




GROWING CONNECTIONS GARDENING THEMED MEMORY CAFE

Trisha Witham, Dementia Care Specialist
Aging & Disability Resource Center

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Dementia Friendly Communities

- A community that shows a high level of public awareness and understanding of dementia
- In which it is possible for the greatest number of people with dementia to live a good life ★
- Where persons with dementia are enabled to live as independently as possible and to continue to be part of their community ★
- Where they are met with understanding and given support where necessary



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Observations

- We all take for granted our cognitive abilities which allow us to enjoy the hobbies and things we do.
- As cognitive abilities decline, a person is less likely to continue doing the those things they once enjoyed and can become more isolated.
- Socialization and learning new things are good for brain health, regardless of a dementia diagnosis.



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Accommodations

- We use accommodations for many things:
 - Glasses, hearing aids, ramps, etc.
- Memory café's are simply accommodations for people living with various cognitive abilities so that they can continue to participate in things that bring them joy!
- Engaging all of the senses is a key accommodation for people living with dementia.



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Growing Connections

- Being outdoors and in nature, gardening and fishing are a big part of our rural community!
- University of Minnesota Extension
 - ▣ Master gardeners
 - ▣ 6-week programs
 - ▣ <https://hennepinmastergardeners.org/growing-connections-for-people-with-early-dementia/>
- How could we adapt and replicate in our community?



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Passion & Volunteers

- Master Gardeners, UW-Extension, Community Partners
- Adapted to availability of volunteers. Created a monthly program
- ADRC: secured location, registration, marketing, printing, and budget
- Volunteers: led the development of the sessions



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The Aging and Disability Resource Center Presents

Growing Connections

For people living with early stage dementia and their care partners.



No garden, gardening experience or green thumb required!

Enjoy the joys of gardening together each month with this fun program! Volunteers will lead the workshops, and each has a separate subject and includes a presentation, snack and an activity. You'll bring home your project, all supplies and materials are included and there is no charge for the program.

To learn more and register contact Trisha Witham at 888-538-3031. Space is limited and registration is required by December 29, 2022.

Monthly Subjects:

January: Succulents
Plant a succulent garden.

February: Herbs/Teas and Farm Visit
Tea tasting and making your own blend to take home. See, pet and hold lambs on a tour of Maple Hill Farm, Ladysmith.

March: Maple Syrup
Make maple butter.

April: Garden Planning Nursery Visit
Rice Lake: Tour Blue View Greenhouse
Ladysmith: Tour Colonial Nursery

May: Birds
Listen to bird calls, watch for birds, keep a log and make a bird feeder.

June: Edible Flowers
Sample edible flowers and plant seeds of the flowers you like.

January-June, 2023
Rice Lake
First Wednesday of each month: January 4, February 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7
Rice Lake Senior Center*
12 Humbird St, Rice Lake, WI
• 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Ladysmith
First Thursday of each month: January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1
Ladysmith Senior Center*
825 E 3rd St N, Ladysmith, WI
• 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

*Note: February and April sessions for both groups will be offsite at other locations. Participants will need their own transportation.




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To learn more and register contact Trisha Witham at 715-537-6225. Space is limited and registration is required by June 30, 2023.

Monthly Subjects:

July: Pollinators
Learn how to attract pollinators to your garden. Make a bee house.

August: Nightshades
Learn about the Nightshade family of plants (tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and more). Make your own salsa.

September: Apples
Learn about growing apples. Taste test a variety of apples and select some to take home.

October: Squash
Learn about different types of summer and winter squash. Paint your own gourd/pumpkin.

November: Cranberries
Learn how cranberries are grown and harvested. Make cranberry relish.

December: Centerpieces/Wreaths
Learn about Evergreens. Decorate your own centerpiece or wreath.

