What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns
Issue #154, August 17, 2011

In this issue:

Right: There are many worthy Japanese maple species. This fullmoon maple, *Acer japonicum* 'Takinogawa' is a cousin of the more commonly grown *Acer palmatum*. See page 3.

Clip and sow now for more Japanese maples

I would like to know how to propagate Japanese maples. Also, would they grow in Florida if grown in the semi-shade? - D.S. -

Take a cutting (see *Making new trees...* on page 6) to make a clone or close copy of a particular tree. You can do that right now, while 6 to 8 weeks of growing season remain -- enough to coax the pieces to produce roots. Afterward, let the rooted cuttings experience the mild, increasing cold of fall, then put them in a protected place to be cold but not frozen over winter.

Softwood cuttings (right, *Forsythia* softwood cuttings being prepped for sticking) made in June or July probably root best but July-early August semi-hardwood cuttings can also "take."

Even simpler, grow a Japanese maple **from seed**. The seed may be ripe for planting now or will be very shortly. (See *Trees from seed...* below.)

Right: The seeds you see on this fullmoon Japanese maple are ready for planting.

One big difference between seed and cutting is that what grows from a given seed will not be a clone of the parent. That's not always a bad thing. If an area has more than one variety of *Acer palmatum* or several of the "Japanese maple" species, they may cross-pollinate. It can be a lot of fun to plant seeds from those trees and see what variations come up.

Most Japanese maples are considered worthy in USDA **hardiness zones 5 to 8**, which includes northwestern Florida and its panhandle. Some varieties, and one species, may be more tolerant of the heat, better able to retain its leaf color and perform well even into zone 9. See *Japanese maple: Misleading name...*" on page 3.

Trees from seed: Japanese maples.

Gather the seed while it's still moist on the tree, still green or pinky red. You might also start with dry seed, but put that into very warm water (starting temperature, 110°F) and let it soak for two days. Plant the fresh or soaked seed immediately and leave the pots or flats outdoors. At least some of the seed will germinate the following spring.

A seedling will show you its leaf characteristics the first year and its growth rate in the second or third year, so you can quickly predict its color and size. The habit -- the tree's branching pattern and shape -- is a characteristic that becomes apparent only later. Sometimes if you are pretty sure of the seedling's parents you can predict its habit before you see it.

Photo ©2011 Dennis Groh

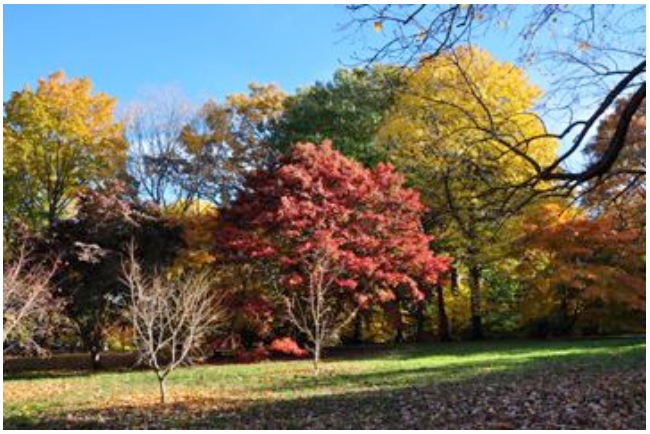
Photo ©2011 Dennis Groh

This seedling (above, right), volunteered in Dennis Groh's maple-rich Dearborn Heights, Michigan garden. Groh liked its leaf color and pattern, so decided to grow and evaluate it. Based on its location, he suspects it's a cross between the Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) and fullmoon maple (*A. japonicum*) whose leaves are shown at right.

Japanese maple: Misleading name for a group of Asian beauties

Most people know *Acer palmatum* as "Japanese maple," yet the term applies to a whole group of small tree species native to Japan, Korea, and temperate China. All are beautiful small trees. Some are hardier, others more heat tolerant. Most have spectacular fall color and some have great twig- or bark color. Here are some of the species, with some of their distinguishing traits:

Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) Probably the best known species. Leaves have 5 to 7 lobes. Hundreds of varieties, from 5' to 25' and with many leaf forms and colors plus branching habits from weeping to narrow-upright and round-crowned. Zone 5 to 8 (some varieties less hardy). Native to Japan, China and Korea.
Below, left: The dwarf green laceleaf *A. palmatum* 'Waterfall' rarely tops six feet. It glows orange in fall.
Below, right: A red-leaf upright *A. palmatum* can surprise a gardener with its size. This one is nearly 30'.



David's snakebark maple (*A. davidii*) (Right, and below.) Leaves variable, from triangular to 3-pointed. Gold fall color. Branches develop white striping. 30' or more. Zone 5 to 7. China.

