

Master Gardener Update

December 2018

<p>In this Issue</p> <p>Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee More on Bumble Bees</p> <p>RPMGA Events: No December Meeting January: Winter Sowing</p> <p>WIMGA Conference Review Getting Children in the Garden</p> <p>New Volunteer Management System</p> <p>Plant Propagation Workshop</p> <p>Winter Training Online</p> <p>Volunteer Opportunities</p> <p>Holiday Fun at Public Gardens</p> <p>Education Calendar</p>	<p>Pollinator Project</p> <p>Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee</p> <p><i>Bombus affinis</i></p> <p>The rusty-patched bumble bee is native to eastern North America. Males and workers have a small rust-colored patch on the middle of their second abdominal segment, hence their name. Once commonly distributed throughout the East and upper Midwest of the United States, the rusty-patched bumble bee has declined from an estimated 87% of its historic range in recent years. It was once an excellent pollinator of wildflowers, cranberries, and other important crops, including plum, apple, alfalfa and onion seed – many of which are cash crops throughout Wisconsin.</p> <p>Responding to a petition filed by the Xerces Society¹ in 2013 to list the rusty-patched bumble bee as an endangered species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finalized the ruling and gave the rusty-patched bumble bee endangered status under the ESA in January of 2017.</p> <p>Rusty-patched bumble bees live in colonies that include a single queen and female workers and reproduce according to an annual cycle. In spring, solitary queens emerge and find nest sites, collect nectar and pollen from flowers and</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>continues</i></p> 
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¹ Source - The Xerces Society – 628 NE Broadway Ste. 200, Portland, OR 97232 USA – Tel.855-232-6639 – Fax.503-233-6794 – Website: [Xerces Society](http://www.xerces.org)

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

begin laying eggs, which are fertilized by sperm stored since mating the previous fall. Workers hatch from these first eggs and colonies grow as workers collect food, defend the colony, and care for young. Queens remain within the nests and continue laying eggs. In late summer, new queens and males also hatch from eggs. Males disperse to mate with new queens from other colonies. In fall, founding queens, workers and males die. Only new queens go into diapause (a form of hibernation) over winter - and the cycle begins again in spring.²

Queens are the largest bees in the colony, typically about .79 to .87 inches long and .35 to .43 inches wide. Workers and males are smaller, typically about .39 to .63 inches long, and .24 to .35 inches wide. All rusty-patched bumble bees have entirely black heads, but only workers and males have a rusty reddish patch at the center of the back.



Bumble bees gather pollen and nectar from a variety of flowering plants. The rusty-patched emerges early in spring and is one of the last species to go into hibernation. Because of the long foraging window the colony needs a constant supply and diversity of flowers blooming throughout its long life, April through September.

To provide a safe and beneficial environment for the rusty-patched bumble bee, plant native plants in your yard such as lupines, asters, bee balm, native prairie plants and spring ephemerals. Don't forget spring blooming shrubs like ninebark and pussy willow. Flowering fruit trees and bushes can also provide an abundance of spring forage for bumble bees. Avoid invasive non-native plants and remove them if you find them in your yard.

In addition to providing food, provide natural nesting areas. Many bumble bees build nests in undisturbed soil, abandoned rodent burrows or grass clumps. Keep some unmowed, brushy areas and don't disturb bumble bee nests if you find them. Reduce tilling of your soil or mowing where bumble bees might nest. Support natural areas in your community, and work to develop pollinator gardens and native plant prairies wherever you can find room. The answer to providing a safe environment for bumble bees, and to bringing back the rusty-patched bumble bee, lies with us.

Mary Kay Thompson

² Source - US Fish and Wildlife Service – Website: [Rusty-Patched Fact Sheet](#)

More on Bumble Bees from the Xerces Society (Xerces.org)

Current Status of the Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee Under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Although this species was formerly commonly found through most of its range, surveys between 2003 and present have found very few *B. affinis*. Recently, *B. affinis* has been found in small numbers in isolated areas primarily in the northern part of its range. In 2017 this species was listed as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. In 2014 the state of Vermont listed *B. affinis* as an endangered species and in 2015 this species was listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. In Canada *B. affinis* was protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2010.

