What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich answers your growing concerns
Issue #49, July 11, 2009

Here you'll find:

Right: Perhaps it's hard to believe, but these plants are having a tough time of it up in the air and needy for nutrients in the soilless mix so essential for good drainage in a pot. Without careful attention in three areas, a container garden may be a bust rather than a beauty. One focus should be on water, including changing the frequency of watering as the plants become larger. Equally important is regular fertilization with a liquid that contains micronutrients. Third, we deadhead and clip to keep new growth coming. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Potted flowers flag for lack of fuss and fertilizer

LouAnn wrote: Janet, I look forward to Saturday mornings and reading your newsletter. The pictures are so clear and informative.

My son has **baskets** on stands lining his front sidewalk. They are lined with preformed moss liners [no plastic]. They have plenty of sun. He plants 'Wave' **petunias** in them. He has a watering system in each basket and waters once a day. They **don't stay nice looking** too long. Can you give us some ideas to improve his outcome?

Thanks much for the feedback, LouAnn. I love sharing the facts and fun, and am very glad we're both able to use Steven's photo library.

I'm glad to know the plants in question have plenty of sun. Petunias and other sun-lovers need at least **six hours of sun per day. There's no compromise** when it comes to light. It's a plant's only energy source. Just this week a gardener called my attention to her two identical, mixed planters put in two different light situations. Plants in the pot that received a couple less hours of sun each day had grown little and some were dying off. Meanwhile their counterparts in the sunnier pot had nearly filled in. A week earlier, I sighed and started over in parts of a Boston

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garden. Like many plants and gardeners in that region, it had been drained of life by 22 days of cloud and rain in the past month.

Knowing that darkness is not the problem, I can cut to the chase and say that **the short answer** to pooped-out potted plants is **fertilizer**.

To understand **why**, start with the two big problems all plants face when their roots are up in the air in a free-draining pot:

- **One**, it doesn't have insulating earth all around it so **a pot dries out quickly**, much faster than the same plants in a garden. Drought stunts and kills.

- **Two**, potted plants often develop **nutrient deficiencies** expressed in pale leaves, lank stems, poor flowering, etc. They do this when we fail to make up for the absence of minerals in our potting mixes. We must use such mixes, since the root zone must drain freely. (See "Even the best garden soil...") Yet there is no or nearly no mineral content in a lightweight soilless mix or in soil mixed with a large proportion of other materials to make it super porous. If we add them, **minerals are flushed away quickly** by all the extra water potted plants require.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Both of these **issues become critical** as a growing season progresses. Days become warmer and plants larger so water needs increase. (See "Watering potted plants.") A pot that needed water every two days when first planted may demand **two waterings per day by midsummer**. Even if you know to step up the water, it's hard to stay ahead of the game if you have a job that keeps you away from home for 9 or 10 hours or an irrigation system limited to one cycle per day. You might grab a watering can immediately on getting home each evening, or set a sprinkler zone to drip on them daily, yet if the plants wilt between waterings they may become stunted, stop flowering, or even lose ground -- die back.

In a year **with a lot of rain, malnourishment becomes famine**. People look at their potted

(Cont'd. on next page)

Alternative liners for wire baskets

I wrote recently about the misunderstanding that caused people to think landscape fabric would be useful as long term "weed control" and how it does far more harm than good in the landscape. In that issue of the newsletter I also proposed a tongue-in-cheek list of alternative uses for this black polyester cloth. Reader Randy Zeilinger adds to that list:

"**Line hanging baskets with landscape fabric** to keep (soil in the wire form or place it in a pot's bottom) to keep soil from running out of the drain hole when watering. "

"However, instead of buying this awful product, you can **substitute newspapers** (*Janet: Or brown bags - above!)* and accomplish the same thing."

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plants and say "You've had rain just about every day! Why are you looking so miserable!? They miss the fact that all that water has leached from the pot every trace of the plant vitamins we call fertilizer.

