

## What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich answers your growing concerns

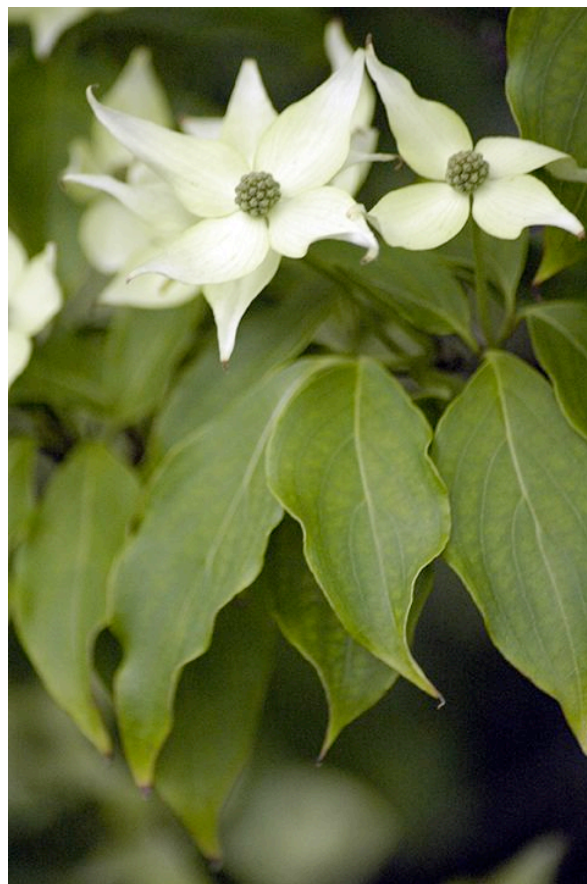
Issue 34, March 28, 2009

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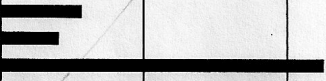
Such a shame, that I cut a trunk out of a kousa dogwood before it bloomed? Not really, just a trade for quicker fill. Read page 6.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



### Passed the test, but flunking analysis of soil's worth

I sent soil samples to the Michigan State University **soil testing lab**. My results are in but I can't understand them. Help! - Cindy -

DATE	LAB #	COUNTY	GROWER'S EMAIL	ACRES	FIELD ID	SOIL				
6/12/2008	87206	Oakland	groweremail@yahoo.com		001	Mineral				
Next to Lake or Stream?		Year Area Planted		Fertilizer Tilled in Prior to Planting?		How Deep?				
(A)		(B)				8 Inches				
SOIL NUTRIENT LEVELS			Below Optimum	Optimum	Above Optimum					
'Soil pH 7.6      Lime Index										
'Phosphorus (P) 51 ppm										
'Potassium (K) 87 ppm										
'Magnesium (Mg) 263 ppm										
ADDITIONAL RESULTS:			Optional Tests:							
'Calcium (Ca) (ppm)	CEC (meq/100 g)	% of Exchangeable Bases			Micronutrients (ppm)				Organic Matter %	Nitrate-N ppm
		K	Mg	Ca	B	Cu	Mn	Zn		
2562	15.2	1.5	14.4	84.1						
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: <i>Flower Beds, perennials</i>										
Limestone:		NONE								
NUTRIENT NEEDS:										
Nitrogen (N)		Phosphate (P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> ):			Potassium (K <sub>2</sub> O):			Target pH:		
3 lb/1000 sq ft		1.9 lb/1000 sq ft			3.5 lb/1000 sq ft			6.0		
FERTILIZER OPTIONS:										

Great timing, Cindy.

**Now is the time to spread slow release fertilizer.** With a soil test you can **choose the very best fertilizer for your soil.**

On the soil test report (left):

**(A) The pH is 7.6.** Plenty of plants will grow in that level of alkalinity but lowering it to 6.0 (acidifying it) would be better.

(B) The soil is **deficient in phosphorus and potassium**.

