



notes

FROM THE GARDENS



Nature's Playground

Where Plants &
Community Take Root



Monk
Botanical
Gardens



Jennifer Plisch, Executive Director

Gardens Staff

Jennifer Plisch - Executive Director
Patrick Murphy - Chief Operating Officer
Kaytie Ruesch - Events & Programming Director
Amanda Valencia - Sprouts Lead Teacher & Outreach Coordinator
Sadie Xiong - Sprouts Lead Teacher
Sarah Loth - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
Lauryn Rammer - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
Sabastian Yaeger - Sprouts Assistant Teacher, Horticulturist & Program Manager

Officers

Mark Munson - President
Tabitha Erlandson - Vice President
Paul Whitaker - Secretary
Jon Plisch - Treasurer

Directors

Paul David, Gillian Battino, Linda Grilley, Jessica Lind, Tom Monk, Meredith Otte, Vickie Richmond Hawkins, Tammy Stezenski, Sid Sczygelski, Lisa Westphal

Mailing & Gardens Address

1901 N 4th Ave, Wausau, WI 54401
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E: info@monkgardens.org
monkgardens.org

Follow us!



Letter from the Executive Director

Hello Gardens Friends and Families!

While it seems to be taking its time, soon enough it will be spring and the Gardens will be abuzz with blooms, pollinators, volunteers, members and visitors. Until then, don't miss our monthly night hikes that are scheduled to align with the full moons, and apparently Mother Nature wants us to have the snowshoes available a bit longer than anticipated!

We have so many new and exciting opportunities and updates to share that I'll get right to it!

- Like and share our pages on Facebook, Instagram & Linked In - many updates and happenings are posted here.
- As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability, our newsletters will be distributed electronically and archived on our website for convenient viewing at any time.
- We welcomed 5 new Board Members - check out our website and postings to learn more about Board Directors Dr. Gillian Battino, Jessica Lind, Meredith Otte, Sid Sczygelski and Lisa Westphal. They and the rest of the Board, composed solely of volunteers, gathered on a cold Saturday in February to continue our planning for the Gardens future and growth. We do this on a regular basis and this year had the opportunity to work with local expert Sarah Hull, a Managing Director with Ankura Consulting and former Director of Bridge Community Clinic. A sincere thank you to Sarah for exceptionally leading the charge with her experience and skill. We are in the drafting phase and will update our About Us section on our website as we proceed.
- Our sponsorship opportunities have grown to include special programming as well as beautification of the grounds. These can be accessed on our website under the support section; give us a call or email with any questions and we can build a package to suit you or the needs and efforts of your company.

Continue reading on the next page.

Your Gardens membership means more than ever! First and foremost, it means your support of this gem in our community and for that we cannot thank you enough!

- Memberships, no matter when they are purchased, are good for 365 days - they no longer follow a calendar year, allowing you to maximize your time at the Gardens and get the most out of your membership!
- **Brand new this year!** ALL memberships include reciprocal membership to over 380 gardens across the US and North America!! That's right, when traveling you have access to any other Garden that is part of the American Horticultural Society Garden Network. Your membership with Monk Botanical Gardens will cover the equivalent entry to any other network garden. There is a full listing of participants on their website.
- **Coming soon!** We've been hard at work updating our systems to give you the best possible experience. This includes access to your very own member portal where you can review your benefits, renew your membership, update your contact information, and purchase tickets to classes and events!
- System updates are slated to wrap up and 'go live' in April. At that time, members will be receiving an email with your membership code. These are easily stored in your Apple or Google wallet without needing to remember your membership card. Not a technology/phone lover? Not a problem, simply print your emailed code. For those needing a card, call the office and we'll be able to help.
- For those who are not yet members, daily passes can be purchased online or visit us on a no-admission/free entry day. Starting April 23, 2026 a membership or day pass will be required. A reminder that we have also partnered with Museums for All to offer reduced admissions for individuals or families who present an EBT card. Do you or your business wish to sponsor a no-admission/free day at the Gardens? Check out our sponsorship guide online.

We're eagerly awaiting spring, the return of greenery and blooms, buses full of students visiting for field trips, summer camp, hosting your group or gathering, and wedding and event season! See you in the Gardens!




