

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer
your growing concerns
Issue 128, January 19, 2011

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Think this *Brugmansia* looks like your *Datura*? Not too long ago they were both classified as *Datura*. As far as spider mites are concerned, both are equally tasty... Read on!

Mite-y Hibiscus brought low

I have two beautiful **hibiscus** plants which were outside all summer. They're inside now and still blooming but one of them is **dropping leaves** after they turn yellow and spotted with little black dots. Also, there appears to be growth that can only be described as silk **webbing**. Can you please tell me what is wrong? - F -

Find a magnifier or loupe, 8x or stronger. Detach a webbed leaf, stand in bright light, take a steadying breath, and look close at the leaf underside.

You may throw the plant into the nearest outdoor trash after seeing **spider mites** skittering around on that leaf amid hundreds more eggs, shells, and cast-off "skins" of juvenile mites.*

If the situation's not yet terrible, the **mite's debris may look like tiny dandruff flakes**. You might not see any webs and miss seeing anything in motion. However, keep in mind that **healthy leaves are not dirty**, and commit that scurfy



*Steven says: "Remember? You did that, trashed a plant in two seconds, when we were first married. That little gift gardenia that went south."



Janet: "Oh, ugh, I remember that! There was no other choice, the plant was so far gone by the time I noticed, and the mites would have spread to other plants."

Steven: "Ha! You were just more squeamish about dealing with greeblies, then!"



appearance to memory. Next time you'll recognize the flecked, off-color look of an infested leaf without getting so close to the mites themselves.

The mites involved are *Tetranychus urticae* and/or *T. cinnabarinus*, the two-spotted and carmine spider mites, respectively. Common wherever houseplants are grown, both are yellowish most of the time and may or may not have two spots on their backs. Both can (but don't always) appear red-orange while overwintering, hence a shared common name, red spider mite. The biggest distinction for us is hardiness. Two-spotted mites can survive Michigan winters nestled under tree bark or leaf litter, carmine spider mites cannot.

Back from scrubbing your hands? Determined to keep the plant even though it's a hotbed of disgusting parasites? Start by **washing the plant**. **Dust and dirt protect mites** from sprays almost as well as webbing does. Mites hunkered down under a web or behind a hill of dust escape our attack. If you haven't given the plant a bath in a long time, give it a one-hour "presoak" to loosen the film of dust, mite excrement, and other debris. Use a mild solution of one tablespoon of dishwashing soap in a gallon of water. Spray the leaves, especially the undersides, until the solution starts dripping off.

Stressed leaves, sun-dried leaves, and some species even in the best of health are easily soap-burned. So be sure on the day before a bath that the plant has all the water it needs, and move it out of the sun when it's time for its bath.

Rinse the plant thoroughly with cool, forceful water. Then **spray with insecticidal soap**. Again, coat leaf undersides and spray to the point of run-off. Spray again three days later and once more on the tenth day to catch mites at hatching that were protected in eggs.

Repeat the wash and spray cycle if a magnified peek three weeks after the initial bath still reveals a significant mite population.



Check the leaves when you admire those flowers!
An infestation of spider mites yellows and distorts the foliage of this *Brugmansia*.

When attention is a mite too much

A little fertilizer is good as a plant grows new leaves. Insecticide may be helpful when a plant's own defenses are down. Yet too much of either one can backfire when you're battling mites.

Go lightly with fertilizer while a mite fight is on, since nitrogen-rich leaves speed up the already-fast mite life.

Use insecticides of any kind sparingly, just to cut down the initial problem. That's because mites build resistance quickly. In addition, for reasons not yet understood, surviving mites multiply at a greater rate where pesticides have been sprayed. This proliferation is not simply a result of mite predators being killed by the sprays. It occurs even when no mite predators were there to begin with.

What mites might bite

In the depths of winter, it's an even bet that an indoor *Hibiscus* will have some mites, if not a full blown infestation. Other mite-magnets are *Brugmansia* (below), *Lantana*, *Gardenia*, and azalea. They seem to like any leaf with hairy undersides.



Symptoms are the same no matter the plant: Leaves look dry and pale and, eventually, new growth is small and distorted. The yellow foliage (upper arrow) on this plant that should be green (lower arrow) is what drew us to look closer and then closer.