(C) The **CEC (cation exchange rate)** is in the teens. That's good. It means the soil has a moderate-to-**good ability to hold nutrients in store**. If that number was below 12 I'd tell you to use only slow release fertilizer and apply even that in small doses throughout the year. If the number was over 20 I'd say give up hope of changing the soil's pH. As it is, you can expect this soil to hold nutrients reasonably well and to be able to acidify it by adding soil sulfur.

(D) Based on its present nutrient levels, its CEC and the crop you specified when you sent in your sample (Flower Beds, perennials), **the lab recommends you use** a fertilizer with a nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium ratio of **3 - 1.9 - 3.5**. You should look for a fertilizer or combination of fertilizers in that ratio, such as 3 - 2 - 3, 3 - 2 - 4, 6 - 4 - 7, etc.

### About that rocky soil

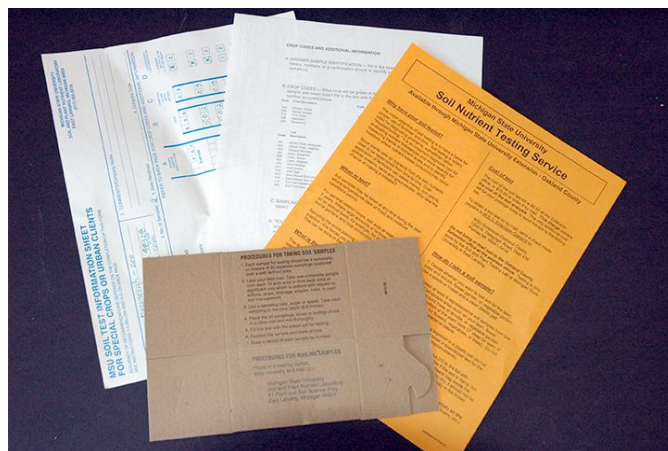
Plants don't mind rocks. Given moisture and a modicum of soil around and between, they grow there. It's people wielding shovels who object to rocks.

### Teeming with life, a good team to have on your side

One teaspoon of organic soil may have 600 million to 1 billion helpful bacteria from 15,000 species. Chemically treated soil may have as few as 100 bacteria.

- Elaine R. Ingham -

Oregon State University soil scientist, quoted in the article "Our Food, Our Future" by Donella H. Meadows, published in Organic Gardening magazine Sept/Oct 2000.



Buy your soil test kit (above) from an Extension office. It consists of instructions, a form to fill out and a box for submitting the sample. You'll take soil from ten or more spots in the sample site, mix them in a clean plastic bucket (center) and send one baggie (bottom) of the dried mixture to the lab. Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila



### How's your taste for flowers?

I curse deer who snip off my lily buds just as they're swelling to bloom, and also the groundhog who munches the buds of purple coneflower and bellflower. Yet we share their taste for flowers, it seems. Name three **vegetables** we eat **that are flower buds**. (Check page 13 for my answers.)

## Tried to grow organic veg... foiled by the soil

Dear Janet,

We built some raised beds **for our vegetable garden**. We would have filled the beds with our own soil but it's terribly rocky and sandy plus this land was once an orange grove so we think it may have pesticide residue, which is what we'd like to avoid in our homegrown produce.

So we did a lot of calling around and checking landscape supply sources, and found several places that sell **organic soil** by the truckload. We bought some, having been told it was certified and had not had any synthetic pesticides or fertilizers used on it for 8 years.

We're so **disappointed**. Almost the day after we put it into the beds the soil became gray and rock hard. We went ahead and planted tomatoes into it, which took a lot of effort, but to keep them growing (they did okay but not exceptionally well) we had to keep putting a fork down into the soil all around each plant and breaking up the soil so it couldn't settle into a brick-like state again. The parts we didn't plant in tomatoes, where we planned to put herbs and some beans, we just didn't plant because it was so difficult to work that soil and so daunting to think we have to keep loosening everything constantly.

Any suggestions? Or explanations why it's **so bad even though it's organic**? D.M.

Some **explanations and several suggestions**, D.M. And my sympathy. I am sorry to hear all this, and sad I can't offer you a quick way out.

