

Insects in a Backyard Prairie: Grow It and They Will Come

Day of the Insects
March 2014
Reiman Gardens, Ames

The Setting

- Less than 1/8 acre of a half-acre urban lot, landscaped & planted with over 50 spp. of native mid- & tallgrass plants, some woodland & a few wetlands spp.
- Surrounded by “trashy” woods: hackberry, boxelder, garlic mustard, water hemlock, wild carrot, tree-of-heaven, common transitional natives
- On south-facing slope above the Bill Riley Trail, Union Pacific railroad, Raccoon River, & Water Works Park in Des Moines





Phenology

- Is not feeling the bumps on someone's head to read their personality.
- Also is not the study of the sounds in a language.
- Nor is it study of prison systems.
- It is the study of timing in the life cycles of biota
 - Aldo Leopold



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Those Pesky Dipterans

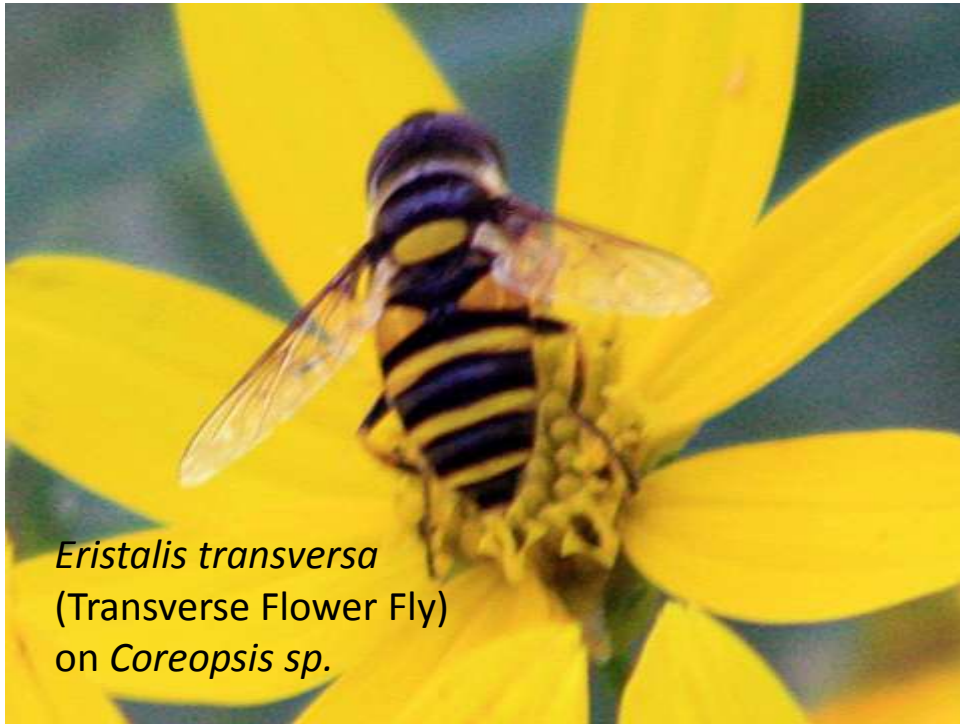
- Most dipteran pollinators seem to be flower or hover flies (Syrphidae),
- With some Tachinidae and other families
- Also, a few not so attracted to flowers, but to other floral resources
- A good nature lesson for children
 - Learn to relax when a hover fly checks you out
 - And when hymenopterans are around
 - Not everything should be swatted



Eristalis arbustorum
on False Boneset
(*Brickellia eupatorioides*)



Eristalis dimidiata
On Heath Aster
(*Symphiotrichum*
ericoides)



Eristalis transversa
(Transverse Flower Fly)
on *Coreopsis* sp.



Eristalis tenax (Drone
Fly) on Aster
(*Symphiotrichum* sp.)



Palpada sp.
on *Coreopsis*
sp.