Mite-y leaf undersides (below) are dotted with white and orange dots and flecks like dandruff. Some are suspended in tiny webbing that spans valleys between leaf vein and leaf, or the gap between leaf edge and stalk.

Trouble shooters' tips

Compare leaves. Looking at a leaf from a troubled plant and unsure what you're seeing? Go find a lush, vigorous example of that plant and compare the leaf you're inspecting to its healthy leaf.

Sprays can be better than granules.

Granular systemic pesticides dissolve, are taken up by roots, become part of the sap and thus poison mites' and other sap-suckers' food. That can be effective *if the plant is growing vigorously*. If the plant is in a slow-growth or semi-dormant state -- as in wintertime! -- too little insecticide may be absorbed and distributed.



Close up views help in pest clean up

Sure, we may see creepy stuff when we look very close at plants. Still, we recommend a magnifier to help you sort out plant pest situations. We use loupes which let us look at things 10- to 16 times life size. The round glass loupe and rectangular plastic model came from camera stores. We picked up the metal fold-out at a gardening conference. Elsewhere in our collection we have loupes from 6x to 20x, purchased from a growers' supply catalog, a military surplus store and a teachers' supply shop.

Pocket microscopes like the rectangular black affair shown here have built in lights and zoom in to 30-, 60 or 100x. They've helped us (yuck!) count legs on mites, differentiate between dust and shed thrips skins, and positively I.D. gall inhabitants.

Businesses that sell gadgets and science equipment stock mini-microscopes. Search the internet with the word combination *magnifier garden teacher* and you'll find them.

There are fine glass loupes that sell for over \$100, and even a tiny, flat-screen digital microscope for the bigger bucks such things command, but a serviceable 10x loupe can be had for under \$20 and a pocket microscope for under \$30.



Going to use a pocket microscope? It could take forever to scan a whole leaf 1/100th at a time, however, so first use a lower power loupe or glass to pinpoint suspect spots.

By February, low light and short days have been the norm for over two months. Plant problems can get the upper hand. Our jade once "broke out" in mealybugs one February so we check it in January to stay one step ahead.

Our cat, Fraxy, is interested. She may wonder why we don't ask *her* to monitor the plants with her better eyes. She may even *hear* the tiny rustles, scratches and slurping sounds the plants' pests make!



A mite's not a spider, just a mighty multiplier

You'll know if you look closely enough to count its eight-legs that any mite is a spider relative. We call the types at issue today *spider* mites because they can produce webbing. Its web can span only tiny gaps such as between the ridge of a vein and the leaf blade. That's plenty for its needs, however -- the biggest adult spider mite is only about the size of a period in this report.

Unlike spiders, most of which hunt insects, these mites are plant eaters. A mite pierces and sucks, creating many minuscule dead spots during its two- to four week existence. Most plants have a few, which do so little damage that we may never notice. But when mite-growing conditions are good and a plant is weak, a hatchling mite can achieve adulthood in five days, and an adult female can lay 300 eggs. In a month of good mite-growing conditions -- dry, warm, still air, and a lack of predators -- one mite and her offspring may be sucking the life out of a territory 2-1/2 inches square.

Mite-heavy leaf surface may have so much dead tissue that it looks yellow, bronze, or dusty dry. Given a few more mite-favorable weeks plus the protection of dust and accumulated webbing, that one mite family may spread to cover *hundreds* of 2-1/2 inch squares.

Being mean to a mite

Protect your plants from mite damage by making the environment as mite-hostile as possible. If you have indoor plants that summer outdoors, mites were there even when your plant was out and looking its best. The pests couldn't build to a noticeable level at that time because the healthy plant's metabolism plus rain, wind, and predators acted as brakes.

So make that your model -- reproduce the great outdoors. Give the plants a weekly or bi-weekly hosing. Mist plants frequently and group them to create pockets of slightly higher humidity. since mites have broad tastes, bathe any plants near a mite-y one, too.



Make this part of your permanent routine since some mites always survive, new mites come in on new plants, your clothing or a summer breeze, and your original mite population may have included individuals lying dormant in off-plant crevices.