I **fertilize planters at potting time** by adding to the soilless mix a slow release product such as fish meal or poultry manure, or ready-made Osmocote or Once.

That won't sustain a potted garden for long. So **use a water soluble fertilizer frequently**, choosing one that lists not only nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium as ingredients but **micronutrients** such as iron, sulfur and manganese, too. They are in **fish emulsions, kelp**, powdered **products for acid loving plants** and others. I try to fertilize every four or five days, using a dilute solution. That is, if the instructions calls for one tablespoon per gallon of water, I use just one-third or ½ tablespoon. Where you see big, beautiful planters in botanical gardens a drip line to those pots may be delivering a bit of fertilizer at *every* watering.

Finally, forestall legginess and encourage continual fresh, new growth. **Deadhead** the plants frequently and **cut back** any branch as it begins to show more stem than leaf. It's especially good to **keep trailing plants full with pinching** since trailers can act like water conserving mulch all down the sides of a pot.

Even the best garden soil...

...does not allow air and water to move through it as well when it's only 8 inches deep **in a pot** as it does in the garden. The pore spaces in a root zone collapse unless they are continually renewed by fungal growth, soil animals -- grubs, worms, et al -- and the exchange of water and air that takes place in a wide, deep space.

So **use a soilless mix** or soil mixed at least half and half with materials such as the perlite and bark (major components in most in soilless mixes). Then your planting media will maintain good pore space even in a heavily watered pot.

Watering potted plants...

...is not the same as watering a garden.

Always water to fill the pot -- the soil mix should be saturated and excess dripping from the drain holes. A good soil mix can hold ¼ of its own volume of water -- a one gallon pot can hold one quart of water. The upended water bottles I've shown you in my container gardens are one way to increase that reservoir.

Then, **water as often as necessary** to keep that soil from becoming completely dry.

Feel the soil or **check the weight of a pot** in comparison to one of the same size that's just been fully watered, **to know if you've added enough water**. Check again daily to judge how long it takes that pot to dry out.

Don't let potted plants wilt. Garden plants that use up all the water in their root zone in the heat of the day can receive water from subsoil. That moisture comes up through loose soil by capillary action. In a pot, once the root zone dries that's that until *you* water again. Watering more to begin with does no good.

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Change watering as potted plants grow

Adjust your watering during as plants' water needs change:

- For **bigger plants**, plants in **more sun** and **windy** days, **water more often** than for smaller plants in shaded sites, cloudy times and calm spots.

- **Move plants out of direct sun when you 'll be away** a long time. Plants use water more slowly in shade.

- **Be aware of wind**. Sometimes calm air is just a few feet away. Although the most important use a plant makes of water is to create its own food*, it uses the **biggest portion of the water** its roots take up **in a cooling process**. It pulls water into its leaves, then passes it out its pores as water vapor to cool itself. **Wind disrupts that** process by whisking away the vapor. Then the **plant must replace that water or wilt** to protect itself.

*To make food, plants split water molecules into component parts -- hydrogen and oxygen. The plant makes carbohydrates -- sugar and starch -- by recombining hydrogen and oxygen atoms with carbon from carbon dioxide in the air. A plant in full sun can make millions of molecules of sugar per minute for its hungry cells... unless the water runs out!

Although we call fertilizer "plant food" it is not food. Only its own sugars can sustain a plant's life and fuel its growth. The nutrients in fertilizer are incorporated like vitamins into growth that takes place only *if the plant has sufficient light to form food and new cells*.

Big mistake, big lesson: Sniff test saves (plant) lives

Since **mistakes are learning experiences**, our biggest blunders could be viewed as great treasures. If only we didn't have to pay the price!

