



## Presidents Message

Cory Tischman, WPS President and Director – Eau Claire, Wisconsin

After a long hard winter it is hard to believe that spring is here - especially since the cold and snow of winter has not departed yet. What a contrast to 2012 which started off with a warmer than normal winter that ended in February and a March with temperatures well above normal which caused peony foliage to emerge early. As normal there were a number of frosts in April of 2012 with a few of them being severe. The frosts caused foliage damage, bloom damage and/or a loss of blooms on a large number of my peony plants.



In general - I'm the type of person which views the glass as half full - not half-empty. Thus, I see a number of benefits from the long winter of 2013. They include a lessened chance of frost damage to

plants since the snow cover and cold has kept the peonies from emerging early as they did in 2012. The long winter has provided extra time to search the vendor web sites for additional peony varieties to add to my must have list of peonies (the varieties that I can't live without) and to my wish lists of peonies (the varieties that I plan on adding in the future). In addition, it allowed me time to place several orders for a number of the peony varieties, that are on my must have list, it pays to order early since the rare varieties sell out fast and normally are not offered again for several years. Thus, I would recommend that you get in your peony order(s) early so you are not disappointed by the vendor(s) being sold out of the peonies that are on your must have list.

WPS is sponsoring two nursery tours and luncheon cook-outs in 2013. I strongly recommend that you attend them, if at all possible, because you will be able to see 100's of different varieties of tree peonies and herbaceous peonies in bloom. You will be able to compare and contrast the blooms and plant habit of 100's of different varieties allowing you to make better informed decisions on which varieties to add to your must have list. There is no cost for WPS members for either of the nursery tours or luncheon cook outs which WPS will be supplying the main c Spring is finally here, and I am sure most of us are happy that peony season is right around the corner. I have been eagerly moving mulch around the base of my peonies to see if any noses are peeking up. My species peonies are well on their way, and the early hybrids have about an inch or two of growth. The lactifloras are coming along, but it is all still too early for them here in Eau Claire. These upcoming weeks in spring seem to fly fast, and there is always something to do for getting the garden beds ready for when the peonies bloom.

The Wisconsin Peony Society (WPS) recently had its winter educational meeting and elections. Michelle Ovans of Ovans Peony Farm, gave an outstanding presentation on her cut peony flower business, and shared some helpful tips and tricks on growing and storing cut flowers. The WPS also held its biennial elections. I was nominated and elected as the new WPS President, with Sue Anderson stepping down to become Past President, and she will be on the Board of Directors for a year. We also have many new and old faces on the Board, which I am very excited to work with, as well as serve you, the members of this society. Peonies are a deep passion of mine and are a reminder of my connections to my late grandmother, who got me

### Calendar of Events

**May 15-19**  
APS Annual Convention

**June 15**  
Tour of Oh My Peonies!

**August 25**  
Grafting Tree Peonies  
Workshop

**October 5**  
5th Annual WPS Peony & Tree  
Peony Auction

For more information see  
articles in this newsletter.

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 Jeff Delaney, 136 Barron St., Eau Claire, WI 54703 or on our website [www.wipeonysociety.org/membership](http://www.wipeonysociety.org/membership). You can print an order form or pay on the website using PayPal.

### What's in This Issue

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Picture in the header was provided by Fina Gardens,LLC.

# Wisconsin Peony Society Garden Tour

## June 15th at Oh My Peonies!

### Schedule of Events

11:30 – Lunch at Pigeon River Brewing Company, 1103 N. Main St, Marion, WI

1pm – Tour of Oh My! Peonies!, W12925 Mielke Rd, Marion, WI

“My passion for peonies started when my sister shared Red Charm with me. My reaction was ‘Oh My! Peonies!’ Since then, my hobby with peonies has grown to 1700 plants and more than 190 peony varieties”.  
– Leroy Mielke

Oh My! Peonies!, owned by Leroy Mielke and his sister Sue



Anderson, was started merely as a hobby. Each Christmas, the main item on Leroy’s gift list was a “peony gift certificate”, which filled the initial peony bed. They now have six main beds of peonies.

Leroy’s retirement dream was to spend more time enjoying what he loved most -- the peonies. In 2014, Leroy and Sue, started Oh My! Peonies!. Leroy’s focus is on the care taking of the beds, and Sue’s focus is on the marketing. They offer both herbaceous and intersectional peonies, and this year had their first peony introduction, “Mystic Pink”, purchased as a seedling at the Wisconsin Peony Society

Fall Auction.

