

## SE MN Prairie Partners Chapter Newsletter December 2024 Volume 13 issue 4

### Watching a Monarch caterpillar become a butterfly – Sue Bresnahan



A Monarch egg on  
a Milkweed leaf



1st Instar, just  
hatched caterpillar



5th and final instar caterpillar.  
Photo by Sue Bresnahan



In the "J", ready to pupate. By  
Sue Bresnahan



Chrysalis almost closed up. Ready  
for privacy during transition to  
butterfly. By Sue Bresnahan



Transformation into butterfly is nearly  
complete. Photo by Sue Bresnahan



Eclosed! By Sue Bresnahan



A beautiful female Monarch dries her wings. She emerged in  
September, so is ready to head to Mexico. By Sue Bresnahan

Sue and Tim enjoyed watching a Monarch caterpillar become a butterfly in their yard this past summer. Monarchs are close to being considered endangered in the US as their populations have greatly dwindled. The Bresnahan yard offers milkweed and other native flowers and butterflies love it.

**SE MN Prairie Partners officers – the**  
Following officers were voted in at our  
November 2024 meeting:

President – Barb Bolan  
Vice President – Nancy Schumacher  
Secretary – Polly Hendee  
Treasurer – Jim Sipe  
Membership Chair – LuAnn Raadt  
Newsletter Chair – open  
Webmaster & Social Media Lead- Matt Brueske  
Grant Manager – Jim Sipe

**Wild Ones Mission:** Native Plants, Natural  
Landscaping promote environmentally sound  
landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity  
through preservation, restoration, and  
establishment of native plant communities.  
Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental  
education and advocacy organization.

**Wild Ones National Address:** 2285 Butte  
des Morts Beach Road, Neenah, WI 54956  
[www.wildones.org](http://www.wildones.org)

**Membership:** Sign up/ renew online at  
<https://members.wildones.org/> or by mail:  
<https://members.wildones.org/renew-by-check/>.  
Cost is \$40 per year for a household (family)  
membership. Student and other membership  
types are also available.

**SE MN Prairie Partners Mission  
Statement:** To preserve, maintain and  
provide knowledge of native and restored plant  
communities in a way that fosters friendship.

**SE MN Prairie Partners online:**

<https://semnprairiepartners.wildones.org/>

[Wild Ones: SE MN Prairie Partners | Facebook](#)

**Newsletter Committee:** Nancy  
Schumacher, Gary Bullemer, Barb Bolan

**Submitting articles for the newsletter –**  
We welcome stories about natural areas, a  
native garden you have visited or designed, a  
nature-based vacation, a special flower, bird,  
butterfly, etc.

**Prairie Partners member local Services**  
*(Please let us know if you have one to list)*

**Whitewater Gardens Farm:** Lonny and Sandy  
Dietz [Whitewater Gardens Farm](#)

**Blazing Star Gardens:** Dustin Demmer [Blazing  
Star Gardens](#)

**Minnesota Native Landscapes (MNL):** Dwayne  
Vosejka [mnlcorp.com](http://mnlcorp.com)

**Bluff Land Wildlife Products:** Matthew Brueske  
[sales@blufflandwildlifeproducts.com](mailto:sales@blufflandwildlifeproducts.com) or [The  
Deer Cage](#)

**Enabling Healthy Habitats:** Dawn Littleton

**Friends of Nerstrand State Park:** Katy Gillispie  
[Friends of Nerstrand Big Woods](#)

**Friends of Whitewater State Park:** Joel  
Dunnette - [Friends of Whitewater](#)

**Zumbro Valley Audubon:** Joel Dunnette –  
Board member [zumbrovalleyaudubon.org](http://zumbrovalleyaudubon.org)

**River Bend Nature Center:** Packy Mader, Board  
of Directors [www.rbnc.org](http://www.rbnc.org)

**Halfpint Hollow Miniature Donkeys:** Rod and  
Sue White [halfpinthollow.com](http://halfpinthollow.com)

**CRP – Clean River Partnership:** Bill Jokela [Home  
- Clean River Partners](#)

**2025 Chapter Events schedule** –*Inside, in-person events will typically be held in the Emmaus Church at 712 Linden St. North.*

Thursday Jan 9th, 7pm - zoom - Deanna Leigh of MN DNR Plant Watch group – Title: Rare ones in Wild Habitats

January Tuesday Jan 21st, 7pm - Lucas Rhoads– on Neonics, all state chapters

Thursday February 13th, 7pm – zoom - Barb on Monarchs and milkweed

Thursday Feb 20th – Master naturalists – roadside project update

Thursday March 13th, 7pm, at Emmaus Church –Bonnie Harper-Lore on “Lessons learned in Protecting and Restoring Biodiversity – Conservation in Action - a book being released.