A mite that specializes in sucking on spruce needles can build up in our dwarf Alberta spruces during hot, dry spells. The tactics described here, such as showering, work on outdoor mites, too, but are easier to employ in a garden.

Appealing tactic or a mite too far?

Mites that prey on other mites can be purchased from biological control companies. To find them, put the word "buy" in front of *Phytoseiulus persimilis*, or *Amblyseius californicus* and type that into an Internet search engine.

Predatory mites cannot bite people, and don't leave the plants.

Mite magicians

Predatory mites, a.k.a. beneficial mites, are important tools for people who tend plants in places such as the Detroit Zoo aviary, where pesticides are never an option. We've used them, too and laughed as we did to recall the words of a botanical garden horticulturist about applying them to mite-infested arborvitae. "It's looks like powder! You have to almost take it on faith that there's anything living in the package. I was like Tinker Bell scattering magic fairy dust!"

Koi pond deserves every edge

Do you have ideas for landscaping around koi ponds? I just moved into a home which backs into a woods and has an existing pond. We have koi in the pond and will be attempting to keep them alive over the winter. I would welcome your ideas. I am looking to add plantings and edging. - D.H. -

First things first. Bring those fish through the winter.

Fish don't need food in winter, just liquid and oxygen. If the pond is deep and not overpopulated, fish can get by under the ice. However, most back yard ponds tend to be relatively shallow and koi fanciers like lots of big fish.... So a stock pond heater and bubbler are almost certainly essential to keep the water open to the air and full of oxygen.

Calling on pond owners and koi fanciers:

Email your suggestion for D.H. What's the most important thing a new pond owner should know, before making changes at pond side?



A firm, dry place to stand and admire your pond and the fish is essential. Scott Bates of Grass Roots Nursery has installed more ponds and helped more gardeners do their own, than most anyone in the business. One of the top things on his list of what every pond should have is a, "Fish feeding rock."

As for the edge, here are a couple of things to think about. We'll write again as we hear from the voices of experience.



A combination of floating and submerged plants is a must, or big plants that lean over the water's edge. They all create shady places for fish looking to escape the summer sun.

Fish in shallow water are easy prey for wading birds, so that a statue is the only kind of heron most koi owners want to see. Yet the birds will come, so give fish a place to hide, such as a big flagstone straddling two bricks to create a cave. This pond offers a deep spot as a refuge, where fish can retreat and that lethal bill can't reach.



This compost continues even in the cold

I continue to **load my kitchen scraps into the compost bin all Winter**. The contents are frozen, so there is no need to turn it and it is not decomposing, but when it warms in the Spring I begin turning again and it is out of my house and my way all Winter. Thanks for all your good advice and I **enjoy reading others comments** as well. - P. -

We sure did miss covering that option in our last issue, P. Thanks!

We're glad you enjoy the newsletter. We share all that we can of what readers say, directly or indirectly. We learn so much from everyone, we wish we could share every bit of it, every week.

That's one of them main reasons we're working on our own website. If time (work still required) and money were not considerations, we'd launch it today. Then with a live forum where everyone could get into any of the dozens of e-discussions we have going on between newsletters -- and carry on their own.

Read on for "raw" excerpts from two recent exchanges.

Lights for plants: Lumen confusion

...OK, so to continue the **banana tree** discussion... I should **provide it some extra light** to try to stave off the aphids that attacked last February. Plan to go get a floor lamp with 3 spots. Here's the site I've been shopping on... **Will any of these bulbs work?** The highest

wattage I've found for these types of lamps is 100 watt bulbs... is there a way to get more light for less wattage? I'm so confused!! - J.B. -

Don't go by watts, J.B., **start with lumens to choose grow lights**. Watts is power use. Lumens is how much light the bulb puts out, and a higher-lumen bulb will cast its light deeper into a big plant...(use a lower-lumen) lamp above a big plant and before you know it the plant's losing lower leaves and growing only at the top.

Once you have the highest lumen bulb you want to buy, **then look at watts**. Divide lumens by watts to get efficiency. If you have two bulbs with the same lumens and one has fewer watts, take that one for the savings in electricity that go with it.

