What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich answers your growing concerns
Issue 63, October 17, 2009

Here you'll find:

When the sassafras glows orange and yellow in a mix that changes every day, I grin. more on page 12.
Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Raised bed planting can be brought low by cold or wet

Good Morning, Janet,
I have a **raised perennial garden bed** and I live here in Michigan which means cold, cold winters sometimes. This bed is only about 3 years old and I mulch it but last year I **lost a lot of my perennials**.

I have been told that putting bales of straw around the edge will help. I think their idea is that being as the bed is raised the **frost can get to more plants around the sides**. I am hoping you will give me your experienced opinion on this. Sure hate to keep replacing these perennials and then losing them again.

The mulch I used last year was something different --- kind of stringy and colored -- maybe not a good choice. Thank you for any help. - Connie -

Insulation around the outside of a pot or bed will change the look. Be sure you need it before you add it.
Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Straw or almost any other airy material can be banked around a planter or container as **insulation**. However, the simple fact of plant loss doesn't prove that cold is to blame. Here are a couple of things to consider before you resort to the extra work and slightly messier look of **padding the outsides** of that bed.

Were the plant **losses concentrated along the bed edges** -- perhaps mostly along the south and west sides or one side more open to the wind? That would indicate exposure issues and extra **insulation might help**. However, that's usually the case only **when a bed is raised quite high**, not just a few inches above grade. When a bed's raised only a few inches, especially if it's edged with wood, plants in it are often just as safe a bet for overwintering as those in ground level gardens on that same property. If there are cold-related losses **in a slightly-raised bed**, it's where perennial clumps pressed along an edge have **some dieback on the exposed side**, as if you edged there with a spade. The **plants don't die entirely**.

If the losses were spotty and throughout the bed, it's more likely that plant choice or drainage are at issue.
By plant choice, I mean that **borderline hardy species** might have been lost. For instance, if there were *Hibiscus* species hardy to zone 5 **dotted here and there in a bed** and temperatures dropped into the zone 4 range, one or more of the *Hibiscus* **might die but not adjacent plants** of hardier species, which pull through just fine.

Drainage issues are what I suspect when winter losses don't seem to be linked to location or species. I don't guess about drainage, I **test it.**

Dig a hole either 18 inches deep or down to where the raised soil meets the original soil, then fill that hole with water and let it drain, twice. If the water is within 12-24 hours both times, there is no drainage problem. If water remains in the hole beyond 24 hours, the bed's drainage is slow. Water that soaks into that soil will tend to sit over-long. **Soil pores** that **should be airy** will be soggy. **Roots**, which need air desperately, **die in soggy soil**. The dead roots rot and the fungus accumulates, making reinfection more likely at every stressful time that follows.

I almost **always ask about drainage in raised beds**. The existing soil should be loosened to become a good base for a raised bed, yet many such beds and berms are made by simply plopping new, **loose soil on top of hard packed ground**. One unseen result can be.

Weak plants hard pressed to be hardy

Drainage trouble often goes undetected. When that happens we can spin our wheels treating all types of problems as primary issues that are actually secondary to water trouble. Roses, for instance, are often accused of being not hardy, even though excess moisture in the soil around the roots and crown is often the real cause of losses. More plants succumb to drainage related root **loss during winter** than during the growing season. During the growing season, plants that lose some roots to wetness can replace their losses and so they abide. In winter, they lose ground because they aren't growing and so can't rebound.

In a bed where drainage is slow but not terrible plants that need good drainage may struggle yet get by. If we mismatch plants and any other growing conditions, the result is the same: **Weak plants**. Given such weakness, **a winter with early cold** can be **a "last straw."**

Plants must be healthy to harden off in preparation for winter -- those changes in cell moisture level and chemical content take time and energy. **Weak plants may be unable to harden** efficiently and on schedule. Last year in the Midwest, cold came hard and early. Plants compromised by less than perfect drainage may have been tardy on the hardening schedule and so they were caught unprepared.

puddles that develop below the surface -- it's called a **perched water table**. It happens because the water flows fairly readily through the new soil but slows and pools on top of the compacted bottom. Even if a puddle is 12 inches below the surface, it affects the roots

On Friday, November 6 I'll be helping a reader/student **check for a perched water** table under her mounded gardens, and **correct it if necessary**. Want to join us? See page 13 for that garden by Janet opportunity."

