

Master Gardener Update

April 2019

<p>In this Issue</p> <p>Carder Bees</p> <p>Pollinators and Spring Garden Clean-up</p> <p>RPMGA: DNR Expert on Preventing and Controlling Invasive Species 2019 Program Calendar</p> <p>Rotary Gardens: Volunteer Refresher Training</p> <p>Community Garden Plots Available</p> <p>Volunteer Opportunities</p> <p>Education Calendar</p>	<p>Pollinator Project</p> <p>Carder Bees</p> <p><i>(Anthidium sp.)</i></p> <p>Carder bees (or wool carder bees) get their name from the female’s behavior of shaving off fine hair-like material (trichomes) from plant leaves, which they use to line their nests. These bees tend to nest in pre-existing tunnels, which may include hollow plant stems and insect tunnels in wood.</p> <p>The bee’s plant preferences include lamb’s ear (Stachys byzantine, in the mint family Lamiaceae), a perennial grown for its fuzzy, silvery gray-green foliage. It’s also been found to forage for trichomes on plants in the figwort/snapdragon family (Scrophulariaceae) and the pea and bean family (Fabaceae).</p> <p>The bee is mostly black and yellow. The females, about the size of a worker honey bee, range in body length from 11 to 13 millimeters, while the males are 14 to 17 mm. The females have specialized hairs on their faces used to gather pollen grains.</p>	 <p style="text-align: right;"><i>continues</i></p>
---	---	---

Websites

UW Extension Rock County:

rock.uwex.edu

RPMGA Blog:

rpmga.blogspot.com

Rotary Gardens:

rotarybotanicalgardens.org

Wisconsin Master Gardener Program:

wimastergardener.org

Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA): wimga.org

Carder bees are native to Europe and were accidentally introduced into New York State before 1963, according to research entomologist Tom Zavortink of the Bohart Museum at the University of California-Davis. The species was not purposefully introduced to pollinate alfalfa, as some reports allege.

Zavortink and fellow entomologist Sandra Shanks, wrote an article for the 2008 edition of the Pan-Pacific Entomologist which pointed out that several papers “have documented its spread from neighboring areas in the northeastern United States and southern Canada” and that the species has since crossed the country. It was confirmed in Colorado in 2005, Missouri in 2006, and Maine, Michigan, Maryland and California (Sunnyvale) in 2007.

The males can be quite territorial, even aggressive in defending their territory, sometimes body-slaming honey bees and other insects to the ground. Essentially harmless however, the males often guard their favorite plants while waiting for a female to approach and will attempt to chase off even the largest of intruders.



Photo: Kathy Keatley Garvey, Communications Specialist, UC-Davis Dept. of Entomology

Addressing the myth that carder bees are vicious predators which might even be responsible for colony collapse, native pollinator specialist Robbin Thorp, emeritus professor of entomology at UC-Davis, said “Males have been observed and recorded to occasionally maim and kill honey bees, but they are no major threat to our primary agricultural pollinator. They do not aggressively seek out honey bees to do them intentional harm. The male wool carder bee merely defends its territory from honey bees and other flying insects to keep the area free of potential competitors that might interfere with its mating opportunities. This non-native bee has co-existed with honey bees in Europe for hundreds of thousands of years.”

Thorp went on to say, “Nor would I recommend we attempt to control or get rid of the ‘newbie.’ It is (just) another pollinator, males visit flowers for nectar and females visit for pollen and nectar.”

Mary Kay Thompson



Protect Your Pollinators During Spring Garden Clean-up

Spring is on our doorstep, and many of us are getting anxious to head out to the garden and clean things up. But in early spring, many insects are still in diapause (a physiological state akin to hibernation). So don't head out with your favorite clippers and rake just yet.

There's a right way and a wrong way to do a spring garden clean-up.

Step 1: Cut, bundle, and tie hollow plant stems.

Lots of beneficial bugs, including pollinators like tiny native bees and pest-munching predators like syrphid flies, lacewings, and parasitic wasps spend the winter hunkered down in hollow plant stems. Cutting down the dead stems too early will disturb the insects before they have a chance to emerge. Ideally, you'd wait until the daytime temperatures are consistently above 50° F. But if you just can't wait that long for this chore, here are two other options:

1. Toss cut perennial and woody plant stems onto the compost pile very, very loosely, or spread them out at the edge of the woods. Many of the insects taking shelter inside the plant stems will still be able to emerge when the time is right.
2. Another option (and the one I prefer) is to take the cut stems and gather them into small bundles of a few dozen stems each. Tie the bundles together with a piece of jute twine and hang them on a fence or lean them against a tree on an angle. Again,

the insects sheltering inside of them will emerge when they're ready. An added bonus of this method: More insects, especially native bees could move in to the stems and use them as brood chambers all summer long.

