



## Newsletter October 2023

**Help us better serve you!**

Please take a few minutes to tell us about your experience so far with the BCSL, and how we can make things even better for next year!

Click [here](#) to take our survey.

### Calendar of Local Garden Related Events:

October 1, 9am - 5pm (free)

[Fall Family Festival](#)

Green Bay Botanical Gardens

October 1, 10am - 11am (free)

[Basic Seed Saving: BCSL Seed Stewards training](#)

Green Bay Botanical Gardens

October 6, 9am - 7pm (free)

[Seymour Park Food Forest and Community Garden Workday](#)

Seymour Park, 330 S. Ashland Ave.

October 12, 6pm - 7pm (free)

[Creating and Managing Landscapes for Native Bees](#)

Virtual, Wild Ones

October 17, 6pm - 7:30pm (\$)

[The Indoor Garden](#)

Green Bay Botanical Gardens, virtual option available

October 18, 6:30pm - 7:15pm (free)

[Food Waste Composting Workshop](#)

Brown County Library East Branch, 2255 Main St

October 19, 6pm - 8pm (\$) **Green Thumb Gardening: [Getting the Garden Ready for Winter](#)**  
Virtual, UW Extension

October 25, 6:30pm - 8:30pm (free) **[Diseases of Houseplants](#)**  
Virtual, UW Extension

October 31, 12pm - 12:30pm (free) **[Debunking Houseplant Myths](#)**  
Virtual, UW Extension

November 1, 6pm - 7:30pm (free) **[Planning a Rain Garden](#)**  
Brown County Central Library, 515 Pine St

Nov 6-9 (\$) **[Friends of the Library's BIG Book Sale](#)**  
Brown County Central Library, 515 Pine St

November 9, 12pm - 12:30pm (free) **[Adaptive Gardening Tools for your Holiday Gift List](#)**  
Virtual, UW Extension

November 16, 6pm - 7:30pm (free) **[The Gardener's Guide to Prairie Plants](#)**  
Virtual, Wild Ones

## One Seed, One Community

This growing season is near the end, but we will continue to build community with our program by collecting and packaging Dragon Tongue Bean seeds. Seeds may be dropped off at the Brown County Central Library on the second floor, or at the Brown County Extension Office located in the STEM Center. Simply put your beans in an envelope with your name, and drop them off in the box. It's exciting to know that seed packets next year will contain seeds that we collectively grew. Thanks for your support in helping our community become more sustainable.

Submitted by Peggy, NEW Master Gardener

## Seed Saving

Saving and storing seeds is an important part of gardening, as it allows you to preserve and propagate your favorite plant varieties. The following are some tips on how to properly save and store seeds:

1. **Harvest seeds when they are fully mature:** Seeds must be left on the plant until they are fully mature before they are harvested. This ensures that they have reached their maximum size and are fully developed.
2. **Clean and dry seeds thoroughly:** After harvesting, clean the seeds by removing any remaining plant material. Dry the seeds by spreading them out in a single layer on a tray or screen and placing them in a warm, dry location for at least two weeks..
3. **Store seeds in a cool, dry place:** Once the seeds are thoroughly dry, store them in a cool, dry place to prevent moisture from causing them to mold or rot. If you are saving seeds for the BCSL, we suggest you store the seeds in a breathable container like paper envelopes or paper bags.
4. **Label and date the seeds:** Be sure to label the seeds with the name of the plant species, variety, and date of harvest. This will help you keep track of the seeds and ensure that you know what you are planting next season.

By following these simple steps, you can save and store seeds successfully and enjoy the benefits of growing your favorite plant varieties year after year.

Submitted by Peggy, NEW Master Gardener  
OpenAI. (2023)

## **Embrace the Seasons: Vernalizing Native Plants by Fall Planting**

Vernalization is the process by which certain plant species, particularly those native to temperate regions such as Wisconsin, require a period of cold temperatures to trigger germination. This adaptation helps plants time their growth to coincide with more favorable spring conditions, reducing the risk of emerging during a late frost. There are several ways to accomplish this, including placing your seeds in moist soil and storing them in your refrigerator for a period of time, or winter sowing in milk jugs. The easiest way is by simply planting in the ground in fall. By directly sowing native seeds in fall, you can harness the power of winter's chill to initiate this essential process and cultivate hardy, thriving native plants that are well-suited to Wisconsin's climate.