I don't worry about mulch in connection with winter losses unless it's a material that packs down to hinder water infiltration and air exchange between soil and air.

Ligularia: Plant that shines in a cool year may be next year's hot topic

I am collecting some **seeds from my ligularia** -- think that's how you spell it. Hope I can grow it by seeds. I love this plant. It would be a hit at swaps. I love the red leaves and yellow flowers, such a funny plant. Is there a **common name** for it? **More info** on it would be nice. - Bonnie -

There are a number of garden-worthy *Ligularia* species. This is *L. dentata* 'Desdemona.'
I've sometimes tested students with this photo from my garden, of *Ligularia* 'Desdemona' growing with Russian sage (*Perovskia*) and blue oat grass. I ask, 'What's wrong with this picture?" The three species are from far ends of the spectrum of environmental needs -- the *Perovskia* and grass fare best where it's hot and the soil dries down between watering. The *Ligularia* loves it cool and never dry. Small wonder the combination didn't last very long in my garden.
Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Ligularia may have shone this year because the summer was **cool** and there was **lots of water**. Those conditions suit this plant very well. Often by mid-summer **in a hotter, drier year it's** pretty sad, with scorched leaf edges and the whole plant spending the middle of each day in a wilt that looks almost like a melt because it can't take the heat. Its yellow-orange daisy flowers aren't nearly so attractive when paired with leaves all **slug chewed** and **heat-marred**.

Don't abandon hope of growing *Ligularia*. However, if you live in the center of a continent **where summers tend to be hot** and people know they must travel a long way to the seashore for a breeze, it's always a **gamble to grow it**, *Verbena*, edging lobelia or others that love the cool, moist conditions of places like the Scottish highlands. Some years you luck out and they grow wonderfully, other years you spend the summer apologizing for their behavior.

Two *Ligularia* species are pretty common at garden centers. Both love cool air and moist soil and bloom after midsummer. *L. stenocephala*, most often seen in its variety 'The Rocket', has a columnar form and produces sulfur yellow flowers on spikes above toothed green leaves about as big as a wide trowel. The other is *L. dentata*, a mounded plant with very large round leaves that have more or

less maroon on their undersides. It blooms later than its cousin, with yellow-orange daisies.

In some books I've seen it assigned **common names leopard plant**, Chinese ragwort and golden groundsel but I don't hear these in common use. It seems to be one of those plants like *Forsythia* that was introduced to us by its proper name and accepted as such.

Sow the seed onto moist soil and cover it lightly or not at all, then cross your fingers. Some in a batch may **germinate in a week or two**, others may wait months to sprout. If you collected seed from a named variety such as 'The Rocket' or 'Britt Marie Crawford' don't expect the seed-grown plants to look just like their parents.

Leave the leaves? Great for plants but an acquired taste for people.

A question on **leaving leaves in the garden**. You mentioned that by the end of August the leaves will have disappeared and you will not see them. But that is most of the growing season and **who wants to wait until the end of the season looking at leaves in the garden** and then around the corner with fall coming the leaves will be back.

I have one customer with a beautiful formal garden that is filled with leaves. What do you tell your customers about leaving the leafs (great name for a book). The gardens I take care of can get as much as three feet of leaves. I have to remove these because **the leaves restrict water** to plants, are **slippery** when wet, **blow around** when dry getting into air conditioning units, and people throw their cigars and cigarettes in the gardens which **could be a fire hazard**. - D -

Leaflessness is horticulturally and ecologically unwise. It's also a bit controversial in social terms, a hallmark of a period in which labor was cheap and the absence of leaf litter meant a person had many servants, serfs or slaves. - Janet -

I do leave the leaves in all but a very few gardens I tend. It is a departure in appearance from bare, dark ground. Some people are willing to let go of that standard. For **those who can't handle the look** but who understand the benefits of returning native organic matter to the soil, I **can grind those leaves or cover them**. When the leaf layer is mostly oak, sycamore or another of the species that break down primarily in the summer months -- the cool decomposers such as worms prefer to work on maple, cherry, birch and apple -- I can shred those leaves and/or mix them with other species to speed their break-down and smooth the look.

If I must rake up for someone who cannot accept this look or because we're addressing a slug problem I **send the leaves to a compost and replace them as soon as possible** with a substitute organic matter.

