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## Grower News

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Editor John Esser

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### Ed Knapton Presented the WGIF Hall of Fame Award

Long time CFGW board member and president Ed Knapton was presented the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation Hall of Fame Award at the Spring Spectacular on March 17.



*WGIF Hall of Fame Chair, Tom Halter presents 2018 Hall of Fame Award to Ed Knapton*

The WGIF Hall of Fame is presented to WGIF/CFGW members who have had

an extensive impact of Wisconsin's green industry. Ed's service to the CFGW, WGIF plus local service fits this criteria.

In my letter of nomination for the CFGW board I wrote that Ed served twenty years on the board ten as president. During those twenty years he seldom if ever missed a meeting and was involved in the funding, through a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, a graduate student scholarship fund at the University of Wisconsin, Madison; funded research on low risk fungicides at the University of Wisconsin's West Madison Agriculture Research Station; was a driving force in the establishment and continuation of the CFGW Field Day as well as the continuation of the 35+ year old Fall Greenhouse Conference. In addition to being on the CFGW board he served on the Gardens Beautiful Board and was Secretary of the WGIF for some time and until his current health issues was in line to become WGIF President.

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**A member of the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation (WGIF).**

CFGW board member Betty Bless and America's Best Flowers employee wrote in her letter of support for Ed's nomination told about his involvement outside the CFGW/WGIF. She said Ed was a American Nursery Landscape Association Senator, member of the Cottage Grove, Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce, Dane Buy Local, REAP Food Group and Dane County's Farmer's Market as well as having America's Best Flowers garden center selected as Today's Garden Center magazines "Revolutionary 100" for four years.

Betty also said "He has an insatiable appetite for gaining knowledge and teaching to others what he has learned. He has spent a lifetime helping us to build a better green industry within Wisconsin."

Congratulations Ed!

Editor

## **What You Can Do Too Help Monarch Butterflies**

Once a common sight throughout Wisconsin, monarch butterflies have been few and far between in recent years. This situation isn't unique to Wisconsin; unfortunately, it's been the case across North America. In fact, the population of monarchs that inhabits lands east of the Rocky Mountains and is well known for its spectacular 2,000- to 3,000-mile yearly migration to Mexico has declined drastically in the last decade.

In 2013 the monarch population reached an all-time low, with a 90 to 95 percent decrease from its once grandiose size; 2014 and 2015 saw slight increases in monarch numbers, but the population is still well below the goals set by monarch scientists (see Figure 1). A smaller population is less able to absorb the effects of events like severe storms or large-scale habitat loss. A recent

study[1] found that given its current size, there is a high probability that the population of migratory monarchs will vanish altogether.

### **Create habitat for Monarchs**

Habitat loss through the monarch's summer breeding and migratory range, which includes Wisconsin, is considered to be the primary cause of the monarch population's crash. Other factors like disease, changing environmental conditions and illegal logging where monarchs spend their winters in Mexico are also thought to be harming the population, but habitat loss throughout the summer range has been most clearly linked to the decline. As a result, one of the best things we can do for monarchs is to create new habitat for them.

### **Plant native milkweed**

Monarchs breed in Wisconsin throughout the spring and summer and the presence of milkweed (*Asclepias*) is crucial to their ability to do so. Milkweeds are the only plants on which monarchs will lay their eggs, so milkweed is required to produce new generations of monarchs. Many people think of milkweed as just one plant, but in fact, there are more than 100 different types in North America, of which 14 are native to our state. It's important to plant only milkweed species native to Wisconsin. Nonnative species don't always mesh well with our local ecosystems, and research has shown that planting certain types of nonnative milkweed can actually hurt monarchs by spreading disease and upsetting their annual migration. When purchasing seeds or seedlings, check the scientific names instead of common names; this will help ensure you are choosing plants that are native to your area.

### **Plant native nectar plants**

While monarch caterpillars can survive and feed only on milkweed plants, adult monarchs rely on a variety of nectar sources for food. Plants like blazing star (*Liatris*), coneflowers (*Echinacea*), Joe

Pye weed (*Eutrochium*), asters (*Aster*), and goldenrod (*Solidago*) are all good options for feeding hungry monarchs and other pollinators. When choosing nectar plants, remember that monarchs will need nectar the entire time they are in the state; monarchs typically arrive in Wisconsin in late April and depart in mid-late September. Plant a combination of nectar sources that bloom at different times to ensure that your land is always providing food for adult monarchs.

### **Other habitat considerations**

Milkweed and nectar plants are the key components of good monarch habitat, but other issues are important as well. Create monarch habitat in sunny locations with windbreaks, if possible. Don't use herbicides or insecticides, as these can be harmful to monarchs. Avoid mowing your entire habitat at once and try not to mow when native plants are flowering or about to seed or when monarch activity is at peak.

Much of our knowledge about monarchs and their population trends comes from data collected by citizen scientists – members of the public who contribute to real scientific research. Monarch citizen scientists number in the thousands and can be found throughout the country. From schoolchildren to retirees, people are observing and monitoring monarchs and the data they collect are used to inform monarch conservation. Consider joining their ranks – there are several great projects you can do right on your own property or at a school or local park.

