

WISCONSIN PEONY SOCIETY LTD

DECEMBER 2019

President's Message

Cory Tischman, President – contact at wipeonysociety.president@gmail.com

Winter can be a rather dreary season, mostly due to the fact it seems to come too early and stick around far longer than most of us would like. But it can also be a time for repose and contemplation. This past March our society had its biennial election, and we have a fresh crop of people elected into office who are ambitious and full of great ideas. Our new Vice President, Jordan Kabat, has taken the lead with renewing our grafting program, which members get a chance to learn how to graft woody (tree) peonies, which can be a fun way to increase your stock and get different varieties into your garden. Everyone had a lot of fun and had the chance to hear many anecdotes regarding grafting in past years with two other well-known Wisconsin hybridizers, Nate Bremer of Solaris Farms, and the late Bill Seidl.

We also had our annual fall root auction and potluck on October 4th. There was plenty of food to go around and we also had a record number of donations -- over 160 items to auction off! Thank you again for everyone that donated to the auction this year. The Wisconsin Peony Society wouldn't be the same without your generosity. Due to the retirement of known Wisconsin hybridizer and owner of Song Sparrow Farm & Nursery, Roy Klehm, who was often one of our major donors, we are hoping that more of our non-commercial members will look to donating more to the auction in the future. Our auctioneer was Scott Parker, of Parker's Peony & Perennial Farm, who did a fantastic job keeping up with the grueling pace. He didn't slow down once over the two and half hours, and was still able to give a good amount of detail about each cultivar. Thank you Scott for donating your time and knowledge in order to make this a successful auction this year! (The auction brought in \$5,429)

I know I am excited for this new year as our group has a lot of exciting events planned. Our first event for 2020 will be at the Garden Expo where we have a booth to educate the public, and sell seeds and seedlings. We are also looking for any members interested being part of any committees or taking on more leadership roles. Please contact me at wipeonysociety.president@gmail.com or 715-827-0666 if you're interested.

Also check out our website: www.wipeonysociety.org or visit us on Facebook: 'Wisconsin Peony Society Group' for updates and posts on events or if you enjoy looking at pictures of peonies (who doesn't?).

Calendar of Events

February 7-9th – Garden Expo at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, WI

March 7th – Spring Meeting and Educational Seminar

- Presentation by David and Linette Sorrentino showing peonies titled, "Peonies – It's Show Time"

June 13th – Bus trip to the Chicago Botanical Gardens to see the American Peony Society cut flower show

August 29th – Grafting Class Seminar

October 3rd – Fall Root Auction

****Specific times and details will be provided closer to the date of the event****

Wisconsin Garden Expo

Jerri O'Connor, Garden Expo Committee Chair

It's that time of year to start planning for Garden Expo. The expo dates are February 7 - 9, 2020 in Madison at the Alliant Energy Center. It's great to come out of the cold and think about spring and your gardens. Over 20,000 people attend the show last year!

You can learn something new with over 150 demonstrations and seminars or find something new for your garden. This year we will be showcasing corals, creams, yellow, and white peonies in herbaceous, Itohs, and trees peonies. We will have Lloyd and Judy Ravet's started seeds which are always a big hit. We will also have

American Peony Society seeds.

This will be a great time to stop by our booth for questions and information as we have many of the peony growers right in our booth! I will be looking for volunteers to help in our booth. My email is jerri.oconnor@gmail.com and my phone number is 608-345-5742. I will be contacting those that signed up at the auction.

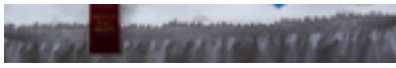
Look forward to seeing you all there! Jerri

“Peonies...It's Show Time”

Jordan Kabat, Vice President & Grafting Class Committee Chair

For the WPS spring meeting on March 7th, David and Linette Sorrentino will present on the fun and excitement of showing peonies. You will learn what is needed to prepare your flowers, including selecting, cutting, storage, transportation, preening, and the APS classification process. They have tips and stories to share about this easy and rewarding hobby of friendly competition.





