

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer
your growing concerns
Issue 96, June 2, 2010

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Goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*, here with Siberian iris) is such a solid performer before, during and after its cream-lace bloom in June, it headlines today! See pages 1 - 3.



Focal points: If one is good, why aren't two better?

Is it OK to have **two focal points in a garden?** I have a birdbath and on obelisk of similar sizes and I'm having trouble placing them. - S. M. -

All it takes to be a focal point is first placement in an area and then being flanked, backed, underlined and/or surrounded by complementary frames. Each frame is filled with a plant or feature which has more in common with other frames than with the focal point. So a combination of short plants (dwarf goatsbeard, perennial geranium) frame this tall goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*). The goatsbeard is literally the high point, standing out all season. It can hold the spotlight even in its green-only phase, despite the attention-grabbing ploy of pretty flowers on a framing mass of perennial *Geranium*.



You can certainly have more than one focal point in a garden. In our basic method of design,* we fill gardens and landscapes one focal point at a time, deciding on the spot, choosing something to go into it, then framing that star with other plants or features. When this first focal point group has enough mass to satisfy the person we've decided is our main viewer, we look around to see, "Where do we want to next call attention?" We end up with planting arrangements that **cause the viewer's eye to follow** our lead. It travels through the garden, point to point.

Distinctive features work well as focal point stars. A birdbath, substantial sculpture, bench or cluster of pottery can often hold its own even in a bed of plants so varied it borders on chaos.



We wanted attention to be drawn to the right side of the bed, rather than the tree's trunk. We filled that focal point with one tall goatsbeard at a distance from the tree, then surrounded it with several groups of shorter, mounded plants.

Your bird bath and columnar obelisk may qualify as distinctive, but **two can be a hard number** to work with. When there are just two strong attention-getters our eye tends to find them, go back and forth between them, then **settle on a point midway between the two**. If the eye finds **nothing there worth seeing, it's disappointing**.

So it's worked well for us to **think in ones or threes**. We give a viewer one or three focal point groups to admire. Then we "ask" that viewer to zero in on one, most attractive focal point. When they move to get a better look, they are **then in a new vantage point**, where we can set them a new scene.

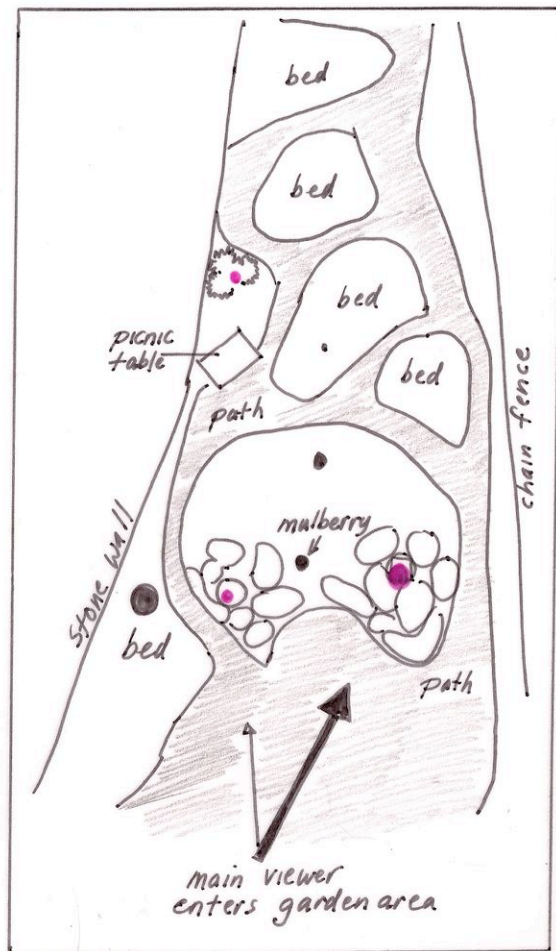
Put ample distance, or some visual barrier, **between focal points** so that they can be enjoyed one at a time by your chosen viewer. If more than one at a time yammers for attention, the scene appears "busy."

Multiple focal points work if features in those spots **share some distinctive characteristic**. Perhaps all are singularly tall points as in the garden we're showing you. They might instead be blue, gold or white in foliage or material, when nothing else in view is that same color. Tall, bright items sit like naturals in a spotlight, yet even very low, fine-textured features can be notable among taller or more coarse textured components. That's why a circle of lawn, a flat pond, and a small paved area can serve as focal points.

How much distance is needed to separate any two focal points depends on the viewer's location and lay of the land. So **every site is unique**.

We intended to give visitors to this garden a triangle of focal points (below, left, pink dots). These would lead our intended viewer's eye around the bed. When seen in one "take", from farther off, this trio would also frame the picturesque trunk of the mulberry tree. As the viewer steps closer, we hope we succeeded in making the right-side group more important. If we did, we'll lead the viewer to walk in that direction. Nudged along the path (below, right), the person will come to a place where additional focal points in distant beds become visible.