### **Contribute to monarch citizen science**

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inform monarch conservation. Consider joining their ranks – there are several great projects you can do right on your own property or at a school or local park.

### **Journey North**

Journey North tracks the monarch migration each spring and fall. It relies on sightings from the public to follow monarchs as they travel to and from Mexico. If you see a monarch, you can use their simple online sighting form to report it. Reporting sightings is a fun and easy way to become a citizen scientist.

### **Monarch Larva Monitoring Project**

The Monarch Larva Monitoring Project monitors monarchs in their breeding range. Volunteers are needed to monitor milkweed plants for the presence of monarch eggs and larvae (caterpillars) from week to week. This is a great project for folks who want to spend some time outside, either alone or in groups.

### **Monarch Health**

If you want to get some hands-on interactions with monarchs, then Monarch Health is the project for you! It tracks the presence and severity of a disease called OE, which can be deadly for monarchs but doesn't infect people or any other animals. Volunteers with Monarch Health take samples of monarch scales; the samples are submitted for testing and the monarchs are released unharmed.

### **Additional Resources**

The DNR's website offers many additional monarch resources. Visit [www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov) and search for "Pollinators" to learn more. The Monarch Joint Venture offers information on monarch biology, conservation, and volunteer opportunities. Visit [www.monarchjointventure.org](http://www.monarchjointventure.org) to learn more.

Eva Lewandowski, Wisconsin  
Department of Natural Resources  
Originally published in the Wisconsin  
DNR's Natural Heritage Quarterly

## West Madison Ag. Research Station 2017 Trial Review

This year, the University of Wisconsin's West Madison Ag Research Station display gardens in Verona, WI, hosted the Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin's exhibit of more than 4,200 New Guinea impatiens/SunPatiens plants, from 175 cultivars (the largest impatiens display in the Midwest) that were bred to tolerate full sun. A range of performance was recorded: All the SunPatiens varieties were stunning, while the New Guineas were more variable (see list below for top 10).

In addition to the impatiens, another 2,000 plants of 84 cultivars of annual bedding plants were evaluated monthly for various performance criteria to inform the growers and industry. All-America Selections (AAS), an independent, non-profit national promoter of the garden industry, continues to showcase their top-rated cultivars of flowers and vegetables grown.

All-American Cultivars: More than 70 AAS cultivars were on display in 2017 (25 ornamental, 46 vegetables), which included 10 cucurbit varieties direct seeded. Most failed to germinate — 10 peppers, 8 tomatoes, 8 brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, kale, pak choi, radish), and a few others.

### Perennial Trials

Another 750 Darwin Perennials' plants from 64 cultivars are under evaluation for winter survival (three winters), performance, and genetic resistance to weather and insect and disease pests, to aid horticultural companies on marketing decisions. Also, in the evolving perennial trials was a chrysanthemum

evaluation trial with the University of Minnesota. The objective was to evaluate the cultivars for persistence over winter, as well as for floral quality and pyretherin levels.

### Horticultural Societies

Several horticultural societies continue to participate in our gardens. The Wisconsin Peony Society solicited help from our visitors to evaluate their improved genetic collection of 50-cultivars displayed and maintained at the trial garden.

### Garden Conditions

The winter of 2016 to 2017 was average in temperature and precipitation. The growing season was wet and cool. Record rainfall fell in June and July, with cumulative rain over 25 inches from April to Sept. Growing degree days (base 50°F) accumulated from April 1 to Sept. 5 was 2187 (much cooler than in 2016 at 2,822). The annual bedding plants peaked in August, while tomatoes, peppers, grapes, and other warm-season crops were slow to mature.

### Consumer Favorites

The top five consumer favorites rated by visitors included three annuals: *Salvia* and begonias, as well as various New Guinea impatiens. Also, the cut flowers (sunflower, ornamental millet, zinnias) were very popular. Two perennials: *Echinacea* and hydrangeas claimed about 20% of the votes. Overall, variety and color of the petunias and SunPatiens blooms were fantastic and were raved about by visitors all summer long. The annual flower evaluations were scored three times over the summer with the top ten scoring cultivars shown below.

### Top 10 Performers (all inclusive)

*Petunia* 'ColorRush Pink'  
*Petunia* 'ColorRush Blue'  
*Petunia* 'Supertunia Vista Fuchsia'  
*Petunia* 'Supertunia Vista Silverberry'  
*Petunia* 'Supertunia Lovie Dovie'  
*Impatiens* 'SunPatiens Clear White'  
*Bidens* 'Campfire Fireburst Imp.' (tied

for 7th place)  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Compact Orange' (tied for 7th place)  
*Petunia* 'Supertunia Vista Bubblegum' (tied for 8th place)  
New Guinea *Impatiens* 'Sunstanding Salmon' (tied for 8th place)  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Compact Blush Pink' (tied for 8th place)  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Spreading Corona' (tied for 8th place)  
New Guinea *Impatiens* 'Sunstanding Orange Aurora'  
*Salvia* 'Mystic Spires Improved'

