

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *Janet Carlson*

My first experience with gardening was when my mom reserved garden space by our house in Maine. I was in second grade and planted flower seeds. The snap dragons, bachelor buttons and other flowers emerged and rewarded this kid with multiple blooms. My neighbor across the street even paid me to deadhead her roses. When my husband and I bought our first house, he took over the gardening. After a couple years, we read about the Toward Harmony with Nature Conference presented by the Wild Ones. We became inspired by the conference. I took over the gardening and little by little changed our garden to mostly native plants. We also added new gardens after having success with the original garden. I enjoy watching hummingbirds, butterflies and bees attracted by the gardens. We downsized three years ago, but moved as many plants as possible to our new smaller yard. One of my favorite flowers is hepatica because it is the first to flower in my yard and at my second home. The bees love it.

Our second home is on the Embarrass River where we spend a lot of weekends. There are three areas around the house where we have planted gardens, but nature determines what ultimately grows there. The last few wet years have caused several feet of shoreline to fall into the river when a couple huge trees fell.



I have two daughters who live in Appleton. When one daughter moved into a new house last winter, we were in for a surprise in the spring when most of her trees in her large yard turned out to be buckthorn. Cutting, treating and hauling away buckthorn has been a major project this year. We are making good progress, but still have huge piles to take to the dump.

My husband and I were married in Berlin, Germany when he was in the Army. We visited two years ago to check out the changes and visit old haunts. We also like to travel other places, especially to see animals in the wild. Two of my favorites were Botswana/South Africa and Borneo. In February we were in Portugal and were lucky to make it back home on March 1 before a lockdown took place. It looks like travel will be restricted for a long time so I'm glad we went when we did.



I joined Master Gardeners to learn more about other types of gardening and work on group projects. Currently, I enjoy the camaraderie of working at the Memorial Gardens on Tuesday with a group of Master Gardeners. I have learned so much from Lucy and the other volunteers. When the Eagle Point project came up, I volunteered due to my interest in native plants. The project is led by Dick Nikolai who retired from the DNR. The parcel is along the Fox River and owned by the Fox River Navigational Authority. So far, we have been trying to control invasive species along the river bank and mark off the dimensions of the garden. The eagle keeps an eye on our comings and goings. Next spring we will need volunteers to plant the area. The area hooks up with a new City trail which is almost ready. The city did a wonderful job of clearing out buckthorn and garlic mustard and paving the trail.