

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich answers your growing concerns
Issue 35, April 4, 2009



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I love the *What's Coming Up* network! It connects me to you whose questions prompt me to stay in close touch with great growers like Burdette Chapman of Swallow's Nest Farm. Here we are in her home in northern Michigan this summer, where I helped tend her field of cutting and drying flowers. In this issue, advice from Burdette's 60 years of experience growing and crafting gorgeous arrangements. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Gardener supplies everlasting flowers -- perfect for a wedding

Hi Janet,
I volunteered to raise **flowers to dry for arrangements** and bouquets for my daughter's wedding. Can you

help me find suggestions for flowers that dry well? Her colors are purple and silver, but we will use other colors as well. - J.K. -



How wonderful that your daughter's including your garden in her big day, J.K. I have just the person to help you, whose flowers have bedecked, been carried and strewn along hundreds of church aisles. Decades later, a great many of those "everlastings" remain in service, pressed in family bibles and wedding albums or framed in shadow boxes.

The purple you see here in Burdette's attic is a staple of dried flower work: Annual statice. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila
 Meet **Burdette Chapman of Swallow's Nest Farm**, who taught me oodles about growing, drying and decorating with dried plants when I lent a hand during several of her harvests and floral busy times. Although that was a very long time ago, just thinking back on those years recalled the joy of standing in the big airy attic of her farm house, nearly tipsy from the massed colors and wonderful scents. The plants she **recommends for purple and silver** are in "**Burdette's top picks.**"

Speaking from experience and with no slight intended to your gardening skill, look not only for plants and seeds to grow but **a back-up dried flower supplier**. Sometimes a crop fails or you need more than you can produce. This contingency planning can be fun -- visit some **herb farms** to see which one can best augment your crop. See "Stock up at herb farms."



Thanks for asking about dried flowers, J.K., nudging me to seek advice from my dear friend Burdette Chapman of Swallow's Nest Farm. Burdette's known, loved, dried and decorated with more flowers than any ten other experts. If you're a customer of Burdette and husband Sam's 20 years selling at the Pontiac, Michigan Farmer's Market you may be smiling right now just thinking of these two gentle farm-artists. Burdette and Sam are well and semi-retired (just flowers, no sheep now) in Michigan's ring-finger tip. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Burdette's top picks for purple and silver dried flowers, with seed sources:

Burdette Chapman of Swallow's Nest Farm depends on these silver and purple dried flowers:

Annuals:

Dark purple **statice** (*Limonium sinuatum*
 'Soiree purple' et al)
 parkseed.com

Suworow statice* (*Psylliostachys Suworowii*)
 chilternseeds.co.uk (credit card company
 handles the currency exchange)

Purple **larkspur** (*Consolida ajacis*)
 parkseed.com buy a mix, plant a lot, harvest
 the purples

Ageratum/Flossflower (tall stemmed purples)
 whiteflowerfarm.com for 'Artist's Purple'

Blue salvia* (*Salvia farinacea* 'Victoria' et al)
 readily available in flats at local garden
 centers

Perennials, shrubs

Blue hydrangea*

Purple **delphinium** (*D. elatum* varieties)
 tmseeds.com for 'Black Knight' or a mix

Artemisia (foliage of *A. schmidtiana*
 'Silvermound' and *A. ludoviciana* 'Silver
 King' and 'Silver Queen')

available in flats at local garden centers

Sea lavender* (*Limonium latifolium*)

Plants sometimes available at a garden
 center with diverse offerings. For harvest in
 the planting year, only started plants will
 do. For those with more time there's
 chilternseeds.co.uk (credit card company
 handles the currency exchange)

*Burdette warns that, "So **many blue flowers**, and some of the pinks (suworowi), are **mauve once they dry**. And then some you'd think of for purple, such as the herb lavender, don't dry purple but blue. Although lavender foliage is a great silver-gray!"

"To dry flowers, pick them fresh, take off foliage you don't need, bundle them right away and **hang them in a warm, airy spot.**"

More about finding plants and seeds to grow for dried flowers

There's too little return if you start with seed or plugs the same year you need perennial flowers. So shop for **perennials in large pots**.

Even in annuals, **check local garden centers** before beginning with seed.

Banish dreams of a single source, in plants or seeds.

