



Wisteria tops our lists of plants that stump gardeners. If yours refuses to bloom, take a look at page 4.

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns
Issue 91, May 1, 2010

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Clethra is summersweet, but spring slow

A **summersweet** (*Clethra alnifolia*) I planted a few years ago isn't doing much this spring. It's **barely budded out**, even though it was doing so well last year. Is it dead? - L.D. -

Don't give up on it, L.D. If it's like other summersweet shrubs we've seen it's simply keeping to its own schedule. Although it would be in step with the overall plant community in a normal year, it looks slow when early warmth coaxes others into precocious growth.

Beech trees (*Fagus* species), rose of sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*), sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*), Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*), *Ginkgo*, *Catalpa* trees and fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*) are others we've noticed that seem to resist being drawn out early. When we see a slow starter we check the twigs for flexibility -- dead wood is brittle -- and pinch the leaf buds to determine if they died and shriveled or are still moist and simply waiting.

We also look around at others of the same species. If they are similarly delayed, we stop fretting about our charge.



Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*) is a North American native of moist, partly shaded places. It blooms a few weeks after the summer solstice. Its flowers are not overly showy but its spicy sweet scent carries when a breeze blows and in fall the 8' shrub stands out as it glows a warm gold.

Plants' vernal alarm clocks

Most hardy plants set a clock each fall and don't resume growth the next spring until that bell has sounded. For many, the wake-up call comes only after the plant has registered about 1,000 hours below 45°F. (There are low-chill fruit tree varieties, selected for more dependable production in southern orchards. These might require only a few hundred hours of cold.) For many plants, the alarm clock is a simple, single-phase device, so the plant begins growth in the first protracted warm spell after its internal chill meter has finished counting down.

Other plants have more complex dormancies and won't bud out in a spring warm-up until their internal cold meter reads zero *and* additional inhibitors have exhausted their influence. Day length matters to some of these, so that shoots won't push out from under protective buds while days are still short. The plant held back this way may miss out on some of the growing season in an early year but is more certain to avoid most late spring frost damage.

Take time to smell the old roses, then clip to rejuvenate

I volunteer in a garden in Washington Township, Michigan, that has some **old roses** which I am not familiar with and therefore I am afraid to do too much pruning. I know I am not the only one who has a **fear of pruning** roses. I would like to have you, or if you someone who is an expert with roses, come out and give a group some hands-on lessons. – D.C. –

We prune shrub roses before they begin growth, D.C. We prune them again shortly after their main bloom period. If a shrub's well into spring growth it's probably best to hold off pruning until new wood ripens. That will be **after the first bloom -- clip back bloomed-out branches**. You might **also do some rejuvenation pruning** at that time, depending on the condition of the shrub.

To rejuvenate is to cut at ground level to remove one or more old canes from each shrub. This spurs development of new canes, insuring that the shrub always has some young, especially vigorous canes as well as dependable-blooming, middle-aged wood.

Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII of France, had such an aversion to roses that she could not stand seeing one even in a painting.

Allen Lacy,
in *The Inviting Garden*

A gardener may be hesitant to prune at the start of a relationship with shrub roses. Eventually, most people become more aggressive once they realize the true nature of these plants -- big, vigorous and suckering. The shrubs shown below, though short, each cover a six foot circle and would take more if allowed.



We love to do hands-on coaching but our volunteer gardening time is pretty much committed for the year. Perhaps a rosarian in this network will contact us about coaching you in your garden as a volunteer. If so, we'll put you in touch. Also, watch our list of talks and workshops for upcoming *Garden By Janet* sessions at the Detroit zoo. If Mother Nature cooperates, we'll be pruning old roses there on June 5 or July 23.

Where we go to *Garden by Janet*

Sometimes we are asked "Can you come do one of your workshops in my garden?" It's a possibility. At these sessions:

- Someone pays for Janet's time, or she's on a site where she volunteers regularly. Although we love to share what we know, we need to eat and pay our bills.
- Our client knows our work well enough to allow us free rein, even to experiment.
- Our client allows strangers on site and trusts our supervision if they pitch in.
- We know the site and plant history enough to explain how that affects the work's "what" and "why."
- We've determined that the plants and site will serve as clear examples.
- We know from questions we've received that the work is of common interest.
- With rare exception, the site's visible from a public way so students can drive by to keep track of "what happens next."