A layer of leaves **doesn't take the whole summer to break down** -- it isn't there for months and then goes poof. In a bed that's biologically active, that material disintegrates from the get-go, accelerating in pace once the soil warms. Some people can't picture this or won't wait and watch. Plus. it can progress more slowly during the first year or two in a garden that's been starved of leaves up to that point, simply because decomposing organisms aren't as plentiful as they should be. **During the last weeks** of each annual cycle, leaf litter **isn't even recognizable** except for remnant leaves here or there.

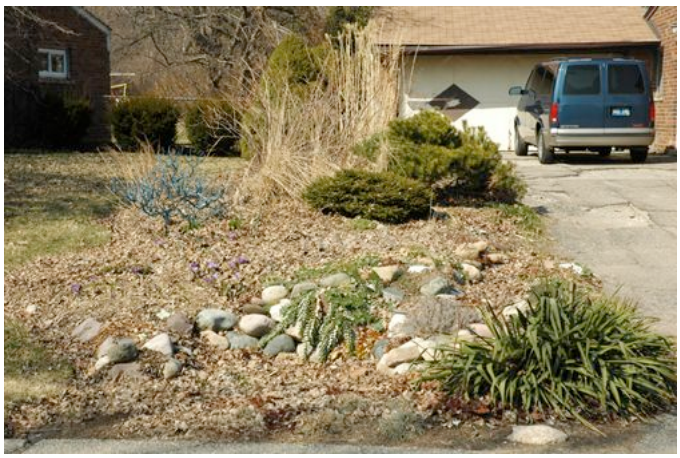
However, the sight of leaves is rarely a big issue in summer. When it's hot is in the several weeks each fall and again in spring when we and the plants make our seasonal transition. Once plants emerge fully and the beds fill in **by late May, the ground just isn't visible** so it's leafiness or lack thereof isn't a concern.

I agree that leaves can be **slippery** but see that happen **when they remain wet** over time. Then it's not the leaves I focus on but the **slow drainage or overwatering** situation.

As for blowing, when leaves are nestled around plants' stem bases and crowns, or once decomposition begins so **fungal threads** or gnashing teeth **knit them together, they don't blow** around much.

As a fire hazard, wood chip mulch qualifies, as well. Where people are so disrespectful that ignition by littering is probable, it's better to use compost as mulch or to shred the leaves so they become compost more quickly.

I add neighbors' leaves to the natural accumulation in my garden. The total depth of mixed maple-crabapple-willow leaves in this bed was six inches by late fall when Steven took the picture on the left. Early the next spring (below), that layer had decomposed to about an inch.
Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Where there are three feet of leaves, someone or something must be adding to the natural fall. With the exception of a pocket here or there associated with tricks of the wind, even the oldest, thickest oak woods receives a natural fall of 12-15" of leaves at most.

It sounds like you're **meeting a lot of opposition to leaves as mulch**. Perhaps **shredding** or removal for composting plus the application of **an alternate mulch** is the route you'll have to

take. People are part of a garden and then it's up to the gardener to keep them happy as well as to meet the soil's need for weather protection and good health.

Leaving the leaves leads to good things such as temperature moderation, increased fertility, and water absorption rather than erosion. Removing fallen leaves -- whether from trees or grass and other herbaceous plants -- without substituting an equal amount and type of other organic matter leads to soil loss and reduced fertility.

Some soils that are rich in organic matter to begin with may take years or decades to become seriously impoverished but the best gardener thinks about that long range effect as well as short term results. In North America where soils haven't had so many centuries of intensive agricultural and horticultural wear as on other continents, we are just beginning to realize the impact of the bare soil aesthetic, and correct it. - Janet -

It's earlier than late fall, but beware being late for early spring

The Holly-tone® that I use on my holly bushes says to **fertilize in late fall** (I am assuming that would be NOW, or is it already too late?), **and in early spring** before new growth begins.

How do I know when "early spring" is? When is it safe for the holly to be fertilized in the early spring? Waiting until I see new growth means I have waited too long! But I don't want to fertilize too early, either. What months do you recommend for fertilizing holly here in zone 6 southeastern Michigan for early spring **and late fall?** - C.H. -

Slow release organic fertilizers are wonderful for the garden **at any time of year** but **especially** productive toward next spring's growth when applied as soil cools **after local trees' leaf fall**. O Essential nutrients in organic forms (carbon-based rather than salt form) move into woody plants' roots, perennials crowns and even into tree trunks at rates and in amounts that are almost unbelievable for a season when we say plants are "dormant." In a University of Washington study using fish as a slow release fertilizer in October -- simulating the forest floor along streams where bear strew fish parts during salmon run -- nearly half the nitrogen in the fish parts had moved into plants' roots and crowns by December. **Close to 90% of that nitrogen was in the plants by April 1**, with a good portion of that already in trees' trunks.

