

Master Gardener Update

February 2019

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According to the Xerces Society's Guide to *Attracting Native Pollinators*, cellophane bees also spray their egg-cell walls with a natural fungicide and bactericide, linalool, secreted from a gland in the bees' mandibles. After coating their cells, the bees fasten their eggs onto the cell walls rather than leaving them on nest floors where moisture might collect. The bees provision their cells by mixing pollen and nectar together to make a liquid "bee bread" for their offspring; these provisions are stored in cellophane sacs that look a little like elongated plastic sandwich bags. The special measures taken by the bees to protect their eggs against water and fungus allow them to build nests near stream banks and other areas with wet soils.

Cellophane bees are solitary and construct individual nests in the ground, excavating tunnels that exit through small round holes. Despite their solitary status, they tend to build their nests near one another. Groups of nesting cellophane bees sometimes number into the tens of thousands. These bees are non-aggressive and do not form swarms. They are important pollinators of spring

trees, crops and wildflowers and are one of the earliest species to become active in spring – sometime between March and May, when adults emerge from their underground chambers.

Mary Kay Thompson

Photos: All photos used for this article are in the public domain.

Sources:

- [Wisconsin Bee Identification Guide](#) Developed by Patrick Liesch, Christy Stewart, and Christine Wen
- [BugGuide.net](#) –Iowa State U, Dept. of Entomology - [Genus Colletes - Cellophane bees](#)
- [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#) – [xerces.org](#)

RPMGA February Program: Invasive Plants, Thursday, Feb. 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Premier Bank

This month, we're turning to the state Master Gardener Program for some level 2 training on Invasive Plants (like the Canada thistle shown at right). You'll get an hour of education credit if you come watch the videos and join the discussion. The first video features Anne Pierce, Coordinator of the WI First Detector Network. It's a general introduction to invasives and the problems they create. Then three shorter videos feature UW or UWEX experts on specific types of invasive plants. One talks about callery pear. The other two talk about aquatic and terrestrial invasive plants.



If you'd like to get another hour of education credit, we'll show you how to do that at home by reading 3 fact sheets on specific types of terrestrial invasive plants and completing a short quiz. (Fact sheets are 4-6 pages each. The quiz is only 6 questions.)



Wild Parsnip in rosette stage

This evening will give you a good introduction to the location and format of level 2 training, so it will be easy to find other topics of interest that you'll feel comfortable pursuing on your own.

Note the location: Our February program will take place in the basement of Premier Bank, 1400 Black Bridge Road, Janesville. It's just off Milton Ave. (Hwy 26) behind McDonalds.

Remember: Be sure to arrive a little early, as the doors may be locked after 5:30 p.m.!

ALL MGVs are welcome, not just RPMGA members.

Planning for 2019: What Do You Want to Do?

It's time to work out a calendar for RPMGA programs for the remainder of the year. The only program we have set after this month is a special tour of our own Rotary Gardens in July—a suggestion from Art Hilker. Thanks, Art! Below are the other suggestions we've gotten so far. If you have additional ideas, or suggestions for a speaker on a topic below, we'd like to hear from you right away! Then, before we get started on the invasive plant program on Feb 7, we'll vote on which programs are of most interest. Send your ideas—or your votes if you can't make it on the 7th-- to either Ruth Flescher (yafello2@gmail.com) or Mary Thompson (mastergardenermary@gmail.com).

Here are the suggestions to date:

Indoor Options:

Home Fruit Trees/IPM for Average Folks (Dennis Norton from Royal Oak Orchard?)