Your **biggest challenge** may be finding seed or plants of a **specific color**. Larkspur and delphinium, for instance, are most often sold in mixed color packets or flats. Also, a pink cultivar of Suworow statice is currently heading the charts and elbowing out its parent species. Yet you must hold out for the species to net blooms that dry to lilac.

Can't grow enough drying flowers?

Annual flowers can't be beat for dried flower production. Plant them now and by midsummer they're full grown and pickable 'til frost.

However, you may have to **go beyond regular garden centers** to buy plants of the type that provide the best crop. The reason's simple: We need stems to make and hang-dry bundles of blooms. Yet most **commonly available annual varieties were developed for short stems** since compact growth is a boon in traditional bedding-out. Flossflower (*Ageratum houstonianum*) is one that dries wonderfully but cultivars most often on offer in flats are nearly stemless. They're great for bordering a sunny walkway with fluffy white, purple or blue but there's almost no way to bunch and hang them to dry. That's sheer **frustration for a dried flower fancier**.

As for **perennial flowers** that dry well, some species may provide a bumper crop of flowers on a single mature plant. However, many species and all younger plants must be **grown in quantity to yield a worthy harvest**.

What to do if you need more flowers than your perennials can produce or fail to find the flower you need in the right color and length of stem?

Stock up at herb farms!

Herb farms grow and sell dried flowers to **meet that need**. Here are some I rely on for plants, and for preserved or dried grasses, seed pods and flowers. Sometimes I visit simply to see gorgeous herb gardens, get ideas at classes and absorb the atmosphere:

Heavenly Scent Herb Farm, 13730 White Lake Road near Rose Center Road, Fenton, Michigan, 248-629-9208, heavenlyscentheherbfarm.com

Sunshine Farm and Garden, 2460 Wixom Road between Wixom and Milford in Commerce Township, Michigan. 248-685-2204, sunshinefarmandgarden.com

Yule Love It Lavender Farm, 960 Yule Road east of Rochester Road, Leonard, Michigan. Lots of lavender, already bundled fresh or dry. Or pick it yourself during July when the crop's ready. yuleloveitlavenderfarm.com

Grow this list: Email me with your favorite place to buy plants to grow for drying or where you purchase dried flowers by the bunch. No matter whether it's in Michigan or Missouri, on the East Coast or West. A referral from this network saved me last year, sending me to **Tender Crop Farm** in Newbury, Massachusetts. Who knows but your tip will save someone stranded in Sarasota and starved for statice?

It's wonderful. Every one is just wonderful. I just have to find a place to plant every one.
- Burdette Chapman -

Weeping cherry that's cheerier than normal is suckering you!

"The new shoots on our **weeping cherry are growing straight** out," writes J.B., "rather than draping down. These new shoots are near the top of the tree, not suckers at the bottom of the trunk. Should these shoots be pruned off, or is there a way to train them to weep?"

Don't let those straight pieces fool you, J.B. They're suckers from the oh-so-straight trunk and they are not trainable. Trace them to their point of origin -- often from the trunk just below the grafted weeping limbs -- and **cut them off**.



If you've been letting them go for years, this may mean sawing off a sizable bit of the canopy. Do it. Cherries grow quickly and will fill that gap. If you don't cut soon, the vertical growth will shade out the weeping portions.

Is it tough to sort out the suckers (marked, right) from desirable weeping limbs on this cherry tree? Yet it's simpler to do that now than to wait until after that thicket leaves out! Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila



MORE flowery vegetables

In the last issue I asked what flowers we eat as vegetables, and gave you artichokes, broccoli and cauliflower as answers. "Capers, too," says Gina, who's correct. Capers are the flower buds of a Mediterranean shrub, *Capparis spinosa*.

Some are weatherwise, some are otherwise.
Benjamin Franklin, in Poor Richard's Almanac 1735

**A medium sized tree
can move more than 500 gallons of water into the air on a hot day.**
- Ken Druse -

This week in Janet's garden Grow with me! This week I will:

Begin **bathing the bushes!**

C.S. emailed to me about "a cypress pine tree that has a core of dead, dried up pine leaves/needles. What can cause this and what can I do about it?"

I'm thinking of you now, C.S., as I drag out the hoses.

Some **dwarf conifers have such a dense growth habit** that although old foliage is shed right on schedule, usually after several years of life (*Chamaecyparis* above, ©2009 Steven Nikkila), that **needle-y debris tends to linger** much longer unless given an exit assist. Some fairly common varieties and species are in this category -- dwarf pines, Hinoki falsecypresses and the blue-needled falsecypress *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Boulevard.' Some gardeners say that build-up can cause trouble, as pests may shelter and accumulate in the debris. Others say even if the nestled needle debris is benign, it's so ugly that a good spring cleaning is in order.



