



notes

FROM THE GARDENS



Harvest Time!

Celebrating the bounty of our community.

A publication of
Monk Botanical Gardens



From the Executive Director

Dear Members and Friends of the Gardens,

As the vibrant colors of autumn unfold across the Gardens, I am reminded of how deeply rooted our community is in this place. Each falling leaf marks another season of growth, learning, and connection made possible by your support. Together, we have welcomed thousands of visitors, inspired children through hands-on nature education, and cared for our living collections that make this garden such a cherished sanctuary.

This fall, we continue to focus on sustainability—strengthening our operations, enhancing our plant collections, and preparing the Gardens for a resilient future. Your membership makes this possible. Every visit, volunteer hour, and donation helps us nurture not only plants, but also curiosity, wellness, and a sense of belonging for all who walk our paths.

As we look ahead to the quiet beauty of winter, I invite you to experience the changing season at the Gardens. Take a stroll through the trails, join one of our fall or winter events, or simply pause to breathe in the crisp air that reminds us why we care for this space together.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Jennifer Plisch



Jennifer Plisch, Executive Director

Gardens Staff

- Jennifer Plisch** - Executive Director
- Patrick Murphy** - Chief Operating Officer
- Kaytie Ruesch** - Events & Programming Director
- Megan Johnson** - Volunteer & Resource Director
- Kari Buck** - Bookkeeper
- Amanda Valencia** - Sprouts Lead Teacher & Outreach Coordinator
- Sadie Xiong** - Sprouts Lead Teacher
- Sarah Loth** - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
- Laurn Rammer** - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
- Sabastian Yaeger** - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
Horticulturist & Program Manager

Officers



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

Directors

- Gillian Battino, Paul David, Tabitha Erlandson, Linda Grilley, Jessica Lind, Tom Monk, Vickie Richmond Hawkins, Tammy Stezenski, Lisa Westphal**

Mailing & Gardens Address

1901 N 4th Ave, Wausau, WI 54401
NEW! P: 715-722-4771
 E: info@monkgardens.org
www.monkgardens.org

Follow us!  



A Triumph of Partnerships

The Shade and Hosta Garden

At every garden center in the area and in most of our backyards, Hosta plants abound. In Wisconsin, Hosta plants' ability to survive our seasonal extremes and their lush foliage all season long make them a well-loved plant by garden novices and enthusiasts alike.

This summer a representative from the American Hosta Society came to confirm our accreditation requirements for our AHS Display Garden, our Shade and Hosta Garden. They met with Executive Director Jennifer Plisch, board member Linda Grilley, and other volunteers from the North Central Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association, our partners in the project. It was an educational experience for all.

This garden was designed and created by the North Central Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association. Master Gardeners continue to volunteer their time to the project and work in partnership with Gardens staff and volunteers to keep it thriving. When you stroll the curvy paths through the hosta plants, you'll spot over 117 different varieties of hostas along with other shade-loving perennials. A kaleidoscope of greens and yellows will bring delight to your eyes. Come visit this nationally recognized beauty soon!

Summer Delights from Camp 2025



The Gardens was bursting with campers this summer for ten weeks. From pond skimming to crafts to mud fights, campers enjoyed learning through play in the outdoors. We welcomed 146 individual campers this year. A big thank you to our Junior Counselors (many of whom have been coming to camp since kindergarten!). They not only gave their summer to helping younger campers but also used a generous grant from the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin to design and build their own addition to the Gardens. A little village of play houses will be used for years to come by campers and sprouts preschoolers.



Thank you to our 2025 Camp Sponsor who made it possible to invite guest educators from REG and Wausau Paddle to camp this year.





THANK YOU, 2025 Sponsors!

Partners:



Fellows:

- Cloverbelt Credit Union
- Sweet Tooth Pediatric Dentistry
- Associated Bank
- J.H. Findorff & Son Inc.

Patrons:



Friends:

- Wausau Awards and Engraving
- REI Civil Environmental Engineering



Grateful for the Gift of Volunteers



Odds are when you last visited the Gardens you probably saw one or more volunteers. Perhaps you even saw Dale (his picture is on the cover) zipping through the Kitchen Garden watering seedlings and harvesting produce for our Member Harvest Nights. He comes almost every day, rain or shine. Dale is a man of few words, but he knows all the going ons at the Gardens. His smile welcomes regular and new visitors alike.

The Gardens is lucky to have Dale giving so much of his valuable time to the Gardens. He and the hundreds of other incredible volunteers are the reason the gardens are what they are today. Next time you visit, be sure to say thank you to the volunteers you see!

From the start, volunteers have been the backbone of Monk Botanical Gardens. It started with working with our benefactor, Mr. Robert W Monk III, to create the non-profit structure to support the Gardens. It's only grown since then!

Today volunteers provide the energy and hands necessary to plant, weed, mulch, water, prune and care for the plants and paths of each garden. They provide help with mailings and office projects. A group even revamped the welcome kiosks at each gate this year.

Some volunteers have begun to take a shift at the Welcome Center saying hello to visitors, handing out maps, and answering questions. It's a new way to help build community at the Gardens.

If you'd like to also lend your time and talents to the Gardens, be sure to visit our website

<https://monkgardens.org/volunteer> for more information on how to get started.



COMING SOON!

Admission Fee Starting April 23, 2026

A new benefit is coming to Monk Botanical Gardens Membership. Members will receive free daily admission starting in April 2026. It's one way to say "Thank You!" for membership gifts that nourish the roots of the Gardens.

A seasonal admission fee will begin on April 23, 2026 and continue to the day before Thanksgiving. Winter months will not currently require admission.

These fees will play a small role in helping the Gardens build sustainable support for the needs of a thriving community hub and resources to care for the plant treasures cultivated in the Gardens. Now that the Capital Campaign

Improvements are complete, the infrastructure is in place to provide an easy way to ensure members can continue to enter for free and visitors can receive a warm welcome when they pay admission fees.

This is a shift for the Gardens community that will bring even more inspiration, education, and well-being to those who visit. Jennifer Plisch, Executive Director, welcomes your questions as admission fees go into effect in 2026. Email her directly at jeplisch@monkgardens.org

Continued updates and FAQ can be found on our website.

Member Benefit	Friend \$35	Couple \$50	Family \$75	Contributor \$100	Patron \$250	Benefactor \$500	Visionary \$1000
Better Homes and Garden Digital Magazine <small>(new members only)</small>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
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							●



NEW Admission Fees

- Members Free
- Adults \$10
- Youth 3-17. \$5
- 2 and Under Free
- Museums for All. . \$5

Occasional public free for all days will be scheduled each season. Partnerships with other non-profits and local agencies are also being explored.



1901 N 4th Ave, Wausau, WI 54401

PRSR STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
UMS

WAUSAU'S HAPPY PLACE

*Open now for information about
Admission Fees coming in 2026*



Reserve your wedding date for 2026 or 2027

at Monk Botanical
Gardens today!

Outdoor spaces fit for intimate groups to large gatherings that will provide the perfect backdrop for memories you'll treasure for years to come.

Visit <https://monkgardens.org/services/wedding-venues/>
to get started on reserving the perfect date for your celebration.