If it's fall, my van's at Uncle Luke's in Troy, Michigan for slow release organic fertilizer like Groganic poultry manure, and birdseed to keep our local manure-makers coming! Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

I **fertilize holly** with **slow release organic** fertilizer **in fall and again in spring**. If the soil is alkaline I look for mixtures that include cottonseed meal, cocoa hulls, coffee grounds or some other material that will reduce soil pH as it degrades. I **might also supplement** at the beginning of **May, June and July** with a water soluble product that promotes acidity or facilitates uptake of nutrients even in alkaline soil. That's when acid-loving plant fertilizers, Ironite and emulsions of seaweed or fish fit this bill.

What makes a fertilizer "slow" and 'organic"?

It's organic and also slow if the nutrients in a fertilizer **do not dissolve readily in water** but **must first decompose or pass through soil animals' guts** to become soluble and available to plants' roots. Espoma company's "-tone" products qualify, as do others with **animal parts, manure, plant parts and rock powders** as main ingredients. Read the label and you'll recognize the real thing for its basis in feather meal, cottonseed meal, poultry manure, kelp, oyster shells, guano, etc.

These products are great for a garden because they have few salts that can accumulate to draw water *out of* plants' roots. Also, they contain carbon which breaks down into humus and binds soil particles into airy, nutrient-rich crumbs. Apply slow release products at any time of year. They are especially effective when **applied in late fall and early spring** as happens in nature during autumn leaf fall and during thaws when accumulated debris begins to decompose.

Plants as your calendar

Late fall, early spring, midsummer... these are **confusing terms**. Yet they came into use in order to end confusion when national experts give advice about activities that vary regionally.

Publishers and garden product manufacturers want to print and package for the whole country rather than develop and stock regional variations. Thus they press their experts to avoid using dates that don't apply evenly across the continent. Someone like me accustomed to advise Great Lakes gardeners to do a certain task "at the end of October or beginning of November" is expected to say "late fall" instead. That's presumed to be understood correctly in the South where late fall doesn't begin until mid-November and be equally understandable in the northern Great Plains where it's late fall by mid-October.

Joe Pye (*Eupatorium* 'Chocolate') blooms to mark the end of "early fall"

Realistically, generic seasonal names are a mess **because we aren't offered an explanation**, not even something as rough as the charts on pantyhose containers and sweatsocks packages relating size "B" to a given weight-height combination and size "M" to "men's shoe sizes 5-9," etc.

Since the economics of mass production are behind this and not going away any time soon, we should learn to translate. **Here's a start** (turn the page!) which relates seasonal terms to stages of plant development.

Translating generic season-names

It's:	When:
Early spring	The buds swell and color on native trees such as red maples, and bloom begins in the earliest showy spring bulbs, such as snow crocus. (That's the first week of March in my part of Michigan although it may happen in February in Georgia.)
Mid-spring	Earliest daffodils, magnolias and forsythia in full bloom.
Late spring	Crabapple and lilac blooms are falling.
Early summer	Weigela in full bloom, snowball hydrangea flowers buds show but are still small and green.
Midsummer	Snowball hydrangea, butterfly weed and bee balm begin full bloom.
Late summer	Panicle hydrangea in full bloom, white not yet pink. Fragrant white hosta in full bloom. Nighttime heat breaks.
Early fall	Virginia creeper vine foliage begins to turn red. Fall clematis in full bloom. Fall crocus in full bloom. (At left with fall clematis leaves and groundcover sedum; this "crocus" is not a true *Crocus* but *Colchicum autumnale*. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila 
Late fall	Tree leaves are heavy on the ground, branches nearly bare. Callery pear foliage turns color.
Early winter	Ground has frozen one or more times. Last perennial foliage has been killed back.
Late winter	Willow twigs show color. Skunks occasionally smelled. First migratory birds return.