Fullmoon maple (*A. japonicum*) Leaves have downy stalks, up to 11 lobes. Flowers are red with yellow anthers. Late, rich gold color. 20-30'. Zone 5 to 7. Japan.

Korean maple (*A. pseudosieboldianum*) Quite like the fullmoon maple but hardier. 15-25'. Zone 4 to 7. Korea and China.

Nikko maple (*A. maximowicziana* a.k.a. *A. nikoense)* Leaves are hairy, divided into three leaflets. 20 - 30'. Zone 4 to 7. Japan and China.

Oliver's maple (*A. oliverianum*) 5 lobed, distinctly star-shaped leaves. Rich orange-red in fall. 15-25'. Zone 7 to 9. China.

Paperbark maple (*A. griseum*) 3-part leaves. Lustrous mahogany bark that peels with age. 20-30'. Zone 4/5 to 7. China.

Shantung maple (*A. truncatum*) Leaves emerge reddish, turn red-orange-yellow in fall. 20-25'. Zone 3/4 to 8. China, Korea and Japan.

Shirashawa maple (*A. shirashawanum*) Leaves have 11 lobes. Flowers are pink and cream and almost upright. Zone 5. Japan.

Three-flower maple (*A. triflorum*) Three-part leaves. Good ruddy orange fall color. Bark nearly amber, vertically fissured. Zone 4 to 7. China and Korea.

Trident maple (*A. buergerianum*) Trident-tip three-lobed leaves. 20-30'. Zone 4/5 to 8. China and Korea.

Most maples in this group need a winter rest of 60 days or more at or below 20° F. Hot summers can be a problem for them. Even in the shade, intense heat can drain the foliage of color or burn the leaf edges.

Left: The fullmoon maple *Acer japonicum*, a variety with luminous "golden" leaves.

Below: Korean maple *Acer pseudosieboldianum* is so similar to fullmoon maple that it often goes by that same common name. It's also beautiful in fall, more orange-red than *A. japonicum*.

Left: The nikko maple (*Acer maximowicziana*) is very similar in size, habit and fall color to the more common Japanese maples, but it's hardier.

Right: Few trees have such universally appealing bark as the paperbark maple, *Acer griseum*. Many plant it just for the bark and then are thrilled to find that it's a beautiful addition to the fall garden. Its leaves turn deep red-orange, quite late.

Above: Three-flower maple, *Acer triflorum* has three-part leaves and glorious fall color.

Diamond of a maple

Japanese maples are like diamonds, a gardener's best friend. We pay more for them than other trees, and treat them specially. Their similarity to precious stones goes even further, in that the price of each is artificially high. They are no harder to propagate and grow than other trees. Nor do they grow more slowly and thus require longer production time. Many grow at a prodigious rate, over a foot per year. So why do they cost more? Simply because we value them more.

Right: This upright, redleaf Japanese maple (one of the varied lot sold as 'Bloodgood') has a 12" annual growth rate. That's respectable for any small tree and surprising to people who think Japanese maples must be slow growers since we pay more for them than other ornamentals.

Notice the change in stem color at the arrow, from green first-year twig to two-year-old green-brown speckled bark. Locating this transition point allows you to determine growth rate and identify new wood that's good for cuttings. Since this plant has stopped pushing out new foliage for the year, cuttings taken now would be semi-hardwood or hardwood. They will be slower to root than softwood cuttings, with a lower overall "take" rate.

Making new trees and shrubs from tip cuttings

Softwood cuttings are most often used for propagating woody plants. Softwood is a young shoot that is still forming new leaves at its tip. **Semi-hardwood** is firm -- brittle enough to snap if bent double -- but not yet woody.

Collect the cuttings. In the morning while the plant is full of water, snip sections from branch tips. Choose husky, straight, flowerless, first year growth. Use a sharp tool, such as a razor blade or bypass pruners, to avoid crushing. Cut 4- to 8 inch tips. Use clean tools, and don't collect wood that has any sign of damage or disease.

Trim the cutting for "sticking" in a moist mixture of sharp sand and peat (top, right). Re-cut the base of the cutting at a 45 degree angle just below a node -- that point where a leaf stalk and stem join. Remove lower leaves so that only two to four leaves remain at the top of the cutting.

Wound the cutting's base. Make several vertical cuts from the base of the cutting up toward the de-leafed nodes. (Right)These arte surface cuts, just barely biting into the wood. The injured cells will produce meristematic tissue -- callus -- to seal the openings. That kind of tissue can develop into roots if kept in moist darkness.

Stick the cutting. Now make a hole in the sand-peat mix, deep enough to cover all leafless nodes on the cutting. Insert the cutting and firm the potting mix around it.

Keep its leaves alive. The challenge is to keep the remaining leaves from wilting or dying. The leaves will continue to photosynthesize, providing energy to buried nodes so they can create roots. Keep leaves alive by keeping the cutting moist under a mini-terrarium -- an inverted glass jar or a tent of clear plastic over a frame of bent coat-hanger wire.

