

[View this email in your browser](#)



President's Message

Michelle Ovans, President – wipeonysociety.president@gmail.com

As the winter closes in, it's a wonderful time to stop and reflect on the peony garden and how and why things progressed for the season. Were you able to fill that empty spot with a newly acquired beauty from the WPS Root Auction? We are so grateful for all the WPS members devoting their time and energy to ensure that we have such a wonderful selection to share at the auction. Many of the donations came from American Peony Society members who are growers and our members. Without these valued contributions, this event would not have been such a great success! Thank you all!

This year was especially challenging to dig peonies. We have been

experiencing extreme weather conditions for the last few years, going from wet cool springs and suddenly turning into extreme high heat, then continuing into drought during the summer months. These dry hot summers can lead to potential problems for our peonies in the future. Mature peonies are very hardy and drought tolerant, but newly planted peonies need plenty of water to get established. After the peonies have finished blooming and the spent blooms are removed, it's easy to divert your attention to other areas of the garden, BUT this is one of the most important times to ensure the peonies are getting sufficient water. This is when the peonies are setting buds for next year's blooming season, and for me, it's all about the blooms! It's best to use soaker hoses instead of overhead watering. Overhead watering encourages the growth of fungus which thrives on wet leaves. It's said, overwatering is the best way to kill a peony! They don't like "wet feet", so how much is good? If you are fortunate enough to have well drained soil, you can water as much as you want. Poorly drained soil is when you have the "wet feet" problem. Mature peonies need at least an inch of water from emergence until bloom for the best flowers and continue with this through the summer months. As I said above, peonies are very drought tolerant, but with prolonged drought conditions, the plants will start producing a chemical that will slow down the decay process of the roots enabling the plant to survive during drought conditions. You may have noticed some of the symptoms this year in your gardens. The leaves on some of your plants may have died or gone dormant earlier than usual. Don't worry! This is a normal process when they are stressed. They are in survival mode. This is the time to take note of these types of signs your plants are giving you. The winter months are an ideal time to research and make decisions on what steps are needed to achieve optimal growing conditions for the best blooming.

For those of you who like to plan well in advance, the Spring Garden Tour will be held at Ovans Peony Farm on Saturday, June 1, 2024. We are considering having a Flower Show that same day. We are encouraging all of you to bring your favorite blooms to share with everyone! I would love to meet all of you and want to hear about your ideas and thoughts about what you would like to learn, do, see, and

experience as a WPS Member. Feel free to email me at wipeonysociety.president@gmail.com



Peonies for sale on a NY City street. Photo by Tracey Nelson

2023 Annual Root Auction

by

Rita Thomas

More than 140 peony roots were donated for the auction, and there was something for everyone. There were herbaceous hybrids, lactifloras, lutea hybrids, itoh hybrids, species; tenuifolia and delavayi, and even packages of metal labels and budding strips.

The room was filled to the walls and Scott Parker, our auctioneer, kept everyone excited with his knowledgeable, running commentary of each offering.

On the high-end was a peony called Elizabeth Black, donated by Nate Bremer that sold for \$310. Sunny Boy donated by Jeff Delaney and Cory Tischman sold for \$180. There were also many gorgeous, tried

and true, peony roots starting at \$15.



Elizabeth Black, Seidl / Bremer



Sunny Boy, Laning

Photos by Nate Bremer

Lloyd Ravet brought several trays of his germinated crosses. One tray sold for \$145, and another was donated by Lloyd to Claire (pictured below) for her research project. Lloyd is an experienced hybridizer, so who knows what treasures lie within.



Claire with seedlings

Thanks to all of you who bid on the peony roots. I noticed a vehicle or two that were quite full with newly acquired treasures.

Your purchases will not only give you lovely peonies to enhance your personal gardens for the next 100 years or so, but will promote the love of peonies to whomever sees them.

Thank You 2023 Auction Donors!

THE ADELMAN PEONY GARDENS

Laura Cutsforth

Betty Dalke

Jeff Delaney & Cory Tischman

Lois & Jack Girton

Todd & Julie Hausser

Lois Kinlen

Minnesota Peony Society

Tracey Nelson

PARKER'S PEONY & PERENNIAL FARM

Scott Parker

Lloyd Ravet

Sharon Schmitz

SEVALD NURSERY

Alvin Sevald

SOLARIS FARMS

Nate & Kimberly Bremer

Jerri O'Connor

Sarah Tseng

OH MY PEONIES

Leroy Mielke & Sue Anderson

Please Thank and Support our Donors



Speaker March 16, 2023 meeting

Gerianne Holzman, National Garden Clubs' 3rd Vice President and *The National Gardener* editor, is a long-time member of the Sunset Garden Club in Madison. While in her twenties, she joined the garden club at the urging of her friend and mentor, Shirley Cuccia. Seeing something in Gerianne that she did not see in herself, Shirley encouraged Gerianne to pursue the challenges of becoming a Flower Show Judge. Now a Master Judge and National Garden Clubs' (NGC) five-star member, Gerianne mentors others. (A five-star NGC member has achieved master status in all four of its Schools: Environmental, Gardening, Landscape Design, and Flower Show.) Wanting to give back to an organization that has given her so much, she is also a

former Wisconsin Garden Club Federation president.