Meanwhile, the person sitting at the picnic table in the back has a more limited view because he is closer to the bed. "Behind" the left side focal point group, invisible to the visitor on entering, is a space to be seen from that table which is small but can present several focal points and frames on a smaller scale.

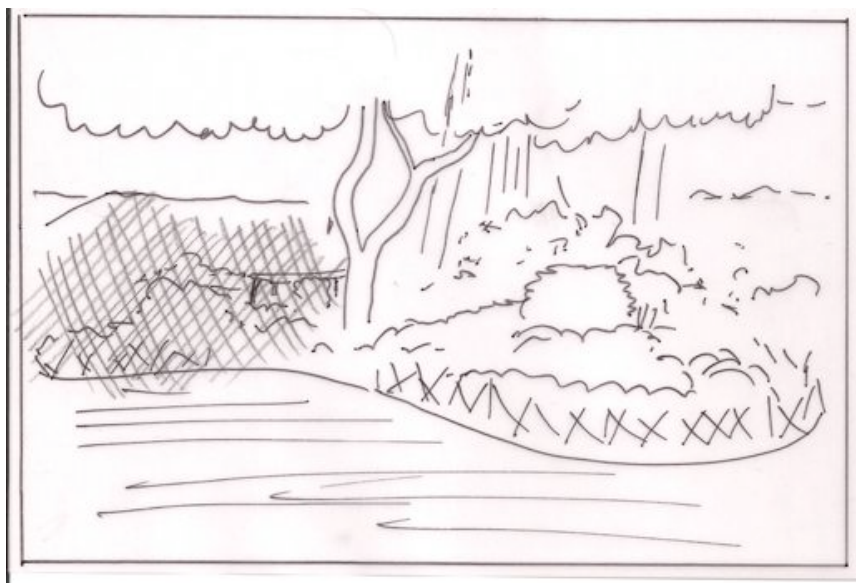


Use this separation test: Stand in the place you think your viewer will occupy, that person you've dubbed front-row center audience. Look at the spot where you have or plan to place a focal point. Focus on it. Now consider the place you want to put a second focal point. While your eyes are focused on point #1 you should NOT be able to bring proposed point #2 into focus -- not unless you turn your head or move your eyes and re-focus.

Try it with our example bed (below, right). "Stand" 30 feet from the bed, as the photographer did. Focus on the high point of the bed's right-side "skyline." While you focus there, can you also keep the far left side of the bed in focus?

Most people say "no", that bringing the left side into focus requires turning the head/shifting the eyes and re-focusing. So the cross-hatched area on the left is fair game for an additional focal point group.

*For more about placing and filling focal points, read Janet's book, *Designing Your Gardens and Landscape*. See page 19.



When lawn's in need, overseed

When should/can I **overseed the lawn**? Some areas are quite **sparse** and really need it. Is there an approximate date/month or some indicator (like forsythia blooming or such) that I can use? - L.P. -

Forsythia bloom season is a good time to overseed a lawn. Even better, overseed when the heat breaks in **late summer**, shortly before Labor Day. However, you can do this kind of lawn renovation **almost any time** during the year when you see favorable conditions coming or know you can make it right for seed to sprout and seedlings to grow.

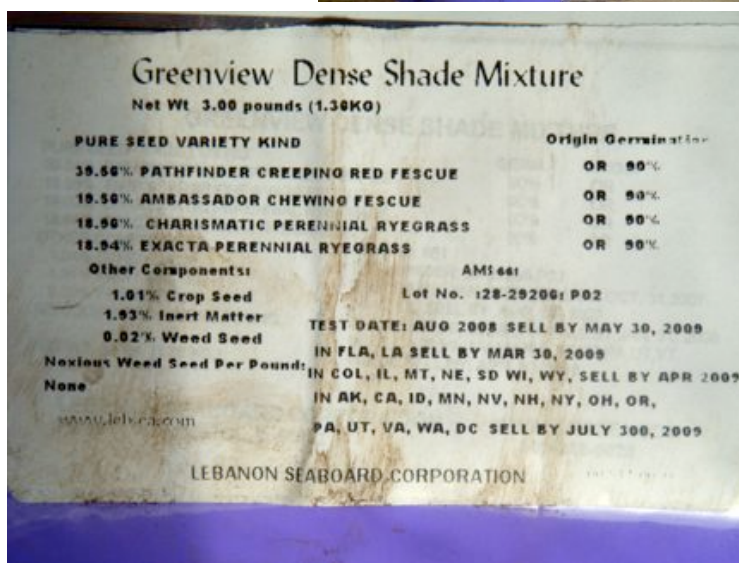
What grass seed needs to sprout is good contact with soil, **some moisture and cool weather**. What grass seedlings need in order to thrive and bulk up is cool- to warm weather, steady moisture and lots of light. Seeds sprout equally well in early fall and early spring. However, grass started at the beginning of fall usually has the advantage over grass sown in spring. Fall seedlings often enjoy months of cool, moist conditions. Spring grass sometimes has only a month to grow before hot weather slows or stops progress.

