



Friends of Thacher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
January—February 2020 • Vol. 24 No. 1

The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee – An 'In Absentia' Introduction



Photo © Johanna James-Heinz

I would like to introduce you to the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*) – although under unfortunate circumstances, as it is the first bumble bee to be listed as a Federally Endangered species. The Rusty Patched used to have a broad range that spread across the eastern U.S. and upper Midwest all the way to the eastern border of the Dakotas. Today, the range is limited to a few isolated pockets in a few states. We are part of its historical range – as recently as the 1990's.

We humans like to order information in neat packages. It becomes difficult for us to respond when we hear that the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee has disappeared from almost 90 percent of its historic range due to pressures from disease, climate change,

habitat loss, and the widespread overuse of bee-toxic pesticides. It is easy to be over-whelmed and feel like there is nothing we can do.

Au contraire! One of the best things we can do for the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee is to plant native plants – and lots of them! Research has shown that certain native plants are especially beneficial to bees, plants that are known immune system builders as well as plants that are “superfoods” – with nectar rich in amino acids.

Bumble bees are fascinating little, fuzzy creatures. They are far more cold-tolerant than other bees and they have a special ability to pollinate specific types of plants. Did you know that the *only* pollinator for your tomato plants, blueberries, eggplants, cranberries, potatoes - are bumble bees?? Bumble bees, including the Rusty Patched, have a special method of pollination called “buzz pollination”. The bee holds onto the pollen structure and vibrates her flight muscles without moving her wings. This vibration causes the plant to release its electrostatically charged pollen onto the oppositely charged bumble bee's body. And for you music buffs, the vibration the bumble bee makes is at the vibration of “middle C”. How cool is that?!!!!

Our current administration has proposed regulations that only prioritize protection for habitat

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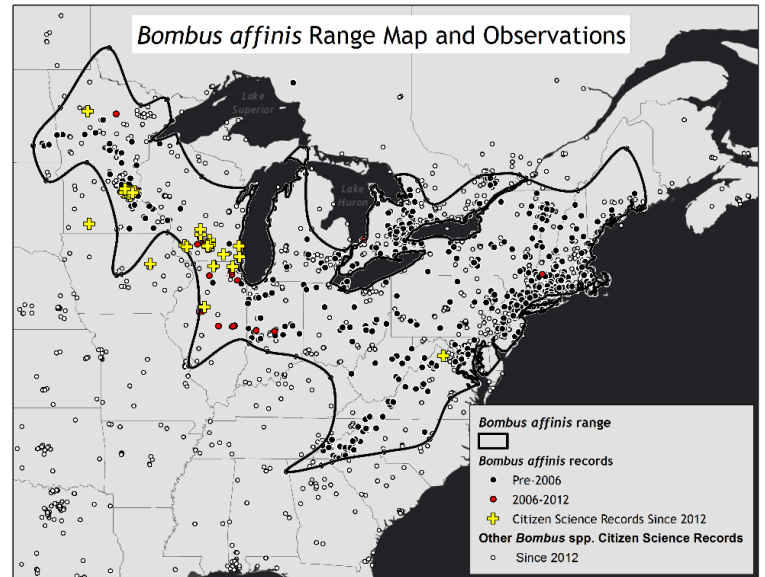
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currently occupied by the species. And since the bee has lost 90% of its former range this is clearly not a winning strategy. It makes it extremely difficult to protect unoccupied habitat that is essential for the bee's recovery, which has been the protocol for endangered species previously.

A native wildflower that requires buzz pollination is the Shooting Star. In support of the effort to bring back the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, this year's annual native plant sale is focused on plants beneficial to these little, furry bundles of wonder. If you would like to pre-order plants to support our buzzing friends, please see the insert for perennials, shrubs and trees, and below for plant kits available for order. Please note that all native plant sale pre-orders are due by February 19th.

Our annual on-site sale will be held at the Thacher Park Overlook on Saturday and Sunday, May 16th and 17th. There will be an even wider selection of plants there and knowledgeable staff will be available to answer your questions.