Bumble Bee Fast Facts

North America is home to around 3,600 species of bees and not one of them makes measureable amounts of honey. Most of them are solitary bees, living by themselves in a hole in the ground. Bumble Bees make up a small group native to much of the Northern Hemisphere. There are 250 species of bumble bees worldwide with 47 of them here in North America. They have larger bodies, are longer and have more dense hair than many other bees. These characteristics make it possible for them to remain active in cool weather and at low light levels and to live at high elevations and latitudes.

“BUZZZZZ”

Bumble bees are buzz pollinators. They vibrate their flight muscles while clinging to a flower, dislodging pollen. This enables them to serve as primary pollinators for agriculture crops. This unique ability makes bumble bees of particular importance to ecosystem health and to the global economy.

Three Things Bumble Bees Need to Survive

- 1) Flowers in bloom from early spring through fall.
 - a. Flowers provide the nectar and pollen resources that pollinators feed on. Growing the right flowers, shrubs, and trees with overlapping bloom times will support pollinators from spring through fall.
- 2) A safe place to build their nests and to over-winter.
 - a. A home for growing pollinators is essential. You can leave patches of bare ground and brush piles or install nesting blocks, and plant caterpillar host plants.
- 3) A pesticide and disease-free environment.
 - a. Pesticides are harmful to pollinators, especially insecticides. Herbicides reduce food sources by removing flowers from the landscape.

Learn more at: [BringBackThe Pollinators.com](http://BringBackThePollinators.com)

What can we do to protect bumble bees?

- Create habitat in your own landscape and in your community.
- Sign the [Pollinator Protection Pledge](#)
- Join [Bumble Bee Watch](#)
- Follow Xerces.org on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

RPMGA: No December Meeting. Enjoy Your Holidays!

See you January 10 for Winter Sowing.

On Thursday, January 10, Joann Franzene will be giving a workshop for us on winter sowing—planting in plastic containers and using the winter weather outdoors to control when your seeds germinate. This is a very easy way to start seeds that require cold treatment, as many native plants do. Watch for more details on when and where in our January Newsletter.



WIMGA Conference Review

Bev Feltz and Ruth Oren are our local representatives to the state master gardener association (WIMGA). They attended WIMGA's fall conference. If you've never been to one of the state-wide conferences, their report gives you a good sense of what you've been missing.

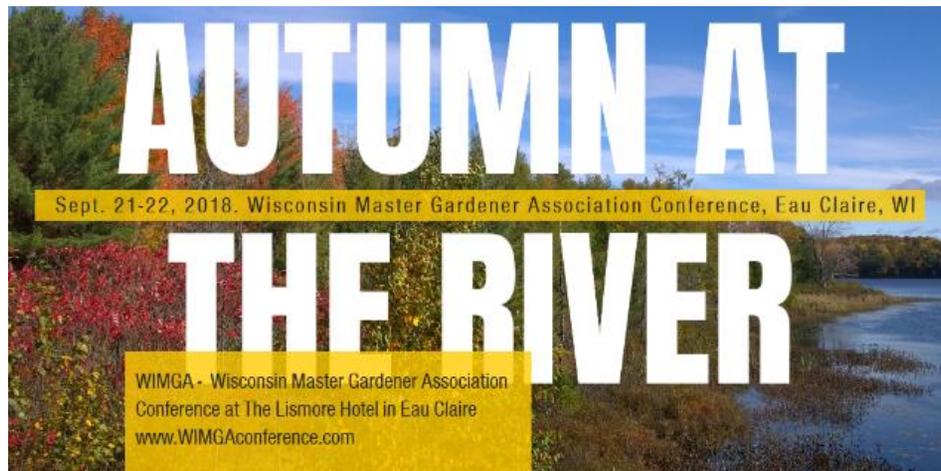
We attended the WIMGA annual conference, Autumn at the River, in Eau Claire, on Sept 21 & 22, 2018. Overall this was a fantastic conference. Accommodations were awesome, food was great and the classes were very informative. The vendors and silent auction items were good. At the Silent Auction, The Pollinator Basket donated by RPMGA sold for \$38.00 which was about average for the other items in the silent auction. There were vendors of bee keeping, honey, compost, tote bags made from old dog food and birdseed bags, and bulbs and seeds for sale. The speakers were very knowledgeable, friendly and helpful. Here are the sessions we were able to attend between the two of us:

Friday Keynote Presentation: Woody Plants for Fantastic Foliage by Mark Dwyer. As always with Mark, there were so many awesome plants for all season interest in the gardens that it was hard to pick one or two favorites. It was good to look at the different ways some of the plants and grasses were used for focal points and complimentary plantings in the gardens.