Late fall? Think lawn fertilizer

To support and enhance the natural soil renewal cycle, add organic matter. Make the most of your effort by adding it when Nature's most primed to receive it, in late fall. Organic slow release fertilizers count as organic matter so they can go on the ground in late fall, too. All the mechanisms are ready to receive it and process it in time to meet the plants' greatest needs as they grow roots in late fall and resume growth in early spring.

Late fall is the most important time to fertilize a lawn. For more about why fall is best for fertilizing turf, read the Cornell University Extension bulletin at www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scene3de4.html

This week in Janet's garden

Grow with me! This week I will:

Hum the tune "High Hopes" to **maintain momentum** as I wade into **overwhelming jobs** and tackle plants bigger than I am. There's always something, like this overbearing clump of iris that I approached one day after telling my sister, "If you don't much like it and I'm saying it's too big for that spot anyway, let's just get rid of it."

Perhaps it doesn't look bad in these photos I decided to snap as the tide began to turn in my favor, but **the clump** was nearly four feet across and **would not even budge** when addressed as one unit. It was so densely matted and tough that even with a sharp spade driven by a booted foot and a strong leg, the best I could do was to **nibble tiny wedges from around the edge**.

Which is what I settled for as I hummed, and eventually whittled it away (Blue lines mark the latest wedge I'd cut -- only about a dozen more to go at this point, so I was singing aloud by then.) As with the ant that moved the rubber tree plant and the ram that butted a hole in a dam, it was all a matter of high hopes and persistence.

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Evict troublemaking **borers** from **lilacs** and give the plant reason to grow more wood that's young enough to resist recolonization by these pests.

A lilac with **symptoms** such as:

- thin of leaf,
- growing and blooming less vigorously,
- displaying cupped, droopy or shriveled foliage, and
- losing twigs and limbs...

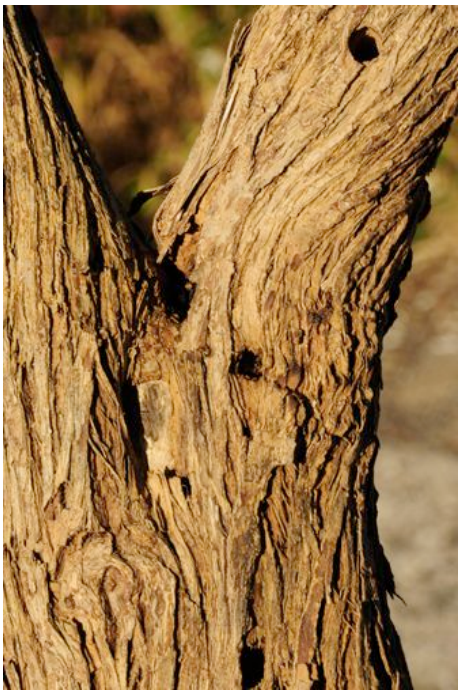
...may well be harboring the larvae of **red headed ash borer moths**. These insects chew into the bark in spring, spend some time eating the starchy cambium just below the bark, then move into the inner wood to finish their development. The damage they do to the cambium hampers

the flow of starch from leaf to root, causing roots to starve and the shrub to struggle. Their feeding in the wood leaves voids that spring sap flow can't get past, so new growth is crippled.

The larvae emerge in spring about the time red maples bloom -- **exit holes** from recent years are visible as neat quarter-inch circles in this lilac trunk; older holes look more like concave belly buttons. As moths they'll mate, then go to lay eggs on trunks an inch in diameter or larger, targeting weak places including those weakened by earlier borer work.

Removing older canes from a lilac each year limits the places where borers can live. Chip or burn what you cut out in fall because any borers in it are old enough to survive even in dead wood, emerge in spring and continue the infestation.

Keep a lilac growing well with **regular water, fertilizer** and by culling older wood. There, borers can't get ahead and do much damage. Let the plants become stressed from neglect or by poor siting in shade or wet soil, then grow old for lack of renewal pruning, and borers can become numerous. The cumulative damage can be a killer.



