

Master Gardener Update

April 2018

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Sweat Bee *Halictidae sp.*

Sweat bees get their name because some species can be attracted to the sweat on your skin. Many sweat bees are small in size (about ¼ inch long), although some species can be midsize (up to ½ inch long). They have dark or metallic green bodies. In some of the metallic green species, the body is entirely green; in other species, the head and thorax (the first two body segments) may be green while the abdomen is striped with black and yellow. Female sweat bees run the gamut from solitary to social, depending on the species. They often dig nests in the soil, however, some species prefer to nest inside rotting logs. If you ever stumble upon a metallic green bee in a rotting log, it's a sweat bee! Like most bees, these insects are docile and are unlikely to sting.

Mary K. Thompson

Websites

UW Extension Rock

County:

rock.uwex.edu

RPMGA Blog:

rpmga.blogspot.com

Rotary Gardens:

rotarybotanicalgardens.
org

Plants to bring butterflies to your garden

Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

This bright orange beauty should be a staple in every butterfly garden. A native wildflower, it is easy to grow, cold hardy, and does well in poor, dry soils. Long-lasting clusters of small, flat-topped flowers are crowned with a yellow, sun-kissed "corona" and bloom from June through August. Butterfly Weed is an important nectar source for Monarch butterflies and its leaves provide essential food for developing Monarch caterpillars - but expect to see a variety of pollinators making use of this plant.

Attracts: Butterflies and hummingbirds.



Coneflower (*Echinacea Purpurea*)

Native to the central and eastern United States coneflowers can be found growing in prairies, fields, and even in open woods. The native plants produce pink, yellow, white, and purplish blooms. The flower head is actually made up of multiple small florets in the center (multiple tiny flowers) with sterile rays that have color and attract insects. This cone-shaped center is where the plant gets its name. Leaves are coarsely to finely hairy. *E. tennesseensis* has very rough hairs, for example, whereas *E. purpurea* leaves have softer hairs. These plants

bloom for a long period – from mid-summer to fall. Deadhead to prolong bloom time. Late in the season begin leaving spent seedheads on the plants for winter bird food.

Attracts: Butterflies and hummingbirds.

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Spotted Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*)

This tall woodland plant (4 to 6') puts on clusters of pink or purple flowers from July to September. It is said a Native American medicine man of the same name used the plant to ease the effects of typhoid. Joe Pye is very adaptable. It does well in moist, well drained soil but will also survive quite nicely in sandy soil.

Attracts: *Adult butterflies love its nectar. It also draws bees and seed-eating birds such as goldfinches and mourning doves.*



Bee balm (*Monarda spp.*)



Bee balm puts on a continuous array of spidery dark pink, red or purple blossoms from summer to fall. Depending on the cultivar the plant can be 1 to 8 feet tall. Also known as Bergamont, Oswego Tea, or Horsemint (depending on species), it is a lovely perennial that brings in bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies. Its leaves are fragrant, and its blossoms serve as a nectar source for butterflies. It is quick to naturalize and needs to be divided every few years. The blooms are ideal for cut flower arrangements and can even be dried. (While researching this article I found references to a small black bee that is said to have co-evolved with *Monarda*. I was unable to locate the name of the bee. I will continue to research this mystery.)

Attracts: *Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.*

Goldenrod (*Solidago spp.*)

Blooms late-summer to late-fall on 2 to 5 foot plants, putting out mustard yellow flowers. Try well-behaved stiff goldenrod or Ohio goldenrod. Native throughout North America, it will grow almost anywhere. Goldenrod does not cause sneezing as was once widely accepted. These are great late season flowers that migrating butterflies will love to visit.



Pollinators will come from miles around to visit these nectar and pollen filled jewels.

Attracts: Bees, at least 18 butterfly species, such as the painted lady and giant swallowtail as well as the goldenrod flower moth. Native sparrows and goldfinches love the seeds.

Mary K. Thompson

Oh, no! As of January, rusty patched bumblebees have been moved to the U.S. endangered species list—the first wild bee to be added to that list. Populations have declined by as much as 90% in the last twenty years.

Rotary Gardens Earth Day Celebration, Saturday, April 21, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Come celebrate and learn about the interconnected world that sustains us. Lots of fun for the entire family. Vendors will host informational booths focused on the environment. Hands-on activities for the children both indoors and out (weather permitting). Zoozort will host both a mini zoo display *and* a LIVE animal show (paid tickets are required for the LIVE animal show). Garden admission is free from 10:00 to 2:00 (donations are always welcome). Food trucks will be available for lunch and sweet treats. You can enjoy your purchases in the Terrace Garden. Please call 608-314-8416 with questions.