Jennifer Plisch



Board members at strategic planning session



Find the Best Membership Level for You



2026 Membership Levels

| Level | Friend | Friend +1 | Family | Contributor | Patron | Benefactor | Visionary |
|---|---------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Price | \$35 | \$50 | \$75 | \$100 | \$250 | \$500 | \$1000 |
| Admission | 1 Adult | 1 Adult 1 Registered Guest | 2 Adults all children under 18 at same address | 1 Family & 1 Registered Guest | 1 Family 1 Guest Pass | 1 Family 2 Guest Passes | 1 Family 3 Guest Passes |
| AHS Reciprocal Membership | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Free Daily Admission | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Early Access to Spring Plant Sale | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Early Access to Camp and Sprouts Registration | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 10% Discount on Select Events and Classes | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Invite to Members-Only Pizza Night | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Seed of the Year Packet | | | | | ● | ● | ● |
| Invite to VIP Events | | | | | | ● | ● |
| Visionary Pin & Recognition by Garden of Choice | | | | | | | ● |



Scan to purchase a membership online or mail a check to:

Monk Botanical Gardens
1901 N 4th Ave
Wausau, WI 54401



A Camp Experience to Remember

by Kaytie Ruesch

Summer is right around the corner, and we are counting down the days to camp season!

Our 2026 Summer Camp season is shaping up to be our most dynamic yet, designed especially for children who crave fresh air, hands-on adventure, and meaningful connection.

Each week will feature nature-based themes that blend outdoor exploration, creative arts, team challenges, and garden discoveries. Campers will build forts, experiment with natural materials, engage in cooperative games, and develop confidence through guided risk-taking and skill-building activities. We are especially excited to expand our offerings for older campers, with programming that keeps them engaged, active, and outdoors; because we know families are often choosing between traditional sports camps and meaningful summer enrichment.

Our goal is to offer both: movement, teamwork, and skill development rooted in a love of nature.

As always, we will prioritize safety, belonging, and joyful learning. Campers will leave each day muddy, happy, and proud of what they've accomplished.



To learn more or register for camp, visit monkgardens.org and click on Education-Children & Families or scan the QR code



Spring

by *Amanda Valencia*

The sun is shining, a new day.

Winter's breeze is flying away.

A sprout peaks through the mud and dirt

Showing all the Earth what it's worth

A promise, a show, a spectacle

A cycle for all to see.

Rejoice and be happy!

Spring, as it's meant to be.



Scan to learn
more about
Sprouts
Garden
Preschool

This time of year is always a special one. Where friendships are as true as the promise of spring. Our Sprouts are almost ready to blossom, and I always take this time to reflect on how far our Sprouts have come. From the last warmth of summer to the early chills of fall. Through the blistering cold days of winter to the warm hug of spring. I am reminded of how much joy can be found in every day, in every season. I wish you all the same!



I Dream of Dirt: A Spring To-Do for Eager Gardeners

by *Sabastian Yaeger*

As another long and quiet winter comes to an end in Wisconsin, I imagine everyone is eager to begin their planting season. Coming from a family of gardeners myself, spring is when my inspiration warms up along with the soil. Growing up, my mom and I would spend our evenings picking and strategizing what flowers we wanted on the porch, counting down the days until a warm weekend would allow us to uncover the beds around the house. Suffice to say, we were dreaming of the soil.

Over the years, some of the best advice I have received is to keep your feet on the ground.

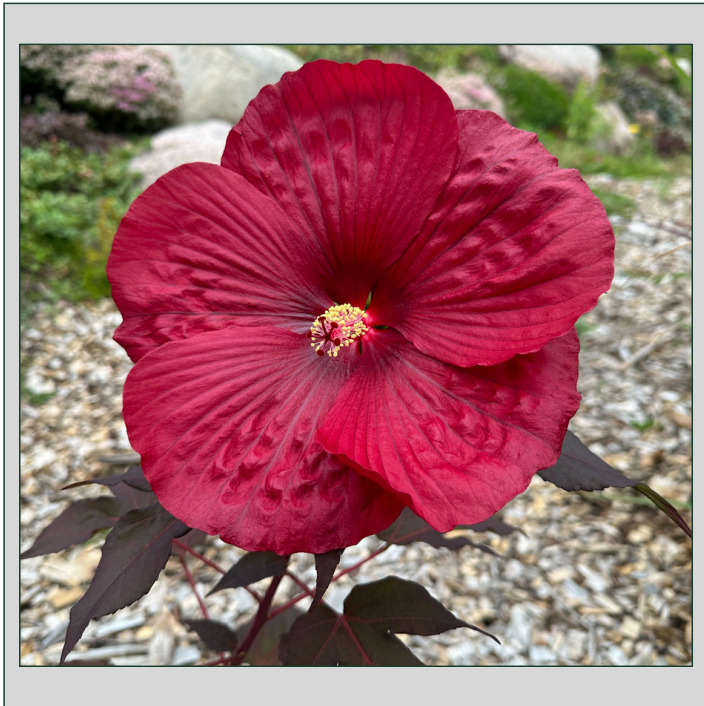
Practice Pruning Patience: Make sure not to prune spring-blooming shrubs, such as azaleas, lilacs, or forsythia, that have already set their flower buds for the year. Enjoy their display first, then prune once they have finished blooming. Pruning them now would cut their show short and cause you to miss out.