I'd like to see the certificate that supplier had for the soil. I **cannot find any authority that certifies soil as organic** or any legal provision for such certification. Federal law plus some State laws and agricultural organizations' standards, specify what food is organic, based on how it was grown. Such food may display "organic" on its label. Those laws also certify grower operations as organic if they meet certain standards. Such a farm may advertise that it is organic.

The laws don't cover soil as a product. 100 farms may have 100 types of soil, some of them easier and some harder to work, some more and some less fertile. **What makes an organic farm's soil special** is not simply that it has not been treated with unacceptable chemicals but that **it is treated all the time as a living thing**. It's repaid for its produce with carefully balanced additions of compost and

### Organic, or what?

The **USDA's** National Organic Standards Board **defines "organic"** and related terms:

Organic agriculture is an ecological production management system that **promotes and enhances biodiversity**, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on **minimal use of off-farm inputs** and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony."

"Organic" is a labeling term that denotes products produced under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act. The principal guidelines for organic production are to use **materials and practices that enhance the ecological balance of natural systems** and that integrate parts of the farming system into an ecological whole.

Organic agriculture practices **cannot ensure** that products are **completely free of residues**; however, methods are used to minimize pollution from air, soil and water.

To learn more, copy this URL to your browser:  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/ofp/ofp.shtml>

specific rock powders. Its keepers guard against compaction so air can reach in to encourage fungi and bacteria that are its nutrient processing department. It's given periodic rest beneath cover crops such as clover that host nitrogen-fixing bacteria and give physical protection from wind and rain.

Growers following organic tenets would even say that **soil should not be moved**, that it is an integral part of the environment in which it developed. To move it is to disconnect it from the situation that fostered its particular mix of microorganisms and the natural processes that allowed it to support healthy plant growth. It would have to undergo gradual change to become a viable part of any new place.

Let's hope your soil really did spend years out of any pesticide loop, and that the only real crime here was opportunism -- sellers hyping a product in ways that take advantage of consumer interest in agricultural purity. I say hope because **it's not possible to test for purity in general and nearly impossible to test for specific contaminants**. One would have to send samples to a lab along with directions to test for the presence of specific chemical compounds.\* The cost would be considerable and the results only as good as the up-front research into which compounds might be present.

If you can trust the claim of no pesticides, then **start work on** a crucial item, the **soil structure**. (See "A fix for floury silt," right.) If you can't trust the claim and don't have the means to do special testing, you can remove that soil and start over. Or you could grow non-food items there until you reach your target starting point. Or you can do a little of both, growing non-food, soil-building crops there as you give the soil more time free of pesticides.

Meanwhile, improve a patch of your rocky, sandy soil, too. In a few years it will be at least as clean as an organic farm's soil.

**This is all worth it. Growing your own food** is the best way to control quality and purity.

### **A fix for floury silt, sticky clay or loose sand**

I've seen many soils that made a gardener cry, "Hopeless!" For almost every one, the best answer was to **improve the soil's structure**.

Structure, in soil, is the way particles of clay, silt and sand connect, how much pore space they have between them for the passage of air and water, and how much organic matter resides there. Many times we buy soil that has had its **structure destroyed**, perhaps **by tilling, screening and sifting** to make it look good. If it's gray rather than dark, it also has a low organic matter content. Aim at that deficit to begin that soil's rehabilitation.

Work some **compost or fine-particle organic matter into the soil's** top few inches. Then add at least two inches of **an organic mulch**. Minced leaves, peat and bark (the latter two are sold together as potting mix) can serve as amendment and/or mulch. Then **keep the bed moist**, even if it's not planted, so microorganisms prosper.

As the organic matter breaks down, **humus will** remain. Along with the excrement of the microorganisms, that humus will become a microbial glue. It will **hold grains of soil together** in complex crumbs. These crumbs will rest together lightly, surrounded by pore space. That's quite an improvement over the initial state of many purchased soils, which tend to fall into dense, airless, lifeless configuration for lack of microbial glue and the questing threads of fungi. Such soils are like dry refined flour. Well structured soil is **like a fluffy home-baked cake**.

