



Perennial Notes

September 2013

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society—an unincorporated nonprofit association

WHPS COMING EVENTS!

All regular meetings are 6:30 social time, 7:00 p.m. program at Olbrich Gardens Commons, 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, September 18 *Chic Plants for Modern Gardens: A Commentary on New Plants with Kelly Norris.* In this commentary-style lecture, plantsman Kelly Norris, horticulture manager for the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, will share his views on the current state of ornamental horticulture, provide an overview of new varieties in some of the hottest perennial categories, while encouraging the audience's feedback and sass—that's right, some new plants just aren't all they're cracked up to be. Join us for a rousing discussion on what makes a great garden plant and why we all need to demand more from the people that make them. Norris is an award-winning author of three books including the *Iowa Gardener's Travel Guide*, the first travel guide to Iowa's public gardens and nurseries, and *A Guide to Bearded Irises: Cultivating the Rainbow for Beginners and Enthusiasts*.

Sunday, September 22, WHPS PLANT EXCHANGE, 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Allen Centennial Gardens. Bring plant(s); get plant(s)! Free parking is available in the parking ramp (Lot 36) across from the Gardens. Plants can be set up before 10:30; Exchange starts promptly at 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, October 16 Joint Meeting with Hosta Society, SPECIAL TIME: 6:00 p.m. Social; 6:30 pm. meeting—*Ferns for Gardeners with Sue Olsen.* One of the most comprehensive and useful resources for garden ferns is the *Encyclopedia of Garden Ferns*, by Sue Olsen. With their beauty and versatility, often combined with a toughness that belies their appearance, ferns are among the most useful and rewarding plants that any gardener can grow. Ferns offer a staggering variety of habit and shape, with foliage comprising endless variations of green as well as bronze, pink, silver and blue-grey—a dazzling array of choices. Olsen has been studying, propagating and writing about ferns for over four decades. Her nursery, Foliage Gardens, has introduced numerous ferns to horticulture and is the oldest mail-order nursery in the United States for spore-grown temperate ferns.

Wednesday, November 13 *Why Grow That, When You Can Grow This?* with Andrew Keys. The recently released *Why Grow That When You Can Grow This?: 255 Extraordinary Alternatives to Everyday Problem Plants* is garnering much praise and for good reason. Pining to grow lilac but lack the full sun? Try the fragrant pink and white flowers of Korean spice viburnum. Love the drama of canna but need something hardier? Try the bold foliage of variegated fleece flower. Boston-based author, garden designer and lecturer Andrew Keys offers hundreds of all-star alternatives that replace—and often outshine—popular problem plants. Each profile in his book shows the problem plant and offers three alternatives that include three or more of the original plant's characteristics—hardiness, shape, color, texture, light, and size. Join us as he presents some of that information in an entertaining lecture. The host and producer of *Fine Gardening's Garden Confidential* podcast, Keys' writing has appeared in *Fine Gardening* and other magazines, as well as on his blog, *Garden Smackdown*. <http://www.gardensmackdown.com/>

Wednesday, December 11, *Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange and Member Potpourri.* We hope you've been taking photos of your garden or gardens you have visited, because the WHPS Member Potpourri is one of our most popular programs and gives you a chance to share with us your favorite garden experiences. Plan on taking up to 10 minutes to present your photos, PowerPoint presentation or video. Contact Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com if you would like to participate. And don't forget to start collecting seeds now to participate in our Seed Exchange.

Sunday, January 19, 2014 *Member Potluck*

February 7-9, 2014, *WHPS Booth at Wisconsin Garden Expo*

Wednesday, February 19, 2014 *Mike Yanni, Johnson's Nursery*

Wednesday, March 19, 2014 *Gene Bush, Munchkin Nursery, Depauw, Indiana*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Saturday, May 17, 2014 *WHPS PLANT SALE*

**June 13-22 2014,
*WHPS TOUR OF NORTHERN ENGLAND***

Digital Photo Images Wanted for WHPS Garden Expo Booth and Website

Our goal is to continue to grow our WHPS society image through artistic photography, with an emphasis on our member events.

Currently, our greatest need is for images of the WHPS Plant Sale at the West Agriculture Station, plant digs and the Plant Exchange. We also welcome images of meetings, speakers and our local garden tours.

If you have digital images you are willing to share, please contact lynnbelanger7300@gmail.com.

You can also post the photos directly to www.flickr.com:
Login: whps100@yahoo.com; Password: Love2garden

Would you like to help serve the future of our organization?

