

Master Gardener Update

March 2019

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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



Illustration 2: Female long-horned bee with scopa filled with pollen. (This photo is in the public domain.)

Illustration 3: Swiss Conservation organization ProNatura named the long-horned bee as the country's Animal of the Year 2010. The group believes the wild bee is a good choice because it calls attention to the millions of other tiny creatures that contribute to biodiversity.

Males can often be seen during the day looking for females, and at night clustering together to sleep.

Long-horned bees tend to be quite docile in nature. They are most often encountered in late summer and fall.

Many long-horned bees are foraging specialists and only visit plants from the aster family (Asteraceae) such as sunflowers, daisies and asters. *Melissodes bimaculatus*, however, unlike other long-horns, are generalists that visit a variety of flowers. The thistle long-horn bee (*Melissodes Subillata*), as its common name implies, is a specialist of thistles. *Melissodes Denticulatus* is a specialist of ironweed.

Mary Kay Thompson



Feed Pollinators with Flowers

As you begin planning your garden for this year, consider making some provision to help our threatened pollinators. Like most living things, their primary needs are for water, shelter and food. Planting their food—mostly flowers—is something we can do that will make a difference. But there are some tricks that will help the bees, birds, moths, butterflies, beetles, etc. get the most from your plantings. Here's what you should remember:

Native plants make the best food. Our pollinators evolved over thousands of generations with the plants that were part of our native environment. They don't do as well with flowers bred and selected to appeal to people. So the more natives you can include in your plantings, the more pollinators you'll support.

Group each type of plant in a clump. Grow or purchase enough of each plant so you can make a grouping that covers three to five square feet. That allows your pollinators to spend less energy finding and gathering their food and provisions. It will help them thrive.

Plant for Variety. Grow flowers with lots of different shapes—flat umbels, small tubes, daisies, large tubes, and more. Grow flowers with different colors. Grow flowers that bloom at different times. Ideally you'd have at least three different flowers blooming at any given time throughout the growing season. Why is variety so important? Because pollinators themselves come in all shapes and preferences! Some see certain colors better than others. Some have short tongues, some have long ones. Some need to land to feed. Some will forage on lots of different flowers, some only want one kind. And some are active in only certain parts of the season, but different ones at different times. So the more variety you design into your yard and garden, the more pollinators you'll be blessed with.

Caterpillars eat leaves. Most of a butterfly's or moth's life is actually spent in its caterpillar form. And they're often specialist feeders. Caterpillars of the Karner blue butterfly eat only wild lupine. Monarch caterpillars eat only plants in the milkweed family. Making sure you also have food for juveniles is another way to support these pollinators.



Native plant: Royal Catchfly, (Silene regia)

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

The weather in February just wouldn't cooperate, so we moved the program planned for February into March. We're turning to the state Master Gardener Program for some level 2 training on Invasive Plants (like the lovely, but invasive Dame's Rocket 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 three 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.)

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 March 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.

Left: Musk Thistle or Nodding Thistle: restricted in Wisconsin

Have you received your 2019 year sticker?

Most of you should have your 2019 year sticker by now. If you haven't received one, please contact Mary Kay Thompson (mastergardenermary@gmail.com).

Planning for 2019: What Do You Want to Do?

As with the program on invasive plants, we were unable to do our 2019 planning in February. So we'll try to get this done as well at our March meeting. As mentioned, the only program we have set after this month is a special tour of our own Rotary Gardens in July. 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 March 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)

We'll work up a calendar for the remainder of the year and publish the results in the next newsletter.

Rotary Gardens: A Look at the Spring Symposium: Saturday, March 16, 2019, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This year's Spring Symposium features four experienced gardeners sharing their philosophies and experiences.

Gardening for the Sake of Gardens, *Chris Fehlhaber, Chanticleer Garden*

Chanticleer Garden outside of Philadelphia is a pleasure garden. Its main purpose is for guests to leave in a better mood than they arrived in. This should be a focus for all gardens - providing pleasure. To help achieve this we must change our approach from that of yard work to the practice of gardening. Come together for a conversation about altering our mindset and Gardening for the Sake of Gardens.