Some gardeners rattle the branches of such plants. **Dennis Groh, a past president of the American Conifer Society*** and one of the most savvy conifer growers in the country, recommends using a forceful stream of water to knock the chaff out and down. **"Give them a vigorous shower. Direct the hose right into the center,"** he told me, gleefully rinsing a *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Aurea Nana' to demonstrate.

* Great information and membership opportunities at: <http://www.conifersociety.org>

SOMETIMES I EVEN ENVY THE GARDENER
WHO INHABITS A RESTRICTED PLOT OF
GROUND. IT DISCOURAGES FOOLISHNESS.
- ROY BARRETTE -

MONEY IS LIKE MANURE;
IT'S NOT WORTH A THING UNLESS IT'S
SPREAD AROUND ENCOURAGING YOUNG
THINGS TO GROW.
- THORNTON WILDER -

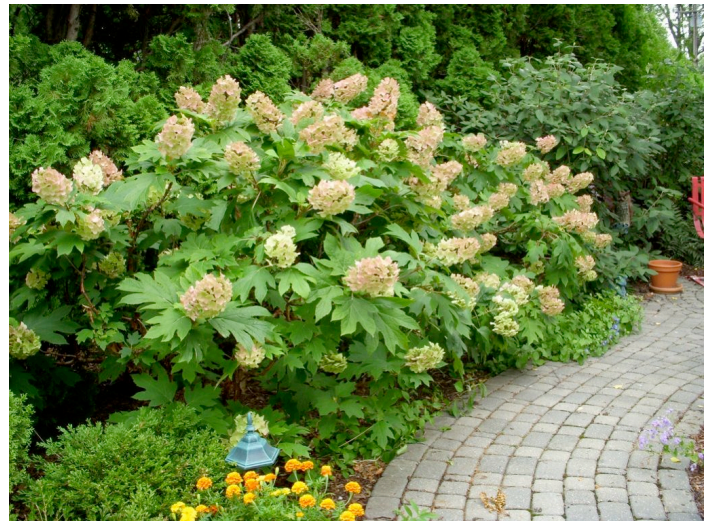
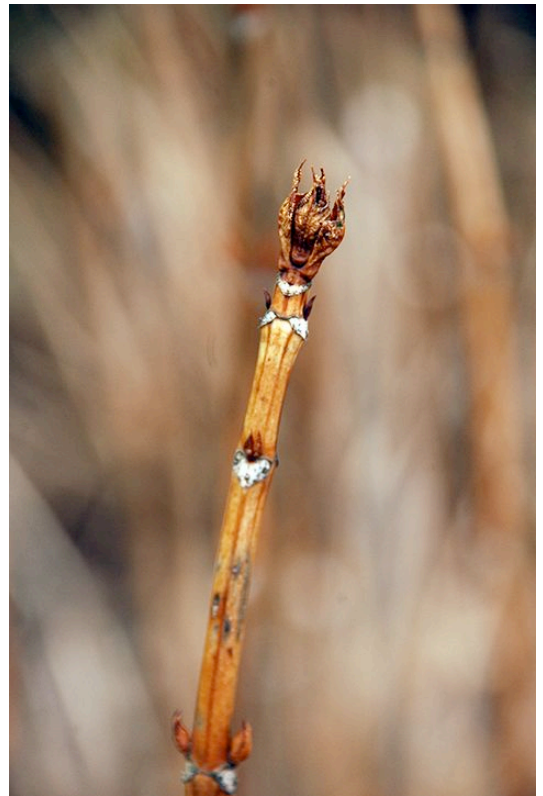
Keep **cutting and cutting**. I cut like there's no tomorrow, because that's truly the case.

When it comes to **stimulating vigorous new growth**, few cuts do the job like those made right before bud break. Bud break's upon us, there's no stopping it, so today is "it" for pruning!

Hydrangeas baffle many gardeners. Keep your head and pruning schedule straight by recognizing **two groups**:

Bloom on new wood, cut as you will in spring: White **snowball** (*H. arborescens*, such as 'Annabelle') and **panicle** type hydrangeas (*H. paniculata* cultivars including 'Limelight,' 'Peegee' and 'Tardiva') produce their flowers from scratch this year -- "on new wood." Thus they can be pruned as hard as desired right now, even if that's to cut every stem to ground level.