Our board will be nominating new directors in November for election in December. If you are interested in serving and would like more information about our 15-to-18-member board, please contact Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com

OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE

Saturday, September 14, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., CAC Garden Days at Troy Community Gardens. Community Action Coalition (CAC) is sponsoring CAC Garden Days at several community gardens the weekend of 9/13, 9/14 and 9/15. CAC Garden Days celebrates community gardens and the benefits they bring to the neighborhoods around them. Troy Community Gardens will be featured on Saturday, 9/14, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Activities at Troy will include apple pressing with an antique apple press, cooking demos with free tastings, door prizes, tours of Troy Gardens, including the Kids' Garden and chickens, CSA farm and native tallgrass prairie. Troy Community Gardens is located in the 500 block of Troy Drive on Madison's northside. The event is free and open to the public. For more information about the event at Troy Community Gardens, contact Jill Schneider at schneiderjill@charter.net or 608-241-1821. For information about CAC Garden Days, contact Micah Kloppenburg at CAC (micahk@cacscw.org, 608-246-4730 ext. 236).

Saturday, September 21, 1-3 p.m. Native Plant Garden Tour: Fall in the Native Plant Garden, UW-Madison Arboretum. Color, fruits, seeds, late blooming plants, late-season insects—find these and more in the varied native plant gardens around the Visitor Center

Friday, September 27, 7:00-10:00 pm, Crackle – Fire & Froth, Olbrich Gardens. Watch the flames from bonfires dance on the Great Lawn, groove to live music, savor a variety of tasty foods from Food Fight restaurants, and sip frothy Wisconsin brews. Tickets \$20 for Olbrich members; \$25 for the general public. Food and beverages are an additional cost above ticket price. In case of inclement weather, CRACKLE will be held indoors.

Saturday, October 12 (noon-5:00 pm) & Sunday, October 13 (10:00 am-4:00 pm) African Violet Show and Sale, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by the Wisconsin State Council of African Violets. A portion of the proceeds benefits Olbrich Botanical Gardens. For more information call 608-833-5552.

Saturday, October 12, 1-3 p.m., Longenecker Horticultural Gardens Tour: Featuring Fall, UW-Madison Arboretum. Don't miss the lovely range of fall color in the woody plant collection. Leaves, fruits and form will be highlighted in this tour, led by Laura Wyatt, WDNR Urban Forestry.

Saturday, November 2, 9:00 am-3:00 pm, Herb Fair, Olbrich Gardens. Free! Sponsored by the Madison Herb Society. Visit www.madisonherbsociety.org.

Saturday, November 2, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Garden Symposia, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville—*New Old Plants for the Midwestern Garden*. Speakers: Jim Ault, Director of Ornamental Plant Research, Chicago Botanic Garden; Kris Bachtell, VP of Collections and Facilities, Morten Arboretum; Susan Martin, Director of Marketing Communications for Walters Gardens, home of Proven Winners. RBG Friends Members, \$55; General Public, \$65. For more information, call (608) 752-3885 or go to <http://rotarybotanicalgardens.org/rotary-botanical-gardens>

Saturday, December 7-Monday, December 31, 10:00 am-4:00 pm daily Olbrich's Holiday Express: Flower and Model Train Show Twinkling lights, festive poinsettias, tiny landscapes, and large-scale model trains. Admission for Olbrich Botanical Society members is free. Admission for the general public is \$3 for adults, and \$2 for children 3-12. Children 2 and under are free. Admission to Bolz Conservatory is included.

December 13-15, 20-23, 27-30, Holiday Light Show, 4:30-9:30 p.m., Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville. Admission \$5.00 adult, \$3.00 (age 3-15). Twenty acres, 300,000 lights, 100 individual displays, 2,000 half-gallon milk jug luminaries, 53 decorated evergreens, 6 miles of extension cords. Santa, live reindeer and camel, holiday shopping, musicians on most nights.

If you know of an upcoming garden program, tour, trip or other information of note, contact Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com



WHPS is now on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/WisHardyPlantSociety>

We hope that our Facebook page will bring us closer to our members and our members closer to each other by allowing us to:

- Share photos of trips
- Let you know of up-to-the-minute opportunities (open gardens, tours, sales, volunteer opportunities, recent news, etc.)
- Provide you with more information on our programs and speakers (and how to connect with the speakers)
- Connect to each other by posting news and photos from your own gardens and garden experiences (a recent garden you liked, a garden project you think we should see, a plant you have a question about, etc.)