Embrace the Mess: Hold on! Don't cut back all the dead perennial stalks until late spring. Many native bees and pollinators nest in the ground or hollow stems. They will appreciate you leaving a quiet corner of your yard with some stalks or patches of undisturbed soil for ground-nesting bees.

Follow Your Nose: Spring is the season of scent; your gardens can be filled with the rich fragrances of the season. It's a great opportunity to create your garden's signature scent, whether from the vinous aroma of daphne, the honeyed scent of viburnum, the classic lilac perfume, or the clove-like aroma of dianthus. Planting near walkways or windows allows you to enjoy these scents most.

Seek Inspiration: Our flora and fauna are beginning to thaw. In a few weeks, spring will be in full swing– the best time to stop by and see our new collection of tulips and daffodils. You'll also notice intricate fern fronds emerging and the first blossoms on our magnolias. See what speaks to you, and if you'd like a helping hand, find me in the Gardens. I'd love to help you create your own spring designs.





A Shared Vision of Inspiration & Growth

by Jennifer Plisch

A place for ALL people of ALL ages to enjoy for generations to come. That is the dream behind the Visions of Growth Endowment Fund. Gifts to this fund, established with an initial gift of \$100,000 from two anonymous donors in 2023, provide enduring support for garden enhancements and internship development.

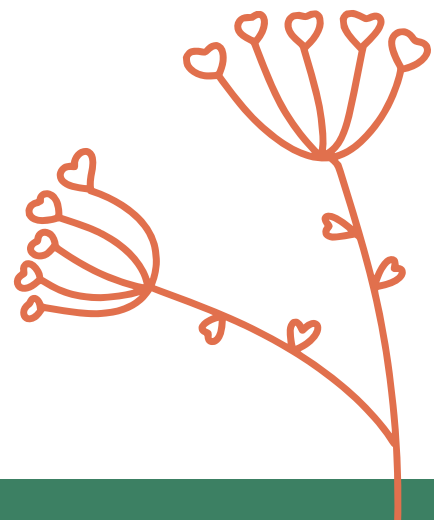
The beauty and power of an endowment fund is that it is a long-term investment strategy. Fund earnings and additional donations from community members continue to grow until harvested by the Gardens for projects that align with the fund's purpose.

We are immensely grateful for the vision of this fund that invests in the future of the Gardens, a place for learning, well-being, and inspiration.

If you too want to help sustain the Gardens forever, please email Jennifer Plisch at jeplisch@monkgardens.org or call 715-722-4771.

“Every single gift is important, every single dollar...it’s time to share a little more of what we have with the community and the places that have added beauty, comfort and peace to our lives over the years.”

- Founding Donors of the Visions of Growth Endowment Fund





BOOZE, BLENDS & BOTANY

returns to the Gardens
on July 9

Sip, Savor, and Socialize.

You are invited to an exquisite affair celebrating vibrant flavors found where the garden meets the glass! Pair sophisticated cocktails with the beauty of our lush botanical setting. Enjoy unique tasting stations run by local experts who will share their passion for craft beverages and delicious pairings. Ages 21+

GARDENS AT TWILIGHT October 16, 23 & 30

*Your Family's Fun,
Illuminated Adventure Awaits!*

We invite you to experience the spectacular Gardens at Twilight, where our beautiful Gardens transform into an illuminated wonderland designed for the entire family. Thousands of lights and interactive stations make this a truly magical experience.



Thank You Sponsors!



See You in the Gardens!

 **>1000**
newly planted
TULIPS

 **110**
varieties of
HOSTAS in the
Shade & Hosta Garden

 **800**
Summer CAMPERS
exploring & learning

 **37**
SPROUTS Garden
Preschool students
graduating in May

