



notes

FROM THE GARDENS



A publication of Monk Botanical Gardens

Fall/Winter 2021

Featured Article

Less Screen, More Green (pg 8)

Your support brought local kids
a Summer Camp full of fresh air,
exploration, and smiles



Monk
Botanical
Gardens

Letter from the Board President

Greetings!

It was my pleasure to become President of the Board for Monk Botanical Gardens in May 2021, after serving on the board since 2018. As we prepare for our organization's growth and focus on developing a strong, active board of directors, I am excited to hear from these new members how the momentum and enthusiasm for the Gardens are "contagious."

Robert Monk had a vision in 2003 when he donated 19 acres, as did all the hard-working volunteers who carried this forward solely on their own until 2017 when we hired our Executive Director, Darcie Howard. Two of those founding board members still serve on our board and have shown incredible commitment. Since 2017, we have gone from a non-profit run 100% by volunteers to a non-profit with a hard-working staff of six. Their creativity in programming options through COVID not only allowed us to survive but rather thrive, as did the generous support of expanded community partnerships, corporate sponsorships, memberships, donations, and grants. Our goal is to become a premier regional botanical garden destination. My hope is grounded in the movie Field of Dreams, with the message, "If you build it, they will come."

I managed the Summer Learning Community Connection program for the Wausau School District for many years. During my tenure, some of my favorite moments included visiting the Gardens, where children were fully engaged in the variety of programming here, particularly hands-on gardening. I consistently heard from parents how excited they were that their children grew, harvested, and ate vegetables. For some children, this was a first!

Since I have retired (while amid the pandemic), I found the Gardens to be a sanctuary. It has been a place where I can safely meet with friends and enjoy the beauty of the various seasons. While huddling with friends on a cold day in January after a nice walk, a woman approached us on snowshoes and proudly announced it was her 80th birthday. We sang "Happy Birthday," and she headed off, with a beaming smile, on the trail ahead. We expressed hope that we, too, will enjoy this resource and have such vitality on our 80th birthdays!

I marvel at what the Gardens can offer to all ages and abilities. We truly are a Garden for All, embracing societal diversity and inclusivity by understanding what nature shows us: that strength, resilience, growth, and sustainability result from ecological biodiversity.

As we head into fall, I invite all of you to visit and become involved in this special place and join the ongoing creation of this beautiful community.

See you in the Gardens,

Nancy Cedar



Nancy Cedar, Board President

GARDENS STAFF

- Darcie Howard - Executive Director
- Tiffany Rodriguez-Lee - Development Director
- Elise Schuler - Education & Events Manager
- Marissa Ashbeck - Horticulture & Grounds Manager
- Brittany Ollhoff - Sprouts Garden Preschool Teacher
- Kaytie Roettinger - Environmental Educator

Officers

- Nancy Cedar, President
- Sheila Rossmiller, Vice-President
- Sandi Cihlar, Secretary
- Scott Wegner, Interim Treasurer
- Robert Reinertson, Past President

Directors

- Susan Lang, Sandi Cihlar, Mallory McGivern, Tom Monk, Sue Matis, Paul Whitaker, Vickie Richmond Hawkins, Sheila Rossmiller

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Seed to Table

Enjoying Summer's bounty

Roasted Potato Salad with Sage & added Veggies

- 6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil (divided)
- 3 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. minced Scallions (optional)
- 1 diced tomato (optional)
- 1-2 lbs. small red-skinned potatoes, cut into bite size chunks

A bunch of fresh sage leaves, trimmed

Kale, or other hearty green, chopped and lightly roasted/sautéed, or mixed in fresh ahead of time to marinate in the vinaigrette (optional)

Green beans or snap peas (optional)

3 cups chopped cabbage (optional)

1. Whisk 3 Tbsp. of the oil with vinegar, and shallots in a medium bowl to blend. Season vinaigrette with salt and pepper. (Add tomatoes if using.)

2. Preheat oven to 425°F. Toss potatoes, cabbage, and remaining 3 Tbsp. oil in a large roasting pan to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast until potatoes are tender, occasionally tossing, about 30 minutes. Mix in sage and cool slightly.

