

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

LU ANN PROTHERO

Written by Jill Van Den Eng

Lu Ann Prothero is no stranger to gardening, growing up on a farm. It is practically in her DNA.

“We always had a very large garden. I carried that on when my children were young.” Most of her gardening knowledge is from her parents or self-taught.

While gardening is her Zen place, it hasn’t always been the safest activity.

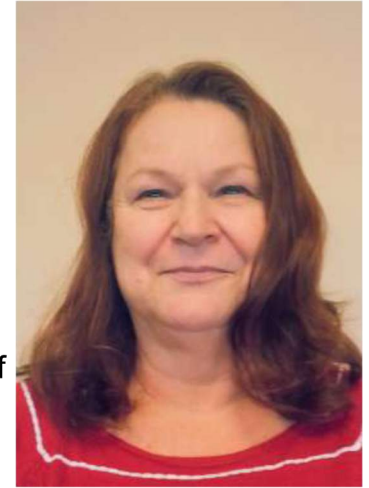
“When I was little, my sister was digging up potatoes and put the fork down and I came running through the garden and stepped right on the tines. She had laid the fork the wrong way ... ouch. We got yelled at to stop fighting ... as I was hopping my way to the house.”

“Then, seven years ago, I was out watering my landscaping at 10 at night and I tripped over my fire-pit cover. One broken elbow and two surgeries later, it’s working great.”

“This year, I got to ride out a tornado in my car ... yup I got caught. Been there done that, don't need to do that again. There were five big limbs down in my back yard, perfectly placed between my deck and the landscaping. As I am cleaning everything up and trying to take a limb off my dwarf apple tree, of course it got hung up. So in my mighty wisdom, I pulled the rope with both hands and the pole came back and hit me on my eyebrow. I was very lucky. There was no damage to the bone or my eye. But I had the most beautiful black eye for over a month. So those are my three, I think I should be good for a while. At least I hope.....”

Lu Ann’s favorite plant is the Hosta.

“Different sizes, different colors, and I have a lot of shade, so they’re perfect.”



She describes her gardening style as keeping it natural. Although she will take advantage of natural resources to create interesting structures, like an old stump turned into a bubbling water feature.

“I love how the moss will grow on it.”

For her, gardening can be a family affair. Her daughter lives behind her and just did her back yard this summer so their adjacent gardens flow together. In addition to coordinating with her daughter, Lu Ann’s black Labrador Retriever Misty is always at her side willing to lend a helping paw.

“She is joined at my hip when I am gardening. I dig a hole for a plant and she drops her toy in it. When I plant a new Hosta, she believes she needs to lay on top of it while I am trying to plant something else. It’s her game and she usually wins and we end up playing. Yes, she’s the boss... I also have a small pond that she believes is her very own. She loves to stand under the waterfall, she is such a dork.”

She may be silly, but Misty the dog does her job of guarding the garden from rabbits and other pests.

Lu Ann considers her family her greatest achievement. She has two children, Kevin (and his friend Kate) and Rhonda (and her spouse Craig). She also has three grandchildren ranging in age from 17 to 19, a grand puppy Lily, four grand kitties, and her faithful dog, Misty.

Since becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer, Lu Ann’s favorite opportunity has been the plant sale.

And her greatest gardening challenge? Planning a landscape design for a lot they recently acquired in Clintonville.

The end of the growing season doesn’t slow her down.

“Most of my friends think I’m nuts, I’m always burning the candle on both ends and I always have a project going.”

This winter she is using her crafty personality to create a picket fence for their property up north and working on creating plant stakes for her hostas. She is also busy with interior projects, like finishing the basement with a gas fireplace.

Besides gardening and crafting, Lu Ann enjoys going for a drive. They frequently road trip to Eagle River or to Ohio to visit family. One of her most memorable vacations was to see the Redwoods with her daughter and family. She also enjoys classic movies such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Sweet Charlotte* with Betty Davis.

When asked what she loves best about living in Northeast Wisconsin, she says without hesitation. “You just never know what season you’re going to get from day to day.”