

# Wisconsin Peony Society Ltd.

August 25, 2018

West Madison Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Road, Verona, WI

## Schedule

10:30 am – Check-in

11 am – Presentation by Lois Girton

12pm – Lunch provided by WPS

12:45pm – Grafting Class

## Presentation by Lois Girton

Lois has been growing peonies since 1995 on 1.3 in-town acres. She began with a special interest in tree peonies and herbaceous species peonies and mostly ignored hybrid herbaceous and lactiflora peonies until just a few years ago. By happenstance, Lois' first tree and one of her first herbaceous peonies were bred by Saunders. In 2010 Lois ordered 'May Lilac' after having seen it in Hans Hansen's MN garden and it has been downhill ever since. Lois now has over 110 herbaceous and over 40 tree peonies in her Saunders collection and a total peony count of about 350.

## Grafting Class

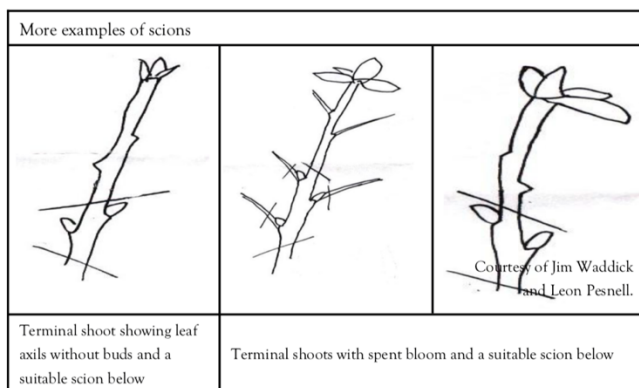
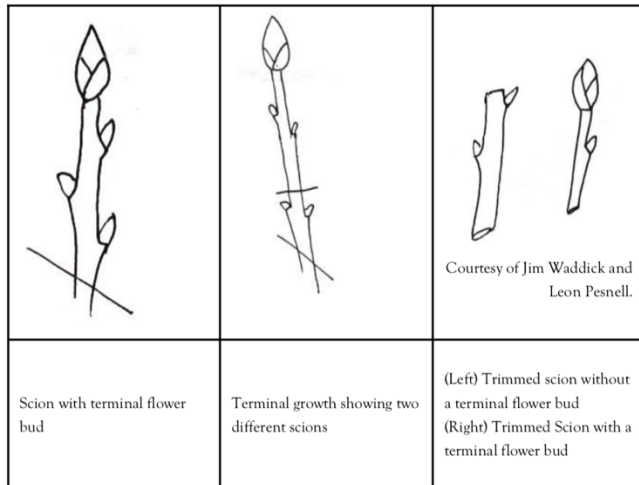
The grafting class will be a demonstration and walk through step by step how to graft woody peonies to herbaceous root stock. WPS members are asked to bring the following:

- Scions
- Nurse roots
- Grafting/utility knife
- Cutting board

Provided on the website <http://wipseonysociety.org/events/> and as an attachment is a guide, "Guide to Grafting Woody Peonies" by Nate Bremer, Jim Waddick, & Leon Pesnell, that provides visuals and steps to gather and prepare scions and nurse roots.

## Gathering Scions

Scions are cut with garden pruners/shears and the desired length of the scion is 2" to 3", with a terminal bud and a couple of side buds if possible. Leaves are pushed backward and they snap off at the axillary nodes leaving the buds intact (they may also be trimmed off with shears). The best scions for grafting have mature terminal buds and show splits in their "bark". These mature scions often have a woody look to them and have little green tissue on them.



## Preparation of Nurse Roots

1) Dig a clump of a herbaceous cultivar. Roots should not be old and woody, but may be large in size. Contrary to printed material on grafting, large roots work equally well as small roots (perhaps better due to their greater energy storage). Save all roots unless they are damaged, diseased, woody or far too big or small to work with.

2) Roots are field dressed immediately after digging. This means cut off all the roots on the dug plant and place them in tubs in the field. It is important to keep track of the root orientation, since grafting must be done on the upward (crown) side of the root or the graft will fail. So, as the roots are cut, make sure the top gets a flat cut and the ends of the roots or root segments get an angle cut. You can then, later, identify the end that receives the scion. The left over crown stubs are placed in another tub for dividing and replanting later. In hot weather it helps the roots to stay hydrated and healthy by filling the tub with water.

3) Place the dug roots on a washing table (a large table that has a top made of hardware cloth mesh with half-inch openings works well). Use a hose with a spray nozzle to wash the roots, so that no soil is left clinging to the roots.

4) Fill a bucket or tub with water and add liquid bleach at a ratio anywhere from 10:1 to 20:1 (water to bleach). Inexpensive bleach works as well as expensive name brands. Mix the solution well, as bleach will stratify toward the top.

5) Place nurse roots into the water-bleach solution for 20 to 45 minutes. This will disinfect the roots so that they do not have soil-borne fungi, bacteria, etc... on their surface. The roots will change color from brown to cream or almost white.

6) Remove the roots from the solution and rinse them thoroughly on the washing table again.

7) Place the roots in a clean bucket or tub and cover it with a bag so that they do not dry out. Roots can be stored in a cool place (the back of our machine shed) until ready for use. Roots may be stored for two weeks like this with no ill effects. If they are stored for an extended period before use, they may need to be disinfected again with water-bleach solution. Visual inspection will tell you if this needs to be done.