How can you connect to the new Facebook page?

First of all, you don't need to have a Facebook page to find us. Simply go to the following URL — <https://www.facebook.com/WisHardyPlantSociety> — and you'll be able to see what has been posted or commented on.

If you want to Post something to our page, you will have to "Like" us, and to Like us you will need to have your own Facebook page.

If you don't yet have a Facebook page, here is a YouTube video on how to start a Facebook page that is uncomplicated and easy to follow:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNe9UujfC0>;

NOTE: You do not have to provide a lot of personal information to make a Facebook page — just your name, email and birthdate and gender will get you started.

In exchange for you "Like"ing us, we promise to do our best to keep you connected to all things WHPS — the things we do, the gardens we recommend, information we think you would be interested in and, most important of all, allowing us the chance to get to know you better.

We will still be sending out newsletters and trip brochures, and those of you with email will still receive our monthly meeting reminders, but if you are online and want to get to know us better and help us know you better, find us on Facebook!

Thanks again for being a member of our organization. We hope to hear from you soon!

—WHPS Board of Directors

Wednesday, June 5, 2013— Al's Auto Body & Arboretum

Lately it seems like every garden event that Mark and I have participated in has happened on a cool day with rain threatening. The weather for the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society bus trip to Lake Geneva and Burlington, Wisconsin, last Sunday was no exception. If the weather wasn't perfect, our first stop of the day — Al's Auto Body and Arboretum in Walworth — was.

If that name makes you shake your head in wonder, read on. Al Ritchey runs the only Arboretum/Botanical Garden outside of a municipality in Walworth County. Any public institution would be happy to have the magical landscape that Al and his father have created over the years. While Al was giving us the scoop on the Arboretum, Phil Broderick, the favorite bus driver for WHPS events, chatted with family, friends, and staff on hand for Al's annual Hosta Fest. The scale of Al's Arboretum — actually more like Hosta heaven — is mind boggling.

None of us really had any idea what to expect when we pulled up to the site. But once we started our tour, we were all agog. Al grows more than 400 varieties of Hostas in a setting that is more garden than nursery. At the annual Fest, he typically sells about 175 varieties.

If you asked me before this trip what I thought about Hostas, I would probably have admitted I'm ambivalent about them. Yes, I grow quite a few but I think of them as workhorses doing a job in the garden with a few favorites as specimens.

At Al's Arboretum, the Hostas were growing in undulating waves, in long lines and wide curves. Every size, color, marking, and leaf shape were represented and all of the plants were healthy and happy.

I wanted to go home and start planting swaths of Hostas. Many pictures were taken. Many questions were asked and answered. Many of us had our eyes opened. With so many Hostas growing at full size, it was easy to see in person what the catalogs can't show no matter how good the photos.

Al mentioned that he does not purposely hybridize Hostas, but the amount and variety of plants he grows means that an interesting sport can appear on its own. He's got one or two that he hopes to market in the future.

Given that the property houses both a body shop and an Arboretum there were lots of interesting non-plant things to see . . . both functional . . . unusual . . . and artistic. Al's is well-worth a visit if you are in the area. And I'm putting next year's Hosta Fest on my calendar. It takes place Memorial Day weekend and the following weekend.

—Linda Brazill, from Each Little World,
<http://www.eachlittleworld.typepad.com/>

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Soil Quality for Conifers

Every modern landscape can be enhanced with the use of conifers as foundation plantings or as barriers to negative lines of sight. The diverse attributes of conifers enable them to provide four seasons of interest as the “bones” in the American mixed perennial border. Siting plants on an inclined plane or irregular rolling slope adds interest to a flat surface and provides the opportunity to stage dwarf plants toward the foreground. Large or intermediate conifers can be used to block unwanted sight-lines. Color, texture, form, seasonal changes, bark and coning attributes provide great options. Whatever landscape situation exists, there is a superlative conifer available for that site. Basic knowledge of conifers and of the site is required to make wise plant choices.

Before planting conifers, you must be able to answer this critical question: *What is the drainage and percolation of the site?* Most conifers thrive in well-drained sandy, clay loam in full sun. Not all projects have ideal conditions, but good drainage is essential to guarantee the success of most plantings. Test your soil percolation by digging a hole two-feet deep with a post hole digger. Fill the hole with water, let it drain and fill again. If the hole does not drain in two hours after the second filling, the soil is limited for conifers. In heavy clay, raise at least half the root ball out of the clay layer and surround the protruding half with good topsoil. Another solution is to remove narrow channels of clay leading away from the plant, like spokes of a wheel. Replace that soil with sand or pea gravel so water and rootlets have an easy path. Water must drain away easily or the roots will rot due to lack of oxygen.