Outdoor fall sowing of native seeds is very straightforward. Wait until we are regularly getting frost at night to make sure the seeds recognize they need to wait till spring to germinate.

1. Choose native plant species that are well-suited to our area and tolerate vernalization. Currently, the BCSL offers native seeds that do not require, but easily tolerate vernalization. In future, we hope to bring you more native seed offerings, and many do require vernalization.
2. Clear the planting area of weeds and debris. Loosen the soil to a depth of a few inches and amend it with compost or organic matter if needed.
3. Follow the recommended planting depth for your chosen native seeds. After planting, water the area to settle the seeds and provide them with the moisture they need for the vernalization process. Apply a thin layer of mulch to help maintain soil moisture and protect the seeds.
4. LABEL!!! Your seeds will not sprout until spring and it will be hard to remember what you planted/where you planted it without labeling well. I like to lay a few sticks in a triangle or square and plant within those borders, so I know where my seeds are. And label using a marker that won't fade or wipe off the tag.

Currently, all of our native seed offerings require light to germinate, so surface sowing or sowing to a depth of 1/8" with a thin layer of mulch will give you the best chance of success. Many seeds require some level of moisture during the vernalization process, so during dry spells in fall you may want to periodically water lightly. Once we get snow cover on the ground you should not need to water until spring.

In addition to being easier for the gardener, outdoor vernalized seeds for native plants tend to have higher germination rates compared to seeds planted in warmer conditions. Native plants grown from vernalized seeds are often more resilient and better adapted to local environmental conditions, making them hardier and less susceptible to disease and pests. By mimicking the conditions these plants have evolved to thrive in, you can grow your garden to handle the specific conditions of Northeast Wisconsin. Embrace the seasons, and let the cold of winter work its magic to bring your garden to life in the spring!

The Brown County Library and the NEW Master Gardeners will be offering training for winter sowing seeds in milk jugs in January. Watch our calendar for updates!

## Living Soil and Planning Your No-Till Garden

Last month we talked about starting your seeds indoors as well as how to move them outside to the garden as discussed in Jesse Frost's book "The Living Soil Handbook". This month we are talking about interplanting (also known as polyculture, multi cropping or companion planting). Interplanting is a broad term, describing any technique where multiple different species of plants are planted together. All plants grow with other species in nature, so interplanting is more closely mimicking the environment where that plant evolved to grow. This can be done to serve several purposes.

Sometimes intercropping helps fill in unused above ground space between slow growing plants. For example, tomato plants should be planted 2-3 feet apart, but it takes them a long time to grow enough to fill that space. So you can interplant a quick growing plant, such as lettuce or radishes, in that space. While the tomatoes are young, the interplanted crop provides diversity and photosynthesis to the soil and you get to harvest an additional crop from that space. Relay cropping is the reverse of that, you plant your new crops into spaces between your current ones shortly before you harvest, and then once you harvest your current crop the new one is already growing.

You can also use interplanting to fill in above ground gaps. When a planned plant fails, such as a tomato plant, that leaves a large gap in your garden row. You can interplant other complementary crops in that space. Interplanting does need to consider how the roots of each plant grow. So for example you don't want to plant different plants close together that both have sprawling roots or they may compete with each other. Interplanting should be done considering both the above ground and underground qualities of each plant.

Interplanting can be used in such a way that the attributes of one plant, such as height or nitrogen fixation, help the surrounding plants. This year, the BCSL offered a 3 sisters planting of corn, beans and squash. The corn provides a trellis for the beans, the squash sprawls over the ground to provide good ground cover, and the beans fix nitrogen in the soil. There are many examples of interplanting used historically as well as currently in farming and gardening.

In some situations, certain crops are interplanted because they have a known ability to either repel certain pests (such as marigold used to repel aphids) or draw in certain pests as a trap crop. With trap cropping, the gardener will plant a sacrificial plant/plants that you will allow insects to eat, thus keeping them away from the crop you want. Blue Hubbard squash is an example of a trap crop. According to the University of Missouri, Blue Hubbard is highly preferred by both squash vine borers and squash bugs, so planting Blue Hubbard around the perimeter of your garden may help draw those insects to it and away from your other squash plants. (1)

Some plants can be used in interplanting to draw in predators of a pest you need to deal with. BCSL offers Mountain Mint, which is a preferred food source for adult scoliid wasps. Scoliid wasps prey on the larvae of scarab beetles to feed their own larvae, and Japanese Beetles are a species of scarab beetle. “Female Japanese Beetles burrow a few inches into the ground to lay their eggs. Their larvae, often called grubs, develop underground and feed on the roots of plants. Female scoliid wasps find and enter the underground burrows of Japanese and other scarab beetles, and lay an egg on each grub. The wasp larva hatches and consumes the grub.” (2)