Bloom from last fall's tips, cut with care: Mopheads and lacecaps that bloom blue or pink (*H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata* types like 'Nikko Blue' and 'Endless Summer') as well as **oakleaf** (*H. quercifolia*) and **climbing** hydrangea vine (*H. anomala*) bloom from the shoots that spent winter closed up at the very tip of each stem. So those blue-, pink-, oakleaf- or climbing hydrangeas' buds must first survive winter (Above: No such luck! Photo © Steven Nikkilae) and then any cutting in spring must **leave at least some of those tip buds intact**. If you feel you must cut one of these hydrangeas in spring, perhaps to limit its size, you can completely remove old or over-tall branches. That will shorten the plant and keep lively new growth coming while leaving tip buds intact on other limbs. Those you spare will be able to bloom in July.



An alternative to spring pruning of blue-, pink-, oakleaf- and climbing hydrangeas is to wait until right after bloom then cut as you will to reduce the plant's size or density. This cut can be either tough or subtle. Look closely at these two photos of oakleaf hydrangea, for the oakleaf hydrangea below is the "after" of the pair. It's a plant I cut last August right after bloom, removing almost 1/3 of its bulk to keep the height down and the interior open enough to support new growth from within. Can't see a difference? Count and compare number of blooms or note the lowest limb in the foreground of the "before" shot at left.

Ma Nature sometimes (often, in Michigan) "cuts" before we can and is the main reason **why blue hydrangeas and others in this group don't bloom**. She does this by killing their tip buds during winter. That ends the branches' chance to bloom that year just as if a gardener pruned off their tip before their time or a hungry deer ate them for breakfast. Check your old-wood-blooming hydrangea in early spring. If they're plump and moist, there's hope. If they're dried out, (photo, page 6) don't expect bloom from that plant this year.

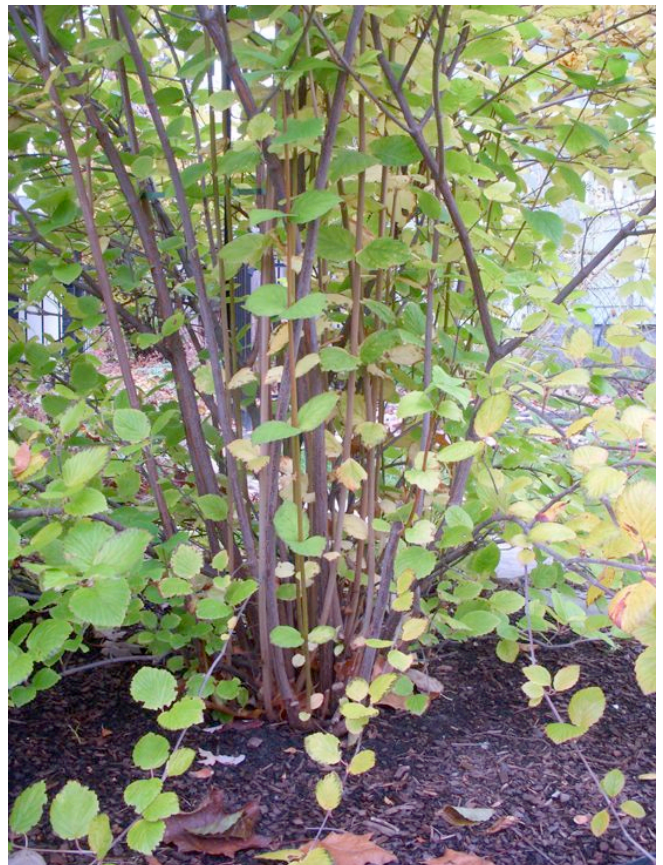
If you cut a shrub because it's just too big, and it dies, you haven't lost anything but a plant that couldn't live by your rules.
- Janet -

The why and how of **rejuvenation pruning** confuses some gardeners. This is annual **pruning to remove the oldest wood**. Often, we remove one third or one quarter of the canes, targeting the oldest. By doing that we **limit the plant's size** to however tall a cane can grow in three or four years.

Another purpose for rejuvenation is to **keep a shrub lively and blooming its best**. This works well for *Weigela*, *Forsythia*, honeysuckle, climbing roses and others, where limbs that are one- to four years old bloom better than the ten to twenty year wood.