3. Transfer roasted veggies to a large bowl. Rewhisk vinaigrette; drizzle over potatoes. Toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature. Enjoy!

Because of donors and volunteers like you, this year, we have a bountiful kitchen garden. For the first time, our garden produced such a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs that we were able to sell them and give the excess away! This Harvest Produce program allowed the community to pre-purchase bags of fresh produce and pick them up in the garden weekly. Volunteers and staff harvested produce for each bag - which included recipe suggestions. Any excess produce was donated to The Neighbors' Place food pantry.

A big thank you to the volunteer groups who have dedicated their time over the summer to planting, weeding, maintaining, and harvesting. From seed to table, we've seen the true beauty that comes in growing food and sharing it with others.

Try out one of our suggested recipes from a bag in August!





▶ Tiffany Rodriguez-Lee



Brittany Ollhoff ◀

Staff Spotlight

As the Garden continues to grow, so does our staff! Welcome to our newest team members, Tiffany and Brittany!

Tiffany Rodriguez-Lee Development Director

Tiffany joined the Gardens in April this year. She will help the Gardens continue to grow and connect to the community as our first Development Director. “The Gardens is growing exponentially in programs, events, new gardens, and staff. Tiffany will be an essential team member helping to continue the Gardens’ development. Our ambition is to be one of the top five reasons to visit Wausau. Tiffany will help us reach that goal,” says Darcie Howard, Executive Director.

Tiffany is from the Seattle area but has spent the last decade in Wausau, raising her three boys. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Marketing & Communications. She is almost complete with her Master’s of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. Tiffany has spent the last six years in the nonprofit industry. She worked in Membership Engagement at the Girl Scouts of the Northwestern Great Lakes and served as the Wausau River District’s Assistant Director. “Spending my first summer as a staff member of the Gardens has been phenomenal. I love that on any given day, you will see a group of kids ex-

ploring, dedicated volunteers pruning or planting, and so much more.”

If Tiffany isn’t at the office or helping families explore memorial options at the Gardens, you might see her helping harvest produce from the Kitchen Garden or skipping rocks in the pond with her boys.

Brittany Ollhoff Sprouts Garden Preschool Teacher

Brittany joined the Gardens’ staff this Summer in preparation for our Sprouts Garden Preschool. Brittany is excited to be a part of a great outdoor learning adventure with the children at the Gardens. Her past experiences with young children were most recently the teacher for the 4K program at Key to Life Christian Childcare Center in Weston. Brittany has taught in four school districts over the past four years, with two years in special education. Brittany has also worked for numerous childcare centers, providing respite care for children with significant special needs. From the very beginning, she says that she has always wanted to work with children. At Sprouts Garden Preschool, Brittany is confident she’ll be doing what she truly loves every day.

When she isn’t teaching, she loves to travel, go to concerts, hike, and read. Family is a big part of her life and is one of the reasons she moved back to the Wausau area after graduating from Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin, with a Bachelors in Education: Regular and Special Education.

Volunteer Spotlight

Julie Berndt

The Volunteer from the North

In January 2021, a Trip Advisor search led Julie to Monk Botanical Gardens. She lives North, between Rhinelander and Tomahawk and was searching for things to do in the Wausau area. She was drawn to our website and immediately fell in love! Julie had owned a tree nursery for 20 years and was looking for a place she could put her interest in plants into practice. She quickly emailed for more info, filled out volunteer forms, and says she doesn't regret it!

In the spring, Marissa connected with Julie and they toured the gardens. The next few weeks, she came out to prune the gardens and weed. Then, along with another volunteer, she took on the raised pepper plant beds for the entire summer. After a loss in the family, Julie had to take a break from the Gardens, but credits her fellow volunteer, Jan and the interns for doing a splendid job keeping up on the plants. Upon her return, she was amazed by the number of peppers that were produced!

When asked about where she sees the gardens in the next few years, she said, "I see the gardens expanding into currently wild acreage, more classes offered, with marketing attracting visitors from throughout the state and a visitor center being erected and staffed year round. I hope to become more involved with Monk Botanical Gardens in the years ahead. They have such a great facility and great staff."



