



# notes

FROM THE GARDENS



English Garden  
Coming Soon!

# Cultivating Community

From Soil to Sky...  
Our Gardens Keep Growing!



# Letter from the Board President

Dear Beloved Garden Enthusiasts,

Stepping into the Gardens always leaves me with a profound sense of enrichment. It's a place where each visit gives me something truly meaningful. As I wander among the blooms and pathways, I ponder, "How can I contribute to this extraordinary sanctuary?" Conversations with fellow community members echo this sentiment, affirming that the Gardens fosters a vibrant sense of togetherness.

In my new role as Board President in 2024, I am excited to elevate my commitment to this invaluable community gem. I am joining hands with our diligent staff, forward-thinking Board members, and dedicated volunteers to ensure that every guest feels welcome and truly at home. Together, we are poised to make 2024 a year brimming with warmth and welcome for seasoned visitors and those new to our sanctuary of serenity.

Remember, while "Botanical Gardens" graces our formal title, we are far more than just that. Our array of programs, events, and educational opportunities, alongside a simple stroll down our paths, offers experiences unlike any other. In a world increasingly detached from nature's embrace, we stand as a beacon, calling upon all to return to the soothing rhythms of the outdoors.

Our community is adorned with remarkable organizations, each playing a vital role. Yet, the Gardens holds a unique place, filling a niche that resonates deeply with our mission. We are dedicated to nurturing well-being in individuals, communities, and the environment – painting a fuller picture of a community that cares for all its members. I am immensely proud to call Wausau my home and equally pleased to serve on the Board of an organization shaping our community's landscape, from the soil beneath our feet to the endless expanse of sky above us.

So, I extend a heartfelt invitation: Come, immerse yourself in the Gardens! It is our community's Happy Place – a space to connect with nature, fellow kindred spirits, and your own sense of joy. May your visit here be inspired with meaning, and may you discover countless opportunities to share your experience and give back to this cherished sanctuary.

Paul David

Read more about us:

Follow us:



Paul David, Board President

## Gardens Staff

- Darcie Howard** - Executive Director
- Patrick Murphy** - Facilities & Grounds Director
- Elise Schuler** - Program Director
- Linda Schill** - Development Manager
- Kaytie Ruesch** - Youth & Family Program Manager
- Megan Johnson** - Volunteer Coordinator & Administrative Assistant
- Lydia Phillippi** - Private Events & Social Media Coordinator
- Pat Witt** - Garden Supervisor
- Kari Buck** - Bookkeeper
- Rebecka Hellweg** - Sprouts Lead Teacher
- Amanda Valencia** - Sprouts Lead Teacher
- Sadie Xiong** - Summer Camp Staff & Sprouts Assistant Teacher
- Sarah Loth** - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
- Linda Grudznske** - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
- Beth Grefe** - Sprouts Assistant Teacher

## Officers

- Paul David**, President
- Mark Munson**, Vice-President
- Paul Whitaker**, Secretary
- Jon Plisch**, Treasurer

## Directors

- Julie Bohr, Tabitha Erlandson, Vickie Richmond Hawkins, Susan Lang, Sheila Rossmiller, Tammy Stezenski**

## Mailing Address

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## Gardens Address

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 715-261-6309  
 info@monkgardens.org  
 www.monkgardens.org

# Grounds Update

## Eco-Friendly Gardening

Hey there, gardening friends! With the sun shining brighter and the weather turning into a rollercoaster here in northern Wisconsin, let's have a little chat about eco-friendly gardening. You know, that wholesome, earth-loving practice that makes Wausau's Happy Place even happier?

At Monk Botanical Gardens, we're all about creating dreamy spaces that look picture-perfect and are also tough cookies – resilient enough to stand up to our changing climate. We're talking about gardens that are as strong as they are stunning, offering a cozy home to our buzzing pollinator pals and wildlife friends.

Adding new gardens and facilities is always an adventure, and we're ensuring each addition is resilient, native, and sustainable. The cherry on top? We're weaving these sustainable vibes into every nook and cranny of what we do, from teaching our community all about the wonders of green living to helping your home gardens flourish with our top-notch consulting.

On that note, our garden gurus are back and ready to dish out yard and landscaping advice! Thinking your green space needs a facelift? We've got you. **Call 715-261-6309 to schedule a consultation.**

Our plant sales are not just about selling plants (although, who can resist a beautiful bloom?); they're a gateway to introducing native plants into your life. These little green heroes are easy on the eyes and tough as nails, too, ready to weather whatever Mother Nature throws our way. This year, we invite you to get your hands dirty with us, purchase plants, and donate them to bedazzle our specific garden areas. **Scan the QR code below for Spring Plant Sale dates and details.**

We're buzzing with excitement for summer, and we can't wait to see you at the Gardens. Your volunteer wizardry has left us awe-struck, and your support is like sunshine on our leaves. The future's looking as bright as a sunflower field, and we are all in this together, growing our Happy Place and community one plant at a time. Come on over, and let's sprout some joy. Every little bit we do brings us closer to a greener, more resilient Wausau.

Oh, and if you've got a skid steer or wood chipper gathering dust, we'd love to put it to good use on the grounds. Your donations keep the Gardens blooming!



Liatris "Kobold" Blazing Star



Solidago Fireworks Goldenrod



Lobelia Great Blue



Lobelia Cardinalis Red

Scan the QR code to shop these native plants and more at our Spring Plant Sale!