Upcoming *Garden by Janet* sessions are listed on page 15 and explained on pages 15 & 16

Consider Preen when *seedling weeds* get out of hand

What do you think about Preen? Is it a good idea, or am I wasting energy and money, plus adding another chemical to my yard?

I also seem to remember reading that annuals and mulch are not compatible. Is that correct? Thanks for taking time for all of us during a busy season. – B. R. –

Preen and other pre-emergent weed killers are a waste of money if you have an established garden in good order and use mulch, B.R. If you have a **new garden** or you're **reclaiming an older bed** from a year or so of neglect, a **pre-emergent can be helpful for a year or two**. It can build up to harmful levels in soil if used **year after year**. **Used in excess** it can float in rain or irrigation water and accumulate in low spots. In either case it **can then cause trouble** for established plants, including yellowing, reduced growth and dieback.

Pre-emergent herbicides: *Seed control*

Preen and similar products kill seedlings as they begin to grow and have no significant effect on weeds beyond that point. If you are battling that gol-durned tiny-leaf, thick-mat chickweed or annoyed by yellow flowered tall rocket, then spring-applied pre-emergents are useless. That's because both those weeds are so-called "winter weeds" that germinate in the fall or during a winter thaw. They were up before the pre-emergent went down, and so they stay up.

As for established perennial weeds such as thistle, dandelions and bindweed, Preen won't affect them as they resume their growth this spring.

We **don't mulch annual flowers or vegetables** except in rare circumstances and then with grass clips, cocoa hulls, clean compost or coffee grounds -- something high in nitrogen as opposed to bark or wood. Most botanical gardens do the same. We've seen that annuals surrounded by wood- or bark mulch grow at only half the rate of the same plants without mulch.

We're glad to help, any time. During the spring we do sometimes fall behind in our email and even in getting this newsletter together, but we have and will keep plugging away. We always catch up. We also always appreciate all the patience and good will there is in this network.

Wisteria's a bloomin' mystery

I have a *Wisteria* tree that we purchased about 6 years ago. It has grown quite well and my husband built an arbor for it to grow and wrap over but I have not been able to get it to bloom. Lots of foliage comes and it seems to grow well but with the fertilizer I researched and gave it – still no blooms. I have read that it sometimes takes over 7 years to bloom. Do you have any insight or suggestions? – Annette –





It can take *Wisteria* 6 or 7 years to go from seed to bloom, Annette. Not so for a good sized plant purchased from a garden center, which should be able to bloom right away or the next year.

Trouble is, *Wisteria* must ripen its wood in a **horizontal position in sun**. Only then will it get the signals it needs to form flower buds. When it wraps around itself, forms new wood in a vertical position, and / or shades its new wood with its own new foliage, it "thinks" it has not yet reached the top of the forest tree it's growing on. (In the wild, this plant is a tree-topping 70-foot vine). So long as it's in climbing mode, it focuses on creating leafy, far-reaching branches rather than flower buds.

Left: Perhaps the most common of all garden complaints we hear is: "We've seen such pretty *Wisteria*! So we planted one, which grows great guns but never blooms." Look at the blooming *Wisteria* photos on page 1, page 4 and here, and notice the lack of leafy branches and the horizontal orientation of these beauties. Even the free-standing plant on page 4 has mainly horizontal limbs. Both factors are key to promoting flowers.

Looking at your photos (right, and on the next page), we figure you have less pruning to do than some *Wisteria* owners. If your vine's in a sunny location, it could have flowers next spring **if you cut it back hard now and clip it again in July**.

