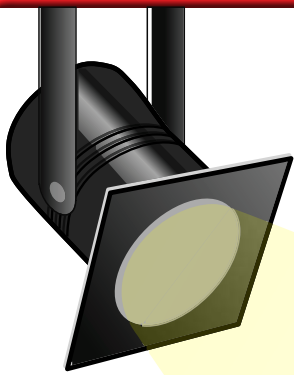


# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Barb Dorzweiler Class of 2013



You know those social media surveys that ask you to tell a few things about yourself then pass it on like a chain letter? I answered one question that my favorite toy as a kid was dirt. I loved playing with dirt, in the garden. Really! I was a strange, quiet kid in a family of nine and I would pick up clumps of soil and pretend I was peeling potatoes. I also noticed the foundation gardens around our big house and grew to love the beauty of the pink, white and red peonies on the west side of the house, the Weigela and the bumble bees that flew in and out of the flowers in the front of the house. As I got a little older, I found zinnia seeds somewhere and planted them between the Weigela and the Mock Orange bush by our big front porch. They grew and they were the most beautiful flowers I ever saw. Instead of “peeling potatoes” I was hooked on growing things. My mom planted red geraniums and Dusty Miller. My dad planted radishes and tomatoes in the backyard. I watched and learned from both of them I’m sure. I’ve always had a garden in every house I lived in. When my son was a toddler, he and I would dress in overalls and work in the big garden behind the garage. If I didn’t keep a close eye on him, I’d find him with a mouthful of dirt! As I cleaned him up, my elderly neighbor would remind me not to worry because “you have to eat a peck of dirt before you die!” Apparently my son inherited my love of dirt.

Today I get my garden boots and baggy jeans or stretchy pants and get out there as soon as I can in spring and I’m usually still out in the gardens as late in the fall as long as I’m not freezing. I often complain that in Wisconsin, March and April are wasted months. The snow is gone and we can see the ground. We just can’t do anything with it until May! I just like being outdoors; being able to actually grow things is the icing on the cake! In early spring and summer I usually find myself in Steins Garden Center or the Home Depot

garden center. I don’t have a favorite garden store, but I go to any garden store that’s open and browse a lot. I usually buy one of something I like, and then plant it to see how it does in my soil. Later, I often can’t find that one variety, so my gardens are design-challenged. Or, maybe I have a “free style” garden design. Transplanting often works things out.

I have a five gallon garden bucket with the canvas pockets that hold an assortment of tools. My favorite is my Stihl pruners because it’s a little smaller and fits in my hand well. It’s also very sharp. I got the leather holster for it to keep it handy and also to not lose it. I’ve lost a couple pruners so I have a couple cheaper models for backup. I love pruning.

Most of my gardens – I have six separate gardens in my postage stamp sized yard – are perennials. I’ve built them all myself when I moved to this house and I constantly shop for and add new stuff that appeals to my eye. Hostas, phlox, anemone, sedums, spiderwort ‘sweet Kate’ (a favorite), pink turtlehead, whoops-a-daisy, Montauk daisy, peony, black-eyed susans and heuchera have a home in my gardens. Shrubs include a dwarf Ninebark, two different willows, spikenard ‘Sun King’ (a favorite), black elderberry, white potentilla, a couple varieties of spirea and a few more. Pretty ‘run of the mill’ for Wisconsin gardens. I have a small strip for vegetables on the side of the garage, the warmest spot in the yard. I usually grow tomatoes and try a few different veggies every year. I use two rain barrels off the garage and two compost barrels. I hope to convert the compost black barrels to open-style wood structures as I think they will be more convenient to use and decompose organic matter faster.

The bane of my gardening existence is clay soil. I add my compost when it’s ready; I buy compost often, but still the clay. I’m sure you can sympathize. I generally put up with other peevish things like chipmunks, rabbits, dandelions, creeping charlie, ants, etc. because I prefer not to overuse chemical



Driveway Garden

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solutions. I don't do Victorian trenches. I've decided to give up my mulch addiction by filling in with more and more plants. My yard is not a showpiece, but I like it. And I get nice comments once in a while from neighborhood walkers.

I've been a Master Gardener since 2013 and I've made good friends and learned a lot. Those were my goals when I joined. I enjoy seeing everyone at the meetings and at

other events. I volunteer most recently with the Hearthstone gardens and the Grounds Committee. When I'm not gardening, I enjoy quilting, going to our cabin near Lake Superior, car trips with the Mister, reading good books and book clubs. As I write this in the midst of the corona virus pandemic and "Safer At Home" isolation, I'm sure looking forward to all those activities again.



**My peony and anemone make a striking combination in early summer**



**A lovely peach iris I got back in the day when we did garden digs**



**My "sweet Kate" spiderwort**