As a mulch breaks down, humus will work into the soil below. **Add more mulch. Grow what you can** because roots exert pressure and contribute by-products that help soil structure, too. **The soil will improve**, absorbing water more readily into pores held open by microbial residues, the passage of tunneling insects and boring worms. What you put on top will be dragged in ever deeper.

## The Organic Trade Association (OTA) summarized the USDA regulation:

For at least 3 years prior to harvest, no prohibited substances\* are to be used on land that produced crops, if those crops are to be labeled "organic."

For more: [www.ota.com/organic/environment/soil.html](http://www.ota.com/organic/environment/soil.html)

\*For a summary of the USDA National Organic Program, including a list of acceptable and prohibited materials for pest control, fertilizers and seed treatments, go to [http://fmi.org/gr/USDA\\_OrganicProgram.pdf](http://fmi.org/gr/USDA_OrganicProgram.pdf)

## Room to grow more organic

Certified organic operations, 2005\*:

California:	1,916
Wisconsin:	580
Washington:	527
Iowa:	453
Michigan:	164
Tennessee:	8
Mississippi:	6
South Carolina:	5

Even if it seems like bad soil -- this hard-as-rock brown clay loam did! -- loosen it however much you can and then add compost. Let the compost settle into the open spaces. Mulch the bed and keep it moist. Makes a great bed!

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



0.5% of all U.S. crop/pasture land is in certified organic operations

\*In 2009 this data will be updated with 2006-7 reports <http://ers.usda.gov/Data/Organic/>

**If you have no other agenda than flowers: Prune spring bloomers right after bloom and prune what blooms after mid-June in early spring.**

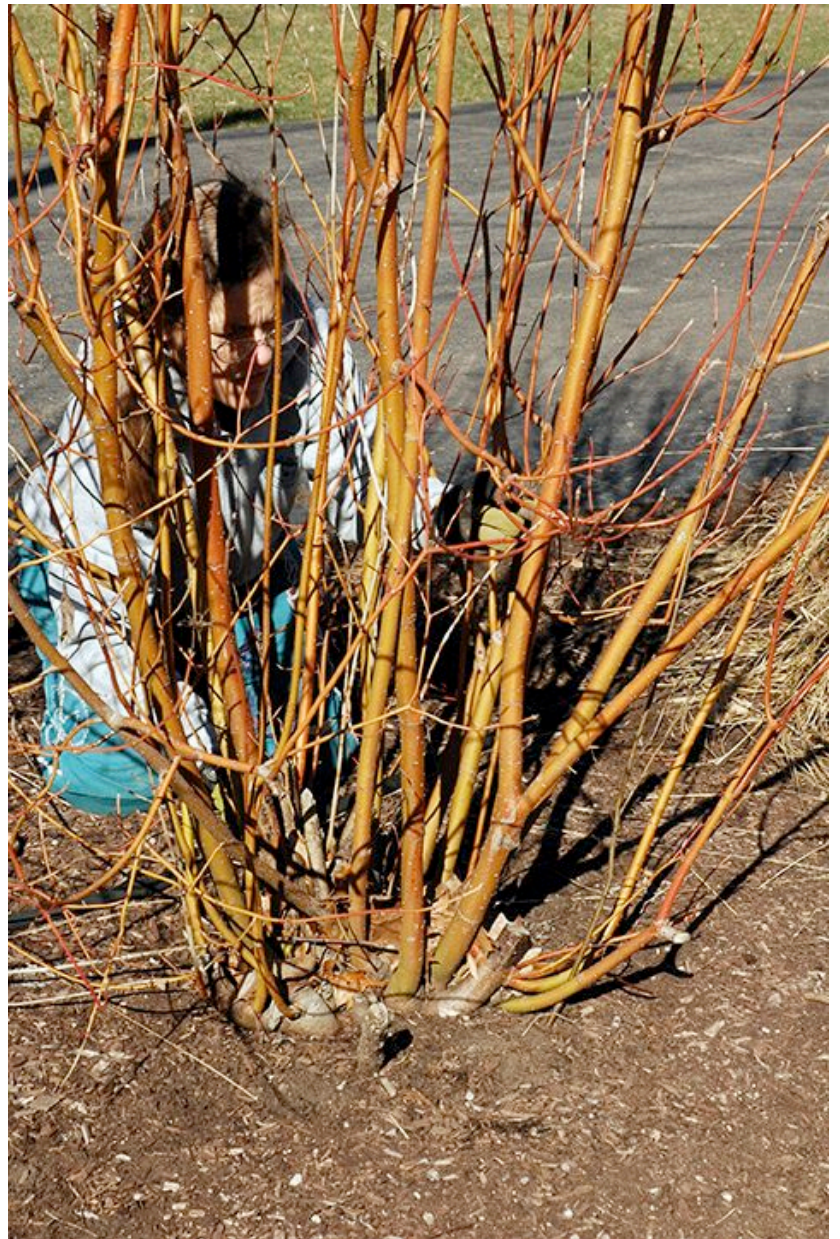
**Cut strong wood lightly, cut weak wood hard.**