Right now, elect a few of the heftiest horizontally-oriented main limbs as "keepers." Cut out the others. If a vine does not yet have any horizontal limbs, bend some vertical canes 90 degrees and tie them in place. Then shorten all side branches on each keeper, to leave just one bud per side branch. The vines that look most spectacular in bloom start each spring with nothing but stubbed side branches.



Above, right: Cut *Wisteria* in early spring to shorten side branches so each is a one-bud stub. The arrow marks one place to cut. Do this regularly, and keep the vine from becoming so dense that it blocks sun from reaching those stubs, and flower buds will form at the base of that stub to bloom the next year. Photo ©2009 Annette Thompsett

In midsummer, shear across the top of the arbor to remove all excess leafy growth -- that whippy new stuff above the main limbs. Get it out of the way so sun will reach the stubbed branch bases.



Left: Imagine Annette's vine in leaf in July. All that foliage is shading the ripening wood and potential flower bud sites. So in midsummer, clip away everything above the orange line to let the light promote budset. Photo ©2009 Annette Thompsett

For more on pruning *Wisteria*, refer to *What's Coming Up* #8 on our collected works CD, *Asking About Asters*. (For CD ordering information see pages 18 & 19.)

Expect pine sawflies and plant bugs as *Wisteria* blooms

The same seasonal clocks that govern plants, guide insect development. So when you catch one of your garden foes at a stage of its life when you can act against it before it has done much damage, look around at what's flowering nearby. Use that plant's bloom as an annual pest alert.

For us, *Wisteria* blooming means we should look for the first wave of four-lined plant bugs, red-orange scuttling nymphs that become tennis-ball green, dark-striped beetle-y critters. They drive us crazy with their ugly pock-marking of various plants' new foliage. Every one we kill at *Wisteria* bloom time means dozens less later in the year.

The sight of *Wisteria* flowers also prompts us to look for pine sawflies in their first stages, when they have not yet done much damage and we can use plain old water in a hard spray to knock them to the ground beneath the pine. Could they return? It's a long shot -- even if they find their way back up, they must run the gauntlet through a crowd of hungry predators along the way.

Ginkgo fruits are a mixed blessing

Is there any way to **prevent a *Ginkgo* tree from flowering and producing fruit?** I have a huge *Ginkgo* tree next to my new patio and as the fruit dropped they left black stains all over the patio. I wondered if there was something that could be put on the soil, taken up by the tree and prevent flowering. – S.S. –

Some people don't realize that a *Ginkgo* is a fruit tree. (See the apricot-colored, gumball-sized fruits hiding among those fan shaped leaves?)

Almost any tree can be stopped from fruiting, S.S., or at least convinced to reduce its crop. What it takes is **a plant growth regulator applied at just the right time**. These growth regulators are also called plant hormones, although they're synthetic versions of the real thing.

Orchardists use such chemicals to thin a tree's fruit. Applied shortly after flowers are fertilized (at petal fall or about two weeks after peak bloom) it induces some of the fruit to drop off -- a job once done by hand is accomplished chemically. Those who manage fruit trees used ornamentally have learned that by varying the timing and amount of hormone applied -- variations that have to be worked out for each tree species -- it is possible to knock off pretty much all of the fruit.

Trouble is, this product has to be sprayed onto the tree while it's at the right stage of bloom. Applied at the wrong time, it can have almost exactly the opposite effect -- it can cause the tree to set more than its usual amount of fruit.

Think your tree's messy? Count your blessings!

Many gardeners dream about shutting down fruit production on crabapples, cherries, mulberries, oaks and other trees positioned to drop their crop onto walkways and patios. People who live under a female *Ginkgo* tree have been known to say, "Ha! you think you have trouble? Stains are the least of our worries. Come over in fall some time and *smell* our *Ginkgo* tree's fruit! Phew-wee, it's like puke and dog doo mixed together!"



It's pretty tough to watch a *Ginkgo* to know when the flowers are in the right stage. Who even notices the flowers? Also, since *Ginkgos* don't generally begin flowering until they're about 20 years old and we grow them as foot-a-year shade trees, we'd probably need binoculars to keep tabs on the bloom sequence. Then, it would take high power spray equipment to get the thinning chemical onto all the flowers. So, almost certainly you'd have to hire someone to apply the hormone, and there's the rub. The logistics of having a tree care

firm there at the right time is even tougher than watching the flowers in the first place.