Can we avoid the cost and advance as a group by pooling our bloopers? Let's try. Here are some **worst mistakes submitted by you-who-will-remain-anonymous**:

My mom taught me **a little bleach in water cleans iris divisions** from plants that had any soft rot. "Just dip them in for a minute or so," she said. I wish she'd also said, "And then pour that water out right away where you want to kill weeds because otherwise you might accidentally **water your seedlings with it and kill them**." Now I always **sniff before I water**.

You asked about dumb mistakes... I left a five-gallon bucket sitting out in a friend's greenhouse with about an inch of **rubbing alcohol** in it. I'd been using that to sterilize tools and also roots of divisions. I didn't realize my error until the next morning. When I went to look for it, it was gone. I was afraid to ask where it went and still simply **hope no one dumped it on a plant**.

But for some, mistake led to reward: "My husband was ill and drank liquid **dietary supplement**. I'd rinse the bottles and think such a waste, such expensive stuff. I'd empty them in the garden. What a surprise: You have never seen such **glorious, healthy roses**!"

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If neighborhood forest becomes see-thru: Check trees for girdling roots

Amy writes: "A friend pointed out to me the other day that a lot of **maple trees** in our neighborhood are **dying back at the crown** and appear to have **a green fungus** or something growing on their trunk. I hadn't noticed it until she pointed it out, but now I see maples like this on my street and as I drive around."

"Are you aware of a disease attacking maples in our area? Anything we can do to help the maples recover?"

"We've noticed this problem **primarily with trees planted along the street**. I suspect the city **planted these trees with the burlap intact**. Why do they do that? The city planted two maple trees in my front easement a few years before I bought the house. I noticed that the 'burlap' (actually a synthetic material) was still intact and that a cage was also encasing what I could see of the root ball on both of the trees. The people I bought the house from said they had questioned the city and were told that was standard practice and wouldn't hurt the tree. One of the first things I did was to dig down and remove what I could of the burlap and the wire cage."

I don't know of any new maple afflictions making the rounds, Amy. I do know that many street **trees suffer at about 15-20 years from girdling roots and/or root restriction**, which can cause the crown to die back.

There are borers that attack maples and can kill limbs but those usually attack already-weakened trees.

If it's the **center top of a tree that's dying** there is almost certainly **girdling underway**. Look for plastic cord, a wire cage or a root wrapped around the trunk, restricting its growth.

If **bits and pieces are dying** all over the crown, **general root restriction** is more likely the cause. Basically, that's when roots have filled all the soil between curb and sidewalk. In that case the plant's prone to drying out, which leaves it susceptible to many pests. It's also more likely to topple, just like a houseplant with a top that outweighs its pot.

Left: Sugar maple with girdling roots exposed. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Has anyone in your neighborhood hired an arborist? That's a good idea. You might pool your resources to **have an arborist look at the overall situation**. Perhaps your community has a forester or arborist on staff to maintain its street trees.

It's **good to remove wire and burlap**. **Yet maples are known for girdling**, Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) chief among them.

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Any maple is just more likely than another tree to develop some roots that circle rather than radiate from the trunk, even when there are no root barriers. So it's always good to keep an eye out for signs of trouble. (See "What is a girdling root?")

The **green on the trunks is probably lichen. It's not harmful** to the trees but can grow and be more noticeable in the light that reaches there as a tree's crown thins for other reasons.

Why are cages and burlap left in place even though they cause big trouble down the road? The main reason is probably that it's **easiest and quickest** to drop the whole package in a hole and scoot. Sometimes, too, the planter may not know or care about the long term consequences.

All the evidence now says, **however, it's bad for numerous reason**s to leave either the cage or the burlap in place. Some landscape professionals may have learned about planting before these facts were clear. If those pros haven't kept current and they do more planting than long term care, they may never have heard about or seen the unfortunate results. Others simply doubt the facts and feel even if there's truth there that it's still too costly to take the time and master the skill of setint the ball in the hole and then removing the wire and cloth.

As for plastic burlap, for at least a while when it first appeared on the scene, too little thought was given to its long term impact. It came into use because someone figured, "This will save time at the nursery; it won't rot away in a year like regular burlap so we won't have to re-wrap the root ball on remaining stock each fall."

