

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns

Issue #162, November 2, 2011

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Fall worth seeing: Steven walks and shoots in Madison, Wisconsin, pages 1 - 14

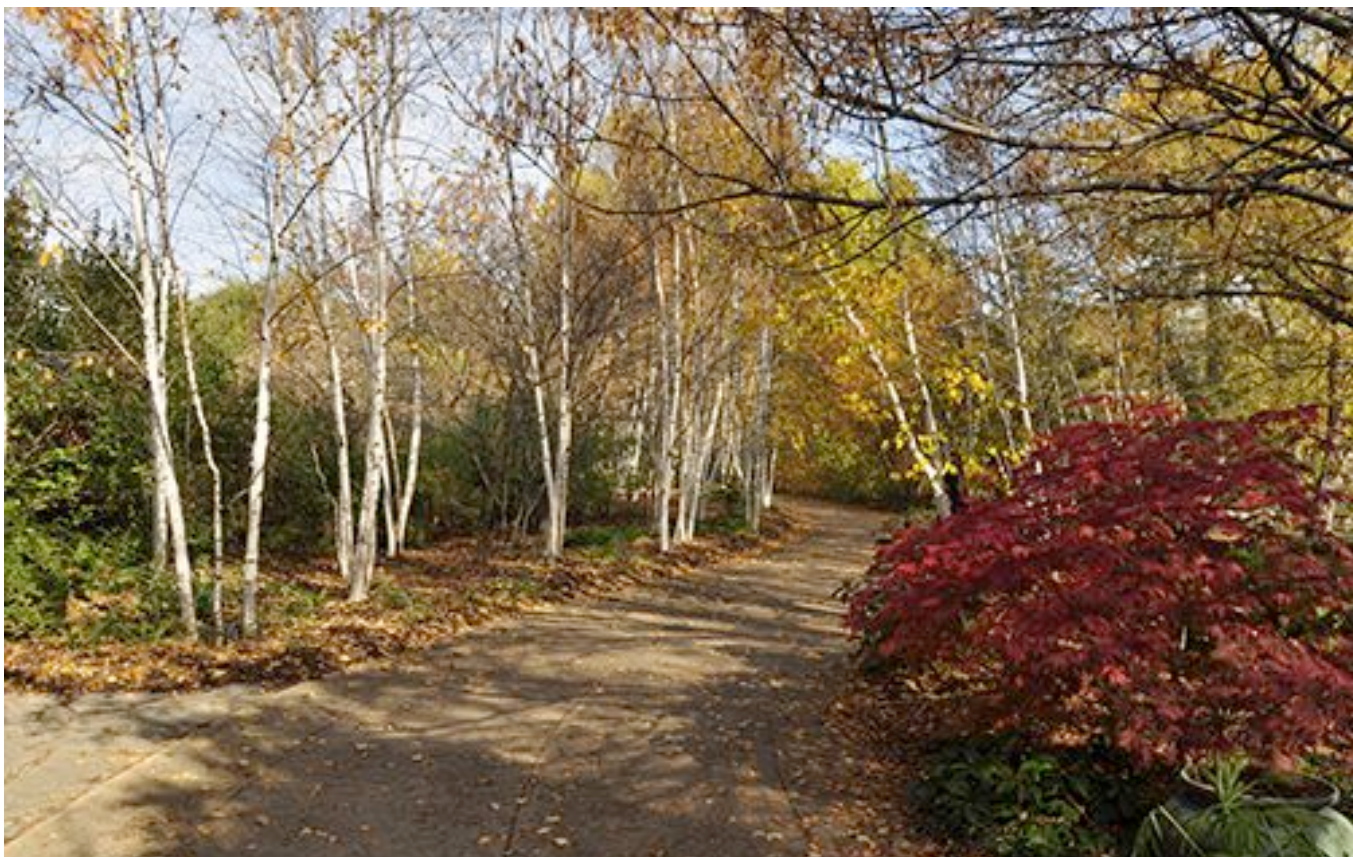
Where to see us, how to buy our books, pages 15 - 19

Steven shoots fall and scores!

This week we depart from our standard Q&A to take a walk and revel in fall. Come with us to visit new places and gather ideas for adding depth and fall interest to your garden.

We return to normal programming in our next issue.

For those who crave more, we recommend back issues #117 and 118, for a different photo tour, for bringing *Hibiscus* indoors over winter, figuring out other tropical plants' needs, dividing daffodils, lighting pumpkins, taking steps to keep winter de-icer out of the garden, designing a pond... Email to request a past issue. We're glad to fill such requests and even happier that soon our archives will be up on our website where you can peruse them without a middleman!