It would be nice if we could just pour something on the soil to sterilize the tree but that doesn't allow for enough control of timing or insure thorough coverage.

So, theoretically, you could stop a *Ginkgo*'s fruiting. **Practically, it's not likely.**

When separate sexes are a great thing

Some plant species are dioecious, meaning that all the flowers on a given plant have either male, pollen-bearing parts or female, fruiting/seed-producing parts but not both. We refer to members of a dioecious species such as holly, bittersweet and ash as male or female, as in "that's a male bittersweet vine" or "that's a seedless male ash tree."

Ginkgo is a dioecious species. So those who want the trees for shade but not fruit can choose to grow male clones such as 'Fallgold' and 'Princeton Sentry.' We put our faith in the nursery when we do this, since such trees are made from cuttings of a known male tree. If a cutting from a female tree got into the mix the mistake might not be apparent for a couple of decades, when the tree reaches maturity.

From lemons, lemonade. From stinky ginkgo fruit, a wonder drug.

A person who lives in the shade of a female *Ginkgo* tree walks very carefully in fall to avoid stepping on the decaying fruit, so they won't track the smelly stuff into house or car. That person might think it's a mistake if they come across a tree catalog that offers dozens of *female* clones of this species.

Yet *Ginkgo* orchards are money makers because the fruit yields extracts highly prized as memory enhancers. So varieties have been selected to make the grower's job simpler: dwarf forms and plants with wide-spread limbs for easy picking, larger- and smaller fruited types, early- and late-bearing trees, etc.

Stumper: Why animals love *your* garden

Some problems are stumpers. We can't solve them, only share the pain and commiserate.

For instance, has a neighbor ever said, "Really? I never see those in my yard" when you touch on an animal problem that's driving you wild? Or perhaps a neighbor reports complete, season-long success after a single application of a repellent -- the same repellent animals have been ignoring in your yard, despite repeated applications.

This may be one of those inescapable facts: That birds, rabbits, squirrels, groundhogs and deer do single out the yard with a garden. That may be because a garden provides more diversity than simple tree-dotted lawn, and thus offers more in terms of shelter. Its attraction as a better salad bar is almost certainly another factor.

As for animals' tolerating a repellent in your yard that shoo'd them out of others', that may be linked to larger size and greater lushness of your garden compared to neighbors' digs. So say the writers of *Ecology & Field Biology*: Abundance of a food source is the top draw for a hungry

animal. This is true even when the same plants occur on both sides of the property lines, even if the less garden-like area is free of foul smelling or bitter tasting repellents, and even if there's the chance the animal may catch a whiff or a mouthful of repellent on your side of the property line. Hungry animals faced with those choices accept more risk for the chance at a bigger feast.

Darn!

Scrabbling in the garden: A trug for gathering ramets and etiolated culms

We gardeners earn admiring murmurs when we display our garden's produce in vases and on plates. Why don't we stir up a bit of that admiration by tossing a nifty horticultural term or two on the table during the next Scrabble game? For instance:

Trug: noun; (rhymes with dug); a coarse basket made of strips of wood and used especially for carrying fruit, vegetables or flowers. *Grab a **trug** off the hook in the shed, and let's go load it up with cut flowers for the party.*

Ramet: noun; RAY met; an individual member of a clone; also, an underground root system that gives rise to large, suckering colonies. *Digging out a tree of heaven shoot that suddenly appears in the back of a garden often turns into a big job since such a tree is often a **ramet**, linked underground to dozens of others.*

Ortet: noun; the original individual that gives rise to a ramet. *All too often the **ortet** that spawns an invasive colony is a plant we introduced ourselves, before we were aware of its running-root nature.*

Culm: noun; KUHLM; stem of a grass. *If an ornamental grass gets ahead of you in spring and grows up new but tangled in its own foliage from the previous year, the simplest fix is to raze all the **culms**, new and old. Like mown lawn, the grass grows back, and soon.*

Etiolation: noun; ee tee oh LAY shun; growth that occurs in too little light, pale, stretched, lacking vigor; can be applied to people. *If you lift up a weed mat you may find **etiolation** -- stems of bindweed, thistle and other weeds, temporarily squelched by the landscape fabric but ready to develop greenery and build strength as soon as they chance to reach light.*



This week in Janet's garden

Grow with me! This week I will:

Ask a few old **Hyacinthus bulbs** to make more of themselves.