July-December, 2023
Rice Lake
First Wednesday of each month: July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, December 6
Rice Lake Senior Center*
12 Humbird St, Rice Lake, WI
• 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Register: 715-537-6225




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July-December, 2023
Ladysmith
First Thursday of each month: July 6, August 3
September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7

Ladysmith Senior Center*
825 E 3rd St N, Ladysmith, WI
• 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

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Engaging All Senses

- Each session provided stimulation of all of the senses:
 - ▣ Hearing/listening to topic, singing a song, discussion
 - ▣ Visually pictures, displays, activity
 - ▣ Tasting a snack
 - ▣ Smelling snack, activity
 - ▣ Tactile/touch participating in the activity

Having Fun!



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Example: Edible Flowers

Growing Connections

Session 6 – Welcome!

Growing Connections Purpose and Vision: Growing Connections is a social and educational program for people with memory loss and their care partners. The goal is to increase overall well-being by engaging in gardening with others, appreciating nature, and utilizing all our senses. We will learn new things, meet new people, and most importantly, have fun!

Today's Topic: Edible Flowers

Have you eaten flowers? If so, what kinds? Do you have a lot of dandelions? What do you do with them? Have you ever foraged?

If so, for what? Kump, with asparagus, more...

Edible flowers are a joyous celebration of the garden's offering. Not only do they add beauty and character to the presentation of a dish, but they also introduce new and unusual flavors. If it is hard to imagine eating a flower, think of it this way: The fruits and vegetables we eat are often the same part of the plant, prior to or after flowering. A head of broccoli is made up of hundreds of premature flower buds. Left alone it will soon burst forth into as many bright yellow flowers. A tomato, pepper, or zucchini is the result of a pollinated flower maturing to a fruit.



It is important to know the source of flowers before eating them. Do not use if the flowers may have any chemical residue or if you aren't fully confident the plant is what you think it is. The best bet is to grow your own!



Dandelions

Dandelions are from the same family as sunflowers. Up until the 1800s, dandelions were seen as extremely beneficial. People would remove grass to plant dandelions. Every part of the dandelion is edible. One cup of dandelion greens = 535% of your daily recommended vitamin K and 112% of vitamin A.



A dandelion seed can travel up to 5 miles before it lands.



Dandelion

- Contains potassium and helps digestion
- Acts as a diuretic, decreasing the amount of sodium in the body
- Reduces the liver and gallbladder
- Acts as a mild laxative and has been used to relieve constipation
- Treats diabetes
- Improves the immune system
- Can be made as tea or a daily drink

HealthWithFlowers.com

Today's snack features "Dandy Blend", a caffeine free coffee alternative that contains dandelion root, chicory root, sugar beetroot, barley and rye. Dandy Blend can be enjoyed hot or cold. Depending on how much Dandy Blend is added to your cup of water, its flavor ranges from a pleasant, nutty roasted tea to a rich, strong espresso or cappuccino.

Benefits of dandelion tea:

- Supercharges liver health
- Boosts energy levels
- Fights urinary tract infections
- Speeds up fat metabolism
- Balances blood sugar
- Soothes bloating and other digestive issues
- Shows anti-cancer potential



Example: Edible Flowers

Violets, one of the most cold hardy annual plants, are so rich in vitamins C and E that the famed Euell Gibbons calls them "nature's vitamin pill". Violet blossoms are three times as rich in vitamin C, weight for weight, as oranges. Parisii, violas' botanical cousin, are edible as well. They have a light, sweet flavor. Add the flowers to a leafy green salad or use as garnish on baked goods.

Nasturtium flowers are also high in vitamins A, C, & D. They have a peppery flavor similar to radishes. They come in many vibrant colors, making them a nice addition to salads or a beautiful garnish. All parts of the nasturtium plant are edible: flowers, stems, and young seed pods. Their flavor is strongest in the seeds and most subtle in the flowers.



Nasturtium: what's edible?

Seeds
Strongly bitter. Can be eaten raw, although they are more often pickled. Sprouting yields sprouts. Use young pods that are still yellow and have not turned into the red pods that are bitter and inedible.