- by Laurel Tormey Cole



Map retrieved from <https://www.xerces.org/endangered-species/species-profiles/at-risk-invertebrates/bumble-bees/rusty-patched-bumble-bee>

Thacher Nature Center Native Plant Sale Garden Kits

👁️ New for 2020!

Monarch & Butterfly Garden Kit

Moist to Average/Full Sun to Afternoon Sun

\$75 (a \$90.00 value!)

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|
| Rose Milkweed | (3) | <i>Asclepias incarnata</i> |
| Turtlehead | (3) | <i>Chelone glabra</i> |
| Purple Monarda | (3) | <i>Monarda media</i> |
| Slender leaf Mtn. Mint | 👁️ (3) | <i>Pycnanthemum tenuifolium</i> |
| Golden Alexanders | (2) | <i>Zizia aurea</i> |
| Wool Grass | 👁️ (1) | <i>Scirpus cyperinus</i> |

Sorry, no substitutions.

Monarch & Butterfly Garden Kit

Dry to Average/Full Sun to Afternoon Sun

\$75 (a \$90.00 value!)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| Whorled (White) Milkweed | 👁️ (3) | <i>Asclepias verticillata</i> |
| Dotted Horsemint | 👁️ (3) | <i>Monarda punctata</i> |
| Northern Blazing Star | (2) | <i>Liatris scariosa</i> |
| Seaside Goldenrod | 👁️ (3) | <i>Solidago sempervirens</i> |
| Aromatic Aster | 👁️ (3) | <i>Symphotrichum oblongifolium</i> |
| Little Bluestem Grass | 👁️ (1) | <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> |

Sorry, no substitutions.

Semi-Shade & Woodland Garden Kit

Average moisture/Part Shade

\$60.00 (a \$72.00 value!)

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------------------|
| Rue Anemone | 👁️ (2) | <i>Anemonella thalictroides</i> |
| Jack in the Pulpit | (1) | <i>Arisaema triphyllum</i> |
| Dutchman's Breeches | 👁️ (2) | <i>Dicentra cucullaria</i> |
| Wild Blue Phlox | (2) | <i>Phlox divaricata</i> |
| May Apple | 👁️ (2) | <i>Podophyllum peltatum</i> |
| Pennsylvania Violet | 👁️ (2) | <i>Viola pensylvanica</i> |

Sorry, no substitutions.

Songbird Garden Kit

Average moisture/Full Sun to Afternoon Sun

\$50.00 (a \$60.00 value!)

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|
| Columbine | (3) | <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> |
| Wild Senna | (2) | <i>Cassia hebecarpa</i> |
| Brown-eyed Susan | (1) | <i>Rudbeckia triloba</i> |
| Anise-scented goldenrod | (2) | <i>Solidago odora</i> |
| New England Aster | (1) | <i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i> |
| Indian Grass | (1) | <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> |

Sorry, no substitutions.

All plants in quart pots, except Jack in the Pulpit (gallon pot).



Friends of Thacher Park Member Form

Member benefits: Newsletter, Scheduled Events Calendar & 10% Discount at the Nature Center Gift Shop.

Renewal date follows name on address label.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____ Email _____

I'd like to become a member of the Friends of Thacher Park. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

I am renewing my membership. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

- Individual \$20
- Family \$25
- Student \$5
- Supporter \$40
- Corporate \$100
- Benefactor \$100
- Donation \$ _____
- Senior (62) \$5

Please make checks payable to the **Friends of Thacher Park** and send to Bonnie Schaller, 6324 Hawes Rd, Altamont, NY 12009. For more info: bschaller@nycap.rr.com

It has been an exciting and successful year at the Park, Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center and Thacher Visitor Center! From the time the park was cleaned up by many helpful hands during 'I Love My Park Day' to the Holiday Bazaar and Open House in December, things were bustling in the Park.

On the maintenance side, the Park got new culverts and a new road, and the Nature Center new paint. The disc golf course saw some improvements this year, with the 13th hole replaced and new T signs erected, and the mountain bike skills course also had some facelifts. Many thousands visited the Park this year, and over 1,500 climbers enjoyed climbing the Thacher cliffs. The art show in March, and the plant sale in May were both a huge success, as were the many programs offered for young and old (and in between) at both Nature and Visitor Centers. The Nature Center had two terrific interns this year, but lost one of its stalwart and friendly faces, as Megan Mansfield has moved on to a new position. We will miss her!