To overseed: **Mow** existing lawn close. **Core aerate or rake** well to remove thatch from bare spots -- if you don't, that material can prevent seed from making good contact with moist soil. **Sow** high quality grass seed. **Rake again** to press seed into contact with soil. **Topdress** with a very thin layer of clean, screened compost or coarse sand. **Keep the soil moist** 'til seed sprouts.

If you overseed when the weather's hot or dry, plan to sprinkle lightly, daily during the hottest part of the day to keep the seed moist and cool the ground for two to three weeks.

Overseed: Sow seed in turf that is living although possibly dormant, as when cool-season grass is to fill in a lawn of dormant warm-season grass. Also used to improve newly established lawn that is spotty, especially when that turf consists of clump forming species such as ryegrass and tall fescue. If desired grasses are stoloniferous, as is bluegrass, and cover at least 50% of the soil surface, it may be easier to fertilize more heavily and to kill weeds until the turf becomes dense.

*Lawn Care: A Handbook for Professionals by Henry F. Decker and Jane Decker, Prentice Hall



ingredients, which should include named (improved) varieties of the grass you're growing. There should be very little weed seed. This dense shade mix has no bluegrass, which is a sun-lover, but it does have improved fescues and ryegrass. Also worth the money: It contains less than 0.02% weed seed.

Inadvertently growing a mess of moss

Could you please discuss the reasons **moss grows in a lawn** or perennial bed? Is this a problem or can it be ignored as a gift from nature? Thanks! - J.V. -

Where moss grows among other plants, the moss is simply as well- or better suited than the others in that particular spot. **Poor drainage** (excess moisture and scarcity of oxygen in the soil), lack of nutrients (lawn grass is a heavy feeder; moss can get by on less), and more **shade** than your preferred plant can handle are the things that favor moss. Poor drainage even in sun, is in itself enough to cause mossiness. Shade, too, can be a sole cause. **Nutrient deficiencies**, including acidity that may prevent existing nutrients from becoming available to roots, don't usually foster moss all on their own but are contributing factors where the soil's poorly drained or light's low.

The moss itself is not a problem, but it's a sign that your other plants need better conditions to perform well.



Moss is no problem if you embrace it as a suitable groundcover! (Note, too, how it frames the central, raised bed.)

Check the drainage. Drainage is how quickly water falls down through the soil and away. It does not measure how water runs across the top of the ground and into storm drains. Even sandy soil can be poorly drained if there is a hard packed layer or soil with very different size pores somewhere below. Water reaches that barrier and backs up like a traffic jam. Plants' roots

higher up die back as rising water displaces oxygen in soil pores, an element they must have to turn starch into energy.

The **simplest drainage test** is to dig a hole in the area 18 inches deep -- as narrow or wide as you like. Fill it with water and let that water drain away. The purpose of this first fill is to insure that the sides of the hole have absorbed all they will. Thus, you can skip it if you are doing this test right after heavy rains have thoroughly wetted the soil.

Then, fill the hole to see how long it takes for water to flow out the *bottom* of your test hole.

The drainage is: of the drain test hole

As you dig to check drainage, you may find answers on the **Excellent, if the hole empties in under 12 hours.**

Adequate, if it the water's gone in less than a day.

Poor, if water remains +24 hours. That's tough growing for most landscape and garden plants.

Quicker-draining soils are a different headache. They're called excessively drained, and dry.

If **drainage is poor, fix** whatever it is that has caused the water to be soggy down below. Raise the bed, install drain tile, break up subsurface hard packed soil by double digging or knifing the bed (slit it deeply), stop inflow of excess water, etc.

If drainage is okay, focus on **reducing the shade**. You can improve light and air movement by pruning overhanging and surrounding trees and shrubs.

If you suspect nutrient problems, such as when drainage and light issues don't seem to be in play, **do a soil test** through your State's soil testing service or a commercial soil testing lab (ask at your Extension about soil testing, or look on-line). Follow the recommendations for adding specific fertilizer, calcium (gypsum; for overly acid soil) or soil sulfur (for alkaline soil). That prescription comes with the numerical report of phosphorus, potassium and other nutrient levels.

Clues on the side... sides of the hole.

Gray or blue soil indicates low oxygen.

Brown, red and yellow soils have sufficient oxygen for most plants.

These colors come from oxidation of iron in the soil -- rust. That requires oxygen.

Mottled soils, **blotched** with blue or gray, are sometimes wet, perhaps in late winter and spring.