We hope you go out in the garden -- yours, others' -- in fall and in every season. There is always so much to see and learn.

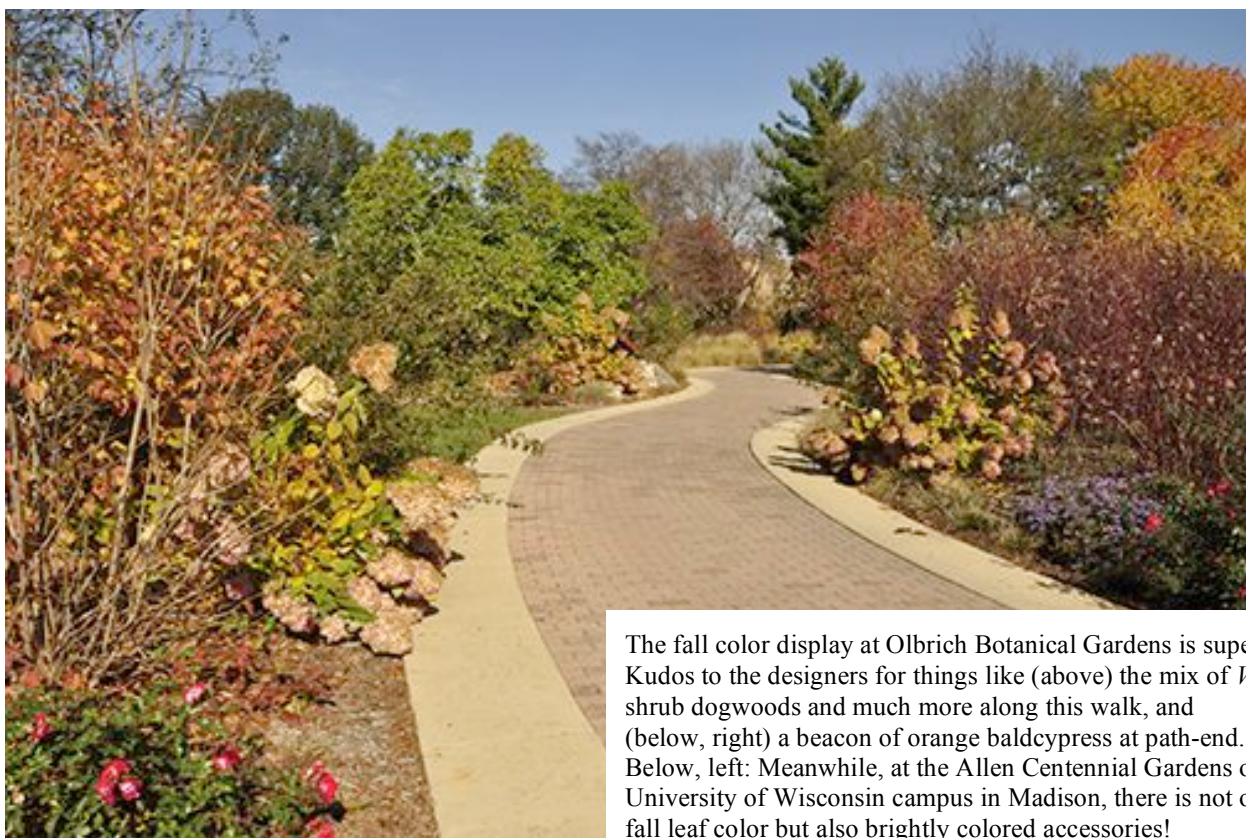
Simply step out and follow a path. Here, you're walking along the alley of native paper birches (*Betula papyrifera*) at Olbrich Botanical Garden in Madison, Wisconsin. Front right, the Japanese maple *Acer japonicum* Aconitifolium').