April 10th – 5pm Dinner - Dennison

April – Rice Lake Park, Owatonna – ephemeral walk/tour

May 17-18th– Plant sale – Nancy and Jim’s, Hwy 56, Hampton, Sat and Sunday

June 12th, twilight walk, moth observation, frog and fireflies watch... - Family event, with Master Naturalists

June – weekend afternoon- prairie remnant ditches – evaluation, workday

July 10th, 7pm – Byllesby tour stops - Mary D and Tim/Sue B places – lakeshore restoration and native plantings

Saturday July 26 afternoon – Northfield yard tours - Jean N and more

August 14th, 2pm – Winona – Prairie tour and Whitewater Gardens (plant sale)

Saturday September 20th - 10AM Seed harvest – location TBD.

Sept, date TBD - Koester prairie – help with seed harvest (master naturalists)

Sep 11th 5pm- Clean River partners – tour of a project – Anna Holmon [anna@cleanriverpartners.org](mailto:anna@cleanriverpartners.org)

October 9th, 7pm - Shelley Gorham, DNR – restorations/wildlife

November 13th, 6pm start – Seed share, led by Scott R., seed germination demo by Nancy S, plus appetizers, socializing

December 11th, 11AM - Luncheon



Gail's Granddaughter finds native fleabane flowers on a meadow walk and lovingly offers them to Grandma. Photo by Gail Gates

## Native Garden Grants Program

We will be offering Member-Sponsored Native Garden Grants again in 2025, for private plantings or public spaces. Please stay tuned for more information and the application.



Part of her Member-Sponsored Native Planting in her yard. Garden and photo by Dee Menning



Invasive Buckthorn remains green longer than other trees and shrubs so is easy to detect in late fall



Judith's restored Iowa prairie at sunset. She added 42 more acres to the previous 26 in her prairie Photo by Judith Bechtum

## Invasive Terrestrials Presentation

*Breanna Wheeler, October 2024*

Buckthorn, an invasive species, is one of the many terrestrial invaders threatening the health of our ecosystems. Breanna Wheeler gave a fascinating and eye-opening presentation on the *Threat of Terrestrial Invasive Species* and shared how we can all help stop the spread of these "spooky" invaders like buckthorn, garlic mustard, creeping bellflower, and wild parsnip. Planting native species is one of the best ways to protect our landscapes and support biodiversity. And remember, removing invasive plants like buckthorn or Dame's rocket when you spot them helps keep the natural balance. Every effort counts!

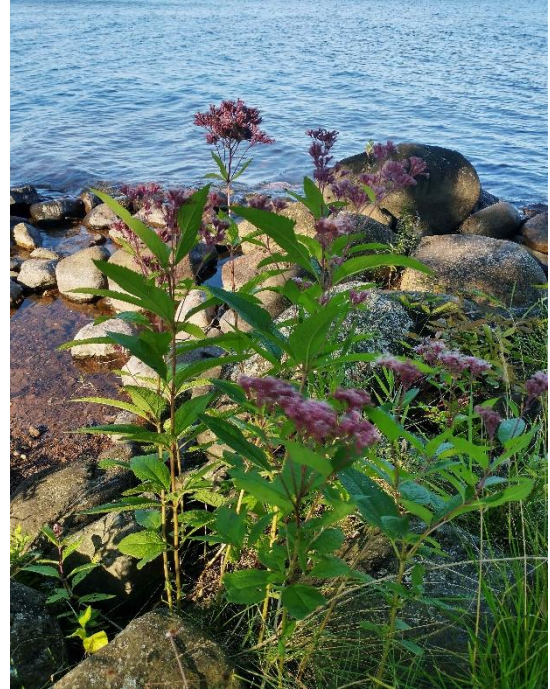
## A Black and Gold Queen Bumblebee on ice.



For the Bee Atlas project, volunteers net bees, put them on ice, photo for ID verification, then released unharmed. Photo by Barb Bolan

## Sue and Rod White's travels

Rod and I decided that a great way to celebrate our 60th wedding anniversary last Sept. was to explore the Upper Peninsula of Michigan along Lake Superior. We found the state parks there delightful. Our camping sites were either on lakes, such as Gogebic and Muskallonge, a river, Tahquamenon, or Lake Superior itself. One was even nestled between a smaller lake and Lake Superior. Our camping dogs, Barnaby and Mazie, loved hiking the wooded trails, swimming on extra-long leashes, and discovering what animals had been there before them. The pictured Joe Pie Weed was behind our campsite on Lake Gogebic's edge and the Sea Rocket we discovered growing on a sandy beach along Lake Superior.