Yet now **20 years after research was complete and widely published** about the negative effects of leaving the wire basket, burlap, or plastic burlap and 10 years after I thought it had been incorporated into every major university and the American Nurseryman's standards, a lot of professionals **still hold to and even teach the old ways. It's very frustrating** to see bad planting practice kill so many trees just as they become large enough to really contribute to a landscape.

So the most important thing I can say **about tree planting*** is that the gardener should do it herself or at planting time **be there and be firm about how things should be done**. Look under the burlap to locate the tree's natural root flare. (The maple tree above, shows a flare on its left face but a flattened base that indicates a girdling root on the right. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila) This often involves removing excess soil that's accumulated at the top of the ball. Check for remnants of older wraps, especially old plastic cord, and remove them. Dig a hole just deep enough to set the flare above the soil line but make that hole wide enough to accept the packaged ball plus allow room for a person armed with bolt cutters and scissors to remove the cage and burlap from all but the bottom of the ball.

*Copy and paste this URL to your browser bar to learn more: http://www.treesaregood.org/treecare/tree_planting.aspx

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What is a girdling root?

It's said "as the twig is bent..." That applies to roots, too. Sometimes **roots circle their plant** rather than head outward like a spoke from a wheel. It can happen because a pot, burlap, bed edging or other **barrier deflects the growing tip**. Sometimes the plant is genetically inclined to curved roots and then **it can happen naturally**.

Once a root circles, it doesn't move. Its girth increases with age. If a tree or shrub grows up **against that root, the trunk growth stops** as surely as if it was wrapped with wire.

One of the reasons we see the results of girdling at 15-20 years is that it may take 10 or 15 years for a tree's trunk to become as wide around as the root ball was at planting time. That's when any root that was circled at the edge of the root ball begins to press. The tree's growth slows and **first signs** appear, such as a **flattening of the tree's top** when uppermost branches grow less than lower, side limbs.

After about five years of this, **the tree begins to die back**. Once serious dieback begins, it's probably too late to save that tree.

To catch a girdling root early, **look for asymmetry in the root flare**. If the base of the trunk isn't uniformly flared like a footed vase but **flat on one side like a stove pipe**, dig down along the flat side, find the girdling root that's preventing growth there, and remove it. Use loppers, saw or a wood chisel. Avoid wounding the trunk

Many people who find a sizable girdling root say, "Oh! I can't remove such a big root, I'll kill the tree!" Yet that root *is* killing the tree. And despite its girth, the feeder roots at its tip make up a less than normal portion of the tree's root system, because they formed within the dry canopy rather than out at the drip line.

Call in an arborist if you have any doubts about performing the operation yourself. If you cut, don't place your body in front of the root's arc because once you cut and release tension the root may pop outward to hit you..

In the photo on the left I've begun to clear soil from around the trunk to locate the root or roots that are killing the maple on the previous page. On the left, I've cleared further and dabbed paint on some offending roots to help you see them. Girdling roots may be much larger and indeed after removing those shown here I found a much larger root that was the primary problem. Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

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Alone in the Garden? Never! Our mentors will always be with us:

Most of us have or had a **parent, neighbor or other veteran gardener** to guide us through our first attempts to grow. Such as C.S.' friend...

"... an elderly lady I met several years ago at the ... Farmers Market (who) was trying to load a half dozen tall ...lilies into her Buick's trunk, and it clearly was NOT going to work, as the plants were taller than the clearance available. I watched for a while, and finally sidled up and asked where she lived. Her home was three miles further than mine, down the same road. I offered to load her lilies in the back of my SUV, drove them to her house, and gained a very savvy gardening friend for life!"