Rooting hormones such as Rootone can be dusted on the cut end before sticking, or hormone-rich sun tea from willow tips used to water cuttings. This may speed rooting but is not critical.

Wait for rooting. Keep cuttings in bright light, out of direct sun, below 75°F. Keep the soil mix moist but never sopping. You'll know roots are forming when the tip resumes growth.

Sticking some tree cuttings? Might as well start a whole landscape!

Other trees and shrubs root readily from semi-hardwood cuttings: Barberry, beauty bush (*Kolkwitzia*), blue mist spirea (*Caryopteris*), boxwood, butterfly bush, *Catalpa*, *Clethra*, *Cotoneaster*, *Deutzia*, dogwood, evergreen rhododendrons and azaleas, *Euonymus* species (including burning bush), false cypress, firethorn, *Forsythia*, *Fothergilla*, hemlock, holly, honeysuckle, *Hydrangea*, ivy, juniper, *Kerria*, lilac, *Pieris japonica*, privet, rose of sharon, smoke tree, spirea, spruce, *Viburnum*, *Weigela* and yew.

Evergreen perennials are also just at the end of the time when they are ripe for cutting, including *Dianthus*, lavender, perennial candytuft, rock rose (*Helianthemum*), Russian sage, sage and *Santolina*.

Simple meadow, complex ecosystem

We live on a large lot, with one-half acre used as a retention basin for severe rainfall. I'm trying to collect information on planting seed of wildflowers on this parcel.

Is there a book that addresses taming fields? My first challenge will be to remove the existing field grass, queen Anne's lace, clover, etc. I'm getting advice to either rototill the area or kill chemically. I'd prefer to rototill. Will that be effective? How many times are needed to be effective? - M.R. -

Take your cues in this from a master wildflower planter, Neil Diboll, owner of Prairie Nursery, a wildflower seed company:

> Old fields are difficult to work up due to the presence of a variety of perennial weeds. Site preparation is the single most important factor. The long-lived but slow-growing wildflowers and grasses are subject to intense competition from weeds in the first two years. Using cultivation (tilling) only, you will need to cultivate beginning in spring and continuing through fall, every two or three weeks at a depth of 4-5 inches.

Diboll shares all his tactics in Prairie Nursery's catalog, and on the company's website, where *Prairie Establishment Guide* is under the "Support and How-To" tab. For a catalog or more information, visit the Prairie Nursery website at www.prairienursery.com.

Develop a clear picture of what you want the area to look like. That will help you select species for your seed mix. (Right: Most people picture wildflower meadows as all-flower. Yet most self-sustaining prairie is more grass than forb.) In addition, it

will sustain you during the several seasons of close management needed to keep unwanted species out while wildflowers become established.

Right: In Michigan and other areas, woodland dominates if the land is allowed to develop naturally, following the process called succession. Finding a woody vine (here, Virginia creeper) climbing over the goldenrod (*Solidago*) is par for the course in that situation. The gardener must decide whether to continually intervene, or let succession succeed.

Prairie flowers **peak in late summer**, but a complete picture comes from visits made over a year. Go in fall to see prairie grasses when their colors can rival a maple woods. Go back to decide if a wildflower meadow **at rest in winter** will thrill or disturb you. In spring, go learn about excluding trees and shrubs that can shade out the prairie plants.

There are nature centers and botanical gardens with **wildflower meadows you can see**. Nearest to our own home base are Seven Ponds Nature Center in Dryden, Michigan (www.sevenponds.org, 3854 Crawford, Rd., Dryden, MI, 810-796-3419) and Ojibway Nature Centre in Windsor, Ontario (http://www.ojibway.ca/tour.htm 5200 Matchette Road, Windsor, 519-966-5852). Seven Ponds has a constructed prairie. The Windsor site, just five minutes from the Ambassador Bridge features a preserved remnant of the wildflower meadows that were here before European settlement.

More places to see wildflowers in prairie settings:

Royal Botanical Garden, Burlington, Ontario
http://www.rbg.ca/Page.aspx?pid=328
University of Wisconsin, Madison, arboretum
http://uwarboretum.org/visit/
University of Minnesota's Arboretum in Chanhassen
http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/prairie.aspx
Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois
http://www.mortonarb.org/schulenberg-prairie.html
Chicago Botanical Garden, Glencoe, Illinois
http://www.chicagobotanic.org/explore/prairie.php

Right: The University of Wisconsin Arboretum in Madison has a well-established restored prairie (in the background of this photo). Many native plants that occur in that prairie, such as the little bluestem grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) in this photo, may also be found in ornamental plantings around the visitor center. You can study such species you might wish to include in your meadow.

We know we haven't listed them all, but we hope you get the

picture: Prairies are out there to be seen and studied. Put the name of your community, State or Province plus the word prairie into an Internet search engine and follow those leads.