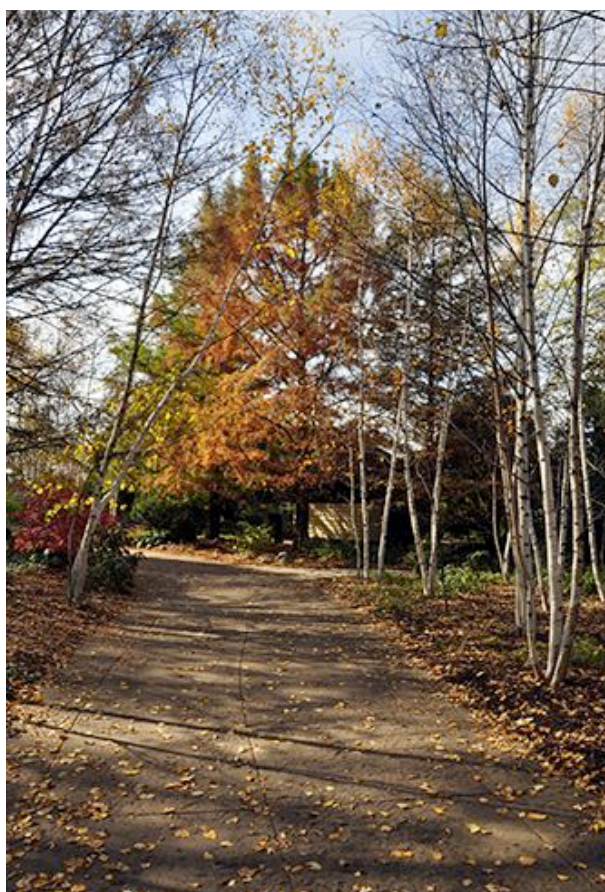
There are always choices. Wide, smooth path or narrower, more rugged course? No matter which way you go there are helpful, delightful and mind-expanding things to discover. Here you're looking at a grove of seven son shrubs at Olbrich Botanical Garden.

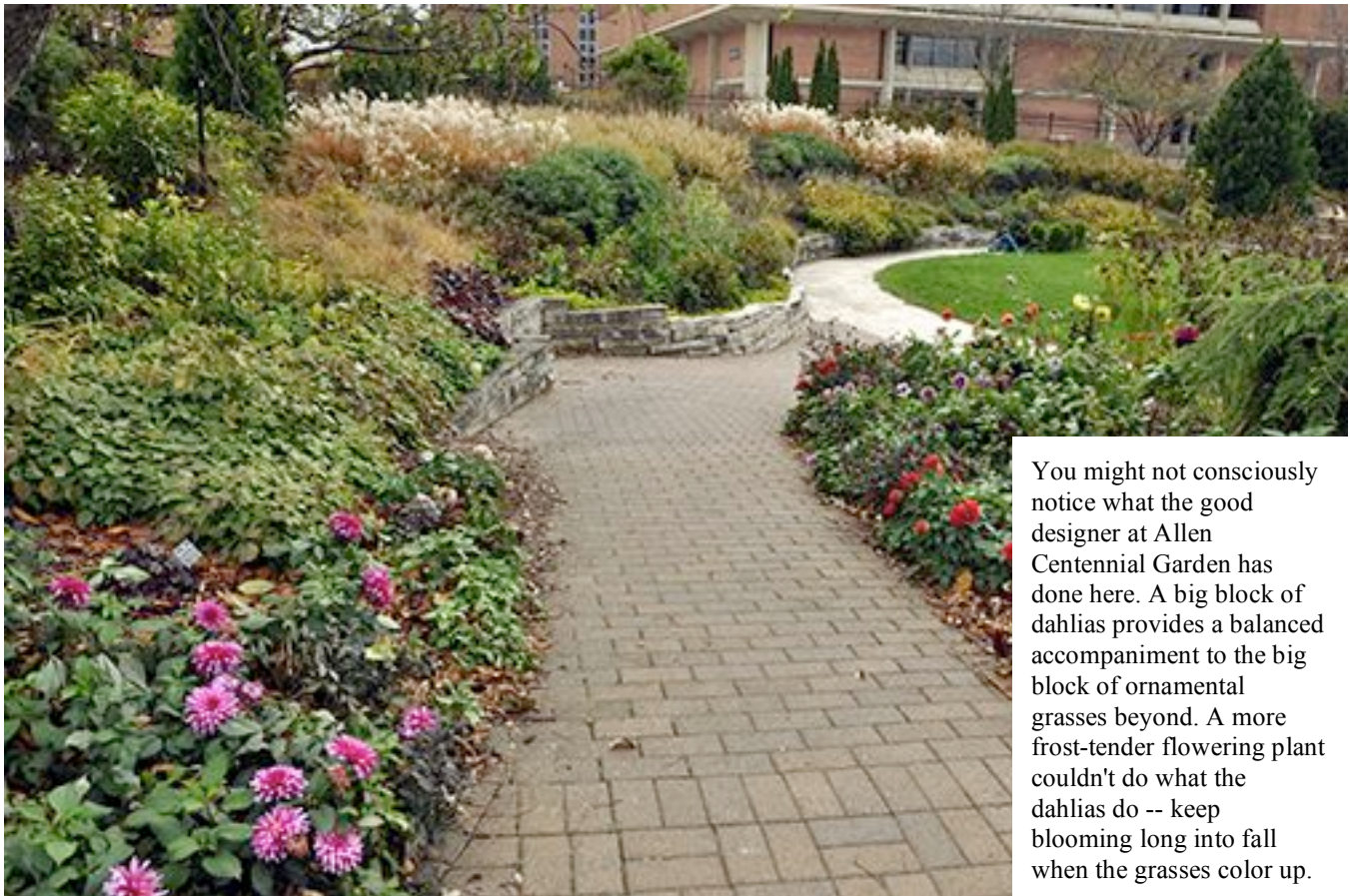
Seven son (*Heptacodium miconioides*) is one of our favorite large shrubs/small trees. A member of the honeysuckle family, it's fast growing like most of its relatives, and gawky in youth. But, oh the fragrant white flowers at the very end of summer, the pink seed pods in fall, and the peeling white bark in winter!