The **gardening advice our mentors give us** may include facts that took many years to develop and generations to confirm and tweak. Think how may observant eyes, growing seasons and trials went into this line about plants that do their neighbors a service by repelling pests or having complementary rather than competing needs for nutrients:

Plant rosemary near cabbage, beans, carrots and sage
to control cabbage moth, bean beetle and carrot fly.

Here's one submitted by Celia Ryker:

Any fool can destroy trees, they cannot run away.
- John Muir -

Has practical detail or overall guidance been given to you? Tell me -- I'll pass along all I can.

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

Deadhead. That means to encourage continued bloom by **clipping off flowering stems** before they can progress very far into seed formation.

As seeds form, they produce chemicals that direct the plant in this way, "Stop making new flowers. Let us have more of the available food." The more seeds, the stronger the message.

This week I've clipped spent lilies, daisies, daylilies, bellflowers, perennial geraniums, foxgloves, catmints and just about all the annuals I grow. Next week, more of the same!

If you want to attract birds with fresh seed, share seed with others, or help an annual or biennial continue its presence in your garden, skip the deadheading or leave a stem or two to ripen.

There are some **plants I usually allow to go to seed** in order to enjoy their seed pods in fall or winter. Some of those **are on my deadhead list this year** because they haven't set much seed. That may be because it was too cool or moist at bloom time so pollinators were not active. False indigo (*Baptisia australis*) is one of these. I may even cut it back completely in fall because its stems didn't develop much strength in this cool, wet spring. False indigo are flopping even now,

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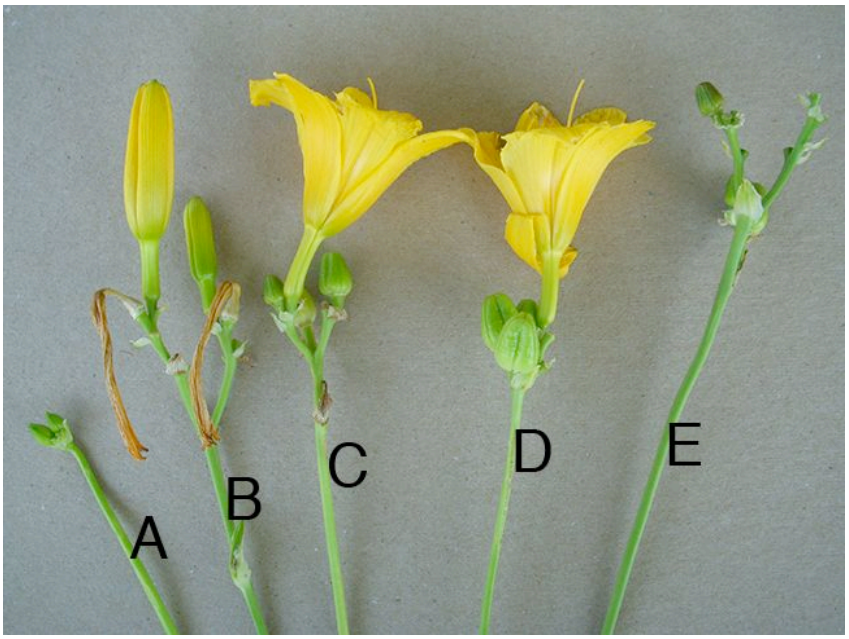
like the sun-starved, heat-hungry butterfly bushes (*Buddleia davidii*) I saw sprawled all over the Boston area.



To deadhead with confidence, learn to recognize spent flowers and to distinguish between flower buds and seed pods. In a daisy, the flowers are tiny yellow buds arranged in concentric circles on the central disk. The outermost circle ripens first (it's open on the lefthand flower above), showing powdery yellow pollen (center flower) and then brown, aging tissue. When the inner circles are showing pollen (right hand flower), it's high time to clip that daisy stem even though the white petals we think of as the flower are still intact.