Very pale subsoil under dark indicates a leach layer. Nutrients are being flushed from the topsoil by excessive drainage.

Any very dense layer, whether clay or sandy, can stop drainage if it underlies a looser soil. Water comes through the loose soil, then puddles on top of this hard pan, creating a "perched" water table.

Why it's fitting that *Ajuga* sounds like a warning claxon

Hi Janet & Steven,

I have a problem with *ajuga* in my back yard. I have been **fighting it for 10 years** since we moved to this house. The previous owners had planted it around the perimeter of the grass with no below-ground edging to stop its spread. I consider this plant to be one of the most

invasive I have ever dealt with and am surprised to see nurseries selling it and even advocating it.

To combat it, I first pulled out all the mature plants from the perimeter, but every year since a new patch crops up in the lawn often 30-40 feet from the original plant site. In addition to digging it out, I have tried painting the leaves with RoundUp which seems to have no effect whatsoever. I have tried "lasagna" mulching techniques over the winters to kill it, but it just comes back in another area.

Do you have any suggestions other than tearing up the whole yard and beginning again? My yard is about 1/2 acre and is **relatively low & shady and rarely dries out** seriously. It is a rough bowl shape with informal and formal shrubs and flowers bordering the grassy area. I am not a fan of the golf-course manicured lawn look and **have a mix of grasses and clover**. The lawn also has moss, but I **don't object to that** particularly. I just don't want the hated ajuga throughout.

Thanks for any
suggesting you have. -
S.J. -

We are sorry for your troubles but we must confess: we do sometimes use *Ajuga* as a **groundcover**. We do it with the understanding that, like all groundcovers worth their salt, it **will try to cover any and all available ground**.



However, we think there may be some **important differences** in our use and your battle. You may be dealing with the species, which seeds prolifically and because of its small leaf and low profile is able to survive some mowing. We use **cultivated varieties** as groundcover. These include types with big leaves like 'Caitlin's Giant' that don't tolerate mowing and 'Ruby Glow' with maroon and pink in the leaf that make the plants less quick to grow than all-green kinds. Both of these may slip a runner over the edge of the bed into the lawn but they are very unlikely to survive there unless the lawn is full of big bare spots and rarely mowed.

Above: At Janet's sister's home, where it was silly to have lawn in a tiny, shady 8 x 15' space in front of the porch, we designed and she planted a "quilt" of *Lamium*, *Ajuga* (dark leaf in foreground is 'Caitlin's Giant'), sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) and variegated *Liriope*. The area is bounded by concrete walks on three sides and the house on the fourth, so we didn't even have to set up no-man's-land boundaries to keep this rabble contained.

Already, after just a few years, we've seen the quilt do what we expect of a hope-they're-evenly-matched mix. First, the *Lamium* took over space the *Ajuga* gave up during a rough start. Then, once the *Ajuga* took hold, the *Liriope* began to move toward the sweet woodruff. We stay out of the melee as much as we can, playing the game of "see-who-wins!"

Ajuga should respond to herbicide. It certainly does die back when it's touched by overspray from lawn weed killers! Sometimes the way we mix an herbicide, the relative acidity of the water, and/or weather following an application can block the effects or neutralize the mixture.

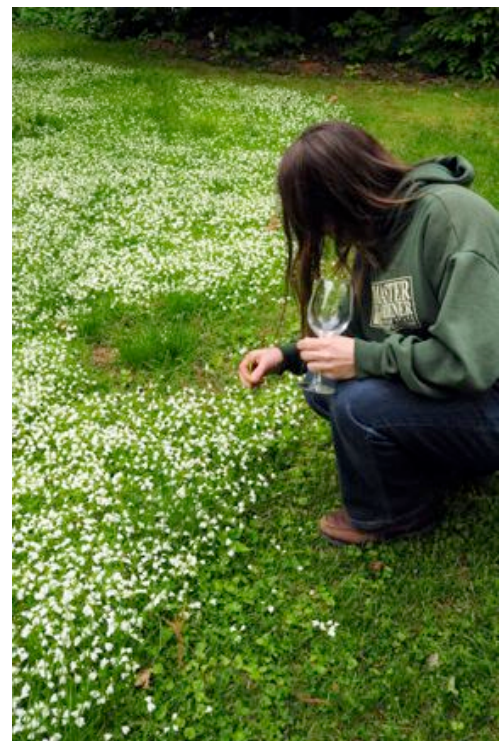
Neither the species nor the varieties are slowed much by in-ground barriers. Since they do most of their traveling a la strawberries -- at ground level by runners -- it takes **a horizontal barrier to stop their progress**. We call these no-man's-land, strips of ground patrolled regularly and cleared of greenery by mechanical, manual or chemical means. We outline *Ajuga* areas with walking paths, for instance, so straying plants are very visible and can be expeditiously removed. Since *Ajuga* wears out underfoot, traffic on the path is another discouragement to the plant's spread.