Everybody says they love Nature, but nobody ever invites her over to their yard.
We mow plant life to within an inch or two of its life, relentlessly spray
toxic chemicals to kill all the bugs, be they good or bad,
and then wonder where all the birds went." - Neil Diboll, Prairie Nursery -

When she asked what to plant over a septic field, we sent Suzi Maynard of Michigan's Upper Peninsula to look at Prairie Nursery's wildflower mixes for that purpose. She replied:
...Prairie Nursery is especially helpful. They have several mixes that would work for us.

Water before fertilizing: True or just bugaboo?

I have a question about your "Kelp Helps" box from #148, page 11. You say, "Don't ever fertilize dry plants. Water first." This is NOT a criticism, I just want to understand more and whether there's evidence of this.

In my bonsai classes... I teach the same thing, but I've always suspected that this could be a myth. (I tell people it may be a myth, but why take the chance - water first.) Why do I wonder if it's a myth? I guess it just doesn't add up in my brain. If we're talking about a chemical fertilizer, (the kind you mix with water first), then it's already wet so how would it burn? I've heard of people dumping undiluted chemical fertilizer onto the soil and losing plants, but that's obviously not how it's supposed to be used. So is this the source of the "water first" idea? If someone used the product improperly like this, even after watering, I'm not sure it would save the plant anyhow.

If we're talking about organic fertilizers... most need to break down for a while before the nutrients are available to the plant, right? So they have the potential to still remain in the soil when it dries out. Why wouldn't they burn the roots then?

(Is) there is actual evidence that not watering first will result in fertilizer burn or is all the evidence anecdotal? My understanding of the processes is probably incomplete, but it doesn't make sense to me. Just curious and thought you might know...

Keep up the good work! Thank you! - T.R. -

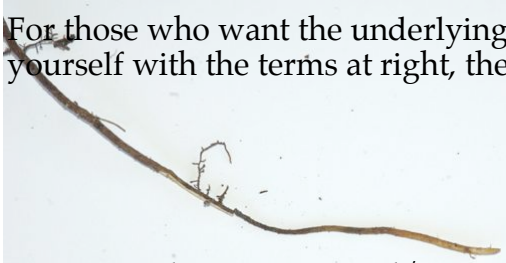
There are many distinctive root types -- these below are each from different tree species . Yet all share a reaction to too much fertilizer: They dry and die.

Will these roots burn if there's residual dry fertilizer in dry soil around them? No. Not until *water carrying that excess of dissolved fertilizer salts comes into contact with root tips*.

Thank *you*, T.R. We, too, like to question our practices and confirm their bases. In this case, we haven't had so many soil science and botany textbooks out for quite a while. Every time we do that, looking for explanation X, we find so many cool facts Y and Z...

For those who just want the quick story:
It's a fact. Water first if a plant is dry, because fertilizer burn can happen with any fertilizer and is most likely if the plant is dry. Some organic materials are less likely to cause a build-up than processed fertilizers, but both can cause burn in some conditions.

For those who want the underlying explanation, acquaint yourself with the terms at right, then read on.



Root tips take up water and/or dissolved chemicals by a process called osmosis. There's water in the root tip and water in the soil. Usually, there's a greater concentration of chemicals inside the root cell than in the soil solution, so pure water works its way into the cell. When the root tip's chemical content declines and there is relatively more salt in the soil solution, some of those salts/chemicals pass into the cell.

A root tip can hold its own in a dry period. For at least a while, it can remain moist enough to survive even in media that's quite dry. The surroundings may be "salty" in that there is fertilizer residue there, but if it is dry and not directly in contact with the root tip, there's no osmosis.

At the root tip

Salt: Soluble form of any chemical, a particle that can be easily dissolved into water

Soil solution: The chemical/mineral mix that develops when water moves through soil.

Osmosis: The tendency of solutions on either side of a cell membrane to become equal in saltiness by exchanging water and chemicals.

Organic fertilizers: Less salty, not salt free

Even carbon based, solid particle, organic fertilizers have some salts -- some portion that is quickly soluble when they become wet.

Organic fertilizers that are liquid, such as fish fertilizer, have more soluble nutrients than their solid counterparts. Bonide's fish fertilize, for instance, is 1.5% soluble nitrogen. The poultry manure package pictured at left contains 2% soluble nitrogen (arrow).

However, **things change if heavily salted water is added to soil** where dry-ish root tips dwell. Water mixed with powdered fertilizer, or liquid "tea" or emulsion is salt-rich. It may become more so if it picks up chemicals as it trickles down through the soil. That water becomes saltier than what's inside the root cells. That's trouble when it reaches the root.