The fall color display at Olbrich Botanical Gardens is superb. Kudos to the designers for things like (above) the mix of *Viburnum*, shrub dogwoods and much more along this walk, and (below, right) a beacon of orange baldcypress at path-end. Below, left: Meanwhile, at the Allen Centennial Gardens on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison, there is not only great fall leaf color but also brightly colored accessories!





You might not consciously notice what the good designer at Allen Centennial Garden has done here. A big block of dahlias provides a balanced accompaniment to the big block of ornamental grasses beyond. A more frost-tender flowering plant couldn't do what the dahlias do -- keep blooming long into fall when the grasses color up.



The magnificent restored prairie at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum offers a more subtle color show, yet is just as inviting.



On a bright fall day we enjoy the rich, low fall light. If you try to capture that day in photos, however, keep in mind that the shadows will appear much darker to your camera than to your eye, becoming harsh stripes and splotches on the picture. The picture above was possible because there was just a touch of haze in the sky that filtered the light.

A cloudy day is a good photo day, as there are few harsh shadows and less glare from bright surfaces such as Allen Centennial Gardens' stonework and bright bridge.





Take a notebook or use your camera to capture the plants along the way. How nice to have a digital camera so there's no waste of film if you record not only the plant but *the plant label*.

Left: Here are striped maple (*Acer pensylvanica*), oakleaf hydrangea (*H. quercifolia*) and hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) at Olbrich Botanical Garden.

Below: Mums attract the last monarch butterflies of the year.





Above: Hosta

Right: Hedge maple (*Acer campestre*)

Below: Golden raindrops crabapple (*Malus transitoria* 'Schmidt cutleaf')



Above: Toadlily (*Tricyrtis hirta*)



Above: 'Color Guard' yucca with fall crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*)



Right: Frost on perennial *Geranium*



Take your time. Look at a plant or a scene from different angles and at different times of day. Do you notice the changes in light here?

Above: The same crabapple from different angles. New background, different light.

Left: A locus tree becomes a work of art when it's backlit.

Below: Quite a difference from waiting until later in the day and changing the angle of view on this laceleaf Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum dissectum*). In the direct sun, its brilliant color is washed out. When the sun's moved on and a bit of cloud appears, the harsh shadows are gone and the color's better.





Steven was taken with the combination of red bridge and red-orange tupelo tree (*Nyssa sylvatica*). So he let it become part of different compositions, take center stage or fade to one side. Try it in your garden: When you admire a plant or a feature, look at it from different perspectives, such as from your kitchen window, the patio, the neighbor's driveway. Take pictures that you can use as your project at a design workshop, or to collect ideas some winter day during a gathering of gardening friends.



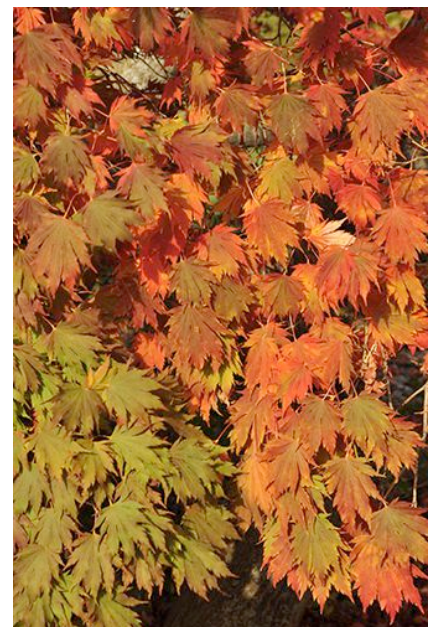


Left: Native white birch, sumac and dogwood shrubs...