# New Winter Programming is a Hit!

Warming our hearts as much as a cozy winter fire



With the recent expansion of Sprouts Garden Preschool, we've been able to revitalize our original yurt into a creative and inspirational space for additional programs. Because of your support, our education team has been hard at work brainstorming new and inventive ways to serve out our mission with programs that engage, educate and inspire visitors of all ages at the Gardens. We've even dedicated one of our staff members in a full-time capacity to oversee the youth and family program offerings.

Each of our winter programs was like a snowflake – unique and special in its own way, bringing our wonderful community together even on the chilliest of days. From educational workshops that turned the white winter canvas into a learning experience, to inspirational walks under the crisp winter sky, we've seen the power of nature to inspire and unite us all season long.

Along with old favorites like Weekend Wonders, new programming added, such as Lunch & Learn and Babes in the Gardens, were hugely successful. Babies and their caregivers were invited out to the Gardens for a short story time or activity, and to say there were dozens of rosy cheeks out at the Gardens would be an understatement!

We'd like to thank Hsu Growing Supply for hosting some of our winter Hands-on Plants workshops for adults and kids in their cozy space, and a gigantic thank you to everyone who bundled up, braved the cold, and joined in on the fun at the Gardens. Moments like these show us why our gardens are "Wausau's Happy Place."

Your smiles, curiosity, and laughter have added extra sunshine to our winter days. Your support has not only made this winter a hit, but it's also planted seeds of excitement for what's to come. We can hardly wait to share more experiences with you, filled with learning, growth, and, of course, loads of fun. So let's keep making memories together, one flower, one snowflake, one smiling face at a time.

Remember, the magic doesn't stop here! Stay tuned for the spring blossoms and learning adventures that await in our garden paradise. Until then, keep spreading joy wherever you go – just like the flowers ready to bloom in the seasons ahead. Sending heaps of gratitude and garden-fresh greetings your way from your Programs & Education team at the Gardens!



## Volunteer of the Year 2023

# Amanda Bagnall-Newman

-Written by Jim Force

Amanda Bagnall-Newman loves to see her volunteer work for the Monk Botanical Gardens have an impact.

She helps out as a graphic designer, so her ideas and designs can be seen all around the area on posters, rack cards, digital images, advertising, and wraps on city buses.

"I have no gardening skills, so I help out where I can," says Amanda, our Volunteer of the Year for 2023.

Her work is a big help. It takes some of the marketing burden off the Gardens' staff, while giving our promotional media the professional look that Amanda – graphic designer for Connexus Credit Union – brings to our projects.

She is one of many who discovered the Gardens almost by accident. "I had an apartment nearby, and I would walk down to the Gardens," she says. "I see the Gardens as a community asset, where everyone is welcome. It's inclusive, and I appreciate that they've taken ADA compliance into account."

Amanda's skills, which have been refined through a four-year degree in graphic design, have helped the Gardens promote Booze and Botany, the Luminary Walks, and recently, Blossom of Lights event nights. She enjoys the work. "The Gardens have a great brand book, with a good type font, visuals, and color," she says. Those tools help sustain her enthusiasm for her volunteer projects.

She is also excited to see what's coming at the Gardens. "Every time I go there, there seems to be something new," she says. She's eager to see the Gardens develop into the future, including the master plan and ideas for the Visitor Center.

No doubt she's already thinking of ways to develop graphics and marketing materials for these new developments.



## Legacy Volunteers

At Wausau's Happy Place, we are truly grateful for the incredible dedication of our volunteers. Whether new or with us since the beginning, your unwavering commitment has transformed our garden into something extraordinary.

That's why we're excited to announce our **Legacy Volunteers** program! Going forward, individuals who have contributed 25 hours or more for 10 years or longer will be recognized as Legacy Volunteers. We want to honor those who have stood by us through different seasons of their lives. As a token of our appreciation, Legacy Volunteers will receive a special pin and have their names engraved on a paver by the Potager, forever commemorating their invaluable contributions.

To all our volunteers, whether new or seasoned, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Your dedication has created a haven of inspiration, education, and natural beauty at Monk Botanical Gardens. We are immensely grateful for your continued support in making our community thrive.



Legacy Volunteers: From L to R: Ron Grilley, Claire Aziz, Linda Grilley, Bev Smith, Anne Kieffer, Jane Blick, Paul Whitaker, Vickie Richmond Hawkins

Missing: Jim Force, Suzan Miller, Sheila Rossmiller, Rita Crooks, Marilyn Benz, Scott Wegner, Laura Kuhnert

### Congratulations to our inaugural inductees as of 12/31/23 to Legacy Volunteer status:

- |                         |                   |               |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Anne Kieffer            | Jane Blick        | Rita Crooks   |
| Vickie Richmond Hawkins | Linda Grilley     | Marilyn Benz  |
| Paul Whitaker           | Ronald Grilley    | Scott Wegner  |
| Bev Smith               | Jim Force         | Laura Kuhnert |
| Claire Aziz             | Suzan Miller      |               |
|                         | Sheila Rossmiller |               |



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# WAUSAU'S HAPPY PLACE

*"One of the most pleasant botanical gardens I've ever been to. So peaceful and optimistic. Go here!"*

*- McKinley Noster*

Open now for a first look at our full lineup of spring and summer programs!



## BLOSSOM OF LIGHTS

**Nature. Illuminated.**

### RETURNING FOR A 3RD YEAR...

And we're expanding the showcase with many NEW lighting features!

Join us every  
**Wednesday through Saturday night**  
**September 18 until October 26**

Visit [blossomoflights.org](http://blossomoflights.org) for all event updates!

Would your business like to be a sponsor partner of the Gardens? Please call us at  
**715-261-6309.**