Joe Pye Weed along Lake Gogebic, Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Photo by Sue White

During a trip to Nevis, MN, Sue and Rod discovered many beautiful native plants.



UP enjoying the view of Lake Superior at Porcupine Mts. Wilderness SP. Photo by Sue White



Native Prairie Thistle



Monarda Punctata, Spotted Bee Balm

**Native Seed Share** – After selecting seeds and having treats, we settled in to watch a video on native landscaping. We had a fun, tasty, successful evening with seeds from over 35 native species to choose from.



Table of seeds at native seed share.

**Arlene and Dennis Kjar** traveled to different state parks this year including a relaxing fall walk along Big Blue Stem grasses in nearby Nerstrand State Park



**Several native species are edible.** However, never taste or eat anything unless you are 100% certain that it is safe to eat.



Black Walnut Cupcakes. By Arlene Kjar



Elderberry Syrup. Made by LuAnn Raadt



Jean with a basket of fresh Oyster mushrooms. Photo by Judith Bechtum

Norma and Terry traveled to Brooklyn NY to visit relatives this fall and found time to check out flowers and bumblebees.



Bumblebee on Aster in NY. Photo by Norma Gilbertson

Gail Gates enjoys learning about nature's beauty and secrets with her camera in hand. One of the places she checked out this year was the gorgeous Valley Grove churches and prairie.



Valley Grove churches surrounded by restored prairie. Photo by Gail Gates



Judith's restored wetland, near Webster, MN. Judith keeps busy restoring and maintaining wetlands and prairies in Minnesota and her prairie in Iowa. Photo by Judith Bechtum



Smooth Blue Aster with pollinators such as the Common Bumblebee. In Jean's native garden. Photo by Jean Novotny

**Butterfly secrets.** So many butterflies have evolved with very unique characteristics or behaviors that help them survive in their little niches. Nature is so amazing.

**The Mourning Cloak butterfly** is our only butterfly that overwinters as an adult, and it has the longest lifecycle as an adult. In late fall the adults convert some of their body's water to an antifreeze-like glycol, then hide in loose bark or logs. They mate upon waking up in the spring.



**Mourning Cloak Butterfly.** Photo by Norma Gilbertson

Our **Sulphur Butterflies** express 'Seasonal Polymorphenism', (seasonal variability). Adults emerging in cool spring or fall weather are smaller and darker. Mid-summer heat triggers adults to emerge larger and brighter. These butterflies have successfully adapted to agriculture changes, especially alfalfa fields. It's very difficult to confirm the species identity, even more so since the clouded and orange species interbreed.



**Clouded Sulphur Butterfly, mid-summer.** Photo by Norma Gilbertson



**Sulphur Butterfly, fall.** Photo by Gail Gates

**Red spotted Purple Butterflies** look quite different from above than below. They also take mimicry to the extreme. To fend off predators, the adults mimic the poisonous Pipevine Swallowtails, the caterpillars are 'poop mimics, and the chrysalis looks like a dead twig or leaf. The Red-spotted purple will sometimes

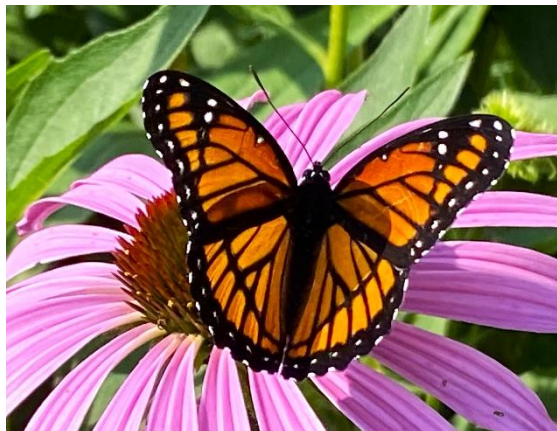
cross with its cousin, the Viceroy. A hybrid offspring is called a “Rubidus”.



Red-spotted Purple Butterfly - underside wing view.  
Photo by Barb Bolan



Red spotted purple butterfly - topside view. Photo by  
Barb Bolan



Viceroy Butterfly. It looks more like a Monarch but is more closely related to the Red spotted Purple and may interbreed with them. Photo by Polly Hendee

**Moths can be fascinating too.** Most are active at night. A Moth spins a cocoon, while butterflies create a chrysalis

**American Dagger** caterpillars should not be handled. Those spikey things are actual venomous bristles that can cause pain and discomfort. The caterpillars typically feed on tree leaves rather than flowers and hang out in wooded lands.



