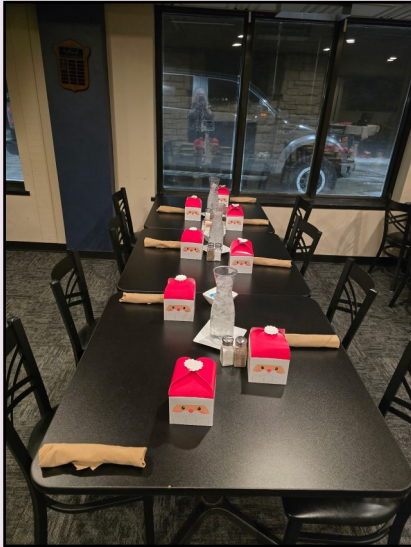




Garden Club Christmas Party



Photos submitted by Barb Smith and Tom Zenner





Bulb... to Bulbs

Have you ever wondered if the breeders or hybridizers got inspired by the Christmas bulb lights or just looking at a rainbow? Where did the bulbs originate? Where and how were different petal colors accomplished?

Let's consider the Christmas Amaryllis Bulb:

The Amaryllis bulbs are native to South America and were brought to Europe by the Dutch in the late 1600's and early 1700's. Because they come from the Southern Hemisphere, their natural growth cycle allowed them to be shipped while dormant and bloom during the European winter.

The incorporation of colors into the bulbs occurs through three primary mechanisms: biological pigment synthesis, historical selective breeding, and accidental viral infection.

1. Biological Pigment Synthesis: The natural colors of the flowers are determined by the concentration and distribution of chemical pigments within their cells.

- **Anthocyanins:** These water-soluble pigments create red, pink, purple, and blue hues.
- **Carotenoids:** These produce yellow and orange tones.
- **Pigment Combinations:** The final color often depends on the balance between pigments. For example, an orange flower is created when high concentrations of carotenoids mix with anthocyanins.

2. Historical Selective Breeding and Hybridization: Human intervention has significantly expanded the color palettes of flowers from their original form.

3. Accidental Viral Infection: Historically, some of the most famous petal colors were the result of a pathogen rather than deliberate breeding.

- During the 17th century, 'Tulip Mania' the highly sought-after striped and feathered patterns were caused by a virus.
- The virus disrupted the distribution of anthocyanins in the petals, creating irregular patches or streaks of color known as 'color breaking'.



Sue Hepp



Barbara Piechocki



Randi Tassoul



Amaryllis Bulbs Grown in Water

Thanks to Barb Smith and Jean Rankin for their guidance ...



Garden
& GREEN LIVING EXPO
PBS Wisconsin | 2026

BUS TRIP
SATURDAY FEB 14TH

\$65.00 per person
includes:

transportation to and from the expo,
admission ticket and refreshments
on the bus.

For more info:
www.kcgardenclub.org



Pick-up Points and Times
Algoma- Nicolet Bank parking lot 5:30am
Kewaunee- Middle School, South parking lot 6:00 am
DePere- Park and Ride Hwy G, Main Ave 6:40am
The bus will leave promptly. Please be on time so we can meet our arrival schedule.

Remit Payment to:
Ann Brunner
N2420 Lakeshore Rd
Kewaunee, WI 54216
Must include your name, phone #, email and pick up point
*email confirmation upon receipt of payment.

Reservation Deadline February 9th

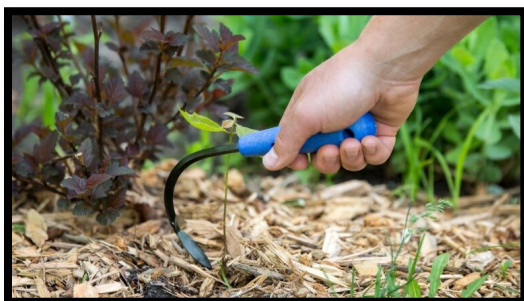
Some of the Seminars ...