Wisconsin Arts and Peony Fest Flower Show

Our spring tour will be at Ovans Peony Farm in Beaver Dam on June 1, 2024 (see details on the "Calendar of Events").

The following weekend is the [Wisconsin Arts And Peony Fest](#) where included in the many activities, is a peony flower show. WPS members are encouraged to bring their favorite, bud-stage, peonies on June 1, for the show on June 8. Michelle will place them in her cooler until the flower show. Alternatively, you may drop them off at Michelle's on Friday, June 7th for the show the next day.



Lloyd Ravet seedlings. Photo by Jerri O'Connor

What Are Peony Bucks?

by Sharon Schmitz, chair

The Peony Bucks Program distributed \$345 Bucks to 18 volunteers this year and \$330 Bucks were redeemed at the auction this fall. Your Peony Bucks can be used at the auction or to purchase anything that the Wisconsin Peony Society sells (sorry, nothing at this time) and they never expire.

The Peony Bucks Program was started to encourage volunteering. These are some ways to earn them:

\$25 Peony Bucks are awarded for:

Serving as an active officer of WPS

Serving as a chairperson of a committee: webmaster, fall auction, Garden Expo, or grafting class.

Volunteering 2 or more full days at the Garden Expo. in February.

\$10 Peony Bucks are awarded for:

Serving as chairperson of the finance or Facebook committee

Doing a presentation outside of “regular meetings” and distributing membership forms promoting the WPS (Project must be approved by WPS President)

Volunteering 1 day at Garden Expo. in February

Donating 4 or more peonies to our Fall Root Auction

Volunteering for the Auction Committee and be an active participant of the Fall Root Auction

\$5 Peony Bucks are awarded for:

Submitting an article for our Newsletter and you are not a board member

Volunteering at a WPS organized peony dig

A maximum of \$25 Peony Bucks can be earned in one year. For more info on the Peony Bucks Program, go to: <https://wipeonysociety.org/peony-bucks-program/>



Candy Stripe, R.F. Anderson. Photo by Jerri O'Connor

Open Board Position

The position of vice-president is currently open. We need participation from more of our members for your board to operate efficiently. Please join us to help make important decisions and to lead the WPS into 2024 and beyond. You may contact any board member for more information or to volunteer.



Firelight, A.P. Saunders. Photo by Sharon Schmitz

Calendar of Events

Feb. 9 - 11, 2024 - PBS Wisconsin's Garden & Landscape Expo.

March 16, 2024 - Spring Meeting:

Time: 10 A.M.

Speaker: Gerianne Holzman - Floral Design for Competition class

Location: TBD

June 1, 2024: Spring Tour, short meeting, & lunch

A delicious lunch will be provided by WPS. Perhaps a few of you can bring desserts to share. Please sign up before May 25, 2024 by email to: rita5586@gmail.com so we know how much food to provide.

Time: Saturday, 11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Location: Ovans Peony Farm, W9904 Cty Road CP, Beaver Dam, WI.

June 5 - 9, 2024 - American Peony Society Convention

Location: Bloomington, Minnesota.

October 5 – Fall Meeting & Root Auction*

*Specific times and details will be provided on the website on

Facebook closer to the date of the event



Mystic Mood, Seidl. Photo by Rita Thomas

Membership Report

Sharon Schmitz, Membership Coordinator

We are 120 members strong! Four members renewed their memberships that had lapsed during the last few years and 6 new members joined the Wisconsin Peony Society at our Fall Auction and Meeting.

There are 39 memberships that will be expiring at the end of 2023. I'll

send out a reminder to them as the year draws to a close.



Alice Kunkel, Tischler. Photos by Sharon Schmitz

Treasurer's Report

Laura Cutsforth, Treasurer

Checking balance	\$ 6,313.66
Savings balance	13,848.93
Cash on Hand	306.00
Total	\$20,468.59

The Peony Root Auction sold over 140 items with 45 bidders. Gross proceeds from the sale were \$6,612.50. Expenses (including Peony Bucks) totaled 410.77 for a net of \$6,201.73.



Lavender Hill, Seidl. Photo by Rita Thomas

PBS Wisconsin's Garden & Landscape Expo

Jerri O'Connor, Chair

Feb. 9 - 11, 2024 will be the 31st year of this 3-day event celebrating all things gardening.