Lessons Learned Under the Trees *Susan Martin, Gardener Sue's News*

Shade. Most of us have it, but many of us are unsure what to do with it. Over a decade of experience gardening in every degree of shade near the Lake Michigan shoreline has taught Susan many lessons and ignited her passion for shade gardening. Much of what she has learned, you'll never find in books about shade gardening, and she's ready to share the inside scoop. Learn how to take advantage of the conditions you have, not those you *wish* you had, and discover life beyond hostas in the shade garden.

Tried & True Perennials (and Exciting Newcomers)! *Mark Dwyer, Rotary Botanical Gardens & Ed Lyon, Reimer Gardens*

In this tandem presentation, Ed and Mark will discuss their favorite, best-performing perennials for sun and shade and will also share some exciting and promising new selections. This will be a whirlwind exploration of some slam dunk opportunities based on over 50 years of collective gardening experiences and observations.

Check in for the symposium runs from 8:00-9:00 a.m.

Register at the Rotary Gardens website by March 11. Price: \$69/members, \$79/nonmembers. No refunds after March 12.

Questions: contact Laura Boettcher at RBG.

Rotary Gardens Hosts Two Volunteer Events

Volunteer Recruitment Faire: Saturday, March 23, 9:00 a.m. to noon Come learn what volunteer opportunities are available for the coming year.

Volunteer Gathering: Thursday, March 28, 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 Chicago area gardens. 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.

Other Highlighted Education Opportunities

Chicago Flower and Garden Show March 20-24, 2019, at Navy Pier. This year's theme is "FLOWER TALES: The Story Grows On!" and includes an expanded show with more than 700 plant varieties. Local landscape designers, builders and suppliers will create realistic solutions within featured landscape and garden vignette displays that inspire and demonstrate the possibilities for your own gardens, yards or balconies. Creators will interpret the unique role flowers, plants and gardens play in the stories of our lives and literature. The show also features lots and lots of educational programs, a garden gourmet stage, kids' activities, a photo competition, home and garden marketplace, and more. For more info, see <http://chicagoflower.com>.

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>

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society: Prairie Plants for the Urban Garden, with Neil Diboll. Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Neil Diboll is the Consulting Ecologist and President of Prairie Nursery. A pioneer in the native plant industry and recognized internationally as an expert in native plant community ecology, he has dedicated his life to the propagation of native plants and their promotion as uniquely beautiful, ecologically beneficial and sustainable solutions for landscapes and gardens. In 2013, Neil was the recipient of the Great American Gardeners Award from the American Horticultural Society. Neil's love of native plants and their habitat is contagious, and we look forward to his thoughts on the use of prairie plants in our urban gardens. More info at www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.org.



Volunteer Opportunities:

Children's Programs Meeting: Friday, March 15, 10:00 a.m. to noon at Rotary Gardens. MGVs and other Rotary volunteers have been working on updating backpacks, originally developed by MGVs, for families to check out and use to explore nature in the gardens. One backpack has activities related to birds and their habitats. The second focuses on trees. The purpose of the March 15 meeting is to test the revised backpacks and their activities and determine if other changes are needed.

Children's Programs Meeting: Friday, March 22, beginning at 10:00 a.m., exact times to be determined. In addition to the backpacks for Rotary Gardens, the committee is developing similar materials to use during school visits. The purpose of the March 22nd meeting is to visit Jefferson Elementary School in Janesville and Cunningham Intermediate School in Beloit (our initial contacts), to meet with teachers and walk the grounds to determine how best to implement activities within each school's environment. We'll visit one school in the morning and the other in the afternoon. If you'd like to be involved, please contact Beverly Feltz (pengnix@yahoo.com).

Research and Answer Garden Questions The county Extension office receives 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).

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).