Leaves
Both leaves and stems are edible and have a mild, peppery taste that softens as they cook.

Flowers
Come in a variety of colors and can be used in the vinegar and other infusions.

Stems
Similar to radish. It offers with a bit more heat than flowers and leaves.

Flavor
All parts have very similar and have a peppery bite that softens as it cooks.

Roses are likely the best known and favorite flower in the whole world. The leaves, buds, petals, and hips of all roses are edible. The word rose comes from the Latin word Rosa which means love. Each rose color has a different meaning; here are a few examples:

- Red stands for love, beauty, courage, respect or a job well done.
- White means pure or innocent. A bride's bouquet of white roses stands for happy love.



- Pink means thank you, appreciation, or admiration. A light pink rose stands for joy and sweetness, gentleness.
- Yellow means friendship, delight, caring, and the promise of a new beginning. A yellow rose with a red tip means friendship, but falling in love.
- Lavender stands for love at first sight.
- Black stands for farewell. There really aren't any black roses naturally grown; they are dyed by florists.

Today's Activity – Decorating with flowers.

Look at these amazing wedding cakes!



Let's talk about weddings while we decorate our cupcakes.

Feedback:

What did you learn that was new or surprising?
What was your favorite part of the class?
What might make this more fun in the future?
Would you recommend Growing Connections to a friend?
Are you interested in helping with future offerings of any of the past six sessions?

Have you signed up yet for the next six month workshop?

Next Month: Pollinators

Learn how to attract pollinators to your garden. Make a bee house. Meet at Senior Center.



Any questions or concerns, contact:

Trisha Wilburn, ADRC Dementia Care Specialist, 888-538-3031
Lori Van Ess, Rice Lake Growing Connections Lead, 920-277-1920 (cell)
Kathy Halbur, Ladysmith Growing Connections Lead, 715-415-1685 (cell)



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Lessons Learned

- Session size: 6-12 people
- Budget \$500/year for two locations
- Having a buddy for people who live alone with dementia or care partner not interested in gardening
- Winter sucks sometimes!
- Field trips took more effort to coordinate, not always the right space
- Finding the right way to market the program



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Lessons Learned

- People living with dementia and their care partners experience a multitude of challenges that get in the way of attending:
 - ▣ Poorer health (frequent doctor appointments, hospitalizations)
 - ▣ Progression of dementia illness
 - ▣ Transitions of care
 - ▣ Difficult symptoms of dementia: refusal to attend

Don't Give Up!



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Our Next Step: Shift to Brain Health

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A social and educational program for older adults to improve brain health.



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Subjects:

February 7th: Succulents

Learn about houseplants. Plant a succulent garden.

April 9th: Garden Planning

Learn about the ins and outs of gardening. Pick a plant to take home.

June 5th: Edible Flowers

Sample edible flowers and plant seeds of the flowers you like.

August 7th: Pollinators

Learn how to attract pollinators to your garden. Make a songnet.

October 2nd: Apples & Squash

Learn about growing apples and different types of summer and winter squash. Plant your own garden and taste test a variety of apples.

December 4th: Centerpieces/Wreaths

Learn about Evergreens. Decorate your own centerpiece or wreath.

Feb-December, 2024

Rice Lake

First Wednesday of every other month: February 7, April 3, June 5, August 7, October 2, December 4

Rice Lake Senior Center*

12 Humber St, Rice Lake, WI

* 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

To learn more and reserve your spot call Trisha Witham at 715-537-6225. Come to one or come to all.

Register: 715-537-6225

 Dove Healthcare

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Questions/Resources ????

- ❑ Funding sources: ADRC, health systems, United Ways, Care Facilities, Helen Bader
- ❑ Contact Trisha Witham, trisha.witham@co.barron.wi.us for templates for handouts and marketing.
- ❑ University of Minnesota Extension will also share their lesson plans and topics.
- ❑ Be creative...no right or wrong topic or activity.
- ❑ Master Gardeners are experts on the information.

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