Preserving and Drying Herbs led by Erin LaFaive. It was interesting to learn which “weeds” are actually very useful and how to cultivate things like stinging nettles and some of the other prickly herbs. Also was great learning what these herbs are used for.

Hooking Kids and Reeling Them into Gardening led by Diana Alfuth. Each attendee got a copy of the book Teaching In Nature’s Classroom, by Nathan Larson. Diane talked about how important it is to get kids in the garden, and how to gear the programs around the age group you are teaching. Getting them in the garden can be as simple as planting seeds, turning the compost bin, sorting trash to find compostable

stuff, putting a book in the garden and then building garden to match the book. The bottom line is we need to get kids engage in nature and gardening and even just playing in the dirt is a start.



Gardens Will Save the World led by Ben Futa. This was an interesting look at ways the staff at Allen Centennial Gardens in Madison, have used the gardens to engage people and get them to visit the gardens. Beautification projects are a way to get people to be involved in nature and if you design and build it people will use that space and being in nature is good for us all.

Tips on Photographing Your Garden led by Tim Fehr. We learned that “noon day” is the worst time of day to photograph in the garden. He discussed the use of colors, textures and contrasts to create the perfect image. He also discussed being aware of what is the back drop or background of your photo so you don’t distract from what you are actually trying to photograph.

History of Plant Diseases led by Brian Hudelson. Brian discussed the impact of plant diseases like potato blight in Ireland, St. Anthony’s fire (corn rust), Dutch elm disease, emerald ash borer and their impact on society and nature.

Bev Feltz

Note: the conference also included optional tours of local highlights and a visit to the local farmers market on Saturday morning. Additional breakout sessions: Incorporating Bulbs in Your Garden; Sustainable Vegetable Gardening; GMOs: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly; What’s New in Daylilies; Home Berry Production & Disease Resistant Varieties; The Basics of Mycology and the Fun of Mushroom Hunting.

Getting Children in the Garden

While at the conference, I also attended a WIMGA meeting where counties showed projects they were doing. In all the presentations, there was a great focus on getting children into and connected to plants and nature. Here are some examples:

Grant County does a pollinator garden at the Fennimore Doll & Toy Museum. “Partnership with volunteers who preserve our heritage by showcasing toys as a memory, a blessing and treasure with a pollinator garden.”

Lacrosse County supports the Riverside International Friendship Garden where they have Irish, German, Chinese, French, Norwegian and Russian themed gardens. Where kids and families can learn about design techniques and plants from different countries.

Another county did a vegetable garden with the Peter Rabbit book. They made scenes from the book throughout the garden for the kids to enjoy while tending their gardens. “One girl brought her dad back to make sure Peter Rabbit was still there.”

Another county did little flats of seedlings and then cut the tops as they were growing to sample. They had compost stations where the kids go to make and to turn the compost.

Lastly another county does Book Worms. A program where they read a book to children about nature and then try to find something in nature from the book. Like looking for worms, bugs, insects or a certain type of plant.

I applaud these counties for getting the children into the garden and keeping them intrigued because we all know children hold the seeds of our future in their hands. We have to teach them to care for our planet, for themselves and all living beings.



Beverly Feltz

New statewide Volunteer Management System for Master Gardeners

Mike Maddox sent us all an email announcing the first stage of the on-line reporting system. Have you gone in to check your data and set up your personal sign in? Though not yet implemented as a way to record your hours (it will be eventually), you can now use this system to update your address, email, etc. and check the status of your required paperwork. If you haven't signed in yet, you can go in and verify that the state office has the correct data for you by going to: https://volunteers.wimastergardener.org/vms/mg_access_form/.