American Dagger Moth. Photo by Gail Gates

Our largest moth is the beautiful **Cecropia**, coming in at 5-7 inches across. Even the caterpillar is about 5” long. And plump. If you find an adult, look closely, it has no mouth. Adults’ sole purpose is to breed and lay eggs. The adults are covered with fuzzy scales that are unappealing to predators. Cecropia are in the Giant Silk Moth family. Some of their biggest predators are parasitoid wasps and flies that feed on the caterpillars as well as squirrels that eat their cocoons during the winter.



Cecropia moth caterpillar at Mud Creek WMA. Photo by Barb Bolan

**Milkweed Tiger Moths, aka Tussock Moths**, use milkweed as their host plants. If you find one, you'll find dozens. And they have voracious appetites, rapidly defoliating the host plant. Like Monarchs, the caterpillars acquire toxins from milkweed and their bright warning colors to ward off predators. The hairy tufts can cause skin irritations to people. The male moths use their Tymbal organs (modified plates on the exoskeleton) to create click noises that both attract females and deter bats, perhaps by disrupting bat echolocation.



Milkweed Tiger (or Tussock) Moth caterpillars. Photo by Gail Gates

Based on folklore, the **Woolly Bear**, aka **Isabella Tiger Moth** caterpillar's rusty red band can predict how harsh the following winter will be. Though researchers have not found a correlation to predicting weather, they did discover that the rusty band width is influenced by the conditions of the *previous* summer. The better their summer, the narrower the band. Additionally, early instar Woolly Bear's have a narrower band than instar 6 caterpillars do. Warm or cold winter aside, these caterpillars freeze nearly solidly to survive the winter.

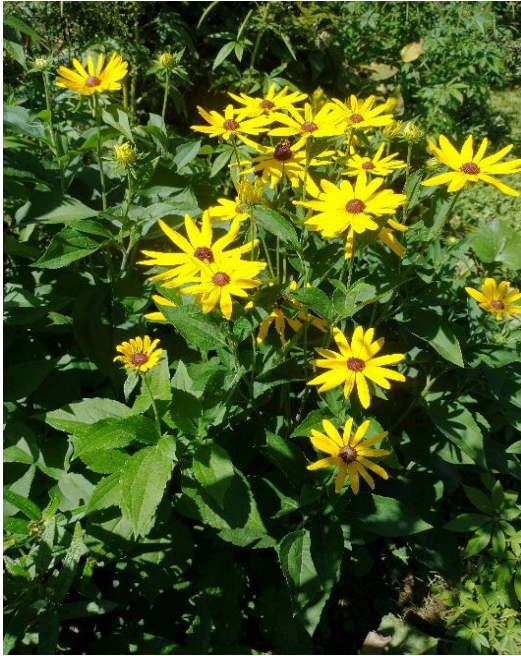


Woolly Caterpillar, aka Isabella Tiger Moth. Photo by Barb Bolan



Showy Tick Trefoil in Kasota Prairie SNA. Beautiful prairie! Photo by Barb Bolan

## Remembering summer 2024



Sweet Susans in her Garden. By Sue White



Black and Gold queen bumblebee on Partridge Pea in Norma's native garden. Photo by Norma Gilbertson



Blue Bottle Gentian. A real beauty. Photo by Gail Gates



Snow Trillium, one of the earliest flowers of the spring, rescued from a construction site in Northfield. Now happy growing in her garden. Arlene's photo.

Return Address:  
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Address Label



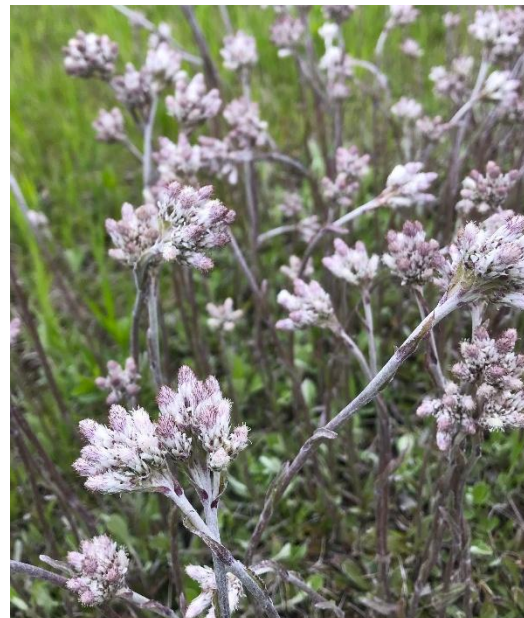
Shooting Star at Lashbrook Park. The plants came from Blazing Star Gardens and were chosen to help attract Rusty patched and other bumblebees. Photo by Breanna Wheeler



Bee on Golden Alexander in Matt's Garden. Photo by Matt Brueske



Mayapple at Judith's home. Great spring bloomer. Photo by Judith Bechtum



Pussytoes in Iowa Prairie. Photo by Judith Bechtum