Cost for LIVE animal show: Tickets are \$5.00/person and are required for every person over the age of 2. Those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Shows last one hour and begin at 10:30 a.m., noon, and 1:30 p.m. Because seating is limited to 175 people per show, we recommend you purchase your tickets online in advance. If you choose to wait till the day of the event, we can't guarantee tickets will still be available. This program sells out quickly! www.rotarybotanicalgardens.org/event/earthday

Please note: Refunds/exchanges are not available for this program. Tickets are only redeemable for the specific time and date. You may show your proof of purchase via your smartphone or tablet, or by printing your ticket. Children must be monitored at all times. Inappropriate or destructive behavior will result in immediate removal from the program. Thank you!

Rotary Gardens Botanical Talk: Soil, So Much More Than Meets the Eye, Thursday, April 26, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Join Steve Stumbras from Purple Cow Organics for an educational yet entertaining presentation starting with the 2 primary functions of soil: 1. Accept and retain moisture and 2. Cycle nutrients. Then, explore a deeper review of the physical, mineral and biological aspects of the soil and how these properties contribute to soil health, plant health (and beauty), nutrient density and ultimately the health of the animals or humans that consume the crop.

Cost: \$7 non-member, \$5 RBG Members; includes printed and note taking materials (where applicable), admission to Rotary Botanical Gardens, and light refreshments. Tickets to this event may be purchased at the door, or online, in advance.

Please note: if you would like to view the Gardens, please arrive with time prior to the beginning of the presentation as the Gardens will close at 6:30 p.m. Those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult, who is also required to purchase a ticket.

RPMGA Event: Rescuing Damaged Tools, Thursday, April 5, 5:30 p.m.

On Thursday, April 5, professional tool sharpener Paul Haen, of the Sharp Edge, will teach us how to rehabilitate garden tools. Bring your favorites that were forgotten in the garden or buried under the compost heap where they became rusty and dull. He'll show us how to clean them up and make them sharp and shiny again. He'll sharpen one tool free for each student in the class. There will be coupons available if you have more than one tool.

A long time tool care professional, Paul has no need to advertise. His business has grown for over 16 years because of his expertise and by word of mouth. It has no store front, no signage, no secretary. The entire thing is carried in the bed of a well maintained pickup truck. He has a hard core of regular customers and for a second time will be teaching a class of Master Gardener Volunteers.

Location: This class will take place at the Rock County Fairgrounds in the Stock Pavilion (NOT the Craig Center). Directions: The Rock County Fairgrounds is located at 1301 Craig Ave., Janesville, WI 53545. Enter the fairgrounds through the main gate and turn right until you reach the Office. Turn left at the office and go one block to the Stock Pavilion which is on the right. There is parking in the immediate area. The pavilion will be heated, but the building may still be cool. Please wear warm clothes.





RPMGA Event: Wildflower Flower Walk with Mariette Nowak,

Sunday, April 22, 1:30 p.m.

This is actually our May educational opportunity, but the wild flowers bloom when they bloom, and we don't want to miss them!

Mariette Nowak is the author of *Birdscaping in the Midwest, A Guide to Gardening with Native Plants to Attract Birds*, and a leader in both the Kettle Moraine Chapter of The Wild Ones and the Lakeland Audubon Society. This very knowledgeable lady had agreed to take us on a walk through the Kettle Moraine State Forest to view early spring wildflowers. If the sun shines that afternoon, we'll be heading to the pasque flower preserve, located between

Eagle and North Prairie. But the pasque flowers don't open if it's overcast. If that's the case, we'll consider another good wildflower location that's a little closer, between Whitewater and Palmyra. We'll meet near the closer location at 1:30, then decide which location is our best bet that day.

Location: Meet at 1:30 p.m. at the Ice Age Trail parking lot on Highway 12, approximately 5 miles east of the intersection of U.S. 12 and Hwy 89, at Sherwood Forest Road. Bring or wear waterproof hiking boots, just in case, as the closer location tends to be wet.

2018 Perennial Plant of the Year: Allium Millenium

The Perennial Plant Association had declared *Allium* 'Millenium' its 2018 Perennial Plant of the Year®. This sun-loving variety is hardy in zones 4 to 9, and was chosen in part for the fact that the spherical purple blooms come out later in the season than other alliums, at a time when fresh blooms are less common. It's also attracts lots of butterflies, and has few pest or disease problems. It's even unappealing to bunnies and deer.