Learn more about how you can join our volunteer efforts by visiting www.monkgardens.org/volunteer



Sue Matis



Susan Lang



Board Spotlight

Sue Matis

Sue, a new board member, comes to the garden with years of expertise! She has been in the Central Wisconsin area for the last 20+ years, working in the Wausau area for about 18 of them. She's spent 25+ years in Human Resources and Organizational Development working in the Healthcare, Financial Services and Technology industries. She dedicates her time to community organizations, including United Way of Marathon County.

Sue has a special connection to the Gardens; her niece, our Horticulturist and Grounds Manager, whose passion for the Gardens inspired Sue to get involved. She quickly connected with our leadership team and immediately noticed their passion. Sue is an incredible asset, assisting with the board and Human Resource Committee. She's excited to be a part of advancing our overall vision. Sue says, "The Gardens has a great future ahead of it with the addition of the visitor center. The more I become familiar with everything, the more I see the great opportunity of becoming a regional botanical garden."

Susan Lang

New board member, Susan, makes volunteering a priority. Over the years, she has enjoyed dedicating her time to organizations making the Wausau area a better place to live, and she is happy to say that the Gardens is one of them! Born and raised in Mosinee, she has lived and worked in the area since 1985. She brings so much to the Gardens board of directors, including her passion for helping organizations do more than they thought possible, moving them to the next level. With a successful year behind the Gardens and incredible new projects on the horizon, Susan is undoubtedly an asset to the organization.

Susan has spent most of her career starting, acquiring, and selling manufacturing companies. She has recently transitioned from running companies to consulting for them. She now assists various clients with economic development projects, renewable energy opportunities, organizational structure, and board governance.

When it comes to the gardens, Susan says, "It will be the place to invest in (financially, physically, spiritually, and educationally) for many of all ages. It will be a key calling card for our county and enjoyed by thousands every year."



GROWING MORE THAN FLOWERS

Sprouts Garden Preschool Update

Fall is here, which means it's time for Back to School! We are thrilled to embark on our first school year with Sprouts Garden Preschool here at the Gardens. Over the Summer, our **dedicated volunteers** constructed the 30 ft. yurt in some of the hottest weather of the year. This unique classroom will host up to thirty-two 3-5 year olds! Studies have shown that children learn best through play and hands-on experiences. Our students will spend at least 80% of their time outdoors, guided in exploration and learning by our skilled early childhood environmental educators. We can't wait to watch this program and the children it serves grow!



For more information about Sprouts Garden Preschool, visit www.monkgardens.org/sprouts.

Honor Your Loved Ones at the Gardens

There are many ways to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the Monk Botanical Gardens while honoring those special to you. A donation offers a unique opportunity to honor the special people in your life. Gifts may be purchased in the loving memory of a cherished friend or relative or to celebrate an anniversary, achievement, or special event.

A variety of benches, pavers, trees, and plantings are available to donors who wish to have their name or the name of a loved one associated with a gift. Some donors may wish to give in support of the various major project elements in the Gardens. All donations must be compatible with the overall Garden plan. Anonymous contributions will be respected, of course. For more information, reach out to Tiffany at trodiguezlee@monkgardens.org





A New Garden Gem

“Thanks to our donors, the Shade & Hosta Garden has opened to the public!” – Linda Grilley

A new garden gem, the Master Gardeners’ Shade and Hosta Garden, is now open for you to enjoy. The garden is a collaborative effort by the North Central Wisconsin Master Gardeners and the Monk Botanical Gardens. Take in the expanded view from the Tree House. Browse the new pathways and discover over 110 varieties of registered hostas and other perennials under our newly planted tree canopy within our red pine forest. Get new landscaping ideas and explore the signs that provide easy access to reference materials on the Gardens’ plants.

The development of the Gardens started over four years ago. Dana Sampt, a Master Gardener, donated the initial conceptual design for an estimated ¼ acre garden. A jungle, so thick that you could not see your fingers when you stretched out your arm, was cleared. Water drainage and soil problems and weak trees were discovered. A second design by Erin Umlaugh to fix these problems guided the building of the ¾ acre bermed landscape you’ll see today. Thanks to Master Gardeners and Monk Botanical Gardens volunteers, the area was planted and mulched with the guidance of Marissa Ashbeck, the Gardens’ Horticulturist.