The (bulb you're looking at is a) 5500K (Kelvin), which makes it a daylight bulb... Lower K is redder/yellower. At 4250 lumens and 85 watts, its **efficacy (lumens divided by watts)** is only 50. Aim for at least 54 or 55. Otherwise the bulb may not pay you back its cost in electricity savings.

In the same catalog you're shopping, we see a 45 watt, 5500K, 2800 lumen bulb. That comes out ahead in efficacy (62) and price, and **2800 lumens is plenty for most interior plants**.

If you're shopping and don't see lumens listed, look at manufacturer's specs.

We know it's a drag. We hate shopping, all these choices. So much worse when there are lights made specially for reading, others for security, sewing, night lighting, and plant growing. That's why we send people to hydroponics stores where *everything* there is for growing. You can compare something that works for your situation with something else that works for your situation.

Wow! what great info! I didn't know about lumens, though guess I should have since I just bought myself **a 10,000 lux lamp made for SAD sufferers**. - J.B. -

About Seasonal Affective Disorder, J.B.: We think the plant grow lights in Janet's office have made a huge difference in what used to be her January low-light blues. Hope it helps you, too!

Yule love this log

Your newsletter article about bringing in a Christmas bough really hit a chord... I had just done some research with a garden group I'm in about the lore of Christmas plants. A friend and I chose mistletoe, holly, ivy and the Yule log... the Yule log was the biggest eye-opener. ...our ancestors would burn bonfires on the solstice to tempt back the sun. Because it always starting coming back... they thought their fires were the cause of it. - B.K. -

Lights, magnifiers, and all our tools...

There is great satisfaction in a well-made clean tool that does its work well.

- Liberty Hyde Bailey -

Bring your tools that need sharpening and cleaning to a tool cleaning party. See page 13.

They also figured that ashes from that special Yule log should be given back to the plant world. They used them about now in a ceremonial blessing and fertilizing of the orchards and fields.

Green thumbs up to **walking in a conservatory on a sunny winter day**. We can all use a bit more light and to get it along with the moist scents of the greenhouse, that's heaven.

Green thumbs down to **the heaviness of snow** in a winter thaw snow. If you must shovel any such slushy stuff, be careful as you stack it. P.M. in Massachusetts is still finding places for all this winter's snow and summed it up, "I worry about my beautyberry bush. There are branches sticking out of the snow bank where there shouldn't be. I think it's pretty mangled!"

Help your local conservatory.

Donate a few dollars when you go. It's expensive to stay warm under glass! Our own Belle Isle Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory suffered a boiler problem and freeze recently, so sad to see.

Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

An eternal student of gardening, Janet Macunovich embraces the perspectives of Thomas Jefferson, 'an old man but a young gardener' and philosopher-garden writer Allen Lacy who can 'spend an entire lifetime in one corner of one garden and still not know all that's going on there'. She aims to study all her life, in classrooms and in gardens. "It's a privilege to work in other peoples' gardens," says Macunovich, "where the same plants I grow in my yard show me faces I wouldn't see otherwise. Some years I work in 100 gardens and don't see the same thing twice. To observe, research and experiment, then develop my understanding further by writing it down for others, it's all better than gold.

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

The Tropical Dome at Hidden Lake Gardens in south central Michigan near Tipton is a vacation spot for us northerners!



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

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

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

So, whether it's...

- a **how-to lesson for a garden club** meeting,
 - a **hands-on workshop** at a site of your choosing or
 - a **multi-part class** for a small group,
- ...we're game!

We can also connect you to one or a whole line-up of other experts who know how to explain how-to. So give us a **call or send an email** to make a date, request our list of classes and talks or get a referral.

JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850. Our calendars fill about a year in advance for spring weekends, and six months ahead for most other weekends and evenings. So give us some lead time. Then we can meet you in *your* garden.



Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich have been digging, shooting and teaching how-to for 22 years. They began producing conferences in the early '90s and then ran a gardening school for 12 years, featuring expert instructors who knew their stuff in the garden as well as knowing how to get their messages across in front of a group. Janet and Steven are glad to help you themselves or refer you to these others to meet your group's need. Contact them at JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850 when you want to set up a talk, workshop or class.