There, **by osmosis, water from inside the root is drawn out into the soil solution**. So much water may be drawn out that the root tip dries and dies. Technically, it doesn't die from too much fertilizer. It dies from losing too much *water* to dilute a salty fertilizer -- it's plasmolyzed. Then we see the up-top symptoms of root loss (see *Too much fertilizer!* on page 11).

If things are not terminally salty within the cell after the root tip's water and soil solution equalize themselves, the root may survive in a weakened state. Then, up top, we see chronic nutrient toxicity symptoms (see *Chronic fertilizer build-up* on page 11).

So, regardless what fertilizer you use, it is best to water first. Leach the soil if you think you may have a salt build-up. It can come from processed, heavy-salt fertilizers such as 20-20-20 powders, granular "plant food", or any combination of processed and supplemental organic fertilizer. Leaching is flushing several inches of water into the ground, waiting half a day and pouring that much on again. That can push soluble salts below the root zone.

Too much fertilizer!

Symptoms: Leaf ,tip, or margin brittle and brown, dull green or yellow. Foliage may die and drop. Failure to flower. Parchment-like leaf texture. Loss of healthy color, weak new growth. Root tips burn, then rot.

Chronic fertilizer build-up

Symptoms: Wilt occurs more often. Leaf margins brown. Plants may be hard, brittle and may have a blue tinge.

Aiming for answers: A "hit" regarding peony leaves

...about iridescence on leaves in our garden... most pronounced on the peony, but I'm seeing lesser amounts on some of my other stuff. Should I fuss about it? Do anything about it besides watch?? - J.J. -

We think you're seeing the discoloration that comes from continually dowsing a plant with hard water. All those minerals/chemicals in the water have an effect. - Janet & Steven -

I'm betting on the hard water in the hot weather. The reason I say that, is because... we watered far, far more than we ever would have done in a normal year. ...and the end of the garden where the peonies are the most iridescent is where the edge of the sprinkler hits on the grass sweeps. -J.J. -

Tell us more: Plants for a rocky row

In Issue #153, we asked for your favorite crevice plants, species that the volunteer gardeners can expect to thrive between big stepping stone rocks at Ottawa Park in Cheboygan, Michigan. We've begun an illustrated list of your suggestions to include here and to send on to the Ottawa Park volunteers. But you can still **send in your favorite species**. We're looking for those that keep their heads down and persist despite foot traffic by snuggling into the safe spaces where flat rock meets soil.

Email the name(s) of the plant(s) you would recommend, to JMaxGarden@aol.com.

Above: *Lamium maculatum* supports fallen Japanese maple seeds. J.G. likes the white-leaf *Lamium* between rocks, "...if you want to monitor it." (Referrring to this plant's tendency to spread.)

Tip cuttings: Growing on from what people are saying this week

So much goes on in email exchanges between newsletters! We wish we could include it all. Excerpts:

Tough year for tomatoes

... I have some questions to ask regarding Tomato Fungus. I am 43 and have been growing Tomatoes since the age of 10... always had a garden growing multiple type of tomatoes. The problem... the last three years seem to be fungus that starts from the bottom of the plants where the leaves will start to turn yellow and work the way up the plant (some of the plants will be decimated). This has spread to multiple types of tomato plants and now has gone over to the peppers. I have tried to spray the plants with a fungus spray but it continues. I have tried to remove the yellow branches but more occur.

Should I hold off on planting for a year or two? Should I use pots? ...Change irrigation to underground? - P.C. -

It does happen sometimes that a plant can be grown for many years before its problems "find" the garden. However, once they do...

...fusarium disease affecting the plants and it will affect all in their family, including peppers and eggplants. Resistant varieties with "F" on the label/in the catalog description are better but none are immune. ...using a fungicide and sanitation probably helped but... Better to eliminate tomatoes and their kin from your garden for two or three years. Keep tomato family weeds from growing there, too -- nightshade is tops on that list. That will reduce the fungus' presence since it will have no hosts.

In the meanwhile, grow your tomatoes in a community plot. Or protected from fungus-spore-filled ground splash by growing them in pots in soilless mix, or atop straw bales. Either way, grow them far from your home veg plot.

Overwhelmed by the garden? Start cutting!

...it just feels like there's too much of everything, it's closing in, and I need to get more control or have more mannerly plants... - M.C. -

Lots of gardeners feel that way, this time of year. This is the height of the season, literally. The good news is you can cut anything and everything now. Cutting won't kill anything, just get it out of your hair and keep it from blocking your view of what's coming on to bloom.

Too late in summer: Borers loose in the iris beds

... about 4-6 weeks ago I noticed about half of my iris looked like the picture (page 13). Do you know what it is, what caused it and if digging it up and getting rid of the affected ones

is the only solution? I divided them about 2 years ago, looked for borers, found only a few, and soaked them in a bleach solution before replanting. - R.W. -

That is borer damage (right), plus the fungi and bacteria that follow on borer-chewed foliage. Iris borers are always around and iris are always susceptible, plus this kind of insect can develop a large population even from one year to the next. So there's really no hope that a good cleaning is protection unless done every year. (Read more on this in issue #152.) We've passed the prime time for iris dividing. In late August, most iris borers are out of the roots and pupating in the soil.