Date Set for Plant Propagation Workshop

This annual workshop is open to any master gardener volunteer and takes place at the D.C. Smith Greenhouse at the UW-Madison. The date for 2019 is Saturday, March 9th, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. This is a hands-on workshop where you'll try at least four propagation techniques and be introduced to several more, including tissue culture. Fee is \$40/person, space is limited, and the workshop is always full. Register soon if you want to attend. There's a registration link in your November Volunteer Vibe newsletter or call (608) 265-5139.



Winter Level 2 or Level 3 Training Online from the state's Master Gardener Program office

Plants Plus topics are Level 2 training. They're free and can be accessed any time through the wimastergardener.org website under the "Learn" tab. You can earn two hours of education credit per topic by viewing & reading the material and completing a short quiz at the end. Topics currently available include root crops, perennial vegetables, houseplants, invasives, tree roots, and shade gardening. Topics are added and deleted from time to time.

Level 3 training is running from January 14 to April 1 on the topic of "Placemaking" as it relates to MGVs. The course topics include Intro to Placemaking, Plant Blindness, Community Needs in Wisconsin, and Civic Engagement as a MGV. Cost is \$40. Anyone who's completed Level 1 training can register, but space is limited. The link to the registration is only found through the Volunteer Vibe newsletter. Check your in-box, spam and trash for an email titled "The Volunteer Vibe – November 2018" from WI Master Gardener to open the newsletter, then find the article on Level 3 training, which contains the registration link.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Rotary Gardens Holiday Light Show, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings continuing December 1 through December 30. A variety of shifts and types of volunteer opportunities related to the light show are available. For job descriptions and to select your shifts, see <http://signature.com/go/LkovyHy>. There are still spots to be filled!

Ecological Restoration Work Parties, UW Arboretum, Saturdays. 9:00 a.m. to noon. Volunteer for restoration activities and learn about prairies and savannas. Tools and training provided. Groups welcome with advance notice. More information: (608) 265-5214 or marian.farrior@wisc.edu. December 1: Wingra Oak Savannah. Meet at Arbor Drive parking lot, off Monroe Street. December 8 and 22: Core Area and Curtis Prairie. Meet at the Visitor Center. December 15: Grady Tract. Meet at the parking lot at the south southeast corner of Seminole Highway and West Beltline Frontage Road.

Holiday Fun at Public Gardens

You won't earn education hours for these, but you should have a good time.

Rotary Gardens Holiday Light Show, Janesville. Every Thursday through Sunday in December. Open 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., lights go off at 9:00 p.m. Check Rotary's website to see which nights are special event nights related to the show: Santa visits, silly scarves, wacky hats, or holiday sweaters.

Olbrich's Holiday Express Flower and Model Train Show, Madison. December 1-31. Open 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Closes at 2:00 p.m. December 24. Closed December 25.

All Aglow Holiday Light Show, plus Sinnissippi Station Model Train Show, Nicholas Conservatory Gardens, Rockford. December 1-January 6. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Extended hours till 8:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays before Christmas, and every day the gardens are open between December 26 and January 6. Buildings closed December 24, 25 and 31 and January 1. (Note: the light show is in the outdoor grounds—and it IS open, even on Mondays and the holidays.)

Winter Solstice Gathering and Luminary Walk, Nature at the Confluence, South Beloit. December 20, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Community fire (with s'mores), candle-lit paths, dulcimer music, and pinecone bird feeder construction.

Solstice Night Walk (Dec. 21, 4:00-5:30 p.m.) and New Year's Eve Night Walk (Dec. 31, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.), UW Arboretum, Madison. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Full Moon Hike, Welty Environmental Center, Beloit, Saturday, December 22, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

December Education Calendar

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

UWA = UW Arboretum, Madison; WEC = Welty Environmental Center, Beloit; ACG = Allen Centennial Garden, Madison; MFI = Michael Fields Institute, East Troy.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Industrial Hemp 2018: Lessons Learned MFI	5	6	7	8
9 Sights, Sounds and Smells of the Arboretum Walk UWA	10	11	12	13 Living Ornaments Workshop ACG	14	15
16 Winter Birds Walk UWA	17	18	19	20	21	22 Full Moon Hike WEC
23 Arboretum Sampler Walk UWA	24	25 <i>Christmas</i>	26	27	28	29
30 Conifers Walk UWA	31					

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

Physical Address: 3506 North Highway 51, Suite A, Janesville, WI 53545 (608) 757-5066