Last fall, Oh My! Peonies! were featured on the PBS program “Around the Farm Table”, which can be viewed under the title “Scandinavian Midsummer Fest 10/18/18.”

As past President of Wisconsin Peony Society, Sue sees the need to educate the public about peony growing, as well as bareroot and cut-flower production. As a previous owner of a floral design company, Sue enjoys sharing her knowledge with her customers.

Join us for lunch at the Pigeon River Brewing Company followed by a tour of the gardens at Oh My! Peonies! Sign-up can be done online or filling out the registration form. Registration for the picnic is \$10/per person, and is for WPS members only. Please bring your own lawn chairs. Beverages will be provided by WPS.

Lunch Options:

Whiskey BBQ Chicken Wrap

Tomato basil tortilla filled with lettuce, grilled chicken, cheese blend, diced red onion, whiskey BBQ sauce, and ranch dressing. Served with kettle chips and dessert.

Chicken Salad Sandwiches

Sourdough bread topped with a grape and walnut chicken salad and lettuce. Served with kettle chips and dessert.

Southwest Veggie Wrap

Tomato basil tortilla filled with lettuce, a mixture of brown rice, black beans, corn, tomatoes, and southwest sauce. Served with kettle chips

You can RSVP by filling out the form below, or contact Michelle Ovans at [ovanspeonyfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:ovanspeonyfarm@yahoo.com) or 715-574-9425

Option 1: Whiskey BBQ Chicken Wrap

Option 2: Chicken Salad Sandwich

Option 3: Southwest Veggie Wrap

This event is not free and open to the public. It is for WPS members only.

Please check with Sharon Schmitz (membership) to make sure your dues have been paid. She can be contacted at: [peony-lover@hotmail.com](mailto:peony-lover@hotmail.com)

Things to Know About the Picnic:

Please wear flat, comfortable shoes, the gardens may be muddy depending on rainfall. Rain or shine, you may want to bring an umbrella and/or raincoat if it rains. Bring sunscreen, sunglasses and/or a hat if you are sensitive to the sun. Don’t forget to bring your cell phone or camera to take photos of the beautiful gardens.

WPS will supply water and soft drinks

You will receive an e-mail confirmation that we have received your registration.

The last date to cancel for a refund is June 12, 2019.

Call if further questions 715-574-9425 -- Michelle Ovans (Garden Tour Committee Chair)

Fill out the bottom portion and send in:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch Option: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Meal payment \$10

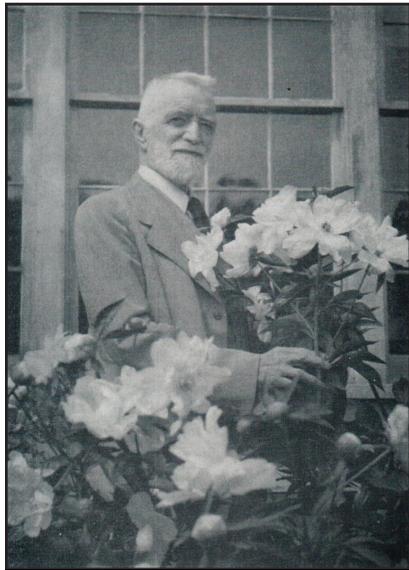
Return your form with payment prior to June 8th:

Make checks payable to WI Peony Society or pay with PayPal on the website <http://www.wipeonysociety.org/events>

Mail to: Jeff Delaney, 1136 Barron St., Eau Claire, WI 54701 or phone 725-864-2274

Call if further questions 715-574-9425 - Michelle Ovans

# Hybridizer's Corner



Prof. Arthur Percy Saunders (March 22, 1869 – August 14, 1953) is probably the most well-known peony hybridizer the world has ever seen. He was responsible for bringing many new species into the gene-pool of our garden varieties, thus bringing new colors and a longer flowering period. Most information about the man and his works can be found in many of the American Peony Society (APS) publications. If you still want to know more about him or his publications, it would be best to join the APS and order the books they have on offer. Below is an excerpt from *The Peonies*, by John C. Wister:

“Professor Saunders was not the first to make crosses between peony species. He was, however, the first to bring together a large assemblage of species—the vast majority of which had never been used before in crossing. He was the first to systematically try to intercross each one of these species with every other one. He created more hybrid races and more new hybrid varieties than all other breeders, past and present, put together. His work in creating these new hybrid races is the greatest peony achievement of this, or any other, century.”