Financial support was vital to making the Shade and Hosta Garden happen. Master Gardeners secured needed financial support, including an urban forestry grant from the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Forestry Program and two donor-advised contributions from The Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin. Land Art donated expertise. And, local businesses, especially nurseries, provided discounts and advice. The hours of volunteer work alone are estimated at over \$30,000.

The Shade and Hosta Garden will continue to improve in the future. With ongoing community support, you’ll see new hostas and trees, improved seating and education spaces, and garden features. The garden will be an evolving gem for generations to come, providing a shady, peaceful place for visitors to gather, learn and relax.



Interested in learning more?

Attend a Saturday tour! We offer tours at 10 am for the public through September.

Less Screen, More Green!

We're getting kids of all ages outside again, thanks to our donors, partners, and staff.

Everyone deserves to dig in the dirt and enjoy the beauty of our Garden. Summer camp is one of many ways we ensure kids of all ages and backgrounds have the opportunity to get outside!

This year, summer camp sessions were available for kids in grades 4K through 5th grade. Camp themes and activities changed weekly with topics varying from prehistoric exploration, wildlife adaptations, pollinators, to art, and so much more! On any given day you could find children building stick forts, catching bugs, or enjoying a book in the treehouse.

To help give the kids a great experience, we partnered with several community organizations. The Central Wisconsin Preschool of the Arts brought so much energy and creativity for the 4K-K camps twice a week, assisting us with crafts. During the Colossal Cavemen week, either Dino Dave or Sean the Mammoth Hunter packed with knowledge and caveman charm. The kids weren't the only ones learning, our staff did too!

Kaytie, our Environmental Educator, shared a story from our Bio-Blitz week showing how enthralled kids can be while exploring and researching.

"I was so impressed with the kids during Bio-Blitz week, and I knew on day one that it was going to be a special session. Each day we focused on a different group of organisms, and I created a field journal for the kids to catalog their findings. The first day was trees, and the kids had the goal of finding 10 different species of tree. For each, they documented the appearance of bark, the style of leaf, and the circumference of the trunk. Armed with "Trees of North America" guides, they were tasked with hypothesizing the tree species using the information they had gathered. It didn't really matter if they got the tree species exactly right. Their collaboration, observation skills, and sense of scientific community

mattered most. The kids were sharing ideas, respectfully challenging each other, and connecting in incredible ways. I thought after researching trees for an hour, these energetic 3rd-5th graders would appreciate running around the treehouse for a while. Not so! Most of the kids chose to continue their studies instead! Of the kids that chose to go to the treehouse, all were back to their research in 5 minutes or less. This may not seem monumental, but I look forward to seeing these scientists on the news someday!"

"Next Summer is so far away!" One child proclaimed on the last day of camp. We can't wait for next year, either. **And with help from donors like you**, we can bring our community's kids another Summer of outdoor exploration and fun.





CONCERTS IN THE GARDENS

Every Tuesday in June & July was a delight! Each week we brought in a local food truck for dinner, Whitewater Music Hall beer, and great local musicians. This was a great way to safely gather outdoors and enjoy Summer evenings.



THEATRE IN THE GARDENS

Out of the Woods Theatre performed several shows for us over the course of the Summer. Alice in The Gardens led attendees throughout the gardens, ending with a Mad Hatter Tea Party. A unique experience for everyone! Marian, the True Tale of Robinhood was another great Summer performance. We rounded out the season with Shakespeare in the Gardens. Out of the Woods performed Twelfth Night and Midsummer Night's Dream.



HANDS ON PLANTS WORKSHOPS

We kicked off the Fall season with a build your own bouquet workshop. Gardens' horticulturist led attendees through choosing a container, picking flowers and greenery, and creating the perfect bouquet using Gardens' flower beds!

SEASON RECAP



BOOZE & BOTANY

For our 3rd year, we brought together the finest Wausau mixologists and chefs, offering a curated menu of craft cocktails and complimentary dishes using a selection of fresh ingredients!



