

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila
answer your growing concerns
Issue 135, March 9, 2011

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Dreaming about homegrown tomatoes. It takes more care to grow
them since late blight appeared in North America. See page 9.



Shedding light on shade plant sources

Once you wrote an article on shade gardens and listed a **catalog that specialized in shade plants**. Can you repeat that source? - K.K. -

You may be recalling a reference to Shady Oaks in Minnesota. They're still there but switched some time ago from retail to wholesale sales.

It's always **tough to make a list** of "where to buy" because no matter the item or plant category or how long we spend assembling a list, just about as soon as we press "Print" or "Send" one of the addresses changes or we realize we've forgotten someone.

In addition, the scope of this network -- we're now sharing information between gardeners in more than ten States -- makes it a massive job to list all the good local garden centers. (Yet it would be possible on our website, in a forum where everyone could contribute to a list. See *Are you for our forum?* on page 5.) Yet so many local sellers do a darned good job with their shade