If your soil is heavy, wet and can't be amended, there are some conifers that are naturally predisposed to such conditions. Choose Larix (larch), Taxodium (bald cypress), Metasequoia (dawn redwood), or Thuja (arborvitae). *Taxodium distichum* is one of the most versatile conifers, because it can thrive in standing water or on a rocky ridge. It is the most adaptable to heavy clay soils. Taxus (yew), Pinus (pine), Picea (spruce) and Abies (fir) demand good drainage and will die with too much water in the soil. Provide your trees with good soil, amendments, and sufficient water. Extra watering is needed during drought periods and until the ground freezes.

Mulch is a positive thing to maintain soil moisture, but it should not be placed too close to the trunk. Chunk bark or coarse wood chips can be beneficial for firs (which prefer an eastern exposure). Pine needles, coarse pine fines or 2-inch wood chips work well for other conifers. Use a light application of compost, peat moss or worm castings and sulphur in reasonable doses for these acid loving plants.

— Susan Eyre, Rich's Foxwillow Pines Nursery, Inc.
11618 McConnell Rd., Woodstock, IL; Phone: 815-338-7442
www.richsfoxwillowpines.com
www.facebook.com/RichsFoxwillowPinesNursery

Seed Exchange Collect now to participate in December!

We hope you have been collecting seeds throughout the garden season to share with members at the WHPS Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange and Member Potpourri on Wednesday, December 11 at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. For an excellent article on **Seed Exchange FAQ**, visit our Website at http://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.com/documents/Seed_Exchange_FAQ_9-2002.pdf

Questions? Contact Seed Exchange Coordinator Jane Gahlman at 608-837-2317, jmgahlman@hotmail.com.

(And if you just can't get enough seed exchanging, please join WHPS business member Betty Adelman at Heritage Flower Farm's free Seed Exchange on Saturday, October 5 from 9-5 at 33725 County Road L, Mukwonago. As Betty says, "It's not what you reap, it's the seeds that you sow.")

Portraying the Beauty of Botany—*Botanical Art Classes with Mary Chambers Bauschelt*

Mary Chamber Bauschelt is our newest business member.



Growing up in rural Wisconsin I was always outdoors exploring nature. This was the inspiration that led to my career as Horticulturist for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Botany Greenhouses and Botanical Garden and to pursue an interest in botanical art. I retired from my position after more than 30 years of growing many species of plants, including the *Amorphophalus titanium*, or Corpse Flower, which led to a big stink in Birge Hall in 2001, when it grew to 8 feet 5.5 inches, already sitting in a pot that was 3 feet tall.

I live in rural Mazomanie with my husband on 7.5 acres raising 30 fruit trees, tending raised-bed vegetable gardens, a wild flower garden, and a pondless waterfall.

Working with nature inspired me to record what I saw through drawing and painting. I work by observing live plant specimens, rendering their essence in graphite and then by using that image as a blueprint I paint with watercolor on hot press paper or vellum. Vellum's unique characteristic illuminates color in a way that it is unlike any other surface, giving it an ethereal quality.

Contemporary botanical art is the realistic portrayal of plants and flowers, created as a blend of art and science. It has moved out of the garden and into fine art museums around the world. Contemporary botanical artists are drawing attention to the issues and opportunities of our times including education, bio-diversity, conservation, health and well-being.

I have studied botanical art for the past 20 years and have been teaching for 14 years. I am a founding member of the American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA), which was formed in 1994. The ASBA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting public awareness of contemporary botanical art, to honoring its traditions and to furthering its development (<https://www.asba-art.org>). As a current ASBA board member and Awards Committee Chair, I bring years of experience and knowledge to the classroom. My work is held in the permanent collection at the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, and I have exhibited nationally and internationally.

I have been teaching botanical art since 2000. Teaching and practicing botanic art instills discipline, observation, patience and appreciation of the functionality, diversity, interdependence and intricacy of the living world. Contemporary botanical art draws together art and science, history and horticulture, economics and ethnology.

As a current board member of the American Society of Botanical Artists, my mission is to invite you to contemplate nature through contemporary botanical art.

I am teaching a progressive series of courses from drawing to watercolor. The classes run for two weekend days, for six hours each day, usually not on the same weekend. Classes will be held at the Town of Berry Town Hall, 9046 State Road 19, Mazomanie in northwestern Dane county on weekends.