A third reason for rejuvenation pruning is to **keep stem size under one inch in diameter on borer-susceptible species**. This reduces the likelihood that pests such as lilac borer and elderberry borer can infest that plant.

Top: Cut out the thickest stems at ground level to reduce this arrowwood *Viburnum* (*V. dentatum*) by a foot. That cut lets sun through the crown promote growth low and inside. Bottom: You'll know oldest wood by its color and thickness. The young, fawn colored stems in this arrowwood are one year old, pink-gray canes are 2 and 3 years old, and the oldest stems are gray. The oldest have also branched more (an example is the "y" branch at far right; others have similar crotches higher up). Since they carry more weight at their tops, they bow outward (the outward lean of the oldest canes is visible at the top edge of this image). Thus old wood makes a shrub not only taller, but wider.



Another hurdle for gardeners is to **be tough when cutting fast-growing trees and shrubs** to keep them looking their best. Let's make **an example of weeping mulberry** (*Morus alba*). Here's one I just cut and what I expect it will do.

Here's the ~~victim~~ mulberry before I ~~attacked~~ pruned it.



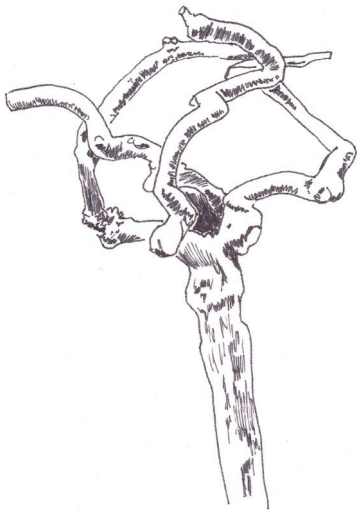
Here it is (left) with all of last year's growth cut away so you can see its framework. Its gardener had been doing about this much pruning each spring. If the tree had been pruned selectively in its formative years, before the current gardener took over, this cut would be the end of the story each spring.

However, the trees' owners and I chose to simplify future cuts and give the tree more grace, so we removed redundant limbs. Those branches produced new growth each year in a portion of the canopy already served by other limbs we judged to be healthier or more attractive. What remains here (right) are those desirable limbs.

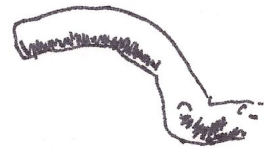
Probably some weeping mulberry owners are saying "Stay away from *my* tree, Janet!" As you wish. But before you seal that contract, do consider how the tree will respond, and compare the appearance and mid-season upkeep (removal of overlong, dense and dead wood) of your tree and one pruned this way. By sketching what happens at the end of just one framework branch (to depict *all* the growth would require Mensa level puzzle skills!) I can show you how this tree will respond and what its gardener's future pruning routine will be.



Special post-publication addition:
See page 14 for this tree 8 weeks
later, grown back and beautiful!



To do the least pruning overall and net a graceful, irregular flow of branches in distinct sections (rather than one mop), I cut it in late winter or early spring before it breaks dormancy. I remove last year's growth leaving only my selected framework (left), the bases of what I see as the best branches. At right is the left-most tip of this tree's framework. Follow it through the next few years.



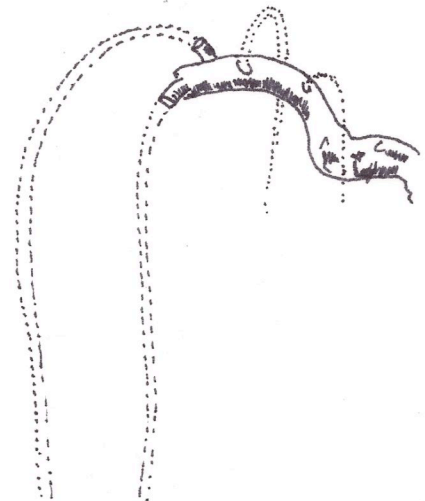
In spring and early summer the tree sprouts from dormant buds (right) and buds set last fall at the bases of main limbs. New shoots elongate rapidly without branching. They may be 3- to 6 feet in length by mid-summer when they begin to harden -- form bark.



I do very little pruning during the summer. I can cut at will to shorten or thin the new growth (below, left), with the understanding that two or three branches will arise behind/above each cut (below, right) and that such branching is more likely to occur if I cut before the wood begins to harden. I prefer the long, sleek drape of unbranched limbs, so I cut late if at all.