Adaptive Gardening (for fewer aches and pains) MGVs from Milwaukee area
Invite the Janesville Sustainability Committee to talk about what they do and how we might cooperate on projects
Soils: an intermediate level discussion of soils, amendments, fertility (Dane Co. UWEX expert?)
Getting Started in Beekeeping, Mirjam Mellin, Rock County MGV
Plants that Changed the World: Potatoes, Apples, Tulips, & Marijuana with Jim Haseman, former Rock County MGV
Companion planting (anyone know someone knowledgeable on this topic?)
Worms: Good or Bad? (DNR expert video)

Outdoor Options/Tours:

Agrecol Plant Nursery or Taylor Creek Restoration Nursery (both are native plant nurseries, and Agrecol sells retail)
Pasque Flower walk with Mariette Nowik (We tried, but ended up canceling this in 2018 due to the cold spring)
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, East Troy
Boerner Botanical Garden in the Milwaukee area
Welty Environmental Center/Big Hill Park near Beloit
Demonstration gardens at the Dane County UWEX office in Madison
Revisit green roofs in the Beloit area and go to Blooming of Beloit
Intrinsic Perennial Gardens (Hebron, IL, on the state line)

Look for the results here in the newsletter next month.



Wisconsin Public Television's Garden & Landscape Expo is a midwinter oasis for people ready to venture out and dig their hands in the dirt. Now in its 26th year, this three-day event celebrates the latest trends in gardening and landscaping, and attracts more than 20,000 people from across the Midwest. Join other gardening enthusiasts to share ideas, gain inspiration and connect with professional landscapers. All proceeds support Wisconsin Public Television.

Things to do at the Garden Expo:

- Learn something new at one of more than 150 free educational seminars and stage demonstrations.
- Connect with dozens of landscaping professionals who can help deliver your landscape dream.
- Visit with hundreds of businesses, independent contractors, nonprofits and artists to share ideas and learn about the newest in gardening, landscaping and local foods.
- Discuss innovative gardening techniques with Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Horticulture experts.
- Relax with a casual walk through the central garden—courtesy of Wisconsin Nursery & Landscape Association (WNLA).
- Purchase seeds, tools and everything else you need to be ready when the trees bud and the ground thaws.
- Attend the Sunday farmers' market, featuring farmers, food artisans and local food retailers.

Hours: Friday, noon to 8:00 p.m.; Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI

Go to www.wigardenexpo.com for a complete schedule.

Milestones in Cumulative MG Volunteer Hours

Congratulations to the following MGVs who, with their 2018 hours, achieved significant levels of total volunteer hours over their MG careers.

250 hours – Ruth Oren
500 hours – Stephanie Dobson
Ruth Flescher
Carol Knoll
Nancy Moskal
Becky Nickel
1000 hours - Bev Drew
2500 hours – Mary K. Thompson



Left to Right: Bev Drew, Mary Thompson (seated), Ruth Flescher, Carol Knoll

Rotary Gardens: Volunteer Gathering. Tuesday, February 19, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

This event combines a Rotary-specific volunteer fair, where you can meet other volunteers and learn about different types of opportunities to support the gardens, with a program on North Carolina Garden Adventures. The program will be hosted by RBG Horticulture Director, Mark Dwyer & Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Boettcher. Light refreshments will be provided. All current and interested volunteers are welcome.

Date Set for Rotary Spring Symposium

Mark your calendar for Saturday, March 16 for the annual Rotary Gardens Spring Symposium. Confirmed speakers for the event include Susan Martin, Chris Fehlhaber (Chanticleer), Ed Lyon (Reiman Gardens) and Mark Dwyer (Rotary Gardens). Registration will be opening soon.



Seed Swap at Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, East Troy, Saturday, February 2, 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Okay, this isn't exactly an education opportunity, but if you want an excuse to dream about your garden after this week's bitter cold...try MFAI's Third Annual Seed Swap of open-pollinated seeds.

How does it work? If you have seeds to share, bring them, along with cultural information. If you don't, come anyway. There's plenty to go around. Tables are divided by category (tomatoes, greens, other veges, herbs, flowers, etc.). Drop off anything you brought in the appropriate place, then cruise the tables and see what catches your eye. Take only as much of each as you will grow this year. (Seed envelopes provided, but your own pen would be handy.) It's a great way to

learn about heirloom and open-pollinated varieties that you may not be familiar with or that aren't commonly available. Or get a small amount of seed of a flower or vegetable you've always wanted to try.