The first class will be held on Saturday September 7, 2013.

Please e-mail me for more information at mary@marybauschelt.com. My website is <http://www.marybauschelt.com>



Garden Fairy Twinkles Spring to Fall

The Knockouts are great, and I love my 'Bonica', but the real star of the roses in my garden is *Rosa* 'The Fairy'. The Fairy stays low to the ground and doesn't impose itself too much on others nearby – only 2 feet or so tall, with a spread of 2-3 feet – but the buds and then flowers start emerging in May and don't stop until November. The flowers are only a little over an inch in diameter, but they are so prolific that there is a constant pink mound in view all season.

Of course, I planted it in a less flattering place than it deserves—it's on the front edge of my driveway bed when it really should be on the top and front of a small wall, so its graceful draping quality can be on full view, but I love it where it is.

I remember every now and then to deadhead (or rather cut back to just above the first five-leaf stem), but even if I didn't deadhead (and it looks much better, of course, when I do), the buds and flowers just keep coming.

And talk about easy care! I've had no problems with blackened leaves or dieback, and even the Japanese beetles are kind enough to leave this little one alone.

This is the rose I always recommend to anyone for their front entrance or driveway area, to enjoy the constant and welcoming view it offers.

This 'Fairy' has made me a believer.

—Stephanie O'Neal



Bringing Nature Home

I have been in a silent war with myself about gardening on both a personal and professional level for many years. I got into gardening because I LOVED plants and earth and nature and creating beauty. I still do, but as I see the world developing and becoming ever so human dominated, my heart feels greater and greater pain. The great web of life is being torn and tattered at every turn by our ballooning growth and needs, and our human-centered way of looking at things.

I look at my own garden and see a plethora of beautiful plants that I love dearly, but how do they serve the web of nature as a whole? Some of my plant friends are native, but most aren't, and although I see birds, butterflies and insects feeding and nesting, I know there should and could be many more. I tend my soil with care, cherishing the microbial nations that flourish there, and garden naturally if not organically. I use rain barrels, french drains and compost everything possible. My small lawn joyfully mingles violets, dandelions, clover and grasses, but what Mother Earth needs is her natural biodiversity back in place, unhindered by the massive assault of chemicals and habitat destruction. Lovely, organic non-native gardens filled with all the new and bigger blooms and leaf colors and special plants from exotic places—that so titillate the senses—may not be helping that much. The beauty that I have dedicated so much of my career toward is not just that of nicely designed compositions of well behaved plants, but of a full rich song comprised of all of the voices that fill a natural environment, from microbes to songbirds and more... and there is so much more I could be doing if I embraced natives more than I have been doing.

I was very heartened when I began reading Douglas Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home*. In it, he eloquently and knowledgeably presents the present dilemma of biodiversity devastation, and gives clear and basically simple information to make a positive change for the future. Basically it involves incorporating as many local natives as possible, from trees to perennials into our landscapes. Natives are important because they are intimately woven into the structure of the local environment in a delicate and brilliant dance of mutual service to all life. Alien plants aren't adapted to this, hence the rub. Tallamy gives great examples of why natives are so valuable in a way that I never realized before, such as native shrubs bearing food during the time a bird needs nutrition to raise it's young rather than later in the season, as many of our common aliens provide.

He talks about why adaptation to aliens can't keep pace with the needs of a native environment. He says, "The important thing to remember is that even if you seem like the only one in all of North America who uses more natives than aliens, wildlife will be better off for your efforts. The effects will be cumulative and probably synergistic, as more and more people join you." He has research data that shows how an alien plant may serve as many as 400 species in its homeland, yet planted as an alien, only serves eight.

The huge importance of insects is dependent on the plants we allow to grow, and the chemicals we use to do so. It behooves us to begin to start orientating our plant choices, practices and design sensibilities to what truly serves nature as well as us.

What inspired me about his message was his conviction that if we gardeners all began to focus on creating as much native habitat as possible, it would start to bridge the wastelands of our urban, suburban and rural areas into greater and greater oasis of natural sustenance for all of life, and ultimately greatly help stabilize the current direction of destruction. In fact, it may be what can turn the tide.