Introducing the WPS Guest Gardener Program

Introducing an opportunity for WPS members to participate in growing a peony for WPS for 3 years, at which time the said peony will be dug and divided, a division will be kept by the participant (if they would like, otherwise, if not, all divisions can be donated), the other/s will be donated to WPS Root Auction. Participant must agree to terms above. Terms must be strictly adhered to in order for this program to be successful.

First group, 2019, was hand selected by chair (Tracey Nelson) for ease of getting this program going. Future years will be through interest and a lottery type drawing, if interest numbers outweigh what roots are available. Members that participate in this program must be WPS members in good standing through the end of the guest gardener program year (paid up on dues). Goal for this program initially is to preserve Klehm Peony varieties. Ultimately, a goal would be to see the proceeds from the auction of these peony roots to go back in to the program, to purchase more roots, essentially funding itself after disbursement of funds by WPS for the next 3 years as we await the first group's cultivation and propagation efforts. I see this as supporting our auction efforts moving forward, and another way to involve the membership in peony cultivation and preservation.

To further encourage WPS participation, any person interested in the Guest Gardener Program shall submit interest *in person* and a lottery drawing for cultivars will take place, at the Spring Peony Educational Meeting, currently occurring in March. The number of Guest Garden Plants will vary from year to year and will depend on funding, of course.

Guest Gardener Program participants will obtain roots at any given year of participation, at the WPS Root Auction of that year. Participants who are due to dig their guest garden peonies on the given year it is due, shall expect to bring their peony division to the root auction. If unable, must be responsible to get root to chair of guest gardener program by the date of the root auction. Failure to do so will prevent you from any further participation in the guest gardener program. This program can only work if we have responsible participants. I am very excited to get this program underway.

GRAFTING CLASSES

The WPS sponsored a grafting class this past fall, which was held at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station. Jordan Kabat of Solaris Farms was the instructor, and was aided by Kris Casey who also frequently aids with grafting at the farm. The class was well attended with about 17 people present aside from the instructor. Topics covered all aspects of tree peony grafting from good scion collection and storage to planting and after care. Attendees were encouraged to bring along their own scions, and a large amount of the cultivars Age of Gold and Boreas were offered for practice. A nice array of scions were brought in by attendees, including some from harder to find New Zealand cultivars. Jordan also made scions available for purchase of two Bill Seidl seedlings that will remain unregistered and have otherwise never been offered to the public. Most individuals in

attendance were well-equipped with their own knives and cutting mats, which made the hands-on portion of the seminar go very smoothly. Some participants purchased additional parafilm wrap to take home to continue their experimentation, and all were given recommendations regarding other tools and equipment, including what is needed for the process of indoor graft healing. Overall, attendees seemed to find the information to be interesting and helpful, and all were able to make some very nice looking grafts by the end of the seminar. Aspects of the history of this practice and different grafting techniques were shared also, as well as some anecdotes about grafting with Bill Seidl and Nate Bremer, including a demonstration with a less-than-perfect grafting machine that at one time belonged to Bill himself. The seminar has traditionally been held every other year, but Jordan has offered to teach the class every year, with next year's grafting class will be held on August 29th. If this is something you are interested in, stay on top of the WPS newsletters and website for more information as that time approaches.

Membership Info

Currently we have 117 paid memberships in the Wisconsin Peony Society. Thirty will expire at the end of the year and those people will need to renew. Thirteen already renewed at our Fall Auction, thank you. If you're unsure when your membership will expire you can send me an email at Peony-lover@hotmail.com and I'll let you know. Dues are \$5 for one year or \$10 for 3 years. Maybe you have a friend who would like to join also? I've learned so much about peonies over the years just by going to our meetings!

You can renew online at our website - "wipeonysociety.org". Just click the "Membership" button and choose your method of payment. Hope to see you all at our March 7th meeting!



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