We have two suggestions. One is that you **consider beefing up the lawn** rather than beating back the *Ajuga*. In a shady, wet yard, lawn does not grow well and so, Nature abhorring a vacuum, other plants will fill bare spots -- both the noticeable bare spots and the tinier spots between sparse blades of grass. If not *Ajuga*, then something else would move in, which may be why you have moss and clover. (A dedicated optimist might say, "thank heaven you have *Ajuga* to fill in or maybe something worse would take hold in those bare spots!") In a thick, tall lawn, *Ajuga* can't get hold at a distance by seed. Although seeds may still fall into it, those that sift to the ground will be blocked from sprouting or the seedlings will be starved in the shade of a thick mat of grass blades. In a thick lawn *Ajuga* can't run so fast and far, either, because its runners don't grow roots except where they lie on moist bare soil. If the runner rests on grass blades and thatch, it doesn't root, doesn't advance the colony yet another 6 inches.

Helping the grass stay ahead of the *Ajuga* would involve aerating or otherwise improving drainage, pruning some trees to get more light, fertilizing the lawn and perhaps doing some overseeding (see page 4)

Idea #2: **replace some or all of the lawn with groundcover**, or introduce plants that will out-compete the *Ajuga*. These new things, if rowdy enough and comfortable enough in damp shade to give *Ajuga* a run for its money, will probably encroach even more on the lawn. We admired *Mazus reptans* in such a role recently, while visiting friends in Connecticut (at left, and on next page).

Maybe it takes a glass of wine to make lawn-plus-other acceptable. Maybe it's seeing those others in bloom, as this mat of white-form *Mazus reptans*.



Groundcover Guru

Perhaps the best mind and heart in groundcovers in the country today is David McKenzie, author of *Perennial Ground Covers* (Timber Press) and owner of Hortech, a wholesale nursery specializing in groundcover and live roof plants in western Michigan. You can use his Plant Selection Wizard, a very cool feature, at premiumplants.net. Check off the conditions and futures you want and see what he recommends. We clicked on the buttons for moderate shade, handles foot traffic, and tolerates wet, and ended up with -- we were afraid of this -- creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) and its golden form. Talk about a competitor. It tends to become the only plant in town...

With its tiny leaves and runners willing to wiggle into every tiny space, it's a winner where lawn gets thin and the gardener can accept a mixed-species turf.



Oh so galling: Spruce adelgid time

There are **pinkish round growths on the tips** of many of the shoots of my spruce. Can you tell me how to treat? Picture of growth is attached. Thank you. - C.D. -



Photo ©2010 Carol DeVries

Looks like **an adelgid (aphid relative)** that attacks spruces, called eastern spruce gall adelgid. The critters are inside that swelling, unreachable except by pruning out the affected parts before the galls mature and open. Burn the unopened gall then and you destroy the insects within.

If there are very many tips involved, **year after year**, control by pruning **can disfigure** the tree. In that case you might take other action, such as to prune off what you can but mark your calendar for next year for **when**

the buds break (usually, late in April). That's when it's time for the next generation to be out in the open for a short time, **vulnerable to insecticide**. You can read more about this at MSU Extension's bulletin at pestid.msu.edu/InsectsArthropods/EasternsprucegalladelgidAdelgesabietis/tabid/288/Default.aspx

The photos at that site are of a slightly more mature gall, losing its bright color.

Kudos to you for keeping an eye on your tree and catching it early. There are a number of different spruce adelgids. The position of the galls at the *base* of new growth, not the tip, distinguish it from the others.

Saw a sawfly, sawing off Azalea leaves

I found yesterday on my plants that the shrubby, huge flowered, very fragrant Azalea, with orange, cream and yellow flowers, the **leaves are laced-up**. I saw green little worms feasting on them.

Please tell me what to do...

Am so disgusted to walk around the yard, expecting glorious bloom from plants so lush and healthy looking before the buds appeared. - L.D. -



Few plants are so showy or so fragrant as the deciduous azaleas, such as the Northern Lights series ('Bright Lights', 'White Lights', etc.)

L.D., don't get down about your garden because of some insects! For everything that goes wrong in a garden there is something going right ten times over. Every plant has a tough year now and then -- which is why we grow plenty of them of many kinds.

The little green things on the azalea are azalea sawfly. Although it looks like a caterpillar it's the **immature stage of a tiny gnat-like insect** called a sawfly. It's been **chewing away for weeks** on the azalea leaves -- ever since the leaf buds opened and began to grow. Now that it's nearly full grown, we notice it because it's eating enough per day to make a big dent.

They can eat all the leaves off an azalea, but a **healthy azalea just replaces them**. Since the sawfly comes only once a year, all is well if this happens once every four or five years.