This event is free, family friendly, and you don't need to register. Just show up at the Big Brown Barn. MFAI thanks True Leaf Market Seed and Turtle Tree Seed for their donations of seed for this event. Questions? Contact Allison: apszeliga@michaelfields.org or 262-642-3303 ext 107. Address: Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, W2493 County Rd ES, East Troy, WI.

Highlighted Education Opportunities: New or Still Open

Protect Your Pollinators Rock Prairie Master Gardener Volunteers will be giving a program on pollinators and gardening for them at Hedberg Public Library on Tuesday February 12, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. In addition to sharing information about pollinators and why they're so important, we'll be sharing tips on gardening to attract and support them, plus introducing good pollinator plants. Free and open to the public. Join us!

Allen Centennial Garden's Spring Symposium: Resilient Landscapes. March 22 and 23, 2019. This spring's symposium explores resiliency in the landscape, discovering the robust and adaptable ideas and individuals that are navigating an uncertain frontier. Chicago's Millennium Park and New York's High Line Park are the examples presented, with local changemakers also adding their perspectives. For more information, see this website: <https://uwccs.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/acg19symp/info>



Xerces Society, Dane County UWEX and Silverwood Park: Farming With Beneficial Insects for Pest Control. Learn science-based pest management strategies to integrate beneficial insects back into crops, orchards, and gardens for natural pest control. Find out how to support these insects that provide pest control, how common farm and garden practices can impact beneficial insects, and how to assess and create habitat for beneficial insects. Registration includes Xerces Society book, Farming with Beneficial Insects, habitat assessment guides, and other relevant publications. Friday, February 8, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more info and to sign up <https://tinyurl.com/SWcourse>

Basics Co-op Winter Lecture Series Cultivating Connection: Healing the Self and the Earth through Holistic Land Care. Learn what holistic land care is and how to focus on applying your values to making your life and landscapes better. You can sign up for a single class or all six. The lecturer is Hawthorne McCracken, who has certificates in native plants, greenhouse growing, and permaculture. Hawthorn owns The Hedgerow, a landscape consulting business. Lectures take place various Saturdays from Jan 12 thru March 16. More info and sign up on Basics' website: www.basicshealth.com.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Children's Programs Meeting: Friday, February 22, 10:00 a.m. to noon AT ROTARY GARDENS. The first project chosen by the Children's Committee is to revise and reintroduce backpacks with exploration guides and tools that families can check out and use to explore nature at Rotary Gardens. (Similar to the Pixie Packs, but aimed at grade school children.) We plan to demonstrate the revised backpacks at Rotary's Earth Day Celebration this Spring. The purpose of the Feb. 22 meeting is to explore the contents of the existing backpacks and decide how they need to be updated and upgraded.

Rotary Botanical Gardens: Rotary Gardens is organizing for the year (see the Volunteer Gathering info on page 6), so now's a good time to think about new ways to volunteer, new things to do. You can also touch base with Laura Boettcher, the volunteer coordinator, to see if there are any unadvertised chores that you can help with. Laura can be reached at 608-314-8415 or email at laura.boettcher@rotarygardens.org.

Beloit Farmers Market Is anyone interested in having a MGV presence at the Beloit Farmers Market this summer? Non-profits are allowed to have two dates throughout the season, but the requests must be made very soon. The task involves deciding what type of information you wish to convey, collecting the tables, chairs, canopy and materials from the office storage, setting up and staffing the table, then tearing down and returning supplies to the office. Are you interested in making this happen? Contact Ruth Flescher (yafello2@gmail.com).

Research and Answer Garden Questions Both the UWEX office and Rotary Botanical Gardens receive gardening questions on a regular basis during the season. Would you be willing to get questions by email, research (if necessary) the options and write back with answers? If you're willing to help, contact Mary Thompson (mastergardenermary@gmail.com).

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.farrrior@wisc.edu. February 2: Wingra Oak Savannah. Meet at Arbor Drive parking lot, off Monroe Street. February 9 & 23: Core Area and Curtis Prairie. Meet at the Visitor Center. February 16: Grady Tract. Meet at the parking lot at the south southeast corner of Seminole Highway and West Beltline Frontage Road.