Photo ©2011 Rosemary Weil

However, you can do a lot this October to keep next year's population down by cleaning up all the iris foliage and hot composting it or burning to kill the iris borer eggs that are laid on the leaves in September. Do it again next spring before the irises resume growing.

Those buggers wiped out our squash!

...squash bugs... a legion of these did in our Plant-A-Row-for-the-Hungry squash... - C.C. -

...saw hundreds of them on the pumpkins as well as the vines. I have tried to kill as many as I can. When I smashed them... they left a orange-brown spot. These guys seem to be smart; they actually run!!! ...I am very frustrated by them!!! Is there any way to eradicate them? - K.G. -

We know squash bugs*, and do not know any remedies other than noticing the egg masses and killing them before they hatch, or killing the new hatchlings right away afterward. The egg-destroying angle is the simpler and more effective of the two.

*http://www.vegedge.umn.edu/vegpest/cucs/squabug.htm
Photo, right, ©2011 Catherine Connelly

Then sit and read a good book!

...after reading your Thomas Jefferson quote: I highly recommend that you read *Founding Gardeners* by British author Andrea Wulf. She has 'dug out' such marvelous tidbits that I have never heard before. - P.D. -

Gardener Afield: Report from Rosewind Gardens, Osseo, Michigan

The world is full of great gardens and even the widest ranging traveler can't see them all. Here's a chance to **peek through expert eyes** at a place you may have overlooked or not yet reached.

Dear Janet & Steven,
As promised, here's the address of Rosewind Gardens, located not too far from Hillsdale, Michigan.

ROSEWIND GARDENS
Perennials, Ornamental Shrubs, Rare Conifers, Trees
4751 S. Bird Lake Road, Osseo, MI 49266
Open Daily 8:30AM-5:30PM, Closed on Sunday
517-523-3246
Susie Kovacs and her husband, Steve do the work themselves and... have some "different" plant material as well as the old standbys.


Photo ©2011 Mary Lu Stone


Photo ©2011 Mary Lu Stone

Prices are more than reasonable and she is such a sweetheart... Last year I was looking for plants to attract hummingbirds to our gardens. It was easy to do there. I just followed the hummers around in her greenhouses, pointed to the plants on which they landed, and told Susie, "I'll take that one...and that one...and that one....."
Mary Lu Stone

This week in our garden

Grow with us! This week:

We're **repairing lawn**. We're fixing the underlying problems -- in this case, we're core aerating to correct soil compaction. The stressed-out grass died in that area and weeds moved in. After aerating we'll rake away the weeds and overseed with good quality seed. Late August is the best time of year to start or renovate a lawn in the northern U.S.

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We're **pruning**. On our list: Arborvitae hedges, overgrown yews and crabapples, Japanese maples, hemlocks and dwarf conifers we keep small with biennial pruning. So many plants, so little time. Our window for most of our 'keep it smaller than it wishes to be' clipping is mid-August to mid-September.

Above: This is the second time we've pruned this Japanese maple -- a tree J.K. didn't know was going to be so big. (It has potential to be 25', as in the photo on page 3.). The first pruning was 30 months ago. It will need it again in 2 years.

Total pruning time, 50 minutes. Clean up time, 50 minutes.

Left: Carol Leonard, Candice Meyer, Nick Mendes and SandyNiks learn reduction pruning on a crabapple at a recent *Garden by Janet & Steven* (see page 21). Can we tell you how, in the newsletter? Yes, and we have (check issue #30). But if you need the courage and confidence to do it, Carol, Candice, Nick and Sandy say, try it this way!

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We're **transplanting**, to take advantage of the great root-growing window that's just opened. It happens when the nighttime heat breaks -- right on time this year, in the third week of August. The combination of oscillating day-night temperatures and shortening days puts woody and herbaceous perennials into high gear when it comes to root growth. We want a plant to quickly root into its new place, so lots of things in the gardens we tend are on the move, right now.

In a *Garden by Steven & Janet* this week we moved this green laceleaf weeping Japanese maple. It had been in its place for more than 13 years. Recent changes in other plants on the property made the owners decide it should be moved.

Kathy Barker, Nancy Bishop, Don Henderson, Diane Kuhlman, Janice McNulty, Sandra Montroy, Paul Needle, Priscilla Needle, John Turchin and Sharon Widger first tied up the tree's branches to keep them out of the way of spades and trowels, and fortify them against breakage. Above: Tree limbs loose.
Left: Tied out of the way as digging begins.

