



Wisconsin Public Television

NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 23, 2018

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Garden Expo Offers Spring-like Respite in February

As winter settles over Wisconsin, the 25th-annual Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo brings a bit of spring-like warmth to the Exhibition Hall at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison Feb. 9-11. Event hours are: noon to 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 11.

Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) hosts the community educational event and fundraiser in partnership with UW-Extension Horticulture. All proceeds support WPT's quality programming, educational initiatives and events that serve to enrich the Wisconsin community. Advance tickets are available now at wigardenexpo.com.

This year's event features the newest innovations in gardening and landscaping — with information and advice spread among lush green plants, colorful flowers, vibrant designs of spring, and delicious bounties from home gardens and Wisconsin farms.

Visitors are invited to explore the fourth-annual Garden Expo Farmers' Market in the Exhibition Hall Atrium 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 11. The Farmers' Market will feature farmers, food artisans and local food retailers. Products available at the Farmers' Market include pickles and preserves, artisan cheeses, honey, olive oil, tea, chocolate, greens, coffee, and hand-crafted salami and cured meats.

Highlights from this year's event include:

- **Hundreds of exhibitor booths** selling seeds, landscaping and landscape design services, plants, books, tools, lawn equipment, and other exciting merchandise for gardens and yards of all sizes.
- **More than 150 free educational seminars and demonstrations** on topics such as everything you need to know about jumping worms, how to grow the best tomatoes, floral arranging, fermenting vegetables, and landscaping your way to a dry basement.
- **Meet and learn** from WPT's *Around the Farm Table* host Inga Witscher, nationally-known gardening expert Melinda Myers, Wisconsin author Jerry Apps, Wisconsin Public Radio's Larry Meiller, United Kingdom-based "Mr. Plant Geek" Michael Perry, garden blogger and author of *Kiss My Aster: A Graphic Guide to Creating a Fantastic Yard Totally Tailored to You* Amanda Thomsen, award-winning garden educator, author and design consultant Kerry Ann Mendez and more!

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- **The Garden Expo aquascaping competition returns**, challenging participants to create an aquarium display on-site at Garden Expo. Come watch contestants build their displays on Friday and Saturday, and attend the awards presentation at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday.
- **UW-Extension horticulture experts** offer insight, plant identification and tips to gardeners and amateur landscapers of all levels.
- **The 1,600-square-foot Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association (WNLA) Central Garden – a welcome spring-like respite in February.**
- **Nonprofit organizations** specializing in various plant species, rain gardens, rock gardens, conservation efforts and more will have booths to share their information.

Other notable special events include:

- **Botanical-Themed Craft Cocktails in the Central Garden**

Friday

Join us Friday from 4-8 p.m. in the central garden for botanical-themed craft cocktails, developed by mixologists from Madison restaurant and bar Graze. Take time to enjoy the beautiful plant and flower display put together by members of the WNLA.

- **Juan Gonzalez-Torres, Los Abuelos Farley Farm**

Sunday

Juan Gonzalez-Torres is a local farmer and owner of Los Abuelos Farley Farm. He will speak about the beginning of his farm business and how it evolved from Puebla, Mexico to Madison. Juan began his farming career in Puebla, learning how to cultivate traditional crops like epazote and papalo. After relocating to Wisconsin, his farm business has grown to be an integral piece of the local food movement. Juan will give his presentation in Spanish and it will be translated into English.

- **Mr. Plant Geek (Michael Perry)**

Friday and Saturday

In 2015, the United Kingdom's Michael Perry was named one of the top 20 most influential people in the gardening world by the *Sunday Times*. He has introduced hundreds of plants to UK gardens, ranging from Climbing Pelargoniums to Ground Cover Lilies, the TomTato and Egg and Chips plants. Michael keeps busy traveling the world in search of new plants and is very active on social media. In this exciting new addition to Garden Expo, he will present a "weird and wacky plant show" with plants that will leave you shocked, amazed, excited and confused. He'll also provide a presentation about traditional UK kitchen gardens, and a session about new, different and unusual plants.

- **Amanda Thomsen, Kiss My Aster**

Friday and Saturday

Loud and fun, Amanda Thomsen landscapes by day and blogs at night. Her blog, Kiss My Aster, has simultaneously alienated and enraptured people for more than a decade. Amanda is also author of *Kiss My Aster: A Graphic Guide to Creating a Fantastic Yard Totally Tailored to You*, an



irreverent and interactive guide to designing an outdoor space. She is empowering a whole new generation of gardeners to take control of their landscapes. Amanda will provide a “Quick and Dirty” Gardening 101 session, as well as a presentation on 150 ways to create a fantastic yard totally tailored to you.

- **Inga Witscher, *Around the Farm Table***

Friday and Saturday

Inga Witscher, host of WPT’s *Around the Farm Table*, will greet visitors at the WPT booth 4-6 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m-noon Saturday. Inga will also host a stage demonstration on Saturday all about fondue. Learn about the history of this cheesy classic, how to prepare it, and you might even be inspired to make a special fondue meal for your valentine.

- **Kerry Ann Mendez**

Saturday

Kerry Ann Mendez is an award-winning garden educator, author and design consultant based in southern Maine. Her latest book, *The Budget-Wise Gardener*, will be released in February. Kerry will present a session with money-saving tips for purchasing plants and designing your garden, as well as a session about simplified gardening for time-pressed and maturing gardeners.

- **Larry Meiller, *Garden Talk***

Saturday

Larry Meiller, host of WPR’s *Garden Talk*, will team up with UW-Extension horticulture experts Lisa Johnson and Brian Hudelson to answer all your gardening questions.

- **Melinda Myers**

Saturday and Sunday

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers will share insights from more than 30 years of horticulture experience. Melinda, a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine, has written more than 20 gardening books and previously hosted seven seasons of *Great Lakes Gardener* on PBS. Melinda’s presentations are made possible with support from American Transmission Company/Grow Smart.

- **New Event! Resilience in Gardening Story Slam**

Before Garden Expo! Free Thursday Garden Expo Prelude Event

Come share and hear great stories from fellow gardeners at a free Garden Expo kick-off event at The Frequency (121 W. Main St., Madison) on the Thursday night before Garden Expo. In partnership with Allen Centennial Garden and Madison Story Slam, the theme for the evening’s stories will be “resilience in gardening.” The event is headlined by Michael Perry, the UK’s Mr.

Plant Geek, and *Kiss My Aster's* Amanda Thomsen, and hosted by Adam Rostad of Madison Story Slam. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the event will begin at 7 p.m. Sign up to tell a 5–7-minute story by sending a message to the Madison Story Slam Facebook page. The first 50 people in the door will receive a Friday night Garden Expo admission ticket.

Single-day tickets for Garden Expo cost \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door. Children 12 and under are admitted free. Two-day passes are available for \$13 in advance and \$15 at the door. Three-day passes are available for \$16 in advance and \$18 at the door.

Advance ticket vendor outlets are located conveniently around the state at various supporting businesses. A complete list is available at wigardenexpo.com. Visitors also can purchase advance tickets on the website. There is an additional charge for parking at the Alliant Energy Center.

All proceeds from Garden Expo support quality public broadcasting in Wisconsin. Garden Expo is presented by WPT, Friends of WPT and UW-Extension Horticulture.

Garden Expo is generously supported by premier sponsor WNLA and associate sponsors Allen Centennial Garden and Champion Sunrooms and Home Exteriors.

WPT is a service of the Educational Communications Board and University of Wisconsin-Extension.

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