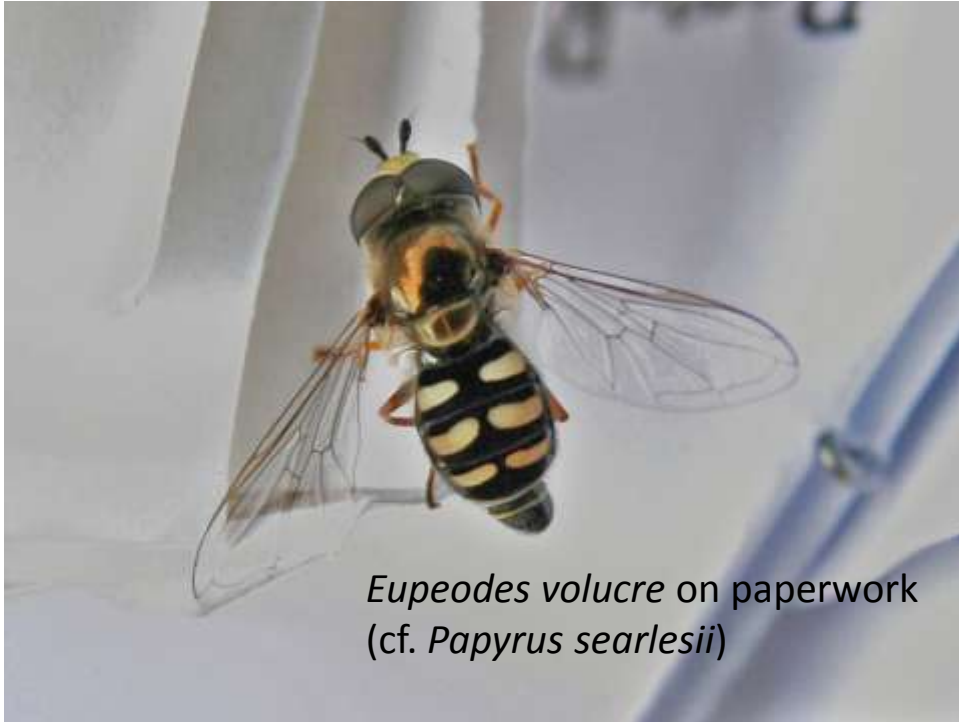
Heliophilus fasciatus on Heath Aster
(*Symphiotrichum ericoides*)



Platycheirus sp.



Allograpta obliqua
on Spotted Joe-Pye
(*Eutrochium maculatum*)



Eupeodes volucre on paperwork
(cf. *Papyrus searlesii*)



Toxomerus glomeratus
on *Coreopsis* sp.



Villa lateralis (Bombyliidae, Bee Flies) on Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)



Condyllostylus sp. (Dolichopodidae, Long-Legged Flies) on ??

Chrysopilus ornatus (Ornate Snipe Fly,
Rhagionidae) on ??



Delphinia picta
(Picture-Winged
Fly, Ulidiidae) on
house siding
(*Masonitus
domesticus*)



- Note on taxonomy:
 - I learned some of my taxonomic nomenclature from *The Roadrunner* and *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*



- The rest has come by osmosis, of which some has left by reverse osmosis



Trichopoda sp.
(Feather-Legged
Flies, Tachinidae)
on Heath Aster
(*Symphiotrichum*
ericoides)



