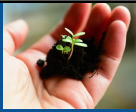






GROWING CONNECTIONS GARDENING THEMED MEMORY CAFE



Trisha Witham, Lori Van Ess, & Hali Dessecker
Barron & Rusk Counties, Wisconsin

Dementia Friendly Communities

- A community that shows a high level of public awareness and understanding of dementia
- In which it is possible for the greatest number of people with dementia to live a good life 
- Where persons with dementia are enabled to live as independently as possible and to continue to be part of their community 
- Where they are met with understanding and given support where necessary



Observations

- We all take for granted our cognitive abilities which allow us to enjoy the hobbies and things we do.
- As cognitive abilities decline, a person is less likely to continue doing those things they once enjoyed and can become more isolated.
- Socialization and learning new things are good for brain health, regardless of a dementia diagnosis.



Accommodations

- We use accommodations for many things:
 - Glasses, hearing aids, ramps, etc.
- Memory Cafes are simply accommodations for people living with various cognitive abilities so that they can continue to participate in things that bring them joy!
- Engaging all of the senses is a key accommodation for people living with dementia.



Growing Connections

- Being outdoors and in nature, gardening and fishing are a big part of our rural community!
- University of Minnesota Extension
 - Master Gardeners
 - 6-week programs
 - <https://hennepinmastergardeners.org/growing-connections-for-people-with-early-dementia/>
- How could we adapt and replicate in our community?



Master Gardener Volunteers

- University of Wisconsin-Extension
- Dedicated to horticulture education, service, and lifelong learning.
- Unbiased university research-based horticulture training (12-week course with 10 hours of CEU's every year).
- Equipped to address needs and opportunities in their community and throughout the State of WI.



Passion & Volunteers

- Master Gardener Volunteers, UW-Extension, Community Partners
- Adapted to availability of volunteers. Created a monthly program
- ADRC: secured location, registration, marketing, printing, and budget
- Volunteers: led the development of the sessions



The Aging and Disability Resource Center Presents

Growing Connections

For people living with early stage dementia and their care partners.



No garden, gardening experience or green thumb required!

Enjoy the joys of gardening together each month with like-minded Volunteers will lead the workshops, and each has a separate subject and include a presentation, snack and activity. You'll bring home your project, all supplies and materials are included and there is no charge for the program.

To learn more and register contact Trisha Witham at 888-537-6225. Space is limited and registration is required by December 20, 2023.

Monthly Subjects:

January: Succulents
Plant a succulent garden.
February: Herbs/Teas and Farm Visit
You'll bring and making your own blend to take home. See, pet and hold lambs on a tour of Maple Hill Farm, Ladysmith.

March: Maple Syrup
Make maple butter.

April: Garden Planning Nursery Visit
Blue Lake Tour/Hay Spa Greenhouse Ladysmith: Tour Colonial Nursery

May: Birds
Listen to bird calls, watch for birds, keep a log and make a bird feeder.

June: Edible Flowers
Sample edible flowers and plant seeds of the flowers you like.

January-June, 2023

Blue Lake
First Wednesday of each month: January 4, February 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7

Blue Lake Senior Center*
12 Humboldt St, Blue Lake, WI
• 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Ladysmith
First Thursday of each month: January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1

Ladysmith Senior Center*
8231 5th St, Ladysmith, WI
• 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

*Note: February and April sessions for both groups will be online or other location. Participants will need their own transportation.



The Aging and Disability Resource Center Presents

Growing Connections

For people living with memory concerns and their care partners.



No garden, gardening experience or green thumb required!

Enjoy the joys of gardening together each month with like-minded Volunteers will lead the workshops, and each has a separate subject and include a presentation, snack and activity. You'll bring home your project, all supplies and materials are included and there is no charge for the program.

To learn more and register contact Trisha Witham at 715-537-6225. Space is limited and registration is required by June 30, 2023.

Monthly Subjects:

July: Pollinators
Learn how to attract pollinators to your garden. Make a bee house.

August: Nightshades
Learn about the Nightshade family of plants (tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and more). Make your own salsa.

September: Apples
Learn about growing apples. Taste test a variety of apples and select some to take home.