**- Janet -**

## This week in Janet's garden

**Grow with me! This week I will:**

Keep on cutting. Now I'm **cutting woodies I hope will produce lots of vigorous young wood** this year: redb twig dogwoods, yellowtwigs, pussywillows, purple osier willow, butterfly bush, dwarf summer-blooming *Spiraea* such as 'Gold Flame' and 'Anthony Waterer', blue mist spirea (*Caryopteris*), rose of sharon, panicle hydrangea (*H. paniculata* varieties such as 'Limelight', 'Tardiva' and 'Peegee'), and others.



I take out about 1/3 of this dogwood's stems each year, targeting the oldest. Once those are out I might shorten remaining stems, or not. Here we like the plant for height but want it to remain relatively narrow. By comparing the photos at top left and bottom left you can see how thick with new stems it becomes after each cut.

Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

I'm still **shaping up woodies that haven't leafed out**, too. Just took an extra trunk out of a kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*). Sure, the conventional wisdom is to prune spring

bloomers like this kousa right after they flower but if I wait for it to blossom it will also have leafed out to accommodate this extra trunk and limbs. Taken then, they'll leave quite a hole. Taken now, there will be one trunk's less bloom but more leafy in-fill response from remaining limbs right from the get go.

All this cutting keeps the garden in bounds and it nets me **a bounty, also**. Some of the cut branches will become **wattle fence** around our Detroit Zoo garden. Stout twiggy-tipped types will be **props for perennials** that need crutches to stay up while in bloom.



Several times this week people out with me have exclaimed over my folding saw. Since it may be news to you and it's certainly a great tool for this season, here it is. It's only a 7 inch blade, which is great for getting into tight places like the dead-stub crowded base of a redbud dogwood that needs cleaning out. (Why, though I say, "cut it to the ground" do people hear "cut it to 8 inches above ground"? When I say I cut all of the butterfly bush stems, all of the bluestem spirea stems, or all the oldest redbud dogwood stems right to the ground, I mean to ground level.) I use both Corona and Felco brand folding saws and think both are fine tools, although I find the closing mechanism of the Corona easier to operate. Both available at many hardware and department stores.  
Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

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I'm also **cutting down** the ornamental **grasses** (except blue oat grass; those I simply comb to pull out the dead blades) and the stems of **perennials** I left up for winter interest, bird food, butterfly and beneficial insect shelter or general ecological completion. As I cut them, I'm **looking for signs of health problems** or overcrowding.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

For instance:

- **Weak stems in the plant center** alert me to a need for division.
- **Thin, sickly stems here and there** or all through a plant's crown make me take a closer look for soil or light conditions that have changed to weaken the plant.
- **A lopsided crown** sets me looking for aggressive, shadowing, smothering neighbor plants.
- **Seeing one or some plants lagging behind** a group that's otherwise prospering prompts me to hunt down differences around or under those plants to account for the variation.
- **Holes near a plant** prompt me to tug on stems; voles may have undermined the crown.



Watch out for trees and traffic. The change is slow and the impact is great,  
yet we miss the one and mistake the other.