If you see any sawflies still feeding, **squish them** (they're pretty resistant to chemical sprays now in their nearly-full-grown stage).

Then keep the azalea well watered and fertilized for the month it will take to grow back. Finally, next spring as the leaf buds and first blooms open, look very close at the new leaves (maybe with a hand lens) to see if on there are miniature versions of the sawflies you're seeing now. If there are, **spray with an insecticide** -- almost any kind will kill them when they're so young.

There may not be any bugs, however, because that sawfly has up- and down years.

The reason I tell you to check first next year before you spray is that it may be a down year for azalea sawfly. It's natural enemies can catch up with it and it simply won't be back for while. In

that case your insecticide would be that much more unnecessary chemical in the environment. Also, if you check and **catch them early** you may be able to knock them off with a hard water spray, or **kill them with soapy water**.

Another option is **pre-emptive** -- just before the leaf buds open, spray the buds with a dormant oil or a **Neem oil** so the insects that come out of eggs through that sheen of oil will be smothered.

You could apply a systemic insecticide as the leaves begin to open. Systemics are products that are absorbed into the plant and act for a long time on insects that take a bite of the treated foliage. However, other consequences of using systemic insecticides on azaleas are worth considering.

Hummingbirds come to these flowers, and since systemic insecticides enter *all* parts of a plant including the nectar, the presence of the insecticide will make the hummingbird sick or prompt it to spit out the nectar and not come back. We shouldn't presume about other people but for us and many others, the chance to see a hummingbird scooting around in our garden is worth putting up with a few insects and an azalea temporarily defoliated.

We hope this helps, and wish you good gardening always.

If you're still down about your azalea, try this: Look around for some flowers that are making you happy. Tell us about those, so we can help you add to that part of your garden, rather than focusing on problems.

This week in Janet's garden

Grow with me! This week I will:

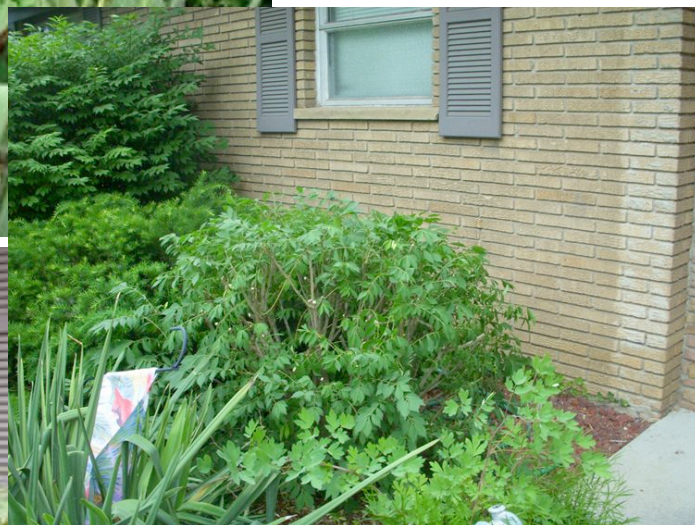
Tend to my when-I-can gardens. Now that my high priority gardens are settled as well as can be, I'm **playing catch-up** elsewhere. Mom-in-law's burning bushes need cutting back every year and I didn't get to them yet. They never should have been planted where they are but the former owners aimed for "instant landscape" when they put their home up for sale and Mom likes them. So we've cut them as you see here for almost 20 years now. They keep coming back!



Look hard, you'll find the dwarf burning bush I cut back, before and after its cut.



Once I've cut a burning bush (top left) at later than-prime-time, it's still shaggy and naturally shaped, just smaller and not so dense as it was before (bottom left). Enlarge your document view or zoom in to look at the photo below and you'll see the white dots of cut branch ends at all levels within the plant. A cut like this isn't a simple shearing but a shortening of all branches, some of which are clipped 'way back so the next flush of growth will begin at all those levels as the branch tips leaf out. This cut last year led to the dense, layered look at bottom, left.





The twigs I cut out of the burning bushes are great to **prop the little dahlias I'm planting**. Clip off the leafy twigs and soft growth (left), then stick them in the ground with forked ends up (bottom). They're crutches for the dahlia stems, soon lost to view as the dahlia fills out.

Be glad for **dragonflies**. Our little pond now seems to be supporting six species of these bug-eating, glittering creatures. It's such fun to watch them zip around, nabbing gnats and moshing mosquitoes!



In *everyone's* garden, **take care during storm season**. It's important that you are able to hear an approaching storm. So don't run power equipment on a day when thunderstorms are forecast. Here's a flashback to What's Coming Up #42 to explain why:

A-OK to work in the rain but don't risk it in electrical storms

It can be pleasant to work in a light rain on a warm day, and transplants take root at great rate in those conditions.