Winter is a quieter season in the Park, but also a beautiful one, especially with snow on the ground. Many guided hikes, programs and lectures are offered throughout the colder season. Come on up to hike, snow-shoe or cross-country ski, enjoy one of the programs or some quiet time in front of the fire place in the Visitor Center.

The Friends of Thacher wish you a peaceful, healthy and happy New Year, and we hope to see you at the Park in 2020!

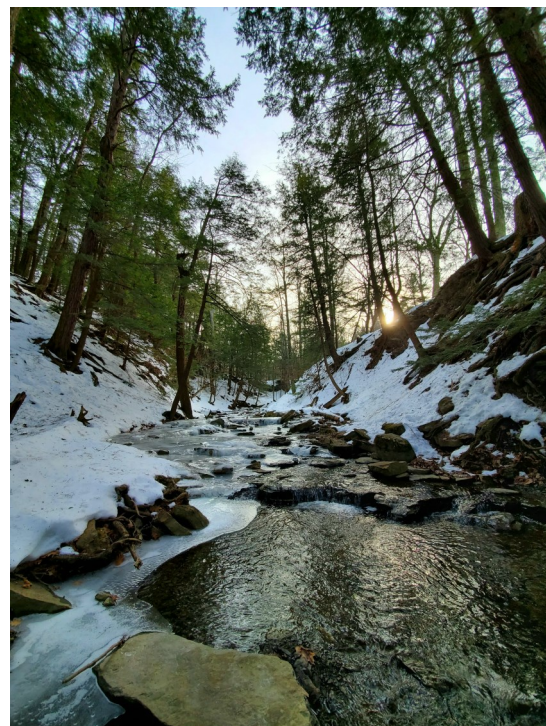


Photo by Hannah Young

Check for updates at www.friendsofthacherpark.org

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As always, call (518) 872-0800 or (518) 872-1237 to verify activity times and dates.

Please feel free to call board members with questions or suggestions.

Many thanks to Laurel Tormey Cole, Brian Horl, Hannah Young and Nancy Engel for their contributions to this newsletter.

Other Trustees

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Want to contribute? Please email me at cgervasi@albany.edu. Christine Gervasi—Editor

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Wednesday, January 15, 2020

Next:

Board Meeting

7:00 pm at Thacher Visitor Center

We are all familiar with the holidays that most of us celebrate: New Year's Eve, 4th of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas etc. My challenge to you for this new year is to choose one of the "natural world" related celebrations. There are several throughout the year, some of which I have written about in previous newsletters. These are often thought of as Pagan or Wiccan celebrations. Unfortunately, these tags make people feel that these celebrations have nothing to do with their world today. I believe that this is far from the truth. All of these are based on times of the year that are either directly or indirectly still important to us today. Most recently was the Winter Solstice (December 21st), a celebration of the days starting to become longer again. Another is Samhain (October 31st), which became our Halloween, which was celebrated as the most important of the four quarterly fire festivals. It was to celebrate the harvest and to honor deceased relatives. Another is the Vernal Equinox on March 20th, a celebration of the rebirth of nature; the birth of wild and domestic animals along with the sprouting of plants. Many cultures even built great sites to celebrate these events, Stonehenge and Chitzen Itzu being

two of these. Many of the monthly full moons were named because of their importance in keeping track of seasons. Examples are the Harvest Moon, the Hunter's Moon or the Cold Moon. They indicated when to plant, when to harvest, when to hunt and when to harvest livestock. Many people give no thought to planting or harvesting, but if "ancient" man did not learn and celebrate these times, where would we be now? So, as you see, these celebrations have a direct impact on today's world. My hope is that some of you will take the time to learn a little more about some of these celebrations and honor them in your own way, and we can become more in tune to nature. And who can say that is a bad thing.

Wishing you all a
Happy and Natural
New Year.

*From the porch,
by Brian Horl*



Photo by Christine Gervasi

As always, you can find a color version of the newsletter at www.friendsofthacherpark.org