



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Jean Beyer Class of 2010

Like many gardeners, Jean Beyer started working with plants while still in elementary school. "My parents and grandparents always had the typical fruits/veggies type of garden that helped to feed the 7 of us! We couldn't wait to have the first treats of the spring made with pie plant (rhubarb)."

"My dad taught me the beginning basics of gardening, like how to plan and plant a garden, how to care for plants after germination, and how to 'sweeten' the soil in a garden with compost. My dad's idea of composting was to hook up his boat/trailer and scour the neighborhood looking for bagged leaves to bring home in his boat! He had the best nutrient-rich soil. But one of the most important things my dad taught me about was how to save seeds from a garden. We started with simple flower seeds like zinnias, marigolds, sunflowers, and hyacinth runner beans."

That early education at her dad's side stuck with her as she helps to educate others. Besides volunteering with the Outagamie County Master Gardeners, Jean has been a member of the Seed Savers Exchange for 14 years.

"SSE is an organization in which members grow fruits, vegetables, or flowers and save the seeds to either sell or trade with other members (or non-members) wishing to grow these heirloom varieties. I have grown over 1200 varieties of tomatoes and 18 varieties of garlic."

Jean lives on an acre and a half homestead, giving plenty of room for gardens. In addition to the many varieties of tomatoes and garlic, she has perennials and an orchard that produces apples, pears, plums, cherries, peaches, and grapes.



"Among my favorites are hydrangeas because of their large blooms that last forever and make awesome dried arrangements,

smokebush shrubs because they have billowy blooms and beautiful fall color, and last but not least, my personal addiction, the hosta. My gardening friends tease me that I can't turn down buying 'just one more hosta!'"

Her favorite part of gardening is creating outdoor spaces.

"I've studied Landscape Design at FVTC, so I enjoy creating outdoor living spaces that help people to appreciate the outdoors just as much as I do."



She also enjoys being creative in using her bountiful harvest. Ever heard of tomato wine? Jean may have invented it. "Because I have grown so

many tomatoes over the years, I had to get creative with recipes. So my better-half Mike and I started making wine with all the tomatoes we had."

When the gardening season is over, Jean enjoys spending time looking at the latest and greatest plants coming out in spring.

"Some of the websites that I frequent are Gilbert H Wild (Gilberthwild.com), Wayside Gardens (Waysidegardens.com), Song Sparrow (Songsparrow.com), Baker Creek (Bakercreek.com), Seed Savers Exchange (SSE.org), and Totally Tomatoes (Totallytomatoes.com). These websites offer plants, seeds, and gardening supplies for sale."

She also finds inspiration in magazines and catalogs. "I regularly turn to Garden Gate for design inspiration and new plant ideas, and Country Living Gardens for unique ways to plant containers."

written by Jill Van Den Eng

### Jean's Rhubarb Bread Pudding

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|---|---------------|-------------------|
| 8 slices bread                            | 1/4 c butter  | 1 1/2 c milk      |
| 3 c rhubarb chopped into bite-size pieces | 5 eggs beaten | 3/4 c brown sugar |
| 1 tsp cinnamon                            | 1/4 tsp salt  | 1 1/2 c sugar     |
| 1T vanilla                                |               |                   |

Remove crust from bread and cube into 1/2" before putting into a 1 1/2 qt well-greased baking dish. Heat milk over med heat until bubbling, stir in butter until melted. Pour over bread.

In large bowl combine eggs, rhubarb, sugar, cinnamon, salt, and vanilla. Stir into bread mixture. Sprinkle brown sugar over top. Bake 350 for 45-50 min or until set. Serve warm with heavy cream or ice cream.