From A to E, flower buds (A), buds plus spent flowers (B), flower plus developing seeds (C and D), and seed-only (E) on daylily stems. If in doubt whether it's a bud or a pod, clip one open. Flower buds are packed with petals, visible even before they develop color. Pods contain seeds! Photos ©2009 by the author

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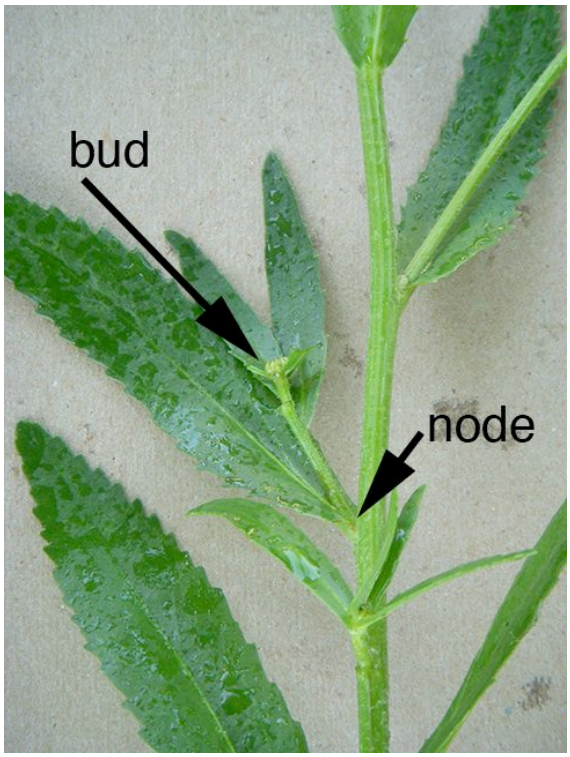

Don't waffle when you cut back that daisy (far left). Clip back to just above a large leaf (arrow). The section of stem indicated by the arrow is enlarged, near left.

A stem's highest node (a node is the leaf-stem junction) is the one most likely to produce a new flowering stalk. If the leaf at that node is large, as on this stalk, the new bloom it produces will receive more food, have a thicker stem and more robust flower.

In that lower node on this daisy stem a new flowering stalk is already forming. If the seeds in the current flower begin to ripen, that bud may be aborted. Photos ©2009 by the author

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Cut out or pluck off what's brown and remove it from the garden. Some of that brown is fungus-infected and I want to **keep the amount of infectious material** to a minimum. I removed a lot of rose leaves this week that are fading -- before they show the distinctive, infectious stage of **rose black spot**. I'll keep doing that all summer.

I've also clipped back any **clematis stems with wilted, brown leaves**. If you see brown in that tangled heap that's your clematis, there's some wilt going on in there!

The fungus we call clematis wilt entered such stems at wounds and cracks, proliferated and plugged the stem, causing everything above to die off. I **clip that stem off at ground level** to encourage the growth of a whole new cane. If I can, I trace that stem upward and remove all its parts. This is not for disease control -- the infection doesn't necessarily travel up -- but for aesthetic purposes.

I don't try very hard in this last step, however. That's because trying to sort out a clematis vine in full leaf is something that probably ranks up there with "worst mistakes." Not only can it take hours but otherwise healthy stems are almost certain to crack in the process. Then *they're* open to new infection.

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Resist the urge to cut shrubs that are beginning to become shaggy. For a few more weeks they're still in spring-growth phase, likely to sprout anew in response to cuts. **Wait until August** to clip shrubs and trees if you want them to be smaller and tighter than Nature would have them. With just one pruning per year as woody growth begins to ripen in earnest for fall, your end result will keep its given form for months and months.

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I've added **another chance for you to prune with me**. See "Where to catch Janet..." on page 13.

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Fertilize. Use water soluble, balanced fertilizer (such as 20-20-20 or 7-7-7) to bolster growth of:

- **annuals**,
- **vegetables** just beginning to form fruit,
- **greedy/needy perennials** such as roses, peonies, delphinium, and clematis, and
- **exotics** that can't get what they need locally. In the Midwest azaleas and rhododendrons top that list, trapped as they are in soil too alkaline to release the nutrients they need.