There's a pest living inside the lilac trunk pictured on this page -- I looked for it because the lilac had become thin of leaf. (top)
The forebears of current borers made these round exit holes in its bark, impressive hollows within the wood, and if we peeled the bark we'd see scribbly excavations in the cambium, too. Because it can also live on its relative, the ash tree, this insect is called red headed ash borer. It's not the same as the emerald ash borer that's causing widespread loss of ash trees throughout the upper Midwest, but is undesirable nonetheless. Thank goodness that simple pruning, proper irrigation and considerate fertilization are all it takes to give a lilac some immunity. Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Emerald ash borer: Learn about it, then cut trees to cut losses

This year I thought, "Wow, the maples are turning early!" Then I realized that it wasn't their timing but the absence of a precursor I've known all my life that was startling me.

Over the past **five years emerald ash borer has killed almost all ash trees in my area**, which was the initial point of this foreign pest's invasion. For the first time in my life I did not see any ash trees doing their reliable gold and maroon opening act before the maples.

I hope that if you are **on the perimeter of the emerald ash borer invasion** -- in Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky Pennsylvania, New York and Ontario -- that you **watch* for the first signs** of this pest and promptly remove and chip any trees it attacks. That may help keep its numbers from building to the cataclysmic levels they reached in my area before it was identified.

It is not a strong flier but is reaching new areas as larvae in firewood and by hitching rides from infested areas in the slipstream of vehicles. If it's denied a toehold in a new area even as it's dying out for lack of host plants in places it's already infested, your ashes may have a chance.

*For more, copy this URL to your browser:
www.emeraldashborer.info/identifyeab.cfm
Your local Extension can also give you information.
Send me an email for reprints of my past articles on the subject or to ask about scheduling an emerald ash borer talk for your community group.

The 45mph garden

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 week.

Lately, it's the change in **pines, false cypresses and arborvitaes** that makes us stop and look. Overnight, these evergreens that **were solid green** may **become two-tone** yellow and green.

Nothing's wrong. Some needled evergreens, including spruce and fir, lose their oldest needles continually, a bit at a time. This week's showboats are more like maples and burning bush in that they withdraw the green and drop a crop of leaves all at once, in fall. They shed only a year's worth of needles at a time, those that were grown two or three years ago.

You can know it's just **normal leaf drop** if it comes all at once in fall and involves only old needles (Above and left.). There's no reason for concern unless the fall color and needle loss extends all the way to branch tips to claim current year growth.

Some people don't like to see an evergreen's fall color and use a forceful spray of water to hurry the leaf fall.

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

Grins: To **something new coming into color every morning** in fall. When I look out and see that another tree or shrub has turned overnight or added a new hue to its cloak, I'm reminded that the season of rest and relatively little change is coming next. I take the time to admire the spectacle now.

Dwarf fothergilla (*F. gardenii*) in fall color (left) and the yellow of katsura or orange of stewartia (below) are some of the things that make fall my favorite season. Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Grow-ans: To **unfounded fear of insects when** it comes to **taking plants back indoors** for winter. It's unnecessary and can even be harmful to try to sterilize a plant or its root zone. Clean the foliage and wood with a forceful shower, and use a soapy spray first if the plant has a known tendency to let scale or whitefly problems get the better of it. Don't subject it to unwarranted "just in case" pesticides, or try to sterilize the soil. Any living things that chance to come in with a plant are dependent on the plant for life and will only cling more closely to it, once inside.

Who's Janet?

Someone fascinated by the *process* of gardening. Janet Macunovich began gardening for others when she ran out of places to make new gardens at her own home. "I was hooked from the first time I worked in someone else's yard. What we do to make a garden has to be modified for *every place*. Now 'my' gardens stretch across several States but each one is still unique, even those that are full of the same plants because those plants behave differently in each place. I've learned a lot of wonderful things over 25 years of gardening, writing and teaching but the flexibility of the process and its never-ending newness is the best fact of all. It makes it a delight and a privilege to work for others and to help students and readers who ask for advice." Email questions to her at JMaxGarden@aol.com.

Where to catch Janet and friends* in-person:

*See October 20 and "Invite Janet or Steven" on page 13.

Tuesday, October 20, 7 p.m., ***Putting the Garden to Bed***. A talk **by Gail Morrell** (see page 15). At the St. Clair County Administration Building, 201 McMorran Blvd., **Port Huron, Michigan**, hosted by the Master Gardener Association of St. Clair County. What you can do now to make spring easier. Public welcome. Donations to the Master Gardener program accepted. For more information contact Barb Haman at barbhaman@comcast.net.

