

Digging in Dodge



Cranberries

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Cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) have a rich history in Wisconsin. Commercial production began about 1860 near Berlin, and today many are fourth and fifth generation growers on the same farms. Wisconsin is the nation's leading producer of cranberries, producing nearly sixty percent of the crop.

Cranberries are a native plant that grows naturally in acid bogs or marshlands, generally an area where no other crop can be grown. Cranberry bog soil is unique in that it consists of alternating layers of sand and organic matter. Cranberries do not grow under water or in standing water, they need a moist but well-drained soil for proper root growth and function.

The cranberry plant is a low-growing, trailing woody evergreen vine that produces stems or runners from one to six feet long. The leaves are tiny and oblong in shape. In Wisconsin, cranberries flower in late June and early July. Berries start to develop after pollination and will change in color from green, to white, to dark red at maturity.

Cranberries are self-fruitful, meaning the pollen from a flower can pollinate itself. Insects, such as native flies, bumble bees and wild bees do the task of pollination. Many farmers also hire beekeepers to bring hives of honeybees to the fields to help with pollination.

Cranberry pests include several insects that attack the fruit or vines of the plant, fungal diseases, and weeds. Cranberry growers follow the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), monitoring pest activity and control pests only when necessary.

Water is used to protect the plants in the

winter. Bogs are covered with water that freezes, the ice layer protects the vines from extreme cold and fluctuating temperatures. Sprinkler systems or flooding, provide water to protect the buds and berries from frost, control pests, and help in the harvesting process.

Cranberries are harvested in the fall – generally mid-September through mid-November. There are two ways of harvesting – dry and wet. The dry method is hand picking or use of mechanical pickers to remove the berries from the vines. Wet harvesting is the most common and cost effective practice. In this process the bog is flooded with water and special equipment churns and loosen the cranberries from the vine. Cranberries have small air pockets that allow them to float to the surface, making it easier to scoop them up.

Cranberries are a “super fruit”- they help maintain a healthy heart, help support memory, and a healthy immune system. They are a good source of Vitamin C and fiber, are fat-free, cholesterol-free, low-calorie, and low in sodium and are the highest of all fruits in antioxidants.

Cranberries can be grown in the home garden, (bog not required) as either an ornamental plant or an edible ground cover. A separate bed may be required as cranberries require sandy, acidic soil. The top six to eight inches of soil would need to be replaced with a mixture of peat moss and sand.

Chris Jacobs,
Dodge County MGV



Cranberry Blossom

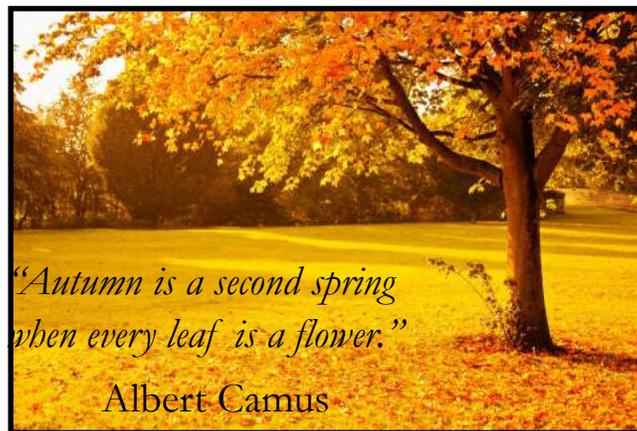
Upcoming Meetings

Anyone with an interest in gardening is welcome to attend the following free programs. Master Gardener meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month. Unless otherwise noted, the meetings are at 6:30 p.m. in the Administration Building, 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau.

No Meetings in November & December—Happy Holidays

January 23—*Project Year in Review* by Dodge County Master Gardener Volunteers. A review of projects they participated in during 2019, complete with photos and discussion.

February 27—*Maple Syrup* by Theresa Baroun Theresa will talk about the History of Wisconsin Maple Industry. We will explore Beginner Maple 101: how to make maple syrup, tree identification, how to tap, and how to finish the product. We will learn differences in grades of syrup, nutritional value, and value-added products. Theresa is a maple syrup producer at Maple Sweet Dairy in De Pere and has been the Executive Director of the WMSPA for four years. In her position she takes care of planning WMSPA Association events, membership, working with the state on maple issues and attends many maple events throughout the year.



Master Gardener Websites

<http://www.wimastergardener.org/>

<https://wimga.org/>

<http://dodge.uwex.edu/master-gardener/>

Master Gardener E-mail

askamastergardener@att.net



Results of 2019 Plant Trials

Summer Squash (6 trials, 4 returned)

Dark Green Zucchini, Grey Griller, Yellow Crookneck

Planting dates: May 21 thru June 2, 2019. All 3 varieties had good germination in most trials. All growers reported excess rain in spring. The wet growing season was probably a contributor to the fungus problems reported in several trials. Squash vine borer was also reported. The traditional dark green zucchini and the new Grey Griller was used in baking with reported good results. Most would grow all varieties again.