***Prevent* fertilizer applications on lawns** unless they're lawns that are watered every two or three days. Lawn fertilizer in midsummer is a waste if the grass isn't kept cool and moist enough to be able to grow. It may even burn turf that is watered only once a week or less.

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Loosen the soil outside the perimeter of any tree/shrub planting hole made in the last year or two. New root growth is accelerating now as summer peaks and days begin to shorten. I want those new woody plants to root wide. Loose soil is the ticket to that trip.

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Visit gardens to see mature examples of things I've planted that are new to me and learn what they *should* look like! I'm in Iowa while you're reading this, to tour the vegetable plots at Seed Savers Exchange and see dwarf conifers, trees and shrubs at the Bickelhaupt Arboretum. Check your newspaper* and library (and my July 23 "Where to catch Janet...") for news of local tours.

* Southeast Michigan gardeners are blessed to have the publication "The Michigan Gardener" (available free at participating garden centers or by subscription -- see "subscriptions" at www.michigangardener.com). It has an extensive listing of tours.

The 45mph garden

You can put a gardener behind the wheel but you can't take the flowers out of his eyes. What's catching driver's eyes this week?

They aren't beautiful but they are drawing the eye. They're **leafless crabapples**. Those that are susceptible to **apple scab** have already lost their leaves to that fungus infection. My neighbor's 'Radiant' crabapple is bare earlier than ever in 30 years because this spring the weather was conducive to scab infection and scab growth for an extended period.

It looks like fall under many crabapples, where leaves killed by apple scab fungus lie thick. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

What a good reason to look beyond the flower when you pick a crabapple at the garden center, and search for **varieties that are disease resistant**.

Unless the tree is ailing for other reasons, skeletal crabs **aren't in mortal danger**. They put away plenty of energy during the months they did have leaves. My neighbor's tree has been at least partly defoliated by August 1 in every year of its 55 years in place but shows no signs of decline.

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

Grins: To those who trust a supermarket produce shelf more than their own yard's bounty. Over the past few weeks we've paused in our work to pick and **eat serviceberries** from trees (*Amelanchier* species and varieties) in our gardens. This attracted the attention of passersby, most of whom were surprised to hear you can eat this delicious native fruit. Yet only a few would sample a berry!

Grow-ans: To dealing with dozens of **sucker locust trees** that arise from the still-live roots of the mother tree that was recently removed. It's especially vexing when it was a *neighbor's* tree but the suckering takes place mostly in your gardens, in whose loose, well watered bosom the tree chose to develop most of its roots. Yet there's good in every development. In this case, I can map the tree's root system by the suckers' locations. It's a textbook example of a circle 1-1/2 to 2 times as wide as the branches reached.

Who's Janet?

A trowel and notebook gardener. Janet gardens professionally but cultivates learning as diligently as she does her clients' gardens. This is because she's so often benefited from what others have told her and from what she's learned in researching questions for other gardeners. She's written ten books, produced a Q&A column weekly since 1993, created and run a gardening school, speaks to groups and teaches classes every chance she gets. "What I know for certain after all this time are just two things. One, that I'm never going to know enough to be completely on top of a garden -- even if I could remember everything at the right times to keep every plant in line, Mother Nature always has something new for me to learn. Two, that even though there are always more things going right than wrong in a garden I must focus on the positive or I might miss it *all*. Every minute in a garden can be wonderful if I keep those two things in mind." Email questions to her at JMaxGarden@aol.com.