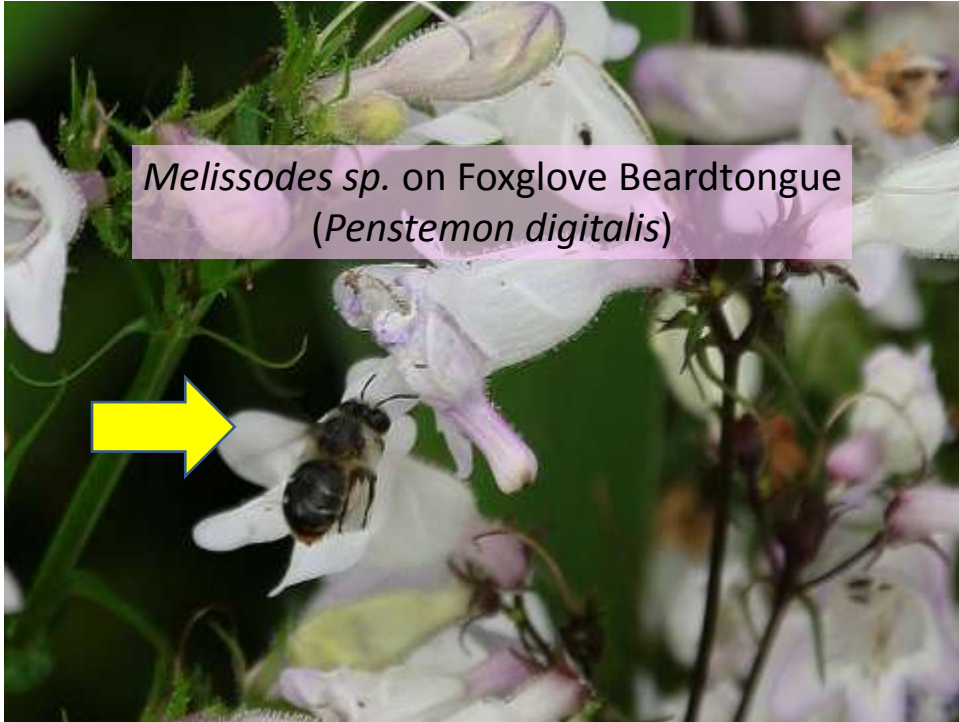
Archytus apicifer (Tachinidae) on
Rattlesnake-Master (*Eryngium*
yuccifolium)





Buccaneers of Buzz and other Hymenopterans

- Apologies to Emily Dickinson
 - “Bees are Black, with Gilt Surcingles –
 - Buccaneers of Buzz.
 - Ride abroad in ostentation
 - And subsist on Fuzz”



Melissodes sp. on Foxglove Beardtongue
(*Penstemon digitalis*)



Andreniid or Mining
Bee on *Coreopsis sp.*





Halictus sp. on
Pycnanthemum sp.



Lasioglossum sp. on
Coreopsis sp.



Anthidium oblongatum
on ??



Megachile sp. on
Asclepias incarnata



Apis mellifera on
Solidago altissima



Apis mellifera on
Asclepias incarnata





Bombus impatiens
exiting Pink
Turtlehead (*Chelone*)



Bombus perplexus
(Confusing Bumble)
on
Monarda fistulosa



Bombus pennsylvanicus
(Eastern Bumble) on
Baptisia sp.



Long-Horned Bee on *Homo sapiens*



Xylocopa sp. (Large Carpenter Bee) on Garden Basil (*Ocimum* sp.)



Ammophila pictipennis
on *Solidago canadensis*



Prionyx sp. on
Solidago canadensis



Sphex ichneumoneus
(Golden Digger Wasp)
on *Asclepias incarnata*





Sphex pensylvanicus
(Great Black Wasp) on
Pycnanthemum sp.



Scolia bicincta
(Double-Banded
Scoliid) on *Solidago*
canadensis



*Myzinum
quinquecinctum* on
Solidago canadensis



*Ancistrocerus
adiabatus* on *Solidago
canadensis*





Polistes fuscatus (Northern Paper Wasp) on Tall Goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*)



Bicyrtes quadrifasciatus (Sand Wasp) on *Brickellia eupatorioides* (False Boneset)



Flutterbys & Skippers

- All species to date are common and easily predicted in a residential area or young prairie restoration
 - Black & Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, Monarchs, Buckeyes, Cabbage Butterflies, Commas, American & Painted Ladies, Red Admirals, Eastern Tailed Blues, Gray Hairstreaks, Viceroys, Pearl Crescents, Orange & Clouded Sulphurs
 - Common Sootywings; Crossline, Fiery, & Least Skippers; & Sachems