Hyacinth is a species that does not readily **produce daughter bulbs**. The one at right is 20 years old, blooms every year but has remained a single bulb.

To encourage it to change its ways, I **nick the basal plate** -- the bulb's tough, flat bottom where the flowering stem plus the leaves that make up the bulb connect to the roots.



By injuring the basal plate's edge in several places and then re-planting the bulb, I encourage the formation of meristem tissue -- callus -- at the point of injury. In the moist darkness, those tissues will be most likely to produce a small, separate bulb. My single *Hyacinthus* will finally become three or four.

Left: I've cut a "v" from the edge of this *Hyacinthus* basal plate. I'll cut two more, then replant the bulb. Next year, when I see several sets of foliage emerge in that spot, I know I can dig the bulb and split it to reap several clones.

Admire the violets. Weeds though they are, they are also beautiful flowers.

Just when you thought that "natural" meant safe

Plants are chemical factories. Sometimes we don't recognize their power until we absorb, ingest or inhale their compounds. If you are handling a plant that's new to you, you should treat it with as much care as you would a chemical cleaning agent or pesticide.



(The) scent of that violet had injurious effect on the voice... of the celebrated singer Mari Sass, who was unable to sing a note after smelling a bunch of Parma violets.

-Roy Genders, in *Scented Flora of the World* -

Resist the urge to start planting in beds smothered just since last fall. They may look clean and ready, but if the bed wasn't already being smothered by September 1 last year, it's unlikely that the vegetation beneath the newspaper and mulch is dead. A look under that smothering layer will probably reveal stems that are etiolated and pressed flat on the ground but still alive.

Given light, such as at the edges of planting holes, they will green up and quickly re-fuel their root -- I'd be back at "go" with that bed.

If something really must be set ahead of schedule into a bed that's being smothered, bare the ground and remove the dying sod or vegetation in a circle three times as wide as the pot or root ball being planted. Then mulch well around the new plant and keep an eye on that circle between it and the smothered ground for the appearance of any questing, undesirable shoots.

Fertilize the heavy feeders and exotics in my gardens. Earlier this spring I fertilized the entire bed with slow-release products. Now the fast-growing, huge-flowered cultivars and maladapted species can use a bit more. I usually apply it in solution for quick uptake: Ironite liquid or one of the water-soluble powders that contains micronutrients for rhododendrons, azaleas and other acid-soil lovers in an alkaline bed; fish emulsion or compost tea for a peony, *Delphinium*, *Clematis* or rose.

Green thumbs up to taking the weeds you pull completely out of the garden, if they have any flowers on them. As a cut flower can remain alive in a vase, so can a plucked weed flower continue into seed production using only the water already in its cells or moisture drawn in as it lays on damp ground. Put flowering weeds into a hot compost so you don't have to deal with their next generation.

Green thumbs down to letting a vine slip between a gap in a fence when you are first training it. Those first shoots will become the trunk, may be comparable to a human arm or leg in both girth and vulnerability. At full size they can be girdled by the boards, wire, or posts. What a shame, that we didn't notice early on that our climbing *Hydrangea* had worked its way between the metal post and the edge of the chain link section! It's mature now, and a great beauty, but we know it will soon die back and we'll have to start over with a new shoot.