Intercropping does not need to be just annuals either. Plant guilds are primarily perennial plants that humans have intentionally interplanted to take advantage of each of the plant’s attributes. Midwest Permaculture gives a wonderful explanation of plant guilds in their [Plant Guilds E-book](#). “Plant guilds are a combination of form and function. The goal is to mimic the stacking and relationships found in nature while also providing useful resources to humans. Drawing from the idea of a food forest, we can generally identify at least seven layers that occur in an ecosystem:

- Overstory
- Understory
- Shrub
- Herbaceous
- Groundcover
- Vining
- Root

However, this can change depending how the guild is organized. For example, a plant that is usually in the understory, such as a semi-dwarf fruit tree, might be the tallest plant in a specific guild and in effect be the overstory. The functions of a plant guild can be of benefit to humans, wildlife and the plants themselves. They are limited only by our imaginations and can include:

Edible fruit, vegetables, roots  
Animal fodder  
Medicinal plants  
Nitrogen fixers  
Nutrient accumulators  
Forage for pollinators  
Insectaries  
Pest control  
Biomass for soil building  
Raw materials for lumber, crafts, fiber  
Fuel sources

Not all guilds will contain every function just as they may not contain every form.” (3)

A perennial plant guild where each of the plants provides a source of food for humans is known as a food forest. In Green Bay, we have our very own at Seymour Park! This Food Forest is a collaborative effort from many groups and individuals in the Green Bay area, spearheaded by the Seymour Park Neighborhood Association and the City of Green Bay Parks & Recreation. To learn more, go to Seymour Park Food Forest [Comprehensive Plan](#) or read this [article](#) from Insight Publications. Seymour Park also has a workday coming up on October 6, where you can participate in adding to the food forest. Sign up [here](#).

- 1: [https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/2017/3/Trap\\_cropping/](https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/2017/3/Trap_cropping/)
- 2: <https://the-natural-web.org/2015/08/19/combating-japanese-beetles/>
- 3: <https://midwestpermaculture.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Plant-Guilds-eBooklet-Midwest-Permaculture.pdf>
- 4: <https://greenbaywi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10971/Seymour-Food-Forest-Comprehensive-Plan>
- 5: [https://www.insightonbusiness.com/latestnews/grant-helps-fund-seymour-park-food-forest/article\\_f60041f2-3221-11ee-8deb-0729bc15b954.html](https://www.insightonbusiness.com/latestnews/grant-helps-fund-seymour-park-food-forest/article_f60041f2-3221-11ee-8deb-0729bc15b954.html)
- 6: <https://www.facebook.com/events/328975806253815?ref=newsfeed>

Submitted by Melissa, NEW Master Gardener

## Composting

Composting 101: Composting is a great way to reduce waste and create a nutrient-rich soil amendment for your plants. If you're just starting out, using



leaves is a great way to get going. This is the perfect time of the year to create a leaf pile to make leaf compost.

First, gather a pile of dry leaves. You can use leaves from your yard or collect them from a nearby park or neighbors. Avoid using leaves from walnut trees, as they can release chemicals that can harm plants. Find a spot in your yard to create your compost pile. Ideally, it should be in a sunny area with good drainage. You can use a bin or simply start a pile on the ground.

Start by layering a few inches of leaves on the bottom of your compost pile. Add some green material like grass clippings. Continue to alternate layers of brown (leaves) and green (grass clippings) material, making sure to keep the pile moist but not too wet. Over time, the pile will break down and turn into nutrient-rich compost that you can use in your garden. Just be patient - it can take several months or longer for the compost to fully mature. With the right conditions, it will be ready next summer. Happy composting!

If you would like more information, join us at the **Food Waste Composting Workshop** on Wednesday, October 18 from 6:30 pm - 7:15 pm at the **EAST Branch Brown County Library**.

Submitted by Peggy, NEW Master Gardener  
OpenAI. (2023)

## Featured Local Organization: 4-H

Did you know, October is 4-H month? 4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization, with more than six million members and over 90,000 clubs. In Brown County we have over 500 youth members, over 50 certified adult leaders plus parents that volunteer.