Where to catch Janet & Steven in-person:

Saturday mornings, January 22, January 29 and February 5. Join Janet, Suzan Campbell, and Cheryl English as the Detroit Garden Center presents the Center's **20th Winter Seminar series.**

20! How 'bout that! And with so many good friends coming each year. It's a great learning time but also a great get-together.

This year we'll spend those three Saturday mornings growing into some new

Gardening Perspectives:

January 22: ***Gardening in Small Spaces.*** Janet shows you how to grow and enjoy more in a courtyard, tiny bed or other small area.

January 29: ***The Big Picture: Overhead, underfoot and long ago in SE Michigan gardens.***

Suzan Campbell, Conservation Educator at the Michigan Natural Features Inventory and Cheryl English, professional gardener and educator, take you back to glaciers and forward to today to show you to what your garden's really made of, why you should care, and how to get the very best four-season effect in your garden with native plants.

February 5: ***All the Best Sense in a Garden.*** Janet gives you a fresh look at your garden as a place of wonder for ears, skin, nose and taste bud. It's how to design and tend your garden to have more dimension and fun, even with your eyes shut.

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. each date, at **Historic Trinity Church, 1345 Gratiot in Detroit**, around the corner from Eastern Market. \$30 per class or \$75 for the series. For more



Have a tiny, tough spot to garden? A courtyard? A miniscule strip along the driveway? a planter box? Join us January 22, 29 and February 5 for ways to make that spot a great garden. You won't believe how much dimension it can have and fun it will be, all from starting with its "small" aspect then working down to its bedrock and out into all five senses.

Below: At the 2010 Detroit Garden Center seminar, tables were full of handout materials from speakers, breakfast refreshments, and the laughter of people escaping winter among other eager gardeners.



information or to register, call the Detroit Garden Center at 313-259-6363 or download a registration form at www.detroitgardencenter.org.

Sunday, January 23, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Janet and her good friends Catherine Connelly and Sue Kempinski-Hennessey (right) present *Birds, Gardens and Poetry* a celebration of things we love in the garden and book signing by Catherine of her new book *The Nature of Poetry*. Janet will speak at 3:00 about planting for the birds. From 4:00 to 5:00 Catherine will read and lead poetry readings by any and all who wish to celebrate their garden and the life in it. In Royal Oak, Michigan at Wild Birds Unlimited, 28588 Woodward between 11- and 12 Mile Roads. Free, but reserve a spot by calling 248-548-2424. *The Nature of Poetry* will be available for sale, and Catherine and illustrator Sue Kempinski Hennessey will autograph books. All proceeds go to support breast cancer research.



Wednesday, February 9, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Janet teaches *Flower Gardens*, a segment of the Michigan State University Master Gardener class. At the St. Clair County Extension office, 200 Grand River, **Port Huron, Michigan**. Open to the current class of St. Clair County Master Gardener candidates plus active Master Gardeners looking for a refresher on this topic. Limited seating. Contact Laurie Dennis at 800-989-6312 or ldennis@stclaircounty.org to reserve a spot.

Thursday, February 10, 10:00 a.m. - noon, *Landscape Ideas: Before-After*. Steven Nikkila shares good landscaping ideas and how-to by walking you through some of his favorite before-after examples. Geared for professional gardeners. At **Ray Wiegand's Nursery Wholesale Office, Macomb, Michigan**. Contact Wiegand's wholesale office at 586-286-3658 for more information.

Saturday, February 12, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. a seminar with Janet and Steven, hosted by the Men's Garden Club of **Youngstown, Ohio** at the Fellows Riverside Gardens of Millcreek Metro Parks. Janet will present ideas and design approaches for *Entry Gardens* and follow up with an all-star line up of *Great Plants and Combinations*, then turn things over to Steven for his recommendations of *Trees and Shrubs for Small Spaces*. For more details and registration information go to <http://mgcy.org/default.aspx> or contact John Kolar at 330-545-2266.