Write a Newsletter Article If you have an idea you'd like to research and share or are willing to write on an assigned topic, contact Ruth Flescher (yafello2@gmail.com).

February 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; UWW = UW Whitewater; ACG = Allen Centennial Garden, Madison; MFAI = Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, East Troy; UWA = UW Arboretum, Madison; RPMGA = Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Janesville; DUWEX = Dane County UW Extension, Madison; KA = Klehm Arboretum, Rockford, IL; HPL = Hedberg Public Library, Janesville; UIEX = Univ. of Ill. Extension, Winnebago County, Rockford, IL; WHPS = WI Hardy Plant Society, Madison; MOSES = Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, conference is in LaCrosse; WEC = Welty Environmental Center, Beloit.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		In Full Bloom: The Orchid Exhibit from February 12 thru March 17 NCG	LOOK: Tropical Tessellations from Feb 16 to March 24 OBG		1	2 Attracting Pollinators UWW/ Everything You Secretly Wanted to Know About Earthworms ACG/Orchid Quest at OBG
3 Spring Hive Management MFAI/Feathered Travelers UWA/ Orchid Quest at OBG	4	5	6 Bee-utiful Design OBG/Lower Financial Risk by Increasing Soil Health MFAI	7 Invasive Plants RPMGA/ Horti- cultural Highlights of 2018 OBG/Can Evolutionary Biology Help Us Restore Prairies? UWA	8 Garden Expo/ Farming with Beneficial Insects for Pest Control DUWEX	9 Garden Expo/ Feeding Birds, Winter into Spring KA

<p>10 Garden Expo/Live Underground UWA/Animal Tracks UWA</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 Protect Your Pollinators HPL/ Straight and Narrow Plants OBG/Grow Plants with LED Lights OBG</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Arboretum Research Symposium UWA</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 Horticulture Therapy ACG/The Art of Pruning UWA/Hunger Moon Night Walk UWA/Orchid Kokedama NGC/ Joys of Gardening Day UIEX/ Beekeeping for Beginners MFAI</p>
<p>17 Enduring a Woodland Winter UWA</p>	<p>18 Art and Engineering at Anderson Japanese Gardens OBG</p>	<p>19 Volunteer Gathering RBG/Stateline Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference UIEX</p>	<p>20 40 Years of Gardening WHPS</p>	<p>21 Seed Starting and Saving DUWEX/ Start a Native Garden from Seedlings OBG/Immobile Yet Responsive— How Trees Interact with Their Environment UWA/ Organic Farming Conference MOSES</p>	<p>22 Orchid Sale NCG/ Organic Farming Conference MOSES</p>	<p>23 Maple Sugar Fest WEC/ Orchid Sale NCG/ Organic Farming Conference MOSES/Winter Trails and Naturalist Tales UIEX</p>
<p>24 Signs of Spring UWA/Tracking Natural Cycles UWA/Orchid Sale NCG</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 Native Shrubs for Your Landscape OBG</p>	<p>27 Grow Plants with LED Lights OBG</p>	<p>28 Vege Garden Planning and Techniques DUWEX/High and Dry OBG/Tropical Tessellations OBG /Action on Climate Change UWA</p>		

Looking Ahead to March:

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

Gardening for Food, Flowers and Fun, Saturday, March 2, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Presented by UIEX and Winnebago County Master Gardeners at NIU, Rockford, IL. Though no specific registration deadline is mentioned, space is limited. Early registration recommended.

Bring Fire into Your Garden. Tuesday, March 5, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Registration deadline: February 26, 2019.

LOOK: Tropical Tessellations Walk. Thursday, March 7, 9-10 a.m. Registration deadline: February 28, 2019.

Spring Into Gardening. Saturday, March 9, 8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m., Westosha Central High School, Paddock Lake WI. Sponsored by Kenosha County UWEX and Racine County UWEX. See kenosha.uwex.edu for info. No registration deadline mentioned, but no refunds after Feb. 22, and space is limited.

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