I have begun doing this by steadily replacing alien plants with natives in my gardens. In some areas, I have chosen more showy natives to blend in with the existing perennials. Plants like baptisia, liatris, Joe-Pye weed, milkweeds, alliums, prairie dropseed, Indian grass, rudbeckias, echinaceas, native ephemerals, butterflyweed and so many more are easily found in local nurseries' native section. Mostly, I try to use the native, and sometimes I use a cultivar of a native. In some areas I am steadily shifting to an all native "patch," which would include fuller communities of natives. Trees and shrubs will be replaced with natives more slowly, but steadily.

My yard is small, but the potential is great, and the pleasure is immense. Already I am seeing different birds, insects and butterflies, and I no longer feel I am gardening at cross-purposes with my beloved natural world.

Great examples of native gardens are popping up everywhere, but one of my favorite places is the UW Arboretum's Native Gardens. They have numerous examples of areas dedicated to different conditions and communities, and all of them are like full-bodied symphonies.

As gardeners, it one of the greatest opportunities we could take, to help mother earth rebalance herself, and cultivate the lush joy of a world filled with the full song of nature.

—Tibi Light, Fine Gardening and Design
*Offering consulting, design and installation,
on a limited basis while going back to college(!)*

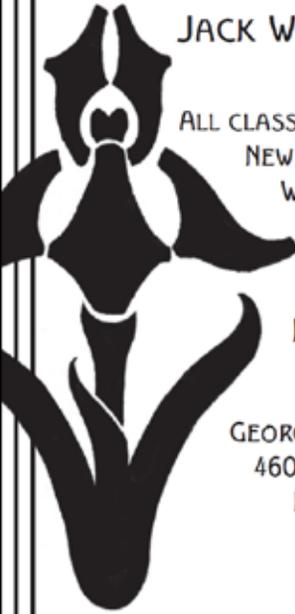
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Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



September 2013 Newsletter

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Do you have a question about your membership? Contact Jane LaFlash at whps05@yahoo.com, 608-243-1208.

..... **Member news, tips, etc.**

Thank you Ed Hasselkus!

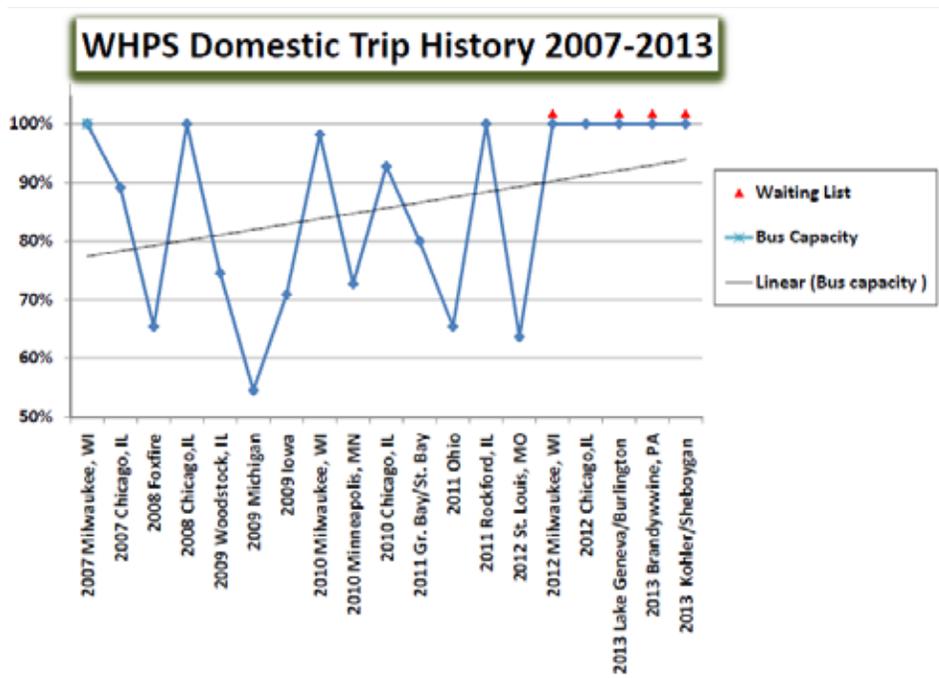
It is with great appreciation and not a small amount of regret that we accept the resignation of Board member Ed Hasselkus.



Ed has been a stalwart since the inception of our organization—extending his vast knowledge of plants, gardens and garden contacts (throughout the world) to our group as a member of the program and trips committees.

Though he is leaving our board, we have been assured that he will remain active with WHPS and will allow us to call upon him for his advice and expertise.

Thank you Ed, for the many years and many fine contributions you have given to our Board!



Visit our website: <http://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.com>