Tuesday evening, February 15. Janet explains and entertains with *What the Groundhog Won't Tell*. This look at gardening folklore, its basis and practical application, takes place at the Fremont Area District Library in **Fremont, Michigan**. Free. No advance registration required. Contact Jill Hansen at the library 231-928-0256 for more details.

Thursday, February 17, 10:00 a.m. - noon, *Cutting Back the Rambunctious Garden*. Janet helps sort out the problems of overgrown gardens and too-big plants with instructions for pruning, growing season cuts on herbaceous plants, dividing to keep small, and other restraints. Geared for professional gardeners. At **Ray Wiegand's Nursery Wholesale Office, Macomb, Michigan**. Contact Wiegand's wholesale office at 586-286-3658 for more information.

Saturday, February 19, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Janet teaches *Flower Gardens*, a segment of the Michigan State University Master Gardener class. At the Wayne County Extension office, 640 Temple Street, just a block west of the Masonic Temple theater in **Detroit, Michigan**. Open to the current class of Wayne County Master Gardener candidates plus active Master Gardeners

looking for a refresher on this topic. Limited seating. Contact Anita Callendar at 734-727-7238 to reserve a spot.

Grow with Janet at **Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin:**

Tuesday, January 25, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., *Simple, Successful Garden and Landscape Design*. Janet presents steps suitable for anyone developing a bed or a property, for themselves or others. Topics include how to match the design to your needs, set a budget, arrange plants and other elements beautifully and even predict needed care.

Wednesday, January 26, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. it's *Garden and Landscape Renovation*. Janet leads you through practical, in-depth how-to for making changes while maintaining unity between old and new facets of a property.

Wednesday, February 23, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., *Pruning Your Trees and Shrubs*. Janet helps you learn what to prune, when and how in plenty of time to take advantage of two prime pruning periods: winter thaws and very early spring. She invites you to "bring a branch" to get specific directions and some hands-on for trimming your own plant.

Thursday, February 24, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. *Gardens for Small Spaces*. A hands-on design workshop where you can learn and try out Janet's how-to and what to grow for those small courtyards, awkward corners and tiny but important beds.

Take one or all of these classes At **Olbrich Botanical Gardens** 3330 Atwood Avenue in **Madison, Wisconsin**. For more information, contact the gardens' office at 608-246-4550 or copy this URL to your browser bar to read about classes, registration fees and to download a registration form: <http://www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm>

Friday, January 28, 10:00 - 11:15 a.m., Janet presents *Renovating the Older Landscape, Part 1* for those deciding where to start and what they can accomplish in changing what's already well established on a property,

and

Friday, February 25, 10:00 - 11:15 a.m., *Renovating the Older Landscape, Part 2*: more of the nitty gritty how-to for making your landscape dreams come true.

Attend one or both sessions. Presented by the Meadow Brook Hall Garden Club in **Rochester, Michigan at Meadow Brook Hall**. (Take Meadow Brook Rd. west from Adams south of Walton rd., and follow signs). \$5 per session to non-members. No advance registration required.

Monday, February 21, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. *Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools!*

We'll be **pruning to shape and control** two ornamental trees to keep them healthy, attractive and in proportion to the small spaces they occupy. **Waterford and Orchard Lake, Michigan.** Email or call (JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850) to reserve a spot and learn the location. Include your phone number so we can call you as the date approaches because the weather may change the plan. This is a limited-space workshop. For more about *Garden By Janet* sessions, see page 17.

Tool Cleaning party. Bring your tools, learn how to clean and sharpen them, then set a spell among good company and put those tools in order!

Sunday, February 6, 1 - 3 p.m. in Ortonville, Michigan

Sunday, February 13, 1 - 3 p.m. in Milford, Michigan

Sunday, February 20, 1 - 3 p.m. in Troy, Michigan

Sunday, February 27, 1 - 3 p.m. on lovely Belle Isle in Detroit

We're co-hosting parties this year with friends and fellow educators Celia Ryker, Sue Shuttleworth, Deb Hall and the Detroit Garden Center. Details are still being finalized but expect to chip in about \$5 toward supplies. Email or call ahead to reserve a

Save the date for these events coming up in March -- details in upcoming issues:

- March 1, Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.,** Janet's presenting **8 Months of Color** at the Howell Carnegie District Library in **Howell, Michigan**. Free.
- March 7, Monday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.,** help from Janet about **Gardening in Small Spaces** at the Northville Library in **Northville, Michigan**. Free.
- March 10, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.,** join Janet for **Canned Goods: Container Gardens** at the **Farmington, Michigan** Hill and Dale Garden club meeting in Heritage Park's Spicer House.
- March 14, Monday, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.,** **Great Plants and Combinations** by Janet at the Lathrup Village Gardeneers meeting at Lathrup Village City Hall, 27400 Southfield Road, **Lathrup Village, Michigan**.