Below: ...tupelo and poplar at University of Wisconsin arboretum.



Below: This shrub rose (*Rosa x rugosa* 'Belle Poitevine') has great fall color (Olbrich Botanical Gardens.)



Above, left to right: Fall crocus (*C. kotschyanus*), golden paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), and a hybrid Japanese maple named for University of Wisconsin Professor Emeritus Ed Hasselkus (*Acer pseudosieboldianum* x *A. palmatum* 'Hasselkus')



Scenes from Olbrich Botanical Gardens, clockwise from top left: Thai temple, Halloween spiders claim the observation tower, entry garden, bench at entry, lawns of the native grass prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*). We love the blue sky as backdrop in a photo, but often dislike the glare it creates in a photo. So when the sky clouded, erasing the glare as Steven looked again at the entry, he zoomed in tight on the bench to crop out the gray sky while capturing the softer scene.



Funny, sometimes we have to go far from home to see that trees we already have all around us can shine in fall. Above, oaks at University of Wisconsin Arboretum; below, a beech cultivar at Olbrich Botanical Gardens).

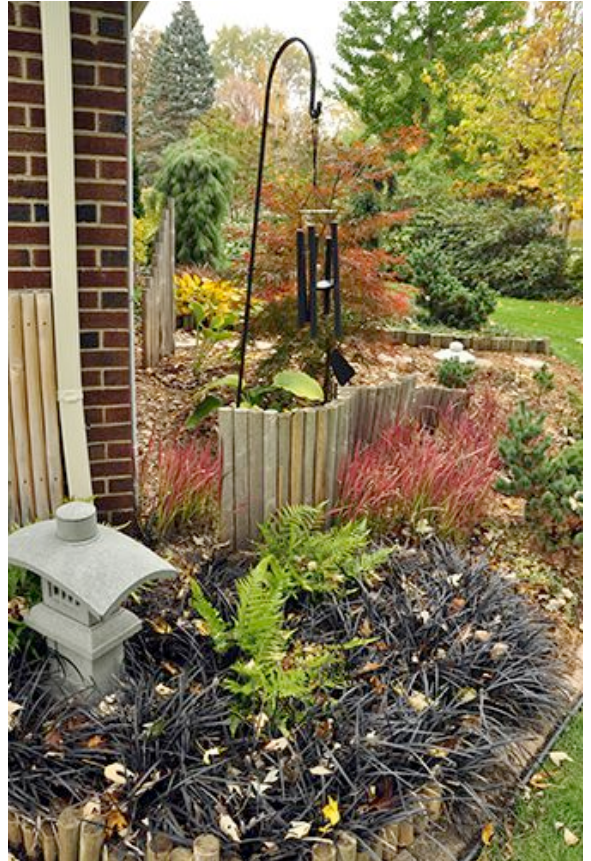


Bring the color home. At Olbrich Gardens' Thai temple and elsewhere in this issue, you've seen tupelo trees (*Nyssa sylvatica*, also called black gum).



Below left: You see foliage color used for dramatic contrast in a fanciful topiary. Now, try it at home!

Below right: That's how black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon 'Nigrescens'*), red blood grass (*Imperata cylindrica 'Red Baron'*), and more came to be in the garden of world-traveling collectors Dennis and Carole Groh of Dearborn Heights, Michigan.





Ornamental kale at Allen Centennial Garden on campus at University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

When you travel, remember that we love to take a peak at what you saw, so send us some snapshots. We feature readers' photos and words of advice in our *Gardener Afield* department.



Bald cypress, red oak and willows at Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin.

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 in order 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 is a horticultural photographer and joint chief of a professional gardening service. He is also remarkable for his steadiness when the situation begins to whirl for any reason. 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.