### **Top 10 Impatiens of the SunPatiens/New Guinea Impatiens Trialed in Full Sun**

*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Spreading Clear White'  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Compact Orange'  
New Guinea *Impatiens* 'Sunstanding Salmon'  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Compact Blush Pink'  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Spreading Corona'  
New Guinea *Impatiens* 'Sunstanding Orange Aurora'  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Spreading Carmine Red'  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Spreading Scarlet Red'  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Spreading Pink Flash'  
*Impatiens* hyb. 'SunPatiens Spreading Shell Pink'

### **Top 10 Flowers (impatiens, petunias excluded)**

*Bidens* 'Campfire Fireburst Imp.'  
*Salvia* 'Mystic Spires Imp.'  
*Verbena* 'Endurascap Pink Bicolor'  
*Begonia* 'Whopper Rose Green Leaf Imp.'  
*Begonia* 'Whopper Rose Bronze Leaf Imp.'  
*Salvia* 'Rockin' Playin' The Blues Imp.'  
*Verbena* 'Superbena Cherryburst'  
*Begonia* 'Whopper Red Bronze Leaf Imp.'

*Zinnia* 'Double Zahara Raspberry Ripple'  
*Begonia* 'Megawatt Pink Bronze Leaf'  
*Canna* 'Toucan Coral'  
*Calendula* 'Lady Gadiva Orange'

**Janet Hedtcke**  
**Director U.W. West Madison Ag. Research Station**

## **Board News**

At the January 16 board meeting the board decided not to supply pots for the Wisconsin State Fair this year. Despite donating thousands of dollars worth of containers to the fair each year the only benefit CFGW receives is a few free fair passes. The fair will not allow labels in the containers that name would the producer/donor of that container.

It was decided to grow Vegetatively propagated Petunias for this year's CFGW Field Day. That event will be held on August 2 at the University of Wisconsin West Madison Agriculture Field Station again.

The Fall Greenhouse Conference will be held at the Natural Beauty Growers greenhouse on October 17, 2018.

The board approved the purchase of a projection screen for use at the meetings. Thank you to Carlin for the use of your screen for so many years but the CFGW owning a screen allows Dann Haendel to miss a membership meeting.

Editor

## **2018 Fall Greenhouse Conference**

CFGW's 36<sup>th</sup> or is it 37<sup>th</sup> but it could be 38<sup>th</sup> Fall Greenhouse Conference will be held on October 17, 2018 at the Natural Beauty Growers (Floral Plant Growers) greenhouse in Denmark, Wisconsin. This program will have a marketing theme with Lloyd Traven from Peace Tree Farms speaking. His first topic is titled "867-5309" taken from a 1981 Tommy Tutone hit song, part of whose

lyrics are “Hey, Jenny don’t change your number.” This is an Ellison Distinguish Lecture Lloyd has given before and he says it will be a challenging topic to your members. His second topic will be “Leveraging Edibles, Finding a Niche”. I first heard Lloyd speak at the Ohio Florist Association convention in Ohio.

Lloyd is in constant demand as a speaker and also publishes articles for GMPro Magazine, Greenhouse Product News, Greenhouse Grower, Grower Talks, etc. He has a BS from Delaware Valley College and an MS from Cornell University and is often called a mad scientist and plant geek. He and his wife Candy have owned Peace Tree Farms in Pennsylvania since 1983. Lloyd is a technological wizard and advocate for small growers. You will find him an invigorating speaker who will challenge you.



*Lloyd Traven on the Martha Stewart Show*

Also speaking is someone many of you will know, MasterTag’s John Martins. John was recommended as a speaker by CFGW member Stein’s Jerry Schmidt and will talk about “The STP of Gardening.” John says STP stands for **S**pace, **T**ime and **P**lace a talk about impacts of current American life on the ornamental plant market. We are not so much in competition with the neighboring greenhouse as we are with TV, computers, iPads and Facebook. John will tell us how to deal with the new competition and be successful.

Our third speaker, also from MasterTag, Gerry Giorgio is their Art Director and will talk about how print fonts, colors and packaging can and will affect your sales. Advertising is important, you can make it more effective with Gerry’s help.

This is another strong CFGW Fall Conference line up so mark your calendars and save October 17 for the CFGW Fall Greenhouse Conference. Look for the registration form in September.

Editor

## Program Schedule, 2018

**-April 4** a 5 PM membership meeting at W.E. Radtke, Inc., W168 N12276 Century Lane, Germantown, WI 53022. 262-253-1412. Speaker Amy Schroeder Mycorrhizal Applications.

**-June 19** probably at 5 PM at North Parish Gardens, Brooklyn, WI. The topic will be a round table discussion of the 2018 spring season.

**-August 2** Field Day @ West Madison Ag. Research Station. 342 Vegetative Petunias varieties on trial. The largest such trial in the U.S.?

**-September** @ BFG Janesville. Topic new varieties by Megan Lambert?

**-October 17** – Fall Greenhouse Conference at Floral Plant Growers, Denmark. Speakers will be Peace Tree’s Lloyd Traven, MasterTags John Martin and Gerry Giorgio with a marketing theme.

**-November** @ Karthaus & Sons. Speaker and topic not selected.