



Presidents Message

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

As you are reading this, I am hoping you and all your loved ones are well. 2020 has been quite the unpredictable year with lots of ups and downs, and with that, a lot of change. Unfortunately, change and comfort are not best friends and it is seldom the two coexist simultaneously (and harmoniously) in our lives. Like the seasons, change can be subtle or rather abrupt, and sometimes we are ready for it, and sometimes not. So, as we transition into a new season, it may be an opportunity for self-reflection as our work in our gardens start to slow down. We can remind ourselves what we may be needing during this time of great change.

We recently had our annual fall auction, which ended up being online this year. We had 95 people register for the event, and with only 87 items donated, down from over 160 items last year, we still ended up raising a whopping \$5160! While our auction was open to anyone, over a half of the winning bids were WPS members. I would like to thank the following people that helped make this year's auction such a success: Scott Parker, of Parker's Peony and Perennial Farm, for helping organize and solicit donations; Jordan Kabat, Tracey Nelson, Jeff Delaney, and Sharon Schmitz for assisting in the pick-up and shipping process. And a special thanks to all of our donors: Carol & Jim Adelman (Adelman Peony Gardens); Betty Dahlke; Don Hollingsworth; Sam & Helen Finazzo

(Fina Gardens); Harvey Buchite (Hidden Springs Flower Farm); José Velázquez (Song Sparrow Farm & Nursery); Mike & Kay Wenzel; Leon Pesnell; Nate & Kimberly Bremer (Solaris Farms); Sue Anderson & Leroy Mielke (Oh My Peonies); Jerri O'Connor; Scott Parker; Rita Thomas; Alvin Sevald (Sevald Nursery); Sharon Schmitz; Steve Johnson; Tim Stanek; and Tracey Nelson.

Our first event for 2021 will be our March 6th meeting and we will also be holding elections. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic, our spring meeting will be held virtually. The Board of Directors and I are currently working on a plan with what format that will look like and will announce it once it has been finalized. For our elections, we will be needing new people for the following positions: Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Newsletter Editor. Please contact me at wipeonysociety.president@gmail.com if you're interested. We will be getting a nominating committee assembled to look for potential candidates ahead of the election and will have an outline of the responsibilities and duties of each position ready for interested members.

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.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 6th – Annual
Membership Meeting
Virtual meeting

June 12th - Garden
Tour and Picnic

August 28th – Grafting
Class

October 2nd - Fall Root
Auction

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

All WPS Newsletters are posted on the WPS web so if you have a few minutes to spare check it out. WPS's membership cost is \$5.00 per year per individual or family or \$10.00 for three years per individual or family.

Contact Cory Tischman at wipeonysociety.president@gmail.com

West Madison Station Peony Bed Update

Tracey Nelson, Planting Coordinator

As I prepare to write my article for the newsletter, I am highly distracted by the procrastination of current....the final Klehm Song Sparrow Sale online. I think to myself, where can I find room for just one more? The West Madison Research Station has more room, what else would be good to add before this all becomes another page of peony history? My biggest problem, I wanted one of each of everything they had left. I'm just not ready to say goodbye.

Ultimately I ordered more. (I just had to!) I received the "latest wholesale update" from a friend and promptly placed an order for the West Madison Research Station. The last minute additions were, 'Burma Ruby', 'Coral Supreme', 'Spiffy', 'Lake of Silver', 'Edwin C Bills', and 'Marshmallow Button'. From order date to planting, three days, not too bad, I'd say. I was particularly lucky with weather and soil temperatures, as if it was all meant to be.

Earlier Fall 2020 additions to the trial beds included 'Sixteen Candles', 'Longfellow', 'Lemon Chiffon', 'Etched Salmon', 'Think Pink', 'Salmon Surprise', 'Golden Frolic', 'Pink Venus', 'Sweet Rewards' and 'Christmas Velvet'. Each have great attributes, I can hardly wait to see them mature and thrive.

In a few years, these beds will be brimming with gorgeous summer flowers. A part of history captured and there for many to enjoy as they walk through the public gardens there. Peony time is a popular time at the research station I am told. Visits the last couple of years have shown me just why they are so beloved. When you have a chance, come out and see for yourself and of course, bring a friend and introduce them to peonies.

Woody Peony Grafting Class

Jordan Kabat, Vice President of Wisconsin Peony Society

The Wisconsin Peony Society sponsored a woody peony grafting seminar this past August, which was held out of doors at Solaris Farms in Reedsville, Wisconsin. In years prior, the class has been held at the WPS's usual meeting location, the West Madison Agricultural Research Station, however, due to pandemic concerns and in an effort to provide a more hands-on experience regarding all steps in the grafting and healing process, the decision to change the location was made. Solaris Farms owner, Nate Bremer, along with WPS Vice President and Solaris Farms Operations Manager, Jordan Kabat guided participants through the process of selecting and cutting scion

material, root selection and preparation, grafting scions to rootstock, and finally the methods employed at the farm to successfully heal grafts in the field. Fifteen individuals were in attendance, and the class lasted roughly three hours. Participants were supplied with five scions of seedling rockii cultivars for practice, and one named lutea hybrid cultivar. More scions of named lutea hybrid cultivars were made available for sale, with proceeds benefiting the WPS. Individuals in attendance who have participated in the class in years prior enthusiastically remarked that the more hands-on approach was wildly more helpful and engaging, particularly regarding

the preparatory steps and the aftercare methods which are difficult to convey in a classroom setting. Across the board, participants were, with a bit of practice, able to make some very nice looking grafts by the end of the seminar that have a good chance of being successful provided appropriate aftercare steps were followed. A grafting class is slated to be offered next year on Saturday, August 28th, with the location yet to be determined. If this is something you are interested in, stay on top of the WPS newsletters and website for more information as that time approaches.