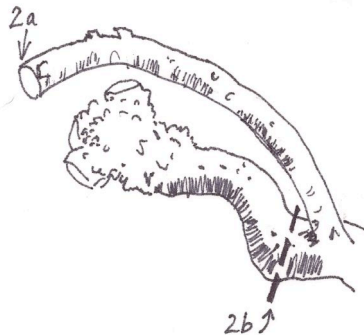
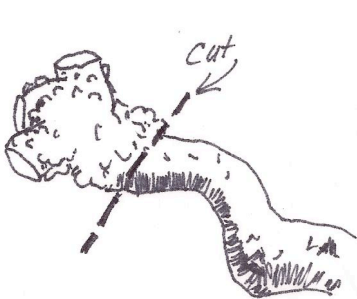


The next spring, I cut again to remove or shorten last year's growth to my framework (right). I cut off completely all spindly parts, each of which would do little more than net me at least one and usually several dead branches



that would need cutting out in summer. I also remove all undesirably oriented branches, such as those which grow up and back over or within the tree's crown to become clutter in another section of the canopy. I leave an inch or so of the stub ends of the thickest, best-placed branches so their buds will be the first and dominant growth of the coming season..

Eventually, the stub end of a framework branch may become so thick and knobby with sealed-over cuts that I decide to either: 1) cut it back farther so it can begin again (below, left) or 2) allow a side branch from behind to replace it. I do this by leaving a handsome length of the new shoot's base intact (2a). It increases in girth each year. Once this new recruit has suitable heft I remove the older limb (2b).



Wrap-up with Grins and Grow-ans that turn our green thumbs up or down

Grins: To stashing a **Band-Aid or two in your wallet**. Or keeping a couple in some other place where you can very quickly grab one. This is the season of sharp tools and rusty reflexes, after all!

Grow-ans: To garden center managers who **think teaching people to divide plants is bad** because it will reduce sales revenues. No kidding, this is exactly what I've sometimes been told. I bet educated gardeners are actually better customers, in their own right and because they bring companions when they shop. How about you? Have you noticed that the more you learn, the more time you have to spend on more stuff and bigger gardens? I've also seen that people tend to ask questions of a confident, successful gardener, such as "What should I plant here?" That usually leads to another trip to the garden center!

I'm pleased to know that my buddy Scott Bates of **Grass Roots Nursery in New Boston**, Michigan is one who recognizes the value of an educated customer. He is sponsoring **my May 2 visit** to his place to **teach a lesson in dividing perennials**. Hope to see you there, or at one of the other events that your friends and mine have arranged. It's all on the calendar beginning on page 11.

Time for new e-delivery options?

If downloading my newsletter is bogging your system and you'd like to try a different approach, send me an email. I'm working on options of two-part delivery when the file size exceeds 2MB, and a photo-less edition for those with dial-up who cannot handle even 1MB without long delays and occasional crashes. I can send you one or 'tother and you can tell me if it helps.

"Remind them of their discount..."

Is what Marge told me. "I forgot that you offered a discount on the CD to we who still had time left on our paid subscriptions, from when your column was with that gardening website that went kaput. I'm glad *you* told me about it when I emailed that I was going to order your books on CD."

A-OK, Sally, here's the reminder. You know who you are, you who were still subscribers as of last October. With your subscriptions you were entitled to discounts on my books and I extended that to this new books on CD. Do you need all the details? Just let me know and I'll email them to you!

Who's Janet?

An eternal student of gardening, Janet Macunovich has embraced the perspectives of Thomas Jefferson (who said he was 'an old man but a young gardener') and philosopher-garden writer Allen Lacy (who can 'spend an entire lifetime in one corner of one garden and still not know all that's going on there'). She aims to keep studying gardening all her life, at universities' and botanical gardens' courses, in books and at lectures, in hers and others' gardens. "It's such a privilege to work in other peoples' gardens," says Macunovich, "where the same plants I grow in my yard show me all the aspects they can take in different situations. Some years I work in 100 gardens and don't see the same thing twice. To observe, question, research and experiment in gardens, to talk with, learn from and explain what I've learned to others, that's better than gold." Email questions to her at JMaxGarden@aol.com.