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Our Partnership with Community Connections, Wausau School District's summer program, created the opportunity for fifteen field trips to the Gardens during the Summer of 2021! Students took three field trips each throughout the summer to learn about gardening and nature. As part of the three field trips, the over 250 students planted and cared for the legume garden bed in our veggie garden and were able to watch it grow from seeds into pea and bean plants. Students' last trip to the Gardens for the summer included harvesting from the veggie garden to taste what had been grown.

A Bustling Summer in the Grounds



After a quiet Summer in 2020, the grounds crew was ready for some noise in the garden. We were fortunate to hire three AmeriCorps Interns for the summer of 2021. Each intern brought a plethora of experience, knowledge, and unique personalities that benefitted the gardens greatly. With the help of the Horticulture and Grounds Manager, Marissa Ashbeck, and many volunteers, the gardens have transformed. Along with all of their hard work and dedication, the interns created projects that would benefit the operations and environment at the Gardens. Claire Butalla helped organize and implement the Kitchen Garden Produce Bag Sales, where she recorded planting dates and harvest dates to refer to when planning next year's Kitchen Garden. Celeste Huff brought a Community Science Series called Pollinator Power to the gardens. She held workshops to explore different pollinator citizen science projects. Maya Desai investigated animal species at the Gardens by observing the wildlife with trail cameras. After collecting her data, she researched which wildlife was beneficial versus a nuisance to the Gardens and how to control the species. We cannot thank our interns enough for their countless hours of caring for the gardens and connecting with the community that surrounds the gardens.

With the help of our AmeriCorps Interns and volunteers, we have created some amazing new garden spaces for visitors to enjoy. The first project of the season was to revamp the front entry area into a display garden for the All-American Selections plant program. AAS winners are flowers and vegetables that have been "Tested Nationally & Proven Locally." Each AAS entry is tested for superior garden performance by horticulture professionals across North America. When entering the front gate, visitors can

check out different plant varieties that are AAS winners. We connected with Northcentral Technical College's Welding Program to have welding camp participants create a fantastic tree sculpture for our new Wildflower Woods extension. In the new area of the Wildflower Woods, we created a berm lined with red granite boulders using a method called Hugelkultur. This allowed us to use debris collected from clearing areas to build the mound and create an environment perfect for microbial decomposition of the material below the soil's surface.

As the development continued on the Gardens, we decided to expand our clearing and focus on another portion of the Meditation Garden. On the western portion of the pond, you will find new boulder seating areas and plantings that look over the pond. As Fall progresses, we will expand our developed garden spaces and maintain our existing gardens.

We would not have been able to implement, install and maintain all of these new areas without the support of our staff, interns and volunteers. Thank you for getting your hands in the dirt and helping us grow our roots!



Our House Senior Living Center residents enjoyed digging and planting again this summer with wheelchair-accessible garden beds. While the residents of the assisted living and the memory care houses were helping plant the flowers, we overheard how great it was to have some color in the yard.

We asked one resident what she thought about the new flowers, she said, "Now it looks like home."

FALL & WINTER PROGRAMS

Tots In the Garden

Tuesdays

2:00 - 3:00 pm on odd weeks of the month

10:00 - 11:00 am on even weeks of the month

Every week is a new nature-themed topic to explore with your young ones. Learn about plants, birds, bugs, and the tools you can use to explore nature with your 3-5 year old. Every session includes an activity, snack, and story.

After School in the Gardens

September 7 – Early November

Tuesdays & Wednesdays 3:30 - 5:30 pm

After a day of learning, let your kids play in the Gardens, explore and learn about nature with the Gardens' education staff. At the Gardens, kids can climb trees, catch bugs, look for animal tracks, build forts, care for a garden, prepare a meal, and learn about the natural world, all with the guidance of our experienced environmental educator.

Creatures of the Night

Friday, Sept. 24 • 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Take a night hike through the Gardens and while walking in complete darkness, you'll play games, do experiments, and we'll do our best to become like the nocturnal creatures who call the Gardens home. End the hike by dissecting an owl pellet and reconstructing the skeleton of an owl's meal!

Luminary Walks

Friday, Oct. 1 • 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Friday, Nov. 5 • 5:30 - 8:00 pm

Friday, Dec. 3 • 5:30 - 8:00 pm

Bring your family and friends (leashed dogs are also welcome) to the gardens for a luminary-lit walk through the Gardens ending at the Kitchen Garden, where you can enjoy a bonfire and hot chocolate. What if there's snow? Bring your snowshoes!