Step 2: Do a careful leaf clean up.

Again, wait as long as possible to rake leaves out of perennial beds: until daytime temperatures consistently reach the 50s, if you can. Scores of butterflies and beneficial insects – morning cloaks, question marks, commas and luna moths, ladybugs, assassin bugs, and damsel bugs, for example – hunker down for the winter in leaf litter in various life stages. Try to keep a sharp eye out for them and do your best not to disturb them. Better yet, since they can be very hard to see, leave most of the leaves undisturbed and only move leaves off the crowns of your plants.

Step 3: Don't mulch...yet!

Beneficial insects and pollinators who overwinter in soil burrows include the hummingbird clearwing moth, soldier beetles, and many native bees. Mulching too early in the spring may block their emergence. Wait until the soil dries out a little and the weather warms.

Step 4: Prune with care.

Keep a sharp eye out for cocoons and chrysalises on woody perennials and shrubs as you prune. Some of our most beautiful moths and butterflies spend the winter in a delicate cocoon dangling from a branch, including the swallowtails, the sulfurs, and spring azures. Leave any branches with a cocoon or chrysalis. You can always cut them back later in the season.

A proper spring garden clean up should NOT be a destructive process.

By taking your time and doing it right, you and your garden can reap the many benefits of a healthy population of pest-munching beneficial insects and pollinators.

This article was excerpted from the SavvyGardening blog written by Horticulturist and garden author Jessica Walliser.

Is it clean up or is it habitat destruction?

Note: Katey Pratt, Horticulturalist at Olbrich Gardens, recommends a Spring clean-up date of April 15 or later for Zone 5 gardens.

Monarch Populations News: Good and Bad



In Mexico's overwintering grounds, populations of monarchs were way up this winter, covering about 6 hectares, vs. last year's 2.48 hectares. This is the highest level since the winter of 2005/2006, and almost ten times the low of .67 hectares in the winter of 2013/2014.

In California, the news is dismal. This past winter, monarch populations were the lowest ever counted. The highest measurement there was over 1.2 million in 1997. This year, the Xerces Society's population tally registered fewer than 25 thousand at Thanksgiving 2018, and the number had dropped below 16 thousand by New Year's Day 2019.

RPMGA April Program: DNR Expert Talks about Preventing and Controlling Invasive Species, Monday, April 8, 6:00-7:30 p.m., in conjunction with Rotary Botanical Gardens

As gardeners and land owners, we deal with plants and weeds all the time. A lot of common plants reseed generously, but some achieve another level, and have earned a special designation from the state. Do you know the difference between plants that just annoying and those that are restricted or prohibited? Do you know what you're required to do if you have one or the other? Matt Wallrath of Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources will be sharing how we, as gardeners, may be affected by the state's rule governing invasives (NR40), and what role we can play in helping to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

"Since 2009," says Wallrath, "the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has used Chapter NR 40 to help prevent the introduction and control the spread of invasive plants and animals in Wisconsin. Come learn why and how this is being achieved, and what you need to know. Topics will include rule definition, resources for easy compliance, alternatives to regulated plants, the past, current and future status of the rule, and how people can get involved." The program runs for an hour, with time for questions afterwards.

Wallrath serves as the statewide Organisms in Trade Outreach Coordinator and Regulation Specialist for the WDNR. His main work focus is monitoring, outreach, and education to achieve compliance with vendors at brick and mortar stores around the state, and online businesses and distribution companies around the country. He also spends time tabling and presenting at conferences and conventions. Matt is a native of Milwaukee. Working with the NR 40 prohibited and restricted species law, he feels he can make an impact in the protection of the rich natural heritage of Wisconsin.

RPMGA is offering this program in conjunction with Rotary Botanical Gardens. Everyone is welcome to come and learn. RBG members and Master Gardener Volunteers attend for free. Members of the public pay \$3.

Date/Time: Monday, April 8, 2019, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Location: Parker Education Center, Rotary Botanical Gardens



Matthew Wallrath of the WI DNR

RPMGA Program Calendar for the Rest of 2019

Based on input from members at the March meeting, here's what we're working on for the remainder of the year:

May—Plants that changed the World: Potatoes, Apples, Tulips and Marijuana, with former MGV Jim Haseman.
Thursday, May 2, 5:30-7:00 p.m. (Watch for the location in the next newsletter.)