Where to catch Janet and friends* in-person:

*See April 18-19, 21, 26 and May 9

With a **SHORT NOTICE ALERT: See April 8**

Sunday, April 5:

Dearborn Heights English Gardens, on Ford Road at Outer Drive, April 5, noon, *Continuous Color in the Landscape*

Royal Oak English Gardens, on Coolidge north of 14 Mile, April 5, 3 p.m., *Adding Garden Color* Free. For more information, call or stop in at an English Gardens store.

SHORT NOTICE ALERT: Here's one I forgot to include earlier. Hope to see you Wednesday!

Wednesday, April 8: *Ready, Set, Spring*, 6 -9 p.m. at **Fred C. Fisher Library** in downtown **Belleville**, Michigan. What to do right now in the garden to start the season most easily and with the longest lasting results. \$20 voluntary contribution. Space is limited. Call the library at 734-699-3291 to reserve a seat.

Sunday, April 19:

Clinton Township English Gardens, M-59 at Garfield Rd, April 19 at noon, *Adding Garden Color*
Ann Arbor English Gardens, Maple Rd at Jackson Rd, April 19, 3:00 p.m., *Adding Garden Color* Free. For more information, call or stop in at an English Gardens store.

Wednesday, April 15, *Predict the Season: Experts' perspectives on a garden*. For professional gardeners and their guests at the Association of Professional Gardeners' meeting. In this presentation go on a virtual garden spring inspection with Janet. Look where she looks, hear what she's seeing and take notes as she opens the discussion to the combined experience of the assembled professionals. Email suegrubba@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Saturday April 18, *Ready, Set, Spring* plus *Great Plants and Great Combinations*. Janet appears at 9 a.m. and noon at Ray Wiegand's Nursery on Romeo Plank Road north of 21 Mile in Macomb Township, Michigan. At 9 a.m. she'll explain what to do right now to get your garden ready for its best year ever. At noon, her spotlight's on great plants of all types that you can add to or rearrange in your landscape to make it really shine. Free. Call or stop in at Ray Wiegand's for more information.

Saturday April 18 and Sunday April 19, *Trees and Shrubs for Small Spaces*. Janet's best friend and partner in the garden life, horticulturist-photographer Steven Nikkila appears as part of Bordine Nursery's Spring Garden Expo. At 1 p.m. Saturday at Bordine's Grand Blanc store, and at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Rochester store you can have his insights on great plants and how to be sure they won't outgrow their allotted spaces. Free. Call or stop in at a Bordine Nursery location for more information.

Tuesday, April 21, *How Green is Your Garden*. A one-day conference in West Branch, Michigan at the Forwards Conference Center of the Quality Inn at Exit 212 on I-75. In this event sponsored by Ogemaw County Master Gardeners, Janet presents:

Beginning Green, for novices to learn the basics and experienced gardeners to focus on environmentally friendly gardening. You'll learn about preparing the ground, deciding what to grow, planting and tending a garden. and

Basic Organic Gardening's three most important aspects and how to apply them to your vegetable or flower garden: 1) Viewing the soil as a living part of the garden. 2) Matching plants to a site. 3) Natural controls for pests and diseases.

Professional gardener and arborist Deb Hall (right) joins Janet to present ***Back to the Root of Gardening*** and Master Gardener Ben Franklin is there to advise on ***Xeriscaping***.

\$45 for the day if you register by April 1. Call 989-345-0692 or email elier@msu.edu for more information.



Saturday, April 25, 8:00 a.m. to noon, "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 Janet's hands-on instruction in spring perennial garden maintenance (weeding, mulching, division, planting and wattle fence weaving). For how to join in, send an email to mstgarden@yahoo.com with subject line "I'll volunteer at the Zoo with Janet."

Sunday, April 26, 1 to 3 p.m. or Saturday, May 9, 9 to 11 a.m., *Michigan Wildflower Walk: Garden revelations* at Highland State Recreation Area, White Lake Township, Michigan Walk in one of southeast Michigan's richest woods to learn some native plants at their prettiest. Take tips from Nature and your guide, Janet Macunovich or Steven Nikkila, about soil renewal, fertilization, plant placement and more. Meet at Goose Meadow picnic area parking lot, Highland Recreation Area. Enter the park off highway M-59 west of Bogie Lake Road in White Lake Township. Follow that main entry road to the first siding, Goose Meadow. Dress and prepare for hiking, the weather and fun. Sorry, no wheelchair access at this location. You must bring with you or purchase a State Park daily- or seasonal vehicle pass for your car. \$20 voluntary contribution. Limited space: Call or email Janet and Steve at 248-681-7850 or JMaxGarden@aol.com to reserve a spot. Provide a contact phone number in your email or phone message.

