

## Butterfiles in the garden: Bring 'em on

There are always those who look at certain gardeners like they have completely lost their minds when they see supposed "weeds" growing in their gardens.

I am one of these people who has been questioned throughout the growing season about a few plants — OK, maybe there were more than a few plants, growing in my garden that a more thoughtful gardener would have ripped out last spring before they even had a chance. However, if you were near my gardens, or for that matter, our farm this past weekend, you would have seen a show that most people only either hear about or dream about.

Yes, I confess, that I allow several 'weeds' to naturalize themselves in my various garden spaces merely for the fact that we love butterflies. Yes, it is true that the milk weed plants stand above many of my plants in one garden especially.

Of course, it is the first garden you see when coming up into our farm yard and is also one of the bigger flower gardens that I have. However, through others pains at wanting to help me out by pulling these 'weeds' out of my garden, usually has been met with stern argument and comment from the younger Masters in what their true purpose is in the garden. Their hard work in defending their right to grow whatever they feel may be necessary to get the end results in the garden was finally seen the past few weeks.

This past weekend, in our yard, especially in the evening, the butterflies have converged on our yard in masses which are hard to describe.

I would not say thousands, which is the young Masters' eventual goal, but I can say easily hundreds were present. And, much to our enjoyment, were also a few Painted Lady butterflies which have this thing in the spring

and fall in which they like to land on people. The young Masters were covered from head to toe in Painted Lady butterflies thinking they made a good roosting spot for the evening.

If you don't know what a Painted Lady looks like, it is also orange and black like the Monarchs that are gracing us with their presence, but much, much smaller and much, much quicker.

We also have several other plants in the garden to help bring in the butterflies. They do like other plants that are sort of similar to the wild flowers that grow around in the area. So, this also helps us to have those kind of numbers to attract Monarchs, in particular. It is also the trees that we have that attracts them.

Of course, like many scientific endeavors, we know that the Monarchs like certain types of maple trees in combination with having available water (we have an old cattle pond near by as well as a bird waterer) and also they like to have pine trees nearby. The researchers don't really understand exactly why this is, but if we were to guess, I would say for cover and protection, since our front yard — from spring until the leaves fall in the fall — is heavily shaded.

We do have many other plants they like that we see them visiting, from the phlox to the annual flowers like the California poppies that are growing this year.

And the young Masters have some of the best zinnias this year — I think they picked out the most fertile spot in the vegetable garden for their flowers this year. All of these help to bring in those beautiful and, yes, helpful, insects that we need for the garden.

It also helps that every late summer we make a butterfly box from an old shoe box. The boys capture a few Monarch caterpillars and watch while they make chrysalis and then hatch into beautiful butterflies.

They release them back into the garden and watch them fly away. It teaches them to be scientists and also to be gentle to some of our most dainty creatures.

*For more information about gardening, you can reach me at 823-4632 or email me at [stephanie@starpoint.net](mailto:stephanie@starpoint.net)*



STEPHANIE  
BETHKE-  
DEJAEGER  
MASTER GARDENER

## New product has a true Greek flavor

■ Marshall-based Ralco Nutrition working with Greek company in production, distribution of performance-enhancing product

By Robert Wolfington III  
[rwolfington@marshall-independent.com](mailto:rwolfington@marshall-independent.com)

Photo by Robert Wolfington  
Dr. Anastasios Tsinas, Ralco Nutrition product specialist and technical director for Echofarm in Greece.



MARSHALL — It's made from a weed grown in Greece that is now serving as a growth enhancer for swine and poultry.

Dr. Anastasios Tsinas, a product specialist for Ralco Nutrition of Marshall and technical director for Echofarm, visited the area recently to discuss the benefits of "Regano" a produce derived from oregano used as a nutrition additive for swine.

Tsinas said Ralco Nutrition, a company based in Marshall, has a deal with the Greek company Ecopharm that produces Regano and distributes it in North America and portions of South America.

Tsinas said the partnership was born in 2003 during an event in Poland.

"I participated in an event in Poland in 2003," said Tsinas. "We had a booth there for our product Regano. A tall guy from Minnesota came in and started discussing the activities in this area.

"He told me afterwards he was already looking for a new product for a natural basis," he added. "A couple months later I came here to Minnesota. It was really cold here, I remember

there being two feet of snow."

Tsinas has taken many trips throughout Minnesota and the Midwest since his trip in 2003.

During his most recent trip, Tsinas said he spoke with many farmers around the area who are warming up to the idea of using the Regano product.

"Initially, it had the normal obstacles we expected to have," said Tsinas. "People really like it, they are very progressive here. We have the results that we can be at least as good as (traditional performance enhancers)."

Tsinas said a ban on most performance-enhancing techniques in Europe opened up opportunities for the Regano product which serves as an alternative.

"In Europe there was a need to have alternative performance enhancers," said Tsinas. "In the United States there isn't a similar ban yet. People are starting to think that it is coming though."

While it is serving as an alternative, Tsinas said the Greek-born product has demonstrated strong results.

"It really makes money for

people," said Tsinas. "I think that's why we have such good acceptance."

All the oregano produced for the product comes from Greece, Tsinas said.

The oregano grown in Greece has properties not found in any other oregano around the world. He said those properties are what makes the Regano product unique.

In order to create a quality product, Tsinas said Ecopharm had to create a process that took what was traditionally grown as a weed in Greece and develop a cultivation process.

Tsinas said the number of farmers in Greece producing Oregano for the company has grown the last few years and the crops are maintained year-round.

Tsinas said he has been happy with the partnership with Ralco in Marshall. He said his company was looking for a smaller company that could handle the Regano product for North America, while at the same time give it the attention he said it deserves.

"We have a good relationship," said Tsinas.

## AG & EXTENSION BRIEFS

### Check in on teens' jobs during school year

By Colleen Gengler  
University of Minnesota Extension

hasn't already been done. What should be saved and what can go for day-to-day wants and needs?

• Check into state and federal

sure to ask the grower. This is one of the advantages of purchasing directly from the farmer. Most will be happy to tell you how it was grown,

Incentives Program (EQIP) is offered through Federal Cost Share. (EQIP) is a voluntary program that offers technical assistance and flat rate payments as

shoot growth and block the replenishment of underground food reserves.

• Treat new seedlings in the spring.

chopper or rotary mower

• A sickle type mower is not recommended

Contact your chemical dealer for guidance in treatments to