The courageous pruner: Lovely, mystifying *Clematis*

'Tis the season for questions from those unsure whether to prune their *Clematis* vines and wondering what difference it will make if they do. We wrote out what we do in our pruning guide (issue #86) so we won't repeat that. Instead, here are photos to help you with your own large flowered, repeat blooming hybrid such as 'Nelly Moser' or 'Henryii.'

Here's a large-flowered *Clematis* vine, a sorry heap three weeks ago, having slipped off its supports during winter. No worries, since we cut it back each spring anyway to



keep the plant neat, with plenty of vigorous new wood coming. We don't cut it down completely since it is one of the hybrids that will bloom on shoots from old wood as well as new. The shoots from old wood bloom first, and newer stems flower later.

Right: Here it is, with about half its stems removed (we target old, weak and damaged canes for removal, snipping them right to the ground). The chosen older stems have been shortened to strong wood, then guided back to the supporting hooks. (White clothing hangers cut and formed to clip over the wall's stone cap.)

Three weeks later, the vine's produced three new stems from its base and a number of side branches from the old wood. Those extensions of the old wood are already developing flower buds. We look in on this plant frequently to coax the new growth along the lines we want.

Remember: be a courageous pruner. What we did several weeks ago, you can still do now. As you approach something that looks like the heap in the first picture sprouting green in all directions, clippers in hand, don't think about the flower buds you're cutting off but the neater, stronger vine you'll have after the cut.



The 45mph garden: Two-tone flowering trees

You can put a gardener behind the wheel but you can't take the flowers out of his eyes. Look at what's catching driver's eyes and raising questions this spring: Two-tone flowering trees.



Left: Many trees, including most crabapples and flowering cherries, are produced by grafting wood from the desired tree (the scion) onto the roots of a faster-growing relative (the rootstock). If suckers sprout from the roots or the trunk below the graft union and are allowed to grow, as here, they will show their genetic individuality in different bloom color, leaf form, fruit or other characteristics. This crabapple is a pink-flowered scion grafted to a white-blooming rootstock.

Below: The arrow marks the trunk of the original, pink-flowered crabapple. All the other trunks began as suckers from the roots, and are now beginning to dominate. In time, most suckers over-grow and shade out the rest of the grafted plant.



Pruning is the practice of cutting out parts of plants and is carried out by gardeners for specific purposes... Considerations of space and personal taste may also have influence, and woody plants in general are remarkably tolerant of various pruning activity.

From The New Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening -

A sucker from the straight trunk of this weeping cherry is a stand-out for its verticality. In its third year now, it will eventually come of age and bloom, probably with white flowers distinct from the pink of than the weeping tree's branches.



Whenever you notice a sucker on a grafted tree (upper arrows in these two photos), trace it to its point of origin (lower arrows in both photos). Then remove it entirely.



Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

The gardener's trainer. For over twenty years Janet Macunovich has been helping gardeners grow through her classes, books and other publications. She shares what she learns in attending classes herself at educational institutions all over the country, reading, participating in professional symposia, and applying it all in her own and client's gardens.

Horticultural photographer Steven Nikkila was a hobbyist with a great eye who went back to college for a photography degree once he ushered his own children into grade school. Needing an elective one semester and thinking to bring home good information for his wife's gardening business, he took a class in ornamental horticulture and found himself hooked. Soon the leaps and bounds he'd been recording as his children grew had rivals in files of leaf and ground. He went on to earn a degree in horticulture, while illustrating his wife's books and lending a hand digging gardens. He calls it, "A great combination," and says, "I love this job almost as much as the best one I ever had -- raising my kids."

Email questions to Janet or Steven at JMaxGarden@aol.com or call 248-681-7850.

Where to catch Janet, Steven and friends* in-person:

*See May 22 and "Invite Janet or Steven" on page 16.

Monday, May 10, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., *Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools!*. Spring work in this garden in **Wakefield, Massachusetts**, 30 minutes north of Boston, includes training a young wisteria and recalcitrant climbing hydrangea, dividing ornamental grasses, and continuing the development of an alternative lawn. Want to come watch and learn, or learn by doing? Email or call Janet (JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850) to reserve a spot and learn the location. Include your phone number in any message so we can stay in close touch in case of weather-related changes. This is a limited-space workshop.