Refreshments, raffle, educational exhibits, too. Voluntary \$5 contribution asked of non-members.

- March 15 & 16, Tuesday and Wednesday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.,** a two-part, come to one or both presentation by Janet to help you **Get Your Garden Ready for Spring**. Open to residents of Rochester and Rochester Hills and their guests, at the Rochester Hills Public Library in **Rochester, Michigan**.
- March 17, Thursday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.,** Janet's advice for a **Low Maintenance Landscape** at the Waterford Township Library in **Waterford, Michigan**. Free.
- March 19, Saturday,** start your day of learning at the 2011 Taylor Conservatory Growing Great Gardens symposium with Janet's take on **Edible Landscapes**. Symposium is 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in **Taylor, Michigan**.
- March 19, Saturday,** Janet's part of the afternoon sessions at the 12th Annual spring education seminar hosted by the Allen County Master Gardeners in **Lima, Ohio**.
- March 24, Thursday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.,** Janet's recipe for **More Color, More Fun** at the Waterford Township Library in **Waterford, Michigan**. Free.
- March 26, Saturday,** Janet's at the Huron County Master Gardeners' Spring Into Gardening Day in **Ubley, Michigan**.
- Garden By Janet** opportunities in Michigan and Massachusetts. Watch here for details.

To attend Garden by Janet sessions:

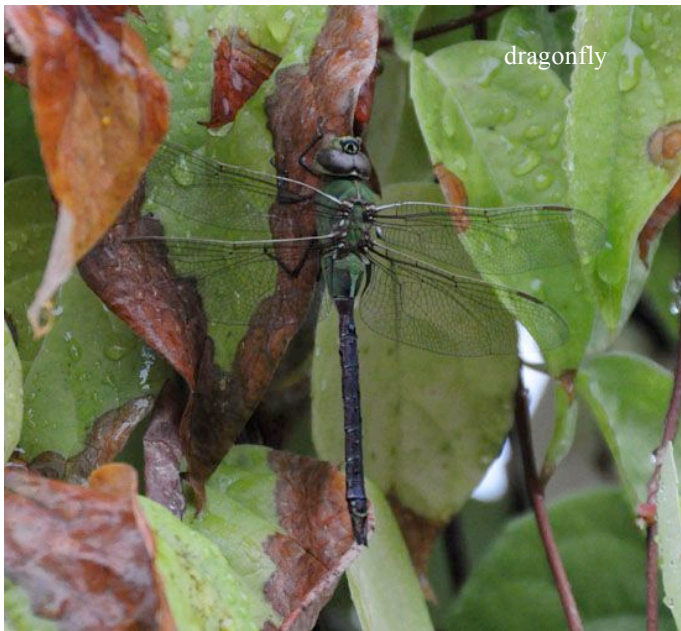
We're let-me-see, hands-on people. That's how we learn best. From time to time there are *Garden by Janet* sessions listed here to afford you that kind of chance to grow. You visit us where we're working to either watch or work with Janet. Generally, there is no charge and we're in one of two kinds of locations:

- 1) At the **gardens we tend through our business, Perennial Favorites:** Our clients understand our enthusiasm for teaching. Some open their gardens to small groups who want to see and practice "how to." When the work we're scheduled to do may be of interest to you, we invite you in.
- 2) In the **Detroit Zoo, Adopt-A-Garden** program where we're 22-year veterans. Many people have worked with us there, some for a day and others for years. We have fun, we learn, we accomplish much. You can check out this program by coming in as my student on a temporary pass. **To join Janet at the Zoo,** email mstgarden@gmail.com with the subject line of your email "Help at zoo."