Saturday, April 25: *Year-round Color* and *Shade Gardens*, 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. at **Plymouth Nursery**, 9900 Ann Arbor Road West at Gotfredson Road in **Plymouth**, Michigan. What to plant and how to manage it for the most color, right through four seasons. Then, revelations and ideas for those gardening in the shade. Part of Plymouth Nursery's Spring Home & Garden Expo. Call 734-453-5500 for details. Free.

Tuesday, April 28: *Michigan Native Wildflowers in the Garden*, 7 p.m. at **Cromaine District library**, 3688 N. Hartland Road, Hartland, Michigan. Michigan has great diversity in its wild plants, and many are well suited to gardens. Come learn which to add to your garden this year. Free. Call 810-632-5200 to reserve a seat.

Saturday, May 2:
More Plants, Free:
Dividing and multiplying in your garden, 10 a.m. at **Grass Roots Nursery**, 24765 Bell Road south off of South Huron Road at I-275 exit 11 (if you're coming from the south) or I-275 exit 11b (from the north). That's in **New Boston**, Michigan, the center of the water gardening universe. Want to make more of that unique, heirloom variety perennial or keep fast growers in line? It's high time to divide perennials for those reasons and to make them younger, more vigorous, pest-resistant, and better blooming. Janet shows you how to divide *everything*. Special bonus: those who come take my divisions home! Dress for the weather. Call 734-753-9200 for details and to reserve a space. Free.

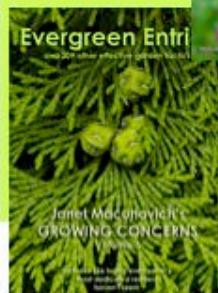
A gardening dream come true:

A complete library of how-to, how-come and what-if. From a writer with a green thumb and a golden gift for practical explanation, here is:

Asking About Asters Janet Macunovich's Growing Concerns Special Edition

Gems from a 20-year, 12,000-gardener discussion:

- Fully researched, with recommended references
- 1,346 questions with in-depth answers
- 335 never seen before on newspaper or website!
- 240 illustrations. 1,200+ pages
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Stay tuned to JMaxGarden@aol.com for information about the 2009 release of more from Janet's Growing Concerns files. (Are you on my mailing list? You should be! Just send me an email to receive my free weekly newsletter. Then you can begin compiling your own free library and annual index.)

Saturday, May 2: Janet's Favorite Plants, 1 p.m. at **Gardenviews Store**, 202 W. Main in **Northville**, Michigan. Here are the trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals Janet picks when she must whittle her choices 'way down yet still be sure to design a beautiful, classic, enduring landscape. Pick from her list and use her tips for fitting one or a few into your garden. Free. Call Gardenviews at 248-380-8881 to reserve a seat. When you call you can also give Lou your email address to receive news of all of his events.

About attending Garden by Janet sessions:

We gardeners are let-me-see, hands-on people and that's how we learn best. In these sessions, I offer you that kind of chance to grow. You can visit me where I'm working and you can either watch or work with me side by side. I hope you'll bring your gloves and join in so you realize the most value for the time.

At the **gardens I tend through my business, Perennial Favorites**: I've worked for many years with some of my clients, who not only trust me with their landscapes but also understand my enthusiasm for teaching. They open their gardens to small groups who want to see and practice "how to." When the work I'm scheduled to do may be of interest to you and the situation allows on-lookers or apprentices, I invite you in.

I've volunteered in the **Detroit Zoo Adopt-A-Garden** program for 20 years. During that time more than 100 people have worked with me, some for a day and others for years. We have fun, we learn, we accomplish much. The program requires that regular garden volunteers complete an interview and orientation process but you can try it for a time or two on a temporary pass as my student. **If you'd like to join me at the Detroit Zoo**, email mstgarden@yahoo.com. Make the subject line of your email "I'll help at the zoo with Janet." That email will put you in touch with my good friend Deb Tosch who keeps my group's schedule straight while I plan and lead the work. You'll receive upcoming work dates and instructions for getting to the zoo and meeting up with my group.

Watch this space to join me in other non-profit gardening events and in gardens I design and tend.

Right: Weeping mulberry, cut in the first week of April and grown back the first week of June that year.