Saturday, October 24, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., ***Cutting back the rambunctious garden: Pruning trees and shrubs***. Learn from Janet, a pruning expert, how to tame overgrown trees and shrubs or keep currently-civil plants from going wild. This class includes a lecture, pruning demonstration, and hands-on outdoor participation. Sponsored by the Detroit Garden Center at the **Belle Isle Nature Zoo** auditorium in **Detroit, Michigan's Belle Isle Park**. Come prepared for pruning outdoors. $25 for a Detroit Garden Center member or Master Gardener, $30 for a non-member. For more information or to print out a mail-in registration form, go to www.detroitgardencenter.org and click on "Tree and Shrub Pruning Workshop" in the right margin. Or register by calling the Detroit Garden Center at 313-259-6363.

Tuesday, October 27, ***Collector's Garden***. Janet speaks as part of an all-day conference hosted by the **Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts** at Andover Country Club in Danvers, Massachusetts. How to maintain the diversity you love but bring some harmony to your collection. With suggestions for more great plants you simply must have! For GCFM members and guests. Contact your garden club for registration information.

Tuesday, October 27, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., ***Improving the Older Garden***. A talk hosted by the **Massachusetts Master Gardeners' Association**. At Elm Bank on Washington Street (Route 16 West), the Massachusetts Horticultural Society facility in **Wellesley, Massachusetts**. Design, maintenance and plant selection tips to correct for and capitalize on the passage of time in a garden. For information about attending this event, contact Betty Sanders at 508-359-9453 or betty02052@yahoo.com

Tuesday, November 3, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., ***Flower gardens*** **segment of Wayne county, Michigan Master Gardener volunteer training**. For active Master Gardener volunteers, one of the perks of the position is an open invitation to refresher courses -- the Master Gardener may return at will to audit the training underway for new volunteers. If you want to brush up on annuals, perennials, design, planting and care, this date's for you. Janet knows vets will be there along with the new recruits, so each time she covers this basic material she uses different plants and situations as examples. At the Wayne County Michigan State University Extension facility at 5454 Venoy Road, **Wayne, Michigan**.

Friday, November 6, 10:00 a.m. to noon., **Garden by Janet*: Identifying and correcting drainage trouble***. In a relatively new garden on an older property in **Plymouth, Michigan**, things "just aren't growing right" and Janet's got the notion that the beds were constructed in a way that impairs the drainage. If you would like to see what poor drainage can do, from subtle to glaring symptoms, how to check drainage and how to correct it in an established garden, this is the place to be. Free. Limited space. You must contact Janet for location details

Saturday, November 7, **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. On this day, Janet's group finishes fall clean up with final cut backs, fertilizing, mulching, pruning and perhaps some special winter protection. To join Janet at the zoo, email mstgarden@yahoo.com with the subject line "I'll garden at the Zoo with Janet."

About attending Gardens by Janet sessions:

We gardeners are let-me-see, hands-on people and that's how we learn best. In *Garden by Janet* sessions, I offer you that kind of chance to grow. You can visit me where I'm working and 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:** My clients understand my enthusiasm for teaching. Some 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, I invite you in.

In the **Detroit Zoo Adopt-A-Garden** program: I'm a 21-year veteran of this great program. Many people have worked with me there, some for a day and others for years. We have fun, we learn, we accomplish much. **To join me at the Zoo,** email mstgarden@yahoo.com. Make the subject line of your email "I'll help at the zoo with Janet."

A complete library of Janet's gardening how-to on one CD... just $24.

Is this *What's Coming Up* newsletter useful to you? Imagine how a whole year of these weekly newsletters could help your garden grow.

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My CD has everything from six of my books: How to prep soil, design, choose and de-bug plants, plus one A-Z index!

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** meeting,
- a **hands-on workshop** at a site of your choosing 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 and Janet Macunovich (above) have been digging, shooting and teaching how-to for 22 years. They began producing conferences in the early '90s and then ran a gardening school for 12 years, featuring instructors who knew their stuff in the garden as well as knowing how to get their messages across in front of a group. That line-up includes people like Gail Morrell (right). Gail gardens professionally. She and Janet formed a friendship 20 years ago in part because they shared a goal: Finding the most practical way to do everything in a garden. Her charm has earned comments from audiences such as, "She made me laugh... about *weeds*, for crying out loud!". Janet and Steve are glad to help you themselves or refer you to these others to meet your group's need. Contact them at JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850 when you want to set up a talk, workshop or class.