In the Beloit Area: Nature at the Confluence and Welty Environmental Center are both gearing up for the year and could use volunteers to help with programming. Both do a lot of children's programs. Contact the organizations if interested.

Ecological Restoration Work Parties, UW Arboretum, Saturdays. 9:00 a.m. to noon. Volunteer for restoration activities and learn about prairies and savannas. Check on the location each week, as it varies. Tools and training provided. Groups welcome with advance notice. More information: (608) 265-5214 or marian.farrior@wisc.edu.

March Education Calendar

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

CBG = Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, IL; NCG = Nicholas Conservatory Garden, Rockford, IL; OBG = Olbrich Botanical Garden, Madison; UWA = UW Arboretum, Madison; BC = Basics Coop, Janesville; UIEX = Univ. of Ill. Extension, Winnebago County, Rockford, IL; WEC = Welty Environmental Center, Beloit; MFAI = Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, East Troy; RPMGA = Rock Prairie Master Gardener Association, Janesville; DUWEX = Dane County UW Extension, Madison; GUWEX = Green County UW Extension, Monroe; KA = Klehm Arboretum, Rockford, IL; WHPS = WI Hardy Plant Society, Madison; ACG = Allen Centennial Garden, Madison; NATC = Nature at the Confluence; South Beloit, IL.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
The Orchid Show thru March 24 CBG	In Full Bloom: The Orchid Exhibit thru March 17 NCG	Simply Spring: The Butterfly Exhibit March 23 thru June 2 NCG	LOOK: Tropical Tessellations thru March 24 OBG		1 Green Fire (Aldo Leopold movie) UWA	2 Madison Reads Leopold UWA/ Planning for Abundance BC/ Gardening for Food, Flowers and Fun UIEX/ Backyard Wildlife Habitat WEC
3 Planting for Pollinators MFAI/ In Leopold's Footsteps Walk UWA	4	5 Bring Fire into Your Garden OBG/ Garden Journaling & Recordkeeping OBG	6	7 Invasive Plants RPMGA/ Look: Tropical Tessellations Walk OBG/ 50 Years of the WI Wetlands Assn UWA/ Garden Landscape Design DUWEX/	8	9 Orchids for Beginners NCG/ Gardening Inspirations for All Seasons GUWEX

10 Awakening Land Walk UWA/Mud Season Walk UWA	11	12 Home Drainage Corrections OBG/Tessellations in Nature OBG/	13	14 Seed Sourcing for Habitat Restoration UWA/Hot Composting and Vermiculture DUWEX	15	16 Spring Symposium RBG/Beekeeping for Beginners MFAI/Have Plants, Will Travel OBG/ Landscape Tree and Shrub Pruning Workshop DUWEX/ Planning for Resilience BC/ Spring Break Gardening UIEX
17 Looking for Green Walk UWA	18	19 Landscapes for a Dry Basement OBG/Twilight Tranquility Walk KA/Signs of Spring WEC & NATC	20 Spring Equinox Night Walk UWA/ Chicago Flower and Garden Show/ Prairie Plants for the Urban Garden WHPS	21 You Are What You Eat OBG/Native Plant Gardens at the Arboretum: Then and Now UWA/Native Plants for Gardens and Pollinators DUWEX	22 Resilient Landscapes Symposium ACG/Chicago Flower and Garden Show	23 Resilient Landscapes Symposium ACG Fruit Tree Grafting OBG/Scionwood Exchange OBG/ Chicago Flower and Garden Show
24 Early Migrants Walk UWA/All About Birds UWA/ Chicago Flower and Garden Show	25 Urban Yard Prairie in 3 EZ Steps OBG	26 A Healthy Lawn for a Healthy Community OBG	27 Soil Health and Fertility OBG	28 Managing Vegetable Garden Pests and Diseases DUWEX	29	30
31 Reading the Early Spring Landscape Walk UWA/ Prescribed Burn Training NATC						

Looking Ahead to April:

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

Perennial Garden Maintenance, Thursday, April 4, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Registration deadline: March 28.

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