- Janet -

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Remembering where I left off in **weed wars** and **resuming my offensive**. Somehow the weedy bulb, **star of Bethlehem** (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*) got into my mom-in-law's garden. It's a terrible creature for its aggressiveness and a tendency to wage neighbor-stunting, chemical warfare in the root zone. To make matters worse, its season of interest is so brief you can miss it if you sleep in one day and its masses of yellowing foliage are the horticultural equivalent of a bad hair day.

I dug it out in the fall of 2007 when I planted daffodils and encountered the weed bulbs already there. Last spring I followed up to route out any I'd missed as their grass-like blades appeared. This week again I **patrolled for survivors**, found and removed another handful (right). I know from experience those could have quickly multiplied to a cluster such as below, right.



This is how weeds beat us. So often people tell me "I did everything but couldn't get rid of it." Most often, I learn they tried digging, perhaps smothering and maybe herbicide but did not truly **embrace persistence**.

**Bulb weeds are particularly difficult** for many gardeners because survivors must be addressed right away as they emerge in spring. If smothering is your weapon, the smothering layer has to be in place before the bulbs' foliage emerges. To come later, as they're fading, and pluck their foliage, dig them or cover them is to almost certainly leave matured offset bulbs or pieces in place. They enter dormancy, disappearing so you think you've won and relax your guard. Only when you see the escapee bulbs in bloom the following year do you realize your mistake, and by then they've got two years' growth under their tunics.

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**Enjoy the spring peepers** every chance I can. Sometimes I can hear them as I drive by a wet area. Other times a lull in the general outdoor noise might bring the sound to me from a park a block from where I'm working. Why does such a little thing -- amphibians treading water in a nearly-icy pond, calling their chums -- make me feel so full of life?

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**Rake out the mole hills to distribute that soil as topdressing**, and assess the animals' overall impact. To subterranean critters it was a mild winter, all the snow keeping the frost from penetrating to any depth.



So it may be that more moles than normal were able to dig and hunt non-stop, and thus survive winter.

If there seem to be not many moles or at least not much of their ankle-twisting shallow tunneling, I may ignore them except to say "thanks for the fertilizer." (See "Molehills.") If their presence is a **problem, it's time for traps**, abhorrent though that tactic is (left).

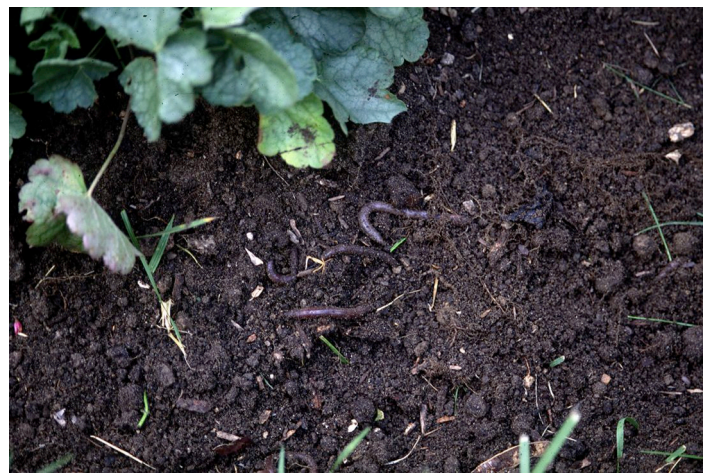
(Don't bother with other fixes. Check my books-on-CD for previously-published details. In April, with traps we have a fighting chance to reduce their numbers, removing at least a few adults before they bring this year's young into the fray.)

I'm told I should kill all the grubs to starve the moles and send them packing. Yet if I killed the grubs, the moles would have worms to eat, and more. As for killing all of those, what then would inhabit my soil to give it structure and enrich it? Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

If not time to trap, it's time to surrender and be content with my decision. If I choose to ignore the potential problem now, so be it. I enjoy the spring and don't berate myself later.

### Molehills: Treasures from the deep

As rain and irrigation water fall through soil, **nutrients leach** away into the subsoil, out of reach of most roots. When **moles dig** to clean out their deep tunnels at winter's end, **lost nutrients end up back on top** when they push their scrapings up to the surface. Rake that gift around the lawn surface and remember to say thank you to the moles.



