

As the Marketing Director for the Rotary Botanical Gardens (RBG) in Janesville, Wisconsin for the past 8 years I have had the pleasure of working with a wide variety of people. From the more than 100,000 visitors a year or the amazing group of volunteers and supporters to our wonderful staff and board of directors, I am fortunate to interact, on a daily basis, with many wonderful individuals and groups. During those interactions, I am always interested to learn what brings them to Rotary Botanical Gardens and what is it about these 20 acres of botanical splendor that has made an impression on them. With that in mind, I thought it might actually be quite interesting for you, the reader, to hear about this magical place from the viewpoint of a guest.

Recently, I met with Rotary Botanical Gardens volunteer, Marsha Mood, and she agreed to share her perspective with you and me. Marsha volunteers on a regular basis at the Gardens. She shares her time and talents in a variety of ways, including as an official volunteer photographer, which includes snapping stunning pictures of the Gardens and activities and people at various RBG events and occasions. She also contributes a lot of time serving on several different committees, such as the Home Garden Tour and Education Committees. Marsha is one of the Gardens most vocal cheerleaders, sharing her photos and insights on social media and with friends, family and the community. I hope you enjoy my conversation with Marsha.

**Marsha's love of photography is what first drew her Rotary Botanical Gardens.**

Several years ago I picked up a hobby of photography and I thought what better place to take pictures than a beautiful garden. I actually visited for the first time during the month of February when there weren't any flowers, but I found a beautiful evergreen branch and I took a picture of it in the sunlight. I submitted that photo to the Gardens' annual calendar photography contest and it was chosen as a winner to be included in the calendar.

**Her first visit to the Gardens was over 4 years ago and she has not left since.**

My first visit was in February of 2012. After that first visit, I never really left. I'm here all the time, at least once a week except in the wintertime. I spend a lot of time here because every day there is something new blooming, there's something new going on, it's a really vibrant and wonderful place to spend my time. Just being here makes me feel happy and good about the world.

**Ever changing natural beauty brings her back again and again.**

The natural beauty and the very cozy feeling of the Gardens are a big draw for me. Additionally I really like the trees. There are these big cottonwood trees that create a beautiful essence about the place that make it feel very cozy, and each day, believe it or not, there's something different and new. I'll be here on Monday and think that I have seen everything for the week and then I come back on Wednesday and there's something new blooming or I might see a bird that I hadn't seen before. It's lots of fun.

**Sharing in nature with others is very inspiring.**

Often people see me taking photos and want to ask me questions about my camera and then we begin a conversation about where they are from and carry on chatting from there. It's very inspiring to meet and talk with people who also want to share in the beauty of nature. Another great motivator for me is that I keep trying to get better pictures each time. You see a daffodil and you take a picture of it but there's really a lot of different ways to photograph that daffodil.

**People love that there is always something new to enjoy.**

The visitors that I talk with all say it is the most beautiful garden they have ever been to. They also appreciate that there is always something new to enjoy each time they visit. Each year there are different color schemes in the Entrance Garden, a new theme in the Children's Garden and the garden art exhibit really draws people too. I also love seeing kids in the Garden, they really have a lot of fun. My own grandchildren also love visiting Rotary Gardens.

**The Iconic Japanese Bridge and Annual Holiday Light Show are her favorites.**

I love the iconic Japanese bridge. It's always a challenge to me to photograph it in different light, at different times of day and with or without people on it. My favorite event is the Holiday Light

Show held in December. I enjoy it because people are so excited to see the beautiful lights in the Gardens and the model train display. They also really enjoy getting together and attending as a family. I love bringing my own family too.

**The new hummingbird themed art project and live hummingbirds top her list for 2016.**

I'm really looking forward to the Garden Art Exhibit-Flight of the Hummingbirds. There are 27 hummingbirds made from wood that are then embellished by artists. They will be on display in the Gardens, June through September 1, 2016. Each year the artists involved with this project come up with such creative ideas that I can't wait to see the finished projects. I am also excited to see the real live hummingbirds because they are so fun to take pictures of.

**She is grateful for the Rotary Botanical Gardens.**

The Gardens is a great asset to the community and the region. I think it's important to have a place like this for people to go. There's lots of trouble in the world and there's lots of sadness, but when you come to a place that's 20 acres of beauty like RBG, you forget about all of that and it inspires you and keeps you going. We also need our children to know about nature and how important it is. We are so fortunate to have this place that is so gorgeous. The whole staff, the volunteers and everybody that's here is so friendly and nice, and they really do a wonderful job. I am very grateful for Rotary Botanical Gardens.