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.

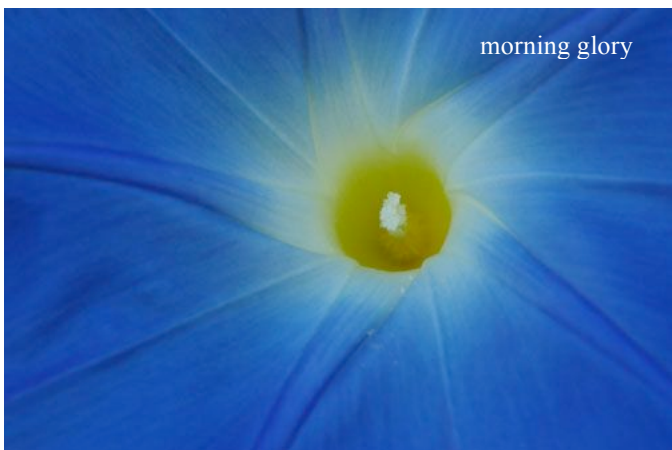
You can own any of Steven's images from *What's Coming Up*.^{*} Or if you have a flower, type of scene or hue in mind, request your dream. His library includes tens of thousands of plants and natural images, so Steven can assemble a customized photo sampler and price list for you.



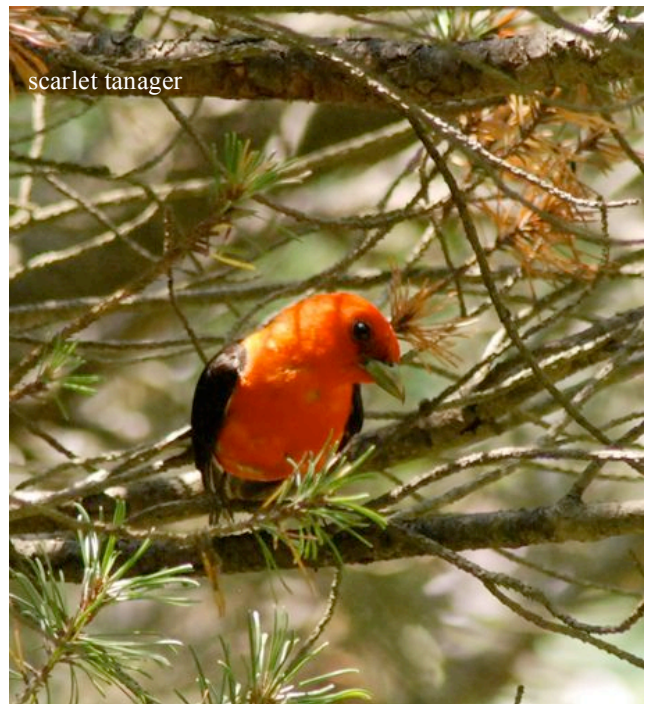
dragonfly

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



morning glory



scarlet tanager

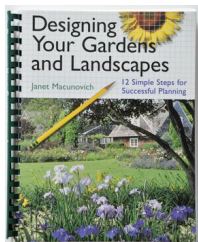
Email us at JMaxGarden@aol.com for details, to request a sampler or to place an order.



starfish

^{*}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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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.

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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.

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Potting Up Perennials CD. New for 2010

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

Janet & Steven's complete digital library New for 2010

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



Janet and Steven give you: Trees*

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.

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Janet and Steven give you: Landscape Ideas*

Janet and Steven's favorite articles on landscape design and renovation: Designing with foliage color; covering up after the bulb season; doubling up perennials for 3-season color; shady solutions; using usual plants in unusual ways; designing hypo-allergenic gardens; Murphy's Laws applied to gardens; renovation how-to; fragrant plants and designs; attracting wildlife; rockwork; invasive plants; discovering a site's hidden assets; using herbs in a landscape; and how to cheat to improve a garden quickly. These articles appeared first in *Michigan Gardener* magazine individually between 1999 and 2010. Now they're collected in this set for your design library.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 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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Janet and Steven give you: Trees, Landscape Ideas and Garden Care *

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

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