We have descended into the garden and caught three hundred slugs. How I love the mixture of the beautiful and the squalid in gardening. It makes it so lifelike.

- Evelyn Underhill -

**Adjust trickle irrigation and emitters for expanding root systems.** Move them so they deliver their water farther out from the trunk of the tree or bush. Get water to those new root tips so they and prosper and keep expanding. The greater the reach of the root system, the better anchored the plant will be and less needy in dry times.

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

**Grins:** To my neighbors, much more tolerant of me and my wild no-lawn right now than at other times of year. Some even go out of their way to drive by while my yard with its clusters of crocus and other **early bulbs** is the **only bit of color in the 'hood**.

**Grow-ans:** To **varmints' taste for yellow crocuses**. My snow crocuses are all up and blooming, my Dutch crocuses not yet open, and I see the whites and purples predominate once more. I add yellow, bunnies and deer eat them. Even in a mixed planting they pick out the yellows!

## Who's Janet?

**The toddler who asked "Why?" grown up and out in the garden.** One day when her daughter was two and peppering her with "why," Janet Macunovich's parents laughed and said, "Now it's *your* turn! You used to drive us crazy with 'why' when you were little!"

"Used to?" said Janet's husband. "She's still doing it!"

Janet's been gardening professionally for over 25 years and loves most to solve garden puzzles, from what to plant where to meet diverse expectations, to why a plant acts one way in one situation and differently elsewhere. She's studied at colleges, botanical gardens, professional associations' workshops as well as in her own garden and extensive library but, "I find the most answers in talking to people with questions -- lots of people in lots of gardens, until I recognize the important patterns and underlying causes. I'm glad to be working in the field I love but even happier to be able to indulge my own curiosity to help others garden better." Email questions to her at JMaxGarden@aol.com.

## Where to catch Janet and friends\* in-person:

\*See March 29, April 18-19, and April 21

### Sunday, March 29

**Garden, Design and Prune with Janet Macunovich and Karen Skandalaris.** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Bogie Lake Greenhouse, 1525 Bogie Lake Road, White Lake, Michigan.

**Getting the Garden Ready for Spring** -- Janet Macunovich explains that even if your garden makes you happy just as it is, there are things you can do in early spring to make the whole season easier and the garden more lush. She'll show you how gardens, bushes, trees and groundcover beds can benefit from your attention in the spring, and how they'll repay you with reduced needs and more color in summer.

**Quick and Easy Garden and Landscape Design** - Landscape designer Karen Skandalaris has been designing landscapes for over 15 years and teaching classes in design for 10 . She is known for creative and practical ways of making a design right for an individual as well as down-to-earth, comfortable direction of those learning to do it themselves. In this session she describes simple steps to make great gardens and landscapes. You'll see demonstrations of how to

develop a plan using design situations drawn from the audience, and be able to try it yourself via fun and enlightening design exercises. Bring a pencil plus a clipboard or hard-backed pad of paper so you can practice fitting Karen's suggestions to your own yard and garden.

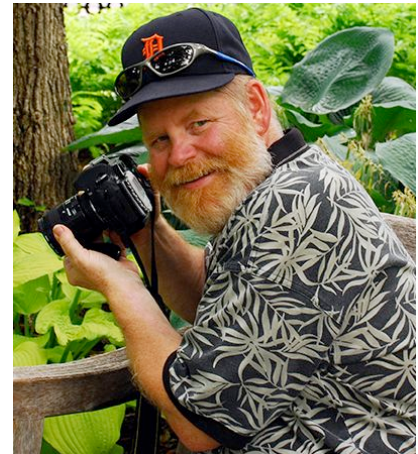
***Fine Pruning the Landscape*** -- How and when to prune your trees and bushes to ensure beautiful bloom, good shape, manageable size, and healthy plants. In this lively and hands-on presentation, garden designer and writer Janet Macunovich covers simple, proven techniques for keeping plants beautiful within the bounds you set.