Next we trenched outside the dripline, then cleared soil from within the drip line with spades until we located the main flare roots.
Right: With trowels, we bared the roots.

The flare roots -- 4 to 11 on most trees, 7 on this one --are those that flare directly from the trunk. They are its most important for water- and nutrient uptake, and for stability. They should not be cut any closer to the tree's trunk than one foot for every inch of trunk diameter. So for this tree with its two-inch diameter trunk we wanted at least 24 inches of each flare root to make the move.
Dig and lift a 48-inch wide root ball? No way! Move a bare root tree? You bet, and we had it ready to go in a little over 90 minutes.

We followed each flare root at least 24 inches, until we came to a point where it branched, and then dug to lift those ends out with the tree, or clipped all the ends cleanly.

We found and removed nylon cord still in place (arrows, below). It had been around the original root ball and was girdling some of the roots.

Above, left: The gang allowed Janet the privilege of carrying the tree (less than 50 pounds) to its new home, where we placed it on the ground, marked the spread of the roots, and dug it a custom hole.

Above, right: The little tree waited as we dug that new home, its branches still tied up, not one leaf wilted. Its roots were covered with a wet sheet except when we took this mug shot.

All that remained to be done was to water it in well, untie its branches, and obtain from the gardener a promise to keep it watered well and its foliage misted on any day for the rest of this year that it's over 75°F. We are confident it will do well in its new spot.

Below, Lily Koen, almost 5, thought that was "Pretty neat", what we did with her Grama's tree.

So, when Dominic Howell set out to move this *Hibiscus*, you can probably see why we said, "No problem-o!"

Dom used the same process to find and bare its roots, mark the dimension of its new hole, and put it in place.

Left: If we had wanted to take a division of this *Hibiscus* we could have clipped at the top arrow to free the right hand stalk and its roots (bottom arrow).

Thanks for all the years of advice. You have the best practical advice... easy to understand, remember... Keep it up!
- Chris Ward -

Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

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, "So 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 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, professionals' workshops, in her own garden and extensive library but finds the most answers in talking to people with questions. "I'm glad to be able to help others garden better at the same time as I indulge my own need to know 'why'."

That quiet garden guy who spreads calm like a comfy blanket. Steven Nikkila, horticultural photographer and joint chief of a professional gardening service, is a safe port in the midst of energy that can spawn headaches in those less well grounded. He rarely loses the clear vision that lets him frame the shot or cut to the chase, even when his wife or family are so charged up with new ideas that the work of the day is in jeopardy. With a steady hand that once "put the magic touch" on his own infant children and ran a house full of his own and others' kids, he directs, does and also captures garden work and play of all kinds. His photos lend beautiful grace to many books, magazines and catalog pages.

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

You're true blue... and so is our coneflower!

The yellow coneflower we used as a donation telltale is all-blue. Thank you! We've paid the design and programming bills and are now learning to operate all the component parts of the site. We're itching to launch but determined to have everything usable *and* useful first. We'll keep you advised of progress right here.

Donations always welcome

You helped us pay for the expert help we needed to insure that our website will be clean, easy to use and secure. Now the project's back to us, and we do a bit more each day after we finish up out on client's gardens. Everything's working smoothly, so far. We're currently loading newsletter archives and working on logistics of the new newsletter format.

We plan to keep our site ad-free, so we will always accept donations. **Send donations**, check payable to Janet Macunovich, to 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328.

Where to catch Janet and Steven in-person:

Chances to ***Garden by Janet and Steven*** -- observe or try your hand. These sessions are free but require registration. Here's the what, where and when. See page 21 for more about the why and how of such sessions.

Friday, August 26, 9-11 a.m. ***Session is filled,*** ***Garden by Janet & Steven*** in Hartland, Michigan. The objectives this session are ***laying out a garden*** and determining what to do for a young tree that won't "take." Observe, or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. Free.

Saturday, August 27, 8 - 11 a.m., ***Garden by Janet & Steven*** at the Detroit Zoo, Huntington Woods, MI, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance to volunteer at the zoo in exchange for Janet's & Steven's hands-on instruction in perennial garden renovation, division and transplanting. For instructions how to join us, send an email to mstgarden@gmail.com with the subject line "I'll volunteer at the Zoo."

Thursday, September 29, 5:30 p.m., ***Garden by Janet & Steven*** in Macomb Township, Michigan, to diagnose and determine what to do for an ailing shade tree. Come to observe or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register, and to learn the address. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

Friday, September 9, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. ***Session is filled*** ***Propagation workshop***, presented by the Kent county Michigan State University Extension in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Janet shows you

how to and gives you hands-on training for making more perennials. Contact Brenda at the Kent County Extension, 616-336-7734 or Brenda.Angelo@kentcountymi.gov.