Yes indeed, that's Santa's helper Steven. He relays wish lists to Santa from The Village mall, of Rochester Hills, Michigan. He also pays visits to distribute gifts and read stories to children of all ages at private parties. He loves this important work as much as gardening. If you would like to engage him for your holiday event, call or email 248-681-7850 JMaxGarden@aol.com

Where to catch Janet and Steven in-person:

Saturday, November 19, 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. *Visualizing Landscape Changes*, a hands-on workshop by Janet & Steven, sponsored by the **Antrim County MSU Extension, Bellaire, MI**. Free to active Antrim County Master Gardeners; a small fee to others to cover supplies and lunch. Contact Gloria Campbell at 231-533-8818 or campb536@anr.msu.edu for more information.

Saturday mornings, January 21 and February 4, 2012, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., it's the 21st annual *Winter Seminar Series* offered by **The Detroit Garden Center**, at Historic Trinity Church near Detroit's famous Eastern Market. This winter's topics are *8 Months of Color* and a *Propagation Workshop*, both led by Janet, with a third session being developed to focus on *Trees* on January 28. You'll pay a pittance for a great deal of fun and learning, thanks to the generous educational outreach of all the good volunteers at the DGC. For more information or to reserve your seat now, contact the Detroit Garden Center at 313-259-6363 or detroitgardenctr@yahoo.com

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

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

So, we're prepared for just about anything...

- **how-to lessons**,
- **hands-on workshops** or
- a **multi-part class** for your 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

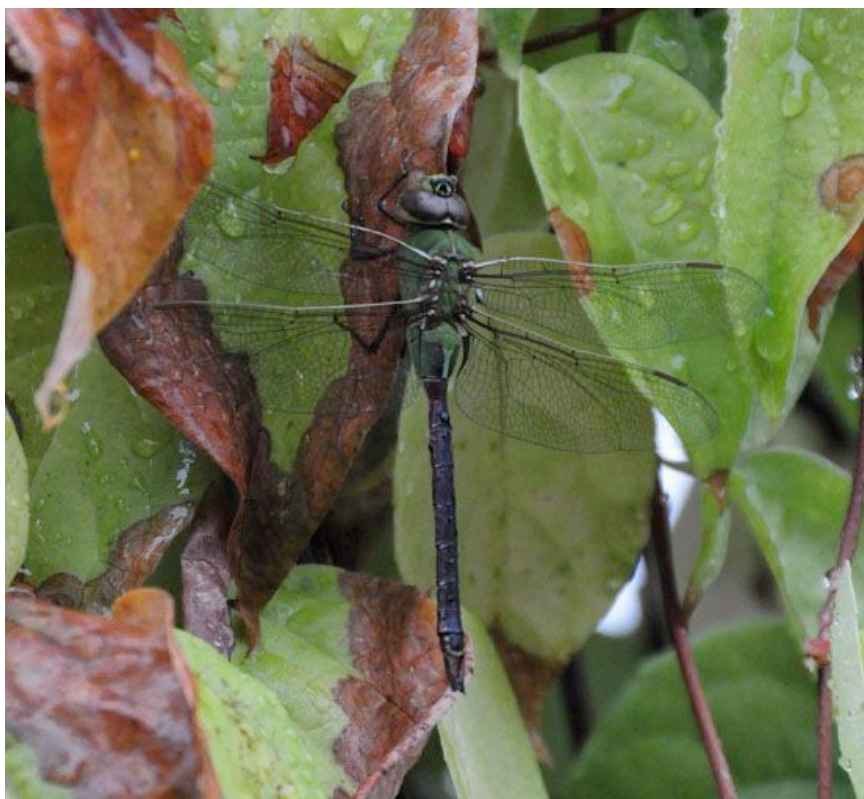
our list of classes and talks or get a referral.

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 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. They continue to support that speaker network.



Garden Art for the wall... a great holiday gift



Steven's decorated many walls with great garden and Nature images. He can help you do the same for your walls or your holiday gift giving. Capture and give to friends and family the garden beauty you love, framed or on canvas to your specifications.

You can purchase hard copies or high-resolution digital files from Steven's library of over 100,000 garden and nature images. You can choose from Steven's images you've seen in *What's Coming Up** or you can tell Steven which flower, type of scene or hue you have in mind. He'll make some matches for you

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

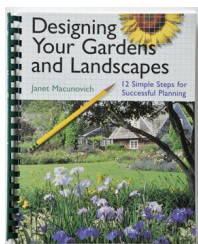
- **Matted, framed,** overall 11 x 15", \$48
- No-fade **cloth tapestry,** 36 x 48', \$215

Describe your dream image, theme or color scheme in an email 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.



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



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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.

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