October: Squash
Learn about different types of summer and winter squash. Paint your own gourds/ pumpkins.

November: Cranberries
Learn how cranberries are grown and harvested. Make cranberry relish.

December: Centerpieces/Wreaths
Learn about Evergreens. Decorate your own centerpiece or wreath.

July-December, 2023

Blue Lake
First Wednesday of each month: July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, December 6

Blue Lake Senior Center*
12 Humboldt St, Blue Lake, WI
• 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

To learn more and register contact Trisha Witham at 715-537-6225. Space is limited and registration is required by June 30, 2023.

Register: 715-537-6225



The Aging and Disability Resource Center Presents

Growing Connections

For people living with memory concerns and their care partners.



No garden, gardening experience or green thumb required!
Enjoy the joys of gardening together each month with the fun program! Volunteers will lead the workshops, and each has a separate subject and includes a presentation, snack and an activity. You'll bring home your project, all supplies and materials are included and there is no charge for the program.

Monthly Subjects:

July: Pollinators
Learn how to attract pollinators to your garden. Make a bee house.

August: Nightshades
Learn about the Nightshade family of plants (tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and more). Make your own salsa.

September: Apples
Learn about growing apples. Taste test a variety of apples and select some to take home.

October: Squash
Learn about different types of summer and winter squash. Paint your own gourds!

November: Cranberries
Learn how cranberries are grown and harvested. Make cranberry relish.

December: Centerpieces/Wreaths
Learn about Evergreens. Decorate your own centerpiece or wreath.

July-December, 2023

Locations
First Thursday of each month: July 6, August 3, September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7

LadySmith Senior Center*

825 E. 306 St N, Ladysmith, WI

* 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

To learn more and register contact Trisha Wilham at 715-537-6225. Space is limited and registration is required by June 30, 2023.

Register: 715-537-6225



Engaging All Senses

- Each session provided stimulation of all of the senses:
 - Hearing/listening to topic, singing a song, discussion
 - Visually pictures, displays, activity
 - Tasting a snack
 - Smelling snack, activity
 - Tactile/touch participating in the activity

Having Fun!



Benefits:

- Socialization for both person living with dementia and care partners.
- Meeting new people.
- Taking a break from “the diagnosis”.
- Getting our hands “dirty”.
- Having fun.
- Learning new things.







Lessons Learned

- Session size: 6-12 people
- Budget \$500/year for two locations
- Having a buddy for people who live alone with dementia or care partner not interested in gardening
- Winter sucks sometimes!
- Field trips took more effort to coordinate, not always the right space
- Finding the right way to market the program

Our Next Step: Shift to Brain Health

The Aging and Disability Resource Center Presents

Growing Connections

A social and educational program for older adults to improve brain health.



No garden, gardening experience or green thumb required!
Enjoy the joys of gardening together each month with like-minded seniors. We'll provide the supplies or you can bring your own. All supplies and equipment are included and there is no charge for the program.

February - Feb. 8: Houseplants
Learn about houseplants. Plant a succulent garden.

April - April 8: Garden Planning
Learn about the joys of garden planning. Pick a plant to start later.

June - June 6: Garden Success
Share your garden and plant needs of the season with like-minded seniors.

October - Oct 6: Apples & Squash
Learn about growing Apples and Squash. Types of apples and squash to grow. How to grow them and how to use them.

December - Dec 6: Caring for Your Plants
Learn about caring for your plants over the winter.

Feb-December, 2021
The program is held every other month: February 7, April 8, August 7, October 7, December 4.
Shelby Lake Senior Center
111 E. Lake St., New Lake, WI
• 53066 • 1000am

Include name and address past and all 53066
Members of 53066 ADRC. Come to one or more to all.
Register: 715-537-6225



Questions/Resources???

- Funding sources: ADRC, health systems, United Ways, Care Facilities, Helen Bader
- Contact Trisha Witham, trisha.witham@co.barron.wi.us for templates for handouts and marketing.
- University of Minnesota Extension will also share their lesson plans and topics.
- Be creative...no right or wrong topic or activity.
- Master Gardeners are experts on the information.