Saturday, September 24, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. ***Fall Gardening Extravaganza***, presented by the Michigan State University Alpine Master Gardeners in Gaylord, Michigan. Janet and Steven guide you through ***Visualizing Changes to a Garden or Landscape,*** and then provide you with ideas for your own landscape makeover in ***Trees and Shrubs for Small Spaces, Favorite Plants and Combinations, and Fabulous Foliage***. At the Otsego Club Resort and Conference Center. Early bird registration until September 9 is just $45; includes a sit-down lunch. For more information call Dee Burau 989-732-2527 or obtain a registration packet at http://www.otsego.org/amg/Trifold_idea_1d.1[1].pdf

The *Garden by Janet & Steven* series:

You and we are let-me-see, hands-on people. That's how we learn best. So from time to time we schedule *Garden by Janet & Steven* sessions and list them in this newsletter to afford you that kind of chance to grow. You visit us in a garden to either watch or work with us. 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 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 our student on a temporary pass. **To join us at the Zoo,** email mstgarden@gmail.com under a subject line "Help at zoo."

Invite Janet or Steven or their expert friends to your club or community.

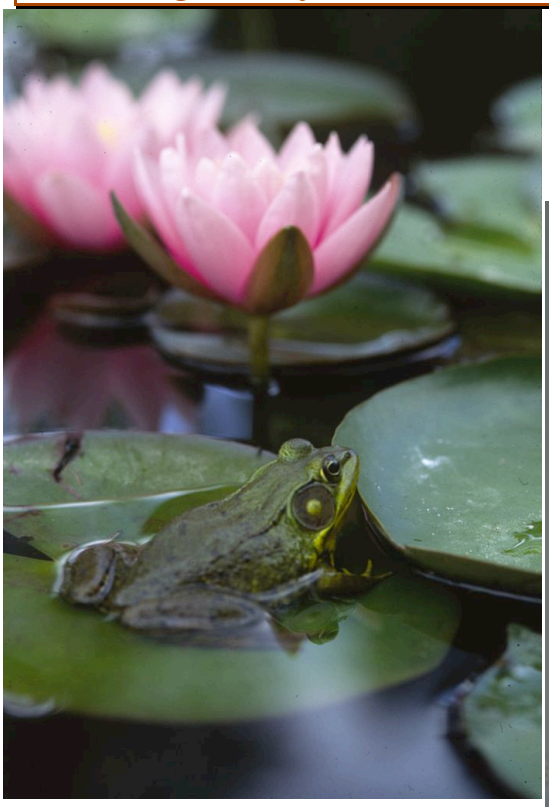
We go where we're invited! That's taken us all over the country and then some over the past 20 years. We address many topics, drawing from our list of **100+ talks**. We also continue **to meet groups' needs** and expand our horizons with new material and "hybrids" from our basic 100.

So, we're game for...
- 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 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 times.

Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich (above, Janet leads a hands-on pruning workshop) have been digging, shooting and teaching how-to for 22 years. They began producing conferences in the '90s and ran a gardening school for 12 years, featuring expert instructors who knew their stuff in a garden as well as knowing how to get their messages across in front of a group.

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 that capture the garden beauty you love, framed or on canvas to your specifications.

You can purchase hard copies or high-resolution versions of any of Steven's images you see in *What's Coming Up.** Or name a flower, type of scene or hue in mind you can request that dream. His library includes tens of thousands of plants and natural images. Email us at JMaxGarden@aol.com for details, to request a sampler or to place an order.

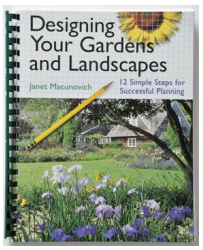
Prices for **Steven's garden art** vary with your wishes in format and size. Examples:

- **Matted, framed**, overall 11 x 15", $48
- 36 x 48' no-fade **cloth tapestry**, $215

Describe your dream image or color to Steven at JMaxGarden@aol.com. He'll send you a photo sampler and price list.

*Images in our newsletter are depicted in low- resolution to facilitate e-mail transmission. Steven's originals and art created from them are full resolution, with so much clear detail they are sharp even as wall-size cloth banners.

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. Text by Janet Macunovich. 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 one index.

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

Potting Up Perennials CD. New for 2011

Practical, beautiful answers about perennials and all kinds of flowers, trees, shrubs, design, pruning and much more is in this collection of 2009 & 2011's *What's Coming Up*. Includes 101 issues with over 1,700 pages, 1,600 articles and 2,400 images. Has a comprehensive index with how-to guide so you can search for any topic or detail in any of the 101 issues. 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. $20.00

Janet & Steven's complete digital library New for 2011

Set of two CDs: *Asking About Asters* and *Potting Up Perennials*. $30.00

Janet and Steven give you: Trees*

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

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 2011. Now they're collected in this set for your design library.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 pp. Color Ill.'s. $12.00

Janet and Steven give you: Garden Care*

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 *

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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