June—Tour Intrinsic Perennial Gardens, Hebron IL (other stops possible!) Details are yet to be finalized, but we're aiming for Thursday, June 6

July—Tour of Rotary Gardens, with MGV and Rotary Tour Guide, Art Hilker, Thursday, July 11, 9:30 a.m.

August—Tour of Dane County UWEX's demo gardens with Horticulture Educator Lisa Johnson
Thursday, August 8, 10 a.m. We'll be adding another stop or two to make a day of it (Olbrich? Flower Factory Perennials? Suggestions welcome.)

September—Green roofs in the Beloit area and Blooming of Beloit
Date and time to be announced.

October—Lifetime Gardening by the Southeast WI MGVs Adapting the gardener and adapting the garden!
Thursday, October 3, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. at Rotary Gardens

November—Annual Potluck for Rock County MGVs and guests.
Date/time/location to be announced.

December—No meeting planned at this point.





Rotary Gardens Volunteer Refresher Training

If you volunteer at Rotary Gardens, (or if you'd like to!), April is the time to learn what's new in the gardens for 2019!

Updates for tour guides, ambassadors and Sunday watering teams will take place on Saturday, April 13. Tour guides meet at 9:00 a.m. in the main building. Ambassadors meet at 11:00 a.m. in the main building. Sunday watering crews meet in the Horticulture building at 1:00 p.m.

All garden volunteers are asked to attend one of two sessions: either Thursday, April 11 or Tuesday, April 16. Both sessions meet in the main building from 7-8:00 p.m.

If you are interested in any of these types of volunteer opportunities, but can't make the refresher training, please get in touch with Laura Peterson so she can get the information to you (see contact info, below)

Assigned gardeners, please check in with Mark Dwyer in early April about your garden. Spring cleanup has begun!

Watch for volunteer sign-up announcements for these May events:

Earth Day Celebration, Saturday, May 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Spring Plant Sale, May 9-12

Spring field trip, "Take a closer look at plants." Please contact Laura Peterson if you would like to help with this event.

Laura Peterson (formerly Laura Boettcher) is Rotary's Education and Volunteer Manager. She can be reached by email or phone:

laura.peterson@rotarygardens.org, 608-314-8415.

Community Garden Plots Available

Looking for space to expand your growing? There are plots available for rent this year out at the Rock County Farm. Located just east of the Rock County Sheriff's office at the intersection of Highways 14 and 51, the community garden is administered through the Rock County UW Extension office.

The garden opens in early May, after the soil dries enough to be tilled and plots laid out. The season runs through the end of October. Each space is approximately 20' x 25', or 500 square feet. Rent for the season is \$35 for one plot or two for \$60. Water is available on-site.

Requests are filled on a first come/first served basis. You can find the application form at this website: <https://rock.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/rental-plots/>. Contact the UW Extension office at 608-757-5066 or email tara.hanley@co.rock.wi.us to check on availability.



A Couple Events of Possible Interest This Month

Though not educational opportunities, here are a few garden-related events you might want to investigate. Rotary Gardens is selling bagged compost all four Saturdays in April (8 a.m. to noon at the Hort Center). In Madison, Olbrich Gardens is hosting an orchid sale by the Orchid Growers Guild on Saturday, April 6, from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On Saturday, April 13, Olbrich is the site of the Midwest Gourd Festival by the WI Gourd Society. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Help Staff Tables at Rotary's Earth Day Celebration, Saturday, May 4 from 9:45 to noon OR noon to 2:15. We need at least two volunteers per shift. This year, in addition to RPMGA's table, we'll be helping Rotary Gardens staff a table on a project we've been helping them with:

Table 1—RPMGA general table: we'll be handing out free flower and vegetable seeds, talking about pollinators and demonstrating the difference compost makes in the garden. We need help arranging the displays or packing up, but most of the time you'd be chatting with people about gardening and gardens in general. Contact Ruth Flescher to volunteer for the RPMGA table and to let her know which shift you'd like to work (a.m. or p.m.): yafello2@gmail.com.

Table 2—Earth Day is the rollout of Rotary's updated Family Adventure packs. These backpacks contain easy, fun activities for families to explore habitat, birds and trees. Volunteers at this table will show the packs, their contents and activities, and explain how families can borrow them for use in the gardens. Contact Bev Feltz to volunteer for the Backpacks table and to let her know which shift you'd like to work (a.m. or p.m.): pengnix@yahoo.com.

(Note: Rotary Gardens will also need other volunteers for the Earth Day Celebration. Watch for other sign-up opportunities as well.)