Where to catch Janet and friends* in-person:

*See August 15 on and "Invite Janet or Steven" on page 13

Thursday, July 16, 10 a.m., come *learn* with Janet as she attends "**Rain Gardens**" taught by one of Michigan's naturalist gems, Professor Orin Gelderloos*, at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, Environmental Interpretive Center. This is an outing of the Association of Professional Gardeners (A.P.G.) and their guests. Are you a professional gardener or interested in entering the profession? Then even if you're not a member of A.P.G. you're welcome to attend a meeting to see how this group helps its members grow. Contact president Gail Morrell at 248-828-2978 or thegardener@comcast.net for directions to the class, membership details or guest information. *All about Professor Gelderloos at www.umd.umich.edu/casl/natsci/faculty/gelderloos/

Saturday, July 25, 8:00 a.m. - 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 topic. We'll be deadheading, diagnosing problems, and designing on this day. To join Janet on this day, email mstgarden@yahoo.com with the subject line "I'll volunteer at the Zoo with Janet."

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Wednesday, July 29, 6 -9 p.m., "**Summer in the Garden: An Expert's Perspective**" Come hear and see Janet's take on what makes a garden grow and makes for fun in summer. This talk is based on examples from the Belleville Garden Club Garden Walk (Sunday, July 26, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; purchase tickets at the Belleville library, $8 in advance, $10 on the day of the walk). You don't have to attend the walk to appreciate Janet's follow-up presentation but if you do you're likely to recognize a whole new dimension in on-site learning. The talk is at the **Fred C. Fisher Library** in downtown **Belleville**, Michigan. Free. Call 734-699-3291 to reserve a seat.

Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools! for
Pruning Trees and Shrubs: Keep them small and shapely
August is prime time for pruning woody plants to keep them small. All around the Detroit, Michigan area Janet has appointments with trees and you're can attend. Janet covers: How well and how long popular landscape plants hold up to pruning, and simple techniques for keeping plants within the bounds you set. Free. You must contact Janet for location details.
You can attend at one or a combination of these locations:

- ***New date:*** **Thursday, August 13**, 9 a.m. in **Grosse Pointe Shores**. Prune **yews, oakleaf hydrangea and more**.
- **Thursday, August 13**, 7 p.m. in **Rochester Hills**. Prune **crabapples** and evaluating the performance and future needs of a serviceberry tree last pruned in this way in 2008.
- **Saturday, August 15**, 8:30 a.m. in **Grosse Pointe**. An upright Japanese maple and a coral bark maple are the focus.
- **Saturday, August 15**, 2:00 p.m. in **Farmington Hills**. A magnolia, serviceberry and fir tree.
- **Monday, August 17**, 6:00 p.m. in **Livonia**. A weeping Japanese maple, yews and a dwarf white pine.
- **Questions? Or to reserve a spot** in these limited-space workshops, call or email Janet: 248-681-7850 or JMaxGarden@aol.com. Include your name and phone number on the phone message or in your email, and make the subject of your email "pruning with Janet."

Saturday, August 15, 7 a.m., "Shoot! That's Steven!" Bring your camera and join horticultural photographer Steven Nikkila on a photo shoot in one of his favorite gardens. Too early in the day for you? Then that may be his first lesson to you: Shoot when the light is soft! This is a free but limited-space workshop. Call or email Steven to reserve a spot: 248-681-7850 or hortphoto@gmail.com. Include your name and phone number on the phone message or in your email, and make the subject of your email "shooting with Steven."

About attending Gardens 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:** 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

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learn, we accomplish much. The official program requires that regular garden volunteers complete an interview and orientation process but you can come as my student on an temporary pass for a day or two. **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." That email will connect you to my friend Deb Tosch who keeps my group's schedule straight. You'll receive upcoming work dates, directions for meeting up with my group at the zoo as a temporary helper, plus all you need to sign up officially in case you decide to stay on.

Invite Janet or Steven 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 own 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, left) have been digging, shooting and teaching how-to for 22 years. They began bringing producing conferences in the early '90s and then ran a gardening school for 12 years to present 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 Deb Hall (above, right) who dug many a planting hole with Janet as well as impressing her with unmatched ingenuity, creativity and humor. 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.
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