Friday, May 14, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m., *Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools*. At the **Detroit Zoo**, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance to volunteer at the zoo in exchange for hands-on instruction in garden design, planning and problem diagnosis. To reserve a place in this limited-space session and learn how to join Janet at the zoo, email JMaxGarden@aol.com by May 10 with the subject line "Help at the zoo."

Saturday, May 15, 8:00 a.m. - noon, *Garden by Janet - Featuring Steven! Bring your gloves and tools*. At the **Detroit Zoo**, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance to volunteer at the zoo in exchange for Steven's hands-on instruction in planting, mulching and trouble-shooting. Steven always makes time to shoot some photos, too. To reserve a place in this limited-space session and learn how to join Steven at the zoo, email mstgarden@yahoo.com by May 11 with the subject line "Help at the zoo."

Saturday, May 15, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m., in **Northville, Michigan**, Janet helps **Gardenviews** store celebrate its new "digs." Those are a new address (117 E. Main Street) *plus* new offerings -- the unique, forged spades and forks that Janet's been using for decades and never before been able to buy locally. Janet's topic for the day is *Design Ideas: Favorite Before-After*s. This is a walk through time as well as beautiful spaces to give you ideas, laughs, hopes and consolation in your own gardening efforts Free, but call Gardenviews to reserve a seat, 248-380-8881.

Saturday, May 22, 11:00 a.m. to noon: Janet's in **Oak Park, Michigan** at Four Seasons Garden Center to suggest *Great Plants and Combinations*. This is a look at specific trees, shrubs and perennials that work especially well together, and how to develop your own winning combinations. Settle in after this presentation for *Herbs in the Garden* by Janet and Steven's friend, designer and educator Pamela Palechek (more about Pamela on page 16). \$5 donation (goes to forgotten Harvest); walk-ins welcome but seating is limited so call 248-543-4400 to reserve a seat.

Other dates and events coming up:

May 19: Janet's in **Detroit, MI** at the Indian Village Men's Garden Club meeting..

May 29: Steven's in **Oak Park, MI** at Four Seasons Garden Center

June 1: Janet's in **Bloomfield Hills, MI** for a *Garden By Janet* wetland native plant workshop

June 2: Janet's in **Birmingham, MI** for a *Garden By Janet* renovated-landscape workshop

June 5: Janet's at the **Detroit Zoo, MI** for a *Garden by Janet* workshop

June 26: Janet & Steven at **Marquette, MI**'s annual Beautification Extravaganza

And even more, throughout summer. Details will be posted here soon. If you need information, email JMaxGarden@aol.com.

Invite Janet or Steven or their expert friends to your club or community.

We go where we're invited! That's taken us all over the country and then some over the past 20 years. We address many topics, drawing from our list of **100+ talks**. We also continue **to meet groups' needs** and expand our horizons by developing new material or "hybridizing" from what we already have.

So, whether it's...

- a **how-to lesson for a garden club**
- a **hands-on workshop** at your site, or
- a **multi-part class** for a small group,

...we're game!

We can also connect you to one or a whole line-up of other experts who know how to explain how-to. So give us a **call or send an email** to make a date, request our list of classes and talks or get a referral. **JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850**. Our calendars fill about a year in advance for spring weekends, and six months ahead for most other weekends and evenings. So give us some lead time. Then we can meet you in *your* garden.

Steven Nikkila (more on page 17) and Janet Macunovich have been digging, shooting and teaching how-to as a team for 22 years. They began producing conferences in the early '90s and ran a gardening school from 1995 through 2008, featuring experts who know their stuff in the garden as well as how to get their messages across in front of an audience. Janet and Steven are glad to help you themselves for presentations but also pleased to connect you to experts they know or send you their list of people, topics and contact information. Designer Pamela Palechek (above, with Janet collecting ideas at Ball Seed's display gardens), is an expert friend who has been a key player in Janet and Steven's educational efforts for 20 years. Palechek designs landscapes and gardens through her business, Petal Pushers. She's a gifted communicator who helped develop the curriculum for Janet and Steven's school, then served as one of its senior instructors, teaching all aspects of gardening from soil preparation to bringing the flavor of French Riviera to gardens in the Midwest U.S. Email JMaxGarden@aol.com or call 248-681-7850 for a speaker/topic list or to set up a talk, workshop or class.