Hands-on Plants: Adult Workshops

Relax by the fire while you create decor for your home, inside and out, using natural materials found in the Gardens! Refreshments and a glass of wine included.

Grapevine Wreaths

Tuesday, Sept. 14 • 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Gather grapevines in the Gardens and make a seasonal wreath to take home for your front door.

Cider Workshop

Tuesday, Sept. 28 • 6:00 - 7:00 pm | In this hands-on workshop, we'll use a couple of home cider presses to turn apples into cider – from selection and preparation of fruit to pressing to storage and possible fermentation.

Horseradish Making

Tuesday, Oct. 12 • 6:00 - 7:30 pm | It's digging time! As the growing season winds down and the frost starts to appear, root crops can be harvested. Horseradish roots are commonly dug in the Fall, and we are going to teach you how to prepare this spicy delight. You will learn about the Horseradish plant and the cultural practices that go along with growing this perennial in your garden. We will be washing, peeling, grinding, processing, and canning a prepared horseradish. You will be able to take home a jar of your prepared horseradish to compliment your dishes.

Porch Pots

Tuesday, Nov. 16 • 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Decorate your containers for the holiday season before the snow starts to fly! Create a holiday porch pot to take with you and learn how to make your existing containers festive. We will be using natural elements collected from the gardens to create stunning arrangements.

Porch Gnomes

Tuesday, Nov. 23 • 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Hey gnomies! Let's make some festive evergreen gnomes to accent your outdoor holiday decor. The three-foot gnomes will be assembled using tomato cages adorned with spruce and pine boughs, along with hats, mittens, and noses. Gnomes are the perfect way to spruce up your home!

Evergreen Wreaths

Tuesday, Nov. 30 • 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Get ready for an evening of crafting and relaxation. We will sit back with a festive warm drink to create an 18" balsam wreath by hand. We will assemble the wreaths with balsam tips and other natural elements to create a gorgeous wreath.

Kissing Balls

Tuesday, Dec. 7 • 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Throughout history, kissing balls hung over entryways as a beacon for blessings and good tidings to all who walked underneath. Kissing balls are making a comeback in holiday traditions because of their natural beauty and good fortune. You will learn how to make a decorated kissing ball using evergreen tips and various other stems. Take home this beautiful feature to decorate your entryway for the holiday season.

Holiday Centerpieces

Tuesday, Dec. 14 • 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Everyone needs a holiday centerpiece to complete their holiday place setting! Come and learn how to create and care for a beautiful holiday centerpiece using evergreens, dogwoods, dried flowers, and berries. You will be able to take home your arrangement to show off during the holidays.

THANKS TO YOU, THIS GARDEN CONTINUES TO GROW!

BENEFACTOR



LEAD



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Cloverbelt Credit Union, Fred Mueller Automotive, Hire a Helper, Greenlawn Underground Sprinklers, Maher Water Corporation, Major Industries, Newcomb Electric & Heating, Whitewater Music Hall, Evolutions in Design, Verve Salon & Spa, Great Lakes Coca-Cola, Jim Kryshak Jewelers, Runkel Abstract & Title, Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company, Abby Bank, Reimer Construction, Wausau Awards and Engraving, Wausau Cleaning Services

Interested in becoming a Corporate Steward of the Gardens?

Call (715) 261-6147

or visit www.monkgardens.com/corporatesteward



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Experience the seasons change at Monk Botanical Gardens

As Fall colors begin to burst, we welcome a new season of activities. Take a look inside at the Fall/Winter lineup!

Thinking about your 2022 plans?

Monk Botanical Gardens could be your perfect venue for a wedding, party, or any special occasion. **For more information call 715-261-6309**

Sprouts

Garden Preschool

Nature-based early education

Enrolling in December for 2022

WAUSAU'S FIRST GARDEN PRESCHOOL!

- Located at Monk Botanical Gardens
- Fun, hands-on learning experiences outdoors and in a Monk Gardens yurt!
- Morning & afternoon sessions
- Scholarships available!