Spring Educational Meeting

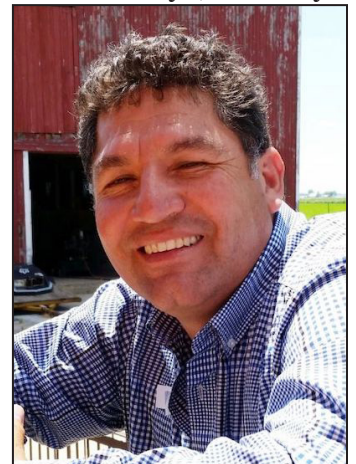
Jordan Kabat, Vice President of Wisconsin Peony Society

Typically an educational meeting is held each spring by the WPS, though it seems with the current pandemic situation and cases on the rise, it will be in our best interest to cancel any in-person presentations that would have taken place in the coming season. At this time, WPS Vice President, Jordan Kabat, is exploring possibilities to make the educational offering virtual this year in lieu of an in-person presentation. When these offerings are finalized, they will be made available to members via our website. Please stay tuned for further details.

Saying Goodbye to a WPS Member and Friend

Tracey Nelson

It was a day well over a decade ago, I arrived at Klehm Song Sparrow open greenhouse days, with my two young daughters alongside. It was my first visit there, as I had only seen their catalog and all of its gorgeous photos. Wondering through a greenhouse that housed clematis, a quiet gentleman approached us, I'm sure I looked overwhelmed and lost. He asked what plants I was interested in and would show me where to find them. He introduced himself as José and was one of the most informed and knowledgeable people I had ever met at a greenhouse. Asking about plant traits regarding a specific cultivar I was pondering, that was not blooming at the time, he was able to explain to me the plant habit, color and how vigorous it would be. He was so helpful.



Through the years, he never seemed to forget conversations we had in past years. José soon was able to guide me to tree peonies I never knew I wanted or needed, but ended up buying. His endearing personality, the genuine nature of who he was, and his infectious love of plants was evident to so many who knew him. He had a true passion for plants and even as recently as 2020 Garden Expo, was showing a few of us at the WPS Booth a peony seedling or two he was “watching” that he had created and thought might be a one to watch and consider for future registration.

José was kind and went out of his way to lend a helping hand when needed. From discussing how to navigate starting tree peonies from seeds, giving the lowdown on exactly which magnolia to get, to helping find some daylilies in the Klehm Field last year. José took the time and extra effort to help track down where these last daylily cultivars hybridized by a dear friend, that had yet to be named, were located. He found them, and when I grabbed a shovel and started digging, he asked to take the shovel so that he could help (of course must be faster and efficient than I could have ever done). This is just who he was.

José was very special and will be missed by many. A kindhearted, warm spirit who could bring joy with a smile or a laugh. We say goodbye too soon, but are grateful for having spent time with and having known José Velazquez.

DETERMINING BLOOM TIMES

Samuel Finazzo, Fina Gardens

How can you determine whether your peonies will bloom in time for a June wedding? With peonies there can be as much as 7 weeks difference in bloom time depending on the species or cultivar. Weather, especially temperature, also has a big impact.

There's no fool-proof way, but here's what I have found is a pretty good indicator. I've been tracking peony bloom times here on our farm Fina Gardens in northern Wisconsin in order to better predict when a given variety will come into bloom. I know that many factors can play a role in when a peony will bloom, but I'm finding a high degree of correlation between bloom time and the accumulation of degree days. Degree days are a mathematical way of measuring the amount of heat available above a threshold temperature on a particular day. The number of degree days accumulated over some period of time is often related to the seasonal development of plants and insects. So many in agriculture use degree days for integrated pest management regimens to determine the most effective times to spray pesticides, put out insect traps or release beneficial insects. There are a number of Internet

sites that provide degree day calculators.

Using the approximate longitude and latitude for our farm (several Internet sites can provide that information just by entering your address), I began looking at the accumulation of degree days in the range of 40 degrees F (when peonies begin breaking dormancy) through 90 degrees F (when it's too hot for good growth) during a period starting March 1. In 2007, for example, there was an accumulation of 1,018 degree days between March 1 and May 31—well above average. The converse was true in 2008, when just 591 degree days accumulated during the March 1 to May 31 period—much less than average. That difference resulted in peony varieties coming into bloom 18-20 days later in 2008 than was the case in 2007.

For instance Roselette opened on May 21 in 2007, but didn't open until June 9 in 2008. When I calculated the degree days for both years I found that Roselette had opened after 795 degree days in 2007 and 794 degree days in 2008. Other varieties showed this same variation in bloom time bloom.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Sharon Schmitz, Membership Chair

It's just about that time of the year again. Time to renew your membership so that we can all stay in touch and keep up with all the peony happenings. Dues are still only \$5 for one year or \$10 for three years. 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. Do you have a friend who is interested in peonies and would like to join our society? We are a wealth of Information!

If you like, you can renew online at our website - "wipeonysociety.org". Just click the "Membership" button and choose 1 year or 3 year renewal and your method of payment. Or, if you prefer you can download the form from the website and send it and your check to our Treasurer, Jeff Delaney, 1136 Barron St, Eau Claire, WI 54703.

Thank you, stay safe! Hope to see you all sometime in 2021!

Treasurers Report

Jeff Delaney, Treasurer

Savings \$19,331.79

\$303.69 more than last year at this time.

Checking \$6,719.55

\$3,770.09 more than last year at this time.

The online auction this year raised \$5,160.

The 3 highest bidding items this year:

Rose Heart \$390

Edna's Wish \$320

Callisto \$225