Out of hundreds of crosses and thousands of seedlings, Professor Saunders registered around 250 of his creations, some even registered after his passing. Many of the newest peony introductions, both herbaceous and woody, can be traced back to Professor Saunders work. Some of his creations have been lost through time, but there are many that still hold a spot in peoples' gardens today, such as 'Nosegay', 'Athena', 'Lovely Rose', 'Vesuvian', 'Black Panther', and 'Cytherea'.

A.P. Saunders in 1953 (age of 84), next to 'White Innocence', one of his many introductions.

## **American Peony Society Annual Convention May 15-19**

The American Peony Society is excited to present plans for the 2019 APS Convention in Ames, IA! The convention is being held earlier this year to showcase large collections of peonies hybridized by famed American hybridizer A. P. Saunders. See biographical information in our Hybridizer's Corner.

Wednesday May 15th will include an Award of

Landscape Merit Judges Training Workshop by Lore Sampson, a workshop on Exhibiting Peonies by Kent Tretheway.

Seminars that will be presented during the convention include: Peonies 101 by Carol Adelman "Better Peony Photography" with a Hands-On Peony Photo Shoot on Sunday by Mark Stolenberg, Botanical Peony Species of Professor Saunders' World by Harvey Buchite, Saunders'

Herbaceous Peonies by Lois Girton, Hybridizers' Corner by Don Hollingsworth, Tim Stanek and Nate Bremer, Lemoine's Disease: What's Behind the Scenes? by Cullen Schaffer, Woody Peonies by Nate Bremer, Ask the Experts (panelists: Nate Bremer, Don Hollingsworth, Jim Adelman and Piet Wierstra). Thursday will include tours through various gardens.

The annual Flower Show will be on Saturday and Sunday.

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into gardening a very young age. This society has allowed me further deepen these connections as well share the knowledge and excitement of peonies to other people.

Other new updates include the WPS also has a new face to our website! Tracey Nelson (WPS Secretary and Website Committee Chair) worked diligently to give the society a more up-to-date and functional website. You can check it out at [www.wipeonysociety.org](http://www.wipeonysociety.org) to see upcoming events, sign-up or renew membership, check out the latest newsletter, see the list of new Board of Directors and Committee Chairs, and we even have our own discussion forum!

We are also looking for volunteers or people interested in getting more involved with WPS. Joining a committee or volunteering can be a great way to learn more about the Society as well as work with other members to help promote our mission to “promote, foster, and generate interest in the cultivation and use of all peonies, and facilitate the sharing of information pertaining to all peonies.”

Do you have a great idea to share? If so, please let me hear from you! I can be contacted at [wipeonsociety.president@gmail.com](mailto:wipeonsociety.president@gmail.com)

### WPS Board of Directors

*President - Cory Tischman*

*Past President - Sue Anderson*

*Vice President - Jordan Kabat*

*Treasurer - Jeff Delaney*

*Secretary - Tracey Nelson*

*Newsletter - Helen Finazzo*

*Member at Large - Scott Parker*

*Member at Large - Michelle Ovans*

## Upcoming Events

**May 15-19th** The American Peony Society Convention in Ames, IA

The crown jewel of the American Peony Society Convention is the Flower Show, which is open to the public on Saturday and Sunday. This year's show will be held at Reiman Gardens and will include cut flowers and artistic design and educational exhibits. APS book and seed sales, plant vendors and an author book signing event will provide shopping and learning opportunities for both members and the general public! The Flower Show will be open on Saturday, May 18 from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm and Sunday, May 19 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Location: Reiman Gardens, 1407 S University Boulevard, Ames, IA 5001

**June 15th** WPS member only tour at Oh My! Peonies!

11:30 – Lunch at Pigeon River Brewing Company, 1103 N. Main St, Marion, WI

1pm – Tour of Oh My! Peonies!, W12925 Mielke Rd, Marion, WI

August 25th – Grafting Class at West Madison Agricultural Research Station: 8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona, WI 53593

1pm – Demonstration by Jordan Kabat (WPS Vice President and Director)

Participants are asked to bring the following:

- Tree peony scions
- Razor blade, box cutter, Xacto knife, or something similar with a fresh blade, and spares just in case
- A cutting board or mat to utilize as a work surface

Other materials will be supplied and there will possibly be a limited number of scions for sale to purchase at the demonstration, but is subject to availability. More information on this event, and how to gather and store scions will be posted on the WPS website and Facebook page around the beginning of August.

**October 5th** – WPS Fall Root Auction at West Madison Agricultural Research Station 8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona, WI 53593

10:30: Check-in

11:00: WPS business meeting with lunch. Bring a dish to pass. Beverages and place settings to be provided.

12:00 pm: Auction Begins