However, the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) warns us that **lightning can strike from out of the blue**, miles ahead of rain and clouds. Having been in a garden just 50 feet from a lightning strike, close enough to two others that I felt the boom in my stomach and never wanting to be there again, I heed the NOAA's advice: **If I can hear thunder I know that lightning can strike**. I drop my metal tools and go inside.

For more, copy this URL to your browser: crh.noaa.gov/fsd/summer/lightning.php

Lightning can jump. Just 10,000 volts can create a one-inch spark. With millions of volts, a lightning bolt can create a 15- to 20 foot spark.

Lightning can be seen farther than thunder can be heard. You can see lightning about fifteen miles off, hear thunder at ten.

To determine the distance between yourself and an electrical storm, count seconds between lightning flash and thunderclap. Then divide seconds by 5 to estimate miles distant. Fifteen seconds from flash to bang means the storm is 3 miles away; five seconds, just one mile off.*

*Based on the fact that lightning moves almost at the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second, while thunder is slower -- about 1,129 feet per second. In five seconds the sound of thunder can travel $5 \times 1,129$ feet -- about one mile. from *Lightning Strikes* by Jeff Renner, The Mountaineer Books

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.

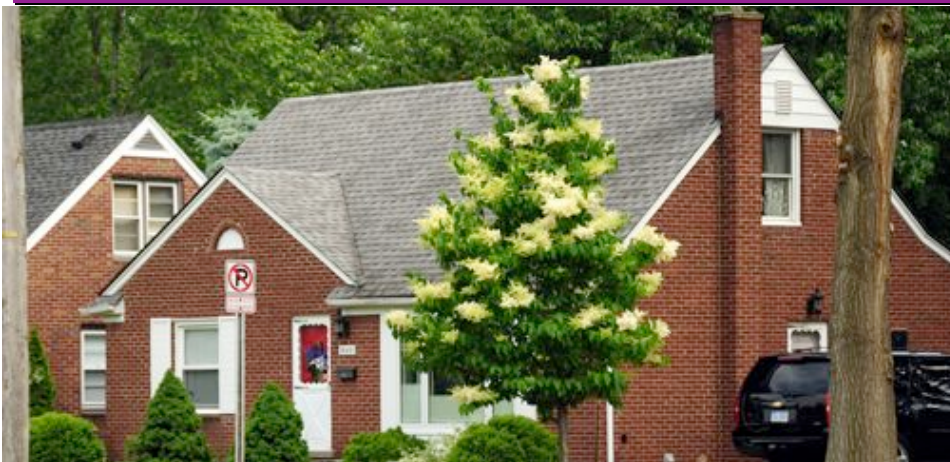
It's full of big, bright creamy white fragrant flowers:

Japanese tree lilac. *Syringa reticulata* is a good small street tree in zones 3 to 7, so it gets a lot of notice in June as it blooms. Although its

smell is not so universally loved as that of the purple common lilac bush, it doesn't have quite the nauseating undertone of its cousin the privet.

It's an oval- to round-topped tree 20 to 30 feet tall with red-brown, glossy bark. It's resistant to the mildew that disfigures lilacs, and the borer that weakens their canes. Watch for it this week as you drive.

Young tree lilacs (*Syringa reticulata*). At left, with maple tree. The tree lilac will eventually be 1/3 the size of this young maple.,



Green thumbs up to the smell of roses. Nothing like it! Even the awful *Rosa multiflora*, which can climb twenty feet up a tree or sucker to fill an acre, is wonderful to be near just now.

Green thumbs down to the smell of privet in bloom. Some people find it pleasant, akin to its relative the lilac. There is a high-class perfume modeled on the smell of privet in bloom. Yet anything more than a brief whiff of it makes my head hurt and I know I'm not alone.

Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

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."

An instructor who finds ways to reach every student. Horticultural photographer Steven Nikkila earned his degree in Landscape Technology from Oakland Community College in 1989. Since then he's helped thousands of people learn about photography, plants and gardens at gardening conferences, professional plant societies' symposia, community education organizations and botanical gardens. He also served as a senior instructor for The Michigan School of Gardening from 1996 to 2008. "I think one of the most important things about both teaching and photography is the angle you take. Everything has to make sense and be useful to the particular audience. When a Boy Scout troop asked me to help them with tree I.D. and photography, I used essentially the same materials I'd put together for the Master Gardener program and an Extension Educators' workshop. But it was a whole different class once I tailored it for the Scouts' perspective."

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

Where to catch Janet and Steven in-person:

Saturday, June 5, 8:00 a.m. - noon, *Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools.* At the **Detroit Zoo**, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance for hands-on instruction in garden **design**, annual- and perennial **planting** and **problem diagnosis**. You'll also be helping the Detroit Zoo maintain its place as a great garden destination (see below, "About attending..." for more). To reserve a place in this limited-space session at the zoo, email JMaxGarden@aol.com by June 1 with the subject line "Help at the zoo."