4-H involves youth in project-based education. Through project learning, youth can explore their interests ("sparks") and master new skills. 4-H projects are meant to be hands-on to create a memorable learning experience. Since 4-H started in the early 1900s, youth have learned by doing. This hands-on process allows youth to understand not only how to do something but also why they are doing it. Youth are involved in gardening, animals, robotics and many other projects. They take part in educational experiences locally and worldwide.

4-H Pledge





Head, Heart, Hands, and Health are the four Hs in 4 H, and they are the four values members work on through fun and engaging programs.

I pledge my HEAD to clearer thinking, my HEART to greater loyalty, my HANDS to larger service, and my HEALTH to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

To learn more about 4-H in Wisconsin, go to <https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/>.

To learn more about 4-H in Brown County, go to <https://www.browncountywi.gov/departments/extension-brown-county/4-h-youth-development/>

Submitted by Eileen, NEW Master Gardeners

## Plant Profile: Anise Hyssop



Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) is an herbaceous perennial that is native to northern North America. It is commonly found in prairies, dry upland forested areas, plains of the upper Midwest, and from the Great Plains into Canada. It is a member of the mint, or Lamiaceae, family. It is

hardy in zones 4-8 and some references list it as hardy even to zone 3.

Anise hyssop does best in full sun but will tolerate part shade. It can grow in average, dry to medium moisture soil. Once established, it can tolerate dry conditions well. Deadheading will encourage additional blooms. This plant spreads by rhizomes and through self sowing, but undesired seedlings are easy to pull. It easily grows from seed planted in spring and often flowers the first year. Its seeds



need light to germinate so only cover lightly with soil. Cold moist stratification improves germination. Rhizomes can also be divided and planted in spring or fall. It looks great as a taller part of a perennial border, in native gardens, in herb gardens and is particularly impressive in masses or drifts. It combines well with other natives such as rudbeckia, echinacea, monarda, or verbena.

Like other members of the mint family, anise hyssop has square stems. The stems are strong and, despite growing 2-4 feet tall, rarely need staking for support. Its leaves are opposite each other on the stems, ovate to broad lanceolate in shape, with toothed margins, and new foliage often has a purplish hue. The leaves have a licorice-like scent and can be used in teas, to flavor jellies, or even in salads in small quantities. Dried leaves are often used in potpourri. While the flowers are edible, they are not scented.



Flowers of anise hyssop are cylindrical and appear on the end of stems by mid summer and bloom well into fall. Looking closely one can see that the flower head actually consists of the many flowered verticillasters, or false whorls, forming the showy 3-6 inch terminal flower spikes. The tiny, tubular, two-lipped flowers are favored by pollinators, despite being unscented, because of their abundant nectar. It is not typically bothered by deer, but rabbits will munch on it. Dried flower heads left over winter will attract birds who eat the seeds.

Despite its name, anise hyssop is not closely related to either anise (of the carrot or apiaceae family) nor to hyssop, which is a European plant used as a healing herb. There are many different hybrid varieties of Agastache that vary in flower head and leaf colors. One hybrid, commonly known as lavender hyssop, combines the sturdy upright growth habit with fragrant lavender scented flower heads.

Anise hyssop is an excellent addition to any landscape or garden. Easy to grow, prolific, and great for pollinators!

Information and photo credit:  
Wisconsin Horticulture, Division of Extension

## Featured Recipe

### Apple Cake (makes one ring bundt cake)

Ingredients :

6-7 apples, peeled, cored and quartered  
2 1/2 cups of sugar  
3 cups flour  
1 3/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 1/2 cup chopped walnuts  
1 cup butter, softened  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Cook apples, stir and remove lumps, bring to boil. Let cool.
2. Sift flour, baking soda and spices into a bowl.
3. Cream butter and sugar together until fluffy.
4. Fold into the apple mixture. Stir in vanilla and nuts.
5. Fold into the flour mixture.
6. Pour into a greased bundt pan. Cook at 350 degrees. Bake until a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean, about 1 1/2 hours.
7. Cool on a wire rack, then unmold to serve.

Submitted by Kate, NEW Master Gardeners





# Northeastern Wisconsin Master Gardeners

FIND YOUR NICHE AND GROW

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE  
WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED  
IN RECEIVING THIS  
NEWSLETTER, FEEL FREE TO  
SHARE IT WITH THEM



OR CONTACT  
SEEDSAVER@  
NEUMASTERGARDENERS.ORG  
WITH THEIR EMAIL ADDRESS