About attending *Garden by Janet* sessions:

We're let-me-see, hands-on people. That's how we learn best. From time to time there are *Garden by Janet* sessions listed here to afford you that kind of chance to grow. You visit us where we're working to either watch or work with Janet. Generally, there is no charge and we're in one of two kinds of locations:

- 1) At the **gardens we tend through our business, Perennial Favorites**: Our clients understand our enthusiasm for teaching. Some open their gardens to small groups who want to see and practice "how to." When the work we're scheduled to do may be of interest to you, we invite you in.

2) In the **Detroit Zoo, Adopt-A-Garden** program where we're 22-year veterans. Many people have worked with us there, some for a day and others for years. We have fun, we learn, we accomplish much. You can check out this program by coming in as my student on a temporary pass. **To join Janet at the Zoo**, email mstgarden@yahoo.com with the subject line of your email "Help at zoo."

Time to garden your walls...

Steven's decorated many walls with great garden images. He can help you do the same with photos that capture garden beauty and stories you love.



Any of Steven's images from *What's Coming Up*, such as these pumpkins and mums, can be made just for your wall. Or you can describe a flower or type of scene you'd like.

If you have an image in mind, you can describe it, then Steven will assemble a customized photo sampler for you. Email us at JMaxGarden@aol.com for details, to request a sampler or to place an order.

There is so much clear detail in these images that they can be enlarged to several feet square and still be crystal clear. So prices depend on your choices in format and size. For example:

*Janet's favorite: "I can change our display by just rolling up one photo tapestry and unrolling another."

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Bonus on this CD: Steven Nikkila's Daydream Screen Saver, 74 of his most vivid works from gardens and nature.

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Janet's complete digital library New for 2010

Set of two CDs: *Asking About Asters* and *Potting Up Perennials*. \$30.00



Janet and Steven give you: Trees. New for 2010*

A choice collection of Janet and Steven's advice for tree selection, planting and care. Each article made its debut in *Michigan Gardener* magazine and has been on hold since, awaiting completion of its fellows until this comprehensive compilation became possible. Topics include: Selecting trees; fall color; what's happening to ash trees; replacing a big tree; descriptions, lists and photos of great trees; why starting small is a good idea when planting; planting how-to, why's and why not's; staking, watering and fertilizing; mulching; rescuing a tree from the lawn; preventing construction damage; pruning to keep trees and shrubs small; removing suckers; detecting girdling roots; and dealing with maple tar spot and lecanium scale.

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New for 2010* Janet and Steven give you: Landscape Ideas.

Janet and Steven's favorite articles on landscape design and renovation: Designing with foliage color; covering up after the bulb season; doubling up perennials for 3-season color; shady solutions; using usual plants in unusual ways; designing hypo-allergenic gardens; Murphy's Laws applied to gardens; renovation how-to; fragrant plants and designs; attracting wildlife; rockwork; invasive plants; discovering a site's hidden assets; using herbs in a landscape; and how to cheat to improve a garden quickly. These articles appeared first in *Michigan Gardener* magazine individually between 1999 and 2010. Now they're collected in this set for your design library.

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Vital how-to for tending a garden, from Janet and Steven's favorite articles on: bed preparation; soil testing; making a weed-free bed; spring start-up; improving hard-packed soil; fertilizing; watering; cutting back and deadheading; repairing irrigation; drought-tolerant plants; sharpening tools; tweaking in summer; staking; and the art of fall garden clean up. Items in this collection were selected from among Janet and Steven's ten years of *Michigan Gardener* articles. Each made its debut in that magazine, waited for its companion pieces and now they all join your library in this more durable and comprehensive form.

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