Monday, June 7, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.: *Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools!* In **Clarkston, Michigan**, Janet's doing some evaluation and brainstorm designing in **a dry woodland garden**.

This gardener's thrown lots of great plants and plenty of love into the mix and asked it to naturalize, so we never know what we'll see and do... If you'd like to attend, to observe or get your hands in, 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 get in touch quickly in case of weather-related changes. This is a limited-space workshop.

Saturday, June 26: Janet & Steven are in **Marquette, Michigan** at the Marquette Beautification & Restoration Committee's 3rd Annual Garden Extravaganza. 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Northern Michigan University. Fifteen seminars are offered and lunch is included. Janet & Steven's part is to explain how to enjoy **Eight Months of Color** in your garden. For more information and to register, contact Judy Place, jplace@nmu.edu or 906-226-9904.

More, throughout the summer. Details will be posted here. For more, 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 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 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. 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."

Where we go to *Garden by Janet*

Sometimes we are asked "Can you come do one of your workshops in my garden?" Maybe! These sessions are held where:

- 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.
- The site's visible from a public way so those who attend can drive by later to see "what happens next."



Garden by Janet sessions are rain-or-shine affairs. We don't go out in electrical storms but a light rain can't stop our fun or learning. This group gathered for a picture at our Detroit zoo garden one rainy but fun fall day: Hope Duff, Deb Hall, Carol Ebner, Deb Tosch, Maddie Laule, Kari Grady, Linda Pilnicki, Michele Armstrong, Janet, Priscilla Needle, Kay Lewis and Susan Campbell.

Time to garden your walls...



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

You can own any of Steven's images you've seen in *What's Coming Up*, or request almost any flower or type of scene you can imagine. His library includes tens of thousands of plants and nearly as many natural

images, including *Forest Seduction* (left) from the Scottish Highlands and a snowy egret strolling down a southeast Michigan road.

If you have an image in mind, describe it to Steven. He'll assemble a customized photo sampler for you. Email us at JMaxGarden@aol.com for details.

There is so much clear detail in these images that they can be enlarged to cover a wall and still be crystal clear. Prices depend on your choices in format and size. For example:

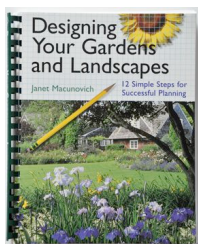
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with stretchers top and bottom
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*Janet's favorite: "I change our display by rolling up one tapestry and unrolling another."



You asked for our advice "on paper". We wrote and sell these books plus CDs:



Designing Your Gardens and Landscape

First published in 1990 as *Easy Garden Design*, a 150-page step-by-step recipe that's become a design classic. Janet developed, uses and has trained thousands of others to use this process. People say: "This is exactly the simple, clear approach I need!" This design process is applicable world-wide.

Soft cover, spiral bound. B&W illustrations by Janet. \$19.00

Caring for Perennials

Janet's unique approach to perennial care how-to, the real-time story of one bed from early spring to season's end. The 180 engaging and fact-filled pages make you part of all Janet does and you might ever need to do in each task's appropriate season and sequence. Includes a chart of what to do, when for 70 top perennials. Advice in this book is applicable in all of temperate U.S. and Canada. The perennial chart includes a key to adapt its timing for far southern or northern edges of that range.

Soft cover book. Color illustrations by Steven Nikkila. \$20.00



Asking About Asters CD.

A digital library of six years of Janet's work: weekly columns, newsletters and over 200 extra Q&A letters to individual gardeners. 1,681 questions answered about soil preparation, fertilizing, pruning, design, choosing plants, foiling bugs and much more. No repeated topics. Fully indexed; the entire collection can be searched from this one file.

1 CD in jewel case, Windows- and Mac compatible. \$20.00



Potting Up Perennials CD. New for 2010

A digital collection of 2009's *What's Coming Up*: 52 issues, over 750 pages with more than 150 articles, 500 images and 250 quick-look lists and reports. Includes a comprehensive index of this collection plus Janet's previously-released digital library, *Asking About Asters*. If you own both *Potting Up Perennials* and *Asking about Asters* you can search all the *What's Coming Up* newsletters plus six years of *Growing Concerns* columns and books from this new index.

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

1 CD in jewel case, Windows- and Mac compatible. \$15.00

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.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 pages. Color illustrations. \$12.00

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.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 pages. Color illustrations. \$12.00



Janet and Steven give you: Garden Care. New for 2010*

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.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 pages. Color illustrations. \$12.00

Janet and Steven give you: Trees, Landscape Ideas and Garden Care New for 2010*

Set of three 10" x 13" magazines, 48 pages each. \$30.00

***For a look inside, email JMaxGarden@aol.com with the subject line "Magazine peek."**



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