\$25. Registration fee that includes a \$20 gift certificate toward your purchases at Bogie Lake Greenhouses. Bring your lunch, plan to step out at lunchtime to dine at an area restaurant, or purchase a lunch on-site. Call to Bogie Lake Greenhouse to register and for more information: 248-887-5101

**Monday, March 30, 7 p.m. *Going Green: A look at your garden's impact on the environment***  
Gardeners are in a great place to make a big difference in the natural world. What are you doing to the air, water and soil quality of your area, and to the wildlife mix? Take a look at see if you're making a positive contribution and follow Janet's many tips to do even more. Brought to you by and meeting in the Northville District Library, 212 W. Cady St., Northville. Free. To reserve a seat call 248-349-3020

**Tuesday, March 31, at MSU Tollgate Education Center, Novi, Michigan, 2 -5 p.m., repeated 6 -9 p.m. Photographer-horticulturist Steven Nikkila and the MSU Extension bring you: *Photography in the Garden*.** Simple steps for capturing the best aspects of a garden. It's an enchanting photo tour of beautiful gardens plus a critical look at what works in a garden from a design perspective. For both manual and automatic cameras: Frame your shot, set up "before and after" shots, plan a dramatic sequence of seasonal- or year to year differences, using light and shadow to your advantage, and correct for less-than-perfect light or subject matter.

**MSU Tollgate Farm Education Center** is on Meadowbrook Road just north of 12 Mile Road in Novi. This class is supported by Michigan State University Extension. \$20 per session. Cash or check payable to Steven Nikkila. No advance registration required. Class meets in Tollgate's conference center. For more information call or email Janet: 248-681-7850 or JMaxGarden@aol.com



**Saturday & Sunday, April 4 & April 5 and Sunday, April 19, as part of English Gardens' Garden Party celebration, Janet will present talks about garden care, design and color:**  
***Eastpointe English Gardens***, on Kelly south of Nine Mile. April 4, 10 a.m. *Getting the Garden Ready for Spring*.

***West Bloomfield English Gardens***, on Orchard Lake Road north of Maple, April 4, 1 p.m., *Improving Older Gardens*

***Brighton English Gardens***, 7345 Grand River, April 4, 4 p.m., *Continuous Color in the Landscape*

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

***Royal Oak English Gardens***, on Coolidge north of 14 Mile, April 5, 3 p.m., *Adding Garden Color*

***Clinton Township English Gardens***, M-59 at Garfield Rd, April 19 at noon, *Adding Garden Color*

***Ann Arbor English Gardens***, Maple Rd at Jackson Rd, April 19, 3:00 p.m., *Adding Garden Color*  
Free. For more information, call or stop in at your local English Gardens store.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Now serving: Flowery veg, quizzzy answers

Vegetables we eat  
as flower buds:  
Artichoke,  
broccoli,  
cauliflower.

Daylily flower  
buds saute nicely  
and make a great  
addition to an  
omelet but can  
hardly be called  
common fare.

Regarding heads  
of lettuce,  
cabbage, Brussels  
sprouts and  
asparagus: It's  
true that each of  
those does contain  
an embryonic  
flower. Yet it's  
hardly a bud  
when we eat it,  
and not our  
primary focus.

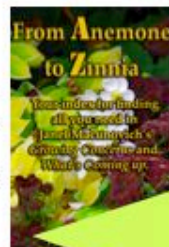
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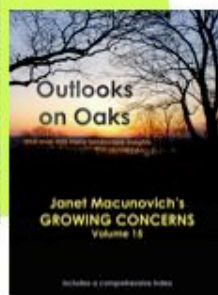
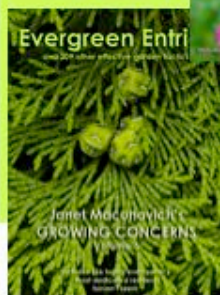
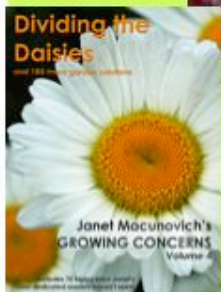
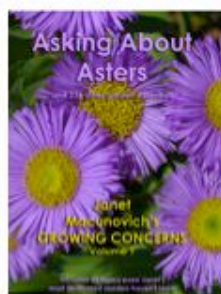
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