Did you know? April is National Gardening Month

Volunteer Opportunities

Saturday, April 14, 9-11 a.m.: Welty Environmental Center Volunteer Workday, Hack and Chop the Brush. Bring your own hand tools, gloves, safety glasses and hard-toed shoes and help clear the way for a Prairie Restoration project at Big Hill Park! Prairie experts from Rock County Conservationists and Green-Rock Audubon will supervise work crews and offer guidance. All new participants require to fill out a City of Beloit Volunteer waiver (available onsite that morning).

Saturday May 5, MGVs at Beloit Farmers Market. Shifts are 8 to 10:30 or 10:30 to 1. We're looking for one or two people per shift to help give out free seeds and talk to people about gardening. Contact Ruth Flescher, yafello2@gmail.com, for information or to volunteer. Other upcoming Farmers Market Dates: June 16 in Janesville, July 28 in Beloit, September 22 in Janesville.

Monday, May 14, Jefferson Elementary School 4th Grade Class, event held at Janesville School District Outdoor Lab. Looking for a team of MGVs to plan and implement one of four stations for the kids to visit in turn (about 13 kids in each group), talking to them about basics of gardening and plants. If you would like to be part of this event, contact Susan Wood: woodslibrarymedia@gmail.com (preferred) or call 262-510-5554.

Ongoing: Community Garden "Supervisor" next to Wilson School. Looking for someone to take the lead on "supervising" the community garden project that is next to Wilson School. Neighborhood folks have been participating with the garden, however each year there is room for new gardeners. Some of the participants are self-directed, others need advice and encouragement. If you need a project for the year, and this sounds interesting, contact Kay Deupree for more information about what's involved: deupreen@charter.net.

Rotary Gardens. Opportunities always abound at Rotary, but right now they're looking for people to help with Earth Day (April 21) upcoming compost/pansy sale weekends and the Spring Plant Sale on May 10-14.

Date not yet announced: Speak to Intern MGVs on a Wednesday morning at the Irwin Young Memorial Library in Whitewater. State Master Gardener Coordinator Amy Freidig is looking for several people willing to discuss their experiences as MGVs and answer questions for new volunteers. Contact Amy (akfreidig@wisc.edu) for details.

Seed Saving Basics talk for August: Looking for a few volunteers willing to help develop and/or give a one-hour talk on the fundamentals of seed saving that we can give at several of the area libraries in conjunction with the new Arrowhead Heirloom Seed Library. If you're interested, contact Ruth Flescher: yafello2@gmail.com.

April Education Calendar

NCG = Nicholas Conservatory Garden, Rockford; OBG = Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison; DUWEX = Dane County UW Extension, Madison; UWA = UW Arboretum, Madison; ACG = Friends of Allen Centennial Garden, Madison; NATC = Nature at the Confluence, South Beloit; WEC = Welty Environmental Center, Beloit

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Your Garden Can Feed You All Year OBG/Pet Friendly Landscaping OBG	4 African Violets OBG/Perennials for Tough Sites OBG	5 Rescuing Damaged Tools RPMGA/Diseases in the Home Garden DUWEX	6	7 Proficient Pruning OBG/Top 50 Plants for Birds in WI OBG
8 Vivacious Vibernums OBG	9	10 Gardens of Stone OBG	11 Garden Walk: Get Ready for the Season OBG/ Gardening by the Moon OBG	12 Growing Berries DUWEX	13	14 Horticultural Landscapes Symposium ACG
15 How to Attract Eastern Bluebirds WEC	16 Selecting and Growing Tropical Orchids OBG	17 Garbage into Gold (Composting) OBG	18	19 Early Spring Flowers Walk OBG/Weeds and Invasive Plant Management DUWEX	20 Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time NATC	21 Earth Day Celebration RBG/ All About Bluebirds UWA/ Earth Day Community Planting Project NATC
22 Wildflower Walk RPMGA/SEED: The Untold Story NATC	23 Soil for the Home Garden OBG	24	25	26 Soil: So Much More Than Meets the Eye RBG/ Annual and Perennial Flowers DUWEX	27	28

29	30 Growing Strawberries and Raspberries OBG		All month: Simply Spring, the Butterfly Exhibit NCG			
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Looking Ahead to May:

The following events at Olbrich Botanical Gardens are early in May but require pre-registration in April. Check their website for details.

Gardening for Hummingbirds, May 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Register by April 25.

Growing and Cooking with Herbs, May 3, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Register by April 26

Tropical Conservatory Walk with the Curator, May 6, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Register by April 26.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

UW-Extension Rock County, 51 S. Main Street, Janesville, WI 53545