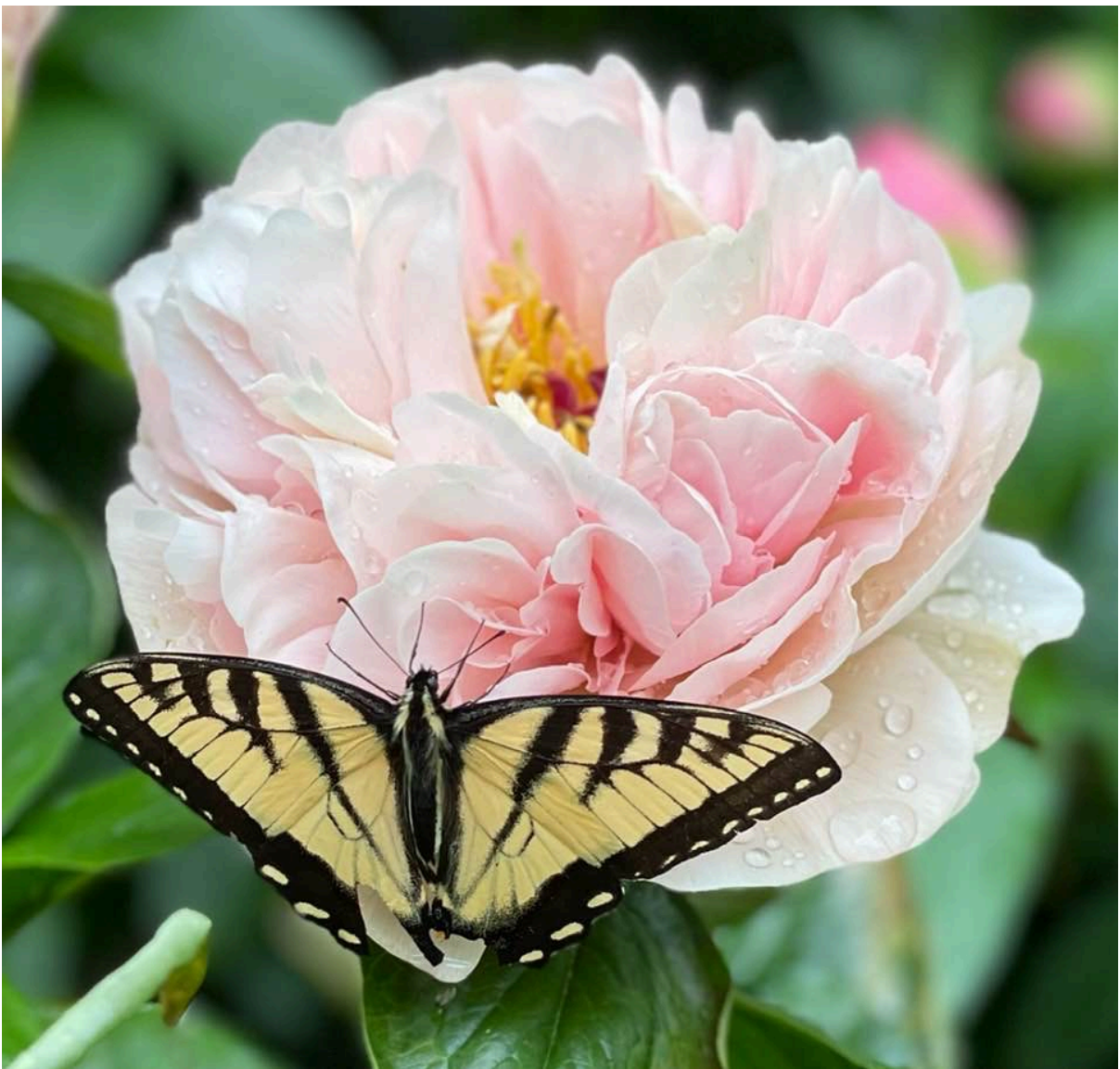
WPS will once again have a booth and we will be looking for volunteers to be there to talk about peony care, planting, to sell our seeds and invite the interested public to join our peony society.

In exchange when you work a 4-hour block, you will get your parking paid for the day you work and a free pass for the entire weekend. If you're interested you can contact me two

ways: Jerri.oconnor@gmail.com or text 608 345-5742.

Expo hours are: Friday 12 - 7, Sat. 9 - 6, Sun. 10 - 4.

Thanks! We look forward to seeing you there.



Callisto with butterfly, Bremer. Photo by Jerri O'Connor.

Board Members

President: Michelle Ovans

Vice President: Vacant position

Treasurer: Laura Cutsforth

Recording Secretary: Damen Smith

Membership: Sharon Schmitz

Newsletter Editor: Rita Thomas

Director-At-Large: Jerri O'Connor

Director-At-Large: Scott Parker



Copyright © 2023 Wisconsin Peony Society Ltd, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