Farmers Market Volunteers for May 18 in Janesville and May 25 in Beloit. Do you enjoy sharing your love of gardening? Farmers market volunteers talk with people one-on-one about a whole range of gardening topics. Free seeds help draw people in and make it easy to get those conversations started. Come for 2.5 hours or the whole 5 hours (markets run 8-1, and yes, we have chairs!). Let us know which day/location works for you, when you can be there and how long you'll stay. Contact Mary Kay Thompson: mastergardenermary@gmail.com.

UWW Campus Garden Workday, Whitewater, Friday, April 26, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Garden cleanup, spreading compost and wood chips and initial planting for this vegetable garden and small orchard. Produce is donated to local food pantries. Contact the UWW Sustainability office: www.uww.edu/sustainability, or email sustainability@uww, 262-472-6724.

Welty Environmental Center Work Days, Saturdays throughout April, 10 a.m. till noon. Join Welty and our prairie partners, Rock County Conservationists and Green-Rock Audubon, for a morning of outdoor work. There is plenty of chopping and clearing to do in the Big Hill prairie, in preparation for spring. Bring your own hand tools, gloves, safety glasses and hard-toed shoes. All new participants required to fill out a City of Beloit waiver (available onsite on work day). Please verify times and let us know if you are coming: call 608-362-6212 or email Kevin at lonerockprairienursery@gmail.com.

April Education Calendar

For details on any of these education opportunities, search the web using the program title and/or organization name.

NCG = Nicholas Conservatory Garden, Rockford, IL; OBG = Olbrich Botanical Garden, Madison; UWA = UW Arboretum, Madison; ; SP = Silverwood Park, Edgerton; RPMGA = Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Janesville; RBG = Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville; DUWEX = Dane County UW Extension, Madison; WEC = Welty Environmental Center, Beloit; NATC = Nature at the Confluence, South Beloit, IL; WHPS = WI Hardy Plant Society, Madison; UWW = University of Wisconsin Whitewater, Whitewater; ACG = Allen Centennial Garden, Madison; UIEX = Univ. of Ill. Extension, Winnebago County, Rockford, IL; KA = Klehm Arboretum, Rockford, IL; WMT = WI Master Gardener Program.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Simply Spring: The Butterfly Exhibit March 23 thru June 2 NCG	1	2	3	4 Perennial Garden Maintenance OBG	5	6 Phenology—Track- ing Nature UWA/ Mushroom Log Innoculation SP
7 Transitions Walk UWA/Garden Excursion Walk UWA	8 Preventing and Controlling Invasive Species in WI RPMGA & RBG/	9 Spring into Gardening Walk OBG/	10	11 Flower Gardening DUWEX	12	13 Into the Woods WEC
14 Frogs Family Walk UWA	15	16 April Showers NATC&WEC/ Connecting People with Nature: 20 Years of Welty Envir- onmental Center WEC	17 Abelia to Zizi- phora: 30 Years of Plant Evaluation at Chicago Botanic Garden WHPS	18 Grow Beautiful African Violets OBG/Skydance Night Walk UWA/ Birds of Prey Presentation UWW/Lawn Care DUWEX	19	20 Heavenly Hydrangeas OBG

21 For Love of Earth Walk UWA <i>Easter</i>	22 Nelson Institute Earth Day Conference ACG/ The Power of a Plant UWW	23 Art in the Gardens Walk OBG/Attract Cavity Nesters with a Bird Box OBG	24	25 Perennials to Avoid in Your Garden OBG/ Garbage Into Gold (Composting) OBG/Severe Weather Webinar UIEX/Succulent Workshop UWW	26 Arbor Day Celebration KA	27 Tropical Conservatory Walk OBG/ Early Signs of Spring Native Plant Garden Tour UWA/ All About Blue-birds UWA
28 Woodland Wild-flowers Walk UWA/Earth Day Celebration Family Nature Program UWA	29	30 Responding to Horticultural Inquiries WMG/ Spring Bulb Walk OBG/Coping with Sloping OBG/				

Looking Ahead to May:

The following events are early in May but require earlier pre-registration. Check websites for details. Programs are at Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, unless otherwise noted.

Common Defects in Urban Trees, Wednesday, May 1, 2019, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Registration deadline: April 24.

Growing and Cooking with Herbs, Thursday, May 2, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Registration deadline: April 25.

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.

Mailing Address: UW-Extension Rock County, 51 S. Main Street, Janesville, WI 53545
 Physical Address: 3506 North Highway 51, Building A, Janesville, WI 53545
 Phone: 608-757-5066 Fax: 608-757-5055