1. Honeyberries: A Promising New Berry Crop for the Upper Midwest
2. Cultivating Community Through Gardening
3. Take Two Chickadees and Call Me in the Morning
4. Coping with Environmental Extremes in Your Garden
5. Gardening for Hummingbirds
6. Creating a Seed-Saving Garden
7. Magnificent Monarchs
8. Attracting Birds to Your Garden
9. Truffle Cultivation: A New and Exciting Prospect
10. The Beauty of Blooming Peonies
11. Gardening in a Warming Wisconsin
12. Food Preservation Inspiration
13. Ten Disease of Native Plants
14. The Life of A Native Perennial Garden



Some of the Demos ...

1. Beneficial Mushroom Coffee, Extracts, and Powder
2. Explore Seed Harvesting and Horticultural Seed Basics
3. Preserving Foods without Canning
4. Fearless Composting
5. Growing Mushrooms on Logs
6. Cooking with Herbs: Appetizers to Desserts



Garden: Benefits of Snow



First off, gardeners don't have to shovel in the garden! Who doesn't appreciate the beauty of a snowy day which beautifies the landscape? It is a time to reflect on the season slowdown and a time for plants to hibernate.

These are some important benefits of snow in the garden ...

1. **Snow acts as an insulator.** Snow is 90 to 95% air which makes it an excellent insulator. Freshly fallen snow can protect perennials from an approaching cold snap.
2. **Snow prevents temperature fluctuations.** During early and late winter, there can be swings in temperature from mild to freezing, sometimes overnight. A layer of snow can shield against the freeze-thaw cycle and prevent temperature fluctuations from confusing or damaging plants.
3. **A Natural Fertilizer** (*poor man's fertilizer*). As snowflakes fall through the air, they pick up nitrogen. The snow in turn delivers the nitrogen into the soil as it melts.
4. **Snow is nature's mulch.** During the winter months, the snow protects the soil from sun exposure and wind erosion. A consistent layer of snow on the soil can also help the soil retain its existing moisture.
5. **Snow is a seed starter.** It provides natural cold stratification essential for spring sprouting of seeds.
6. **Winter weather kills garden pests and diseases.** Cold temperatures and prolonged snow cover can reduce the populations of overwintering pests, such as aphids, whiteflies, and some fungal spores. Many insect larvae, eggs, and pathogens cannot survive prolonged exposure to freezing conditions.
7. **Enhances soil structure.** The weight of the snow compresses the soil slightly, which aids in breaking down organic matter. As the snow melts, it encourages soil particles to settle into a more cohesive structure, improving aeration and drainage.
8. **Winter shelter for wildlife.** Winter gardens can serve as a haven for wildlife and pollinators. Snow-covered plants and trees provide shelter, while seed heads left on coneflowers and sunflowers can offer food.
9. **Winter exposure creates stronger plants.** Being exposed to cold weather can help certain plants build resilience, making them better adapted to future conditions. This is especially true for cold-hardy vegetables like kale, Brussels sprouts, and garlic.
10. **Snow reveals visitors to the garden.** Animal tracks are more visible in snow such as birds, rabbits, mice, cats, dogs, foxes, skunks, coyotes, deer, and more, depending on where you live.

Officers:
President: Tom Zenner
Vice President: Cheryl Eberle
Secretary: Sue Hepp
Treasurer: Ann Brunner

Marketing Committee:
Tom Zenner
Barb Smith
Cheryl Eberle
Nancy Lamack
Joel Weichelt



www.kcgardenclub.org

♥ Happy Valentines Day ♥



Valentine Gardens

<https://www.valentinegardens.org/>

The Valentine's are licensed educators who live on a five-acre farm just north of the UWGB campus in Green Bay. Sarah and Mark believe it is important to farm sustainably and to use organic practices that protect and give thanks to the land, air, and water, making a healthy and quality of life possible. These are some of the animals, trees, berries, veggies, and bees you will find on their farm ...

- Over 100 varieties of fruit trees (*apples, cherries, peaches, plums, and pears*)
- Native plantings of wildflowers and grasses
- Goats
- Chickens and turkeys
- Over an acre of garden beds
- Honeybees
- Greenhouse
- Raspberry, blackberry, elderberry, aronia, gooseberry, currant, honeyberry patches
- Organic gardening practices