Carrots (11 trials, 7 returned)

Danvers Half long, Nantes, Atomic Red

Planting dates: May 14 thru June 2, 2019. Really split results all around with the carrot trials. Most growers reported poor germination with all 3. No insect or disease problems were reported with any. Yield was acceptable to unacceptable. The flavors were reported as being bitter tasting or just "ok". The Danvers and Nantes varieties would be grown again. Only 1 grower would grow the Atomic Red variety again.



Beans, Bush (13 trials, 10 returned)

Blue Lake, Tendergreen, Purple Velour

Planting dates: May 14-June 8, 2019. Blue Lake had the best overall germination. The Purple Velour had the worst. A few of the growers reported that the Velour variety were small and thin plants. Most liked enough to be willing to grow again. Japanese beetles were a problem with several growers. No diseases were reported. (Some of the trials were incomplete because some of the Blue Lake beans were incorrectly packaged and were not bush beans).



Results of 2019 Plant Trials

Basil (7 trials, 5 returned)

Sweet Italian, Lemon, Crimson King

Planting dates: May 14-June 26, 2019. Only a few had good germination. The Lemon was strongly flavored. The Crimson King was very similar in flavor to the Sweet Italian. Overall the favorite was the Sweet Italian. Little disease or insect problems were reported in any of the varieties.

Zinnia, Tall (14 trials, 9 returned)

Cactus Mix, Super Giants, Lime

Planting dates: May 14 thru June 23, 2019. Acceptable to not acceptable germination results were reported. Very wet spring. A small number of growers reported a bit of powdery mildew. Very little insect problems. Wonderful for pollinators. The cut flowers lasted a long time. Most growers would grow again.



Spring 2020 Level 1 MGV Training



2020 Dodge County Master Gardener Volunteer Training

14 Weeks

Begins Tuesday, February 4, 2020

6:00-9:00 p.m.

Registration deadline Friday, January 17, 2020

Mandatory orientation meeting Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Cost is \$150

For more information, call 920-386-3790 or

www.dodge.extension.wisc.edu



Make a Cornucopia from the Garden



Decorate for the fall season with a cornucopia and use materials collected from your garden or landscape. Start with a horn shaped basket available at most craft stores. From the garden, collect mini pumpkins, winter squash, okra, peppers, ornamental corn, and gourds. From the orchard, select apples and pears. From the landscape, collect pine cones, acorns, ornamental grasses, perennial flowers, rose hips, bittersweet, and tree and shrub leaves with fall color. Perennial plants with unique or colorful pods include Oriental poppy and Chinese lanterns.

Enjoy your display through the fall, then when the snow flies, turn it into a winter decoration). Collect greenery from pines, spruce, arborvitae, junipers, and fir trees. Add red apples or crab apples. Dress up the pine cones by dipping them in white, silver, or gold paint. Have fun, be creative, and enjoy!

NEBLINE Newsletter Article by Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate
Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County at <http://lancaster.unl.edu>



Fun Thanksgiving Fact: Female turkeys (called hens) do not gobble. Only male turkeys gobble.

Recycling Christmas Trees

According to the University of Illinois Extension, 93% of real Christmas tree consumers recycle their tree in community recycling programs, their gardens or backyards.

After the holidays, there are several ways to dispose or recycle your tree. (Before recycling your Christmas tree, remove all tinsel and ornaments.) Some suggestions are:

- ◆ Place the tree in the yard or garden for use by birds and other wildlife. The branches provide shelter from strong winds and cold. Food can be supplied by hanging fruit slices, seed cakes, or suet bags on its branches. You can also smear peanut butter and seeds in pine cones and hang them in the tree.
- ◆ Prune off the branches and place the boughs over perennials as a winter mulch.
- ◆ Chip the tree and use as a mulch around trees, shrubs, or in flower beds.
- ◆ If you can't use the tree yourself, contact local government offices, such as the Public Works Department, or your sanitation service. Most communities have some type of Christmas tree disposal program. Some have central collection points, others collect the trees at curbside.
- ◆ Conservation groups may be another option. Some hunting and fishing groups collect trees and use them to provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

For many, selecting and decorating the Christmas tree is one of the highlights of the holiday season, after the holidays recycle the tree and prolong its usefulness.

Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University



Fun Christmas Tree Fact: The most popular Christmas trees are: Scotch pine, Douglas fir, noble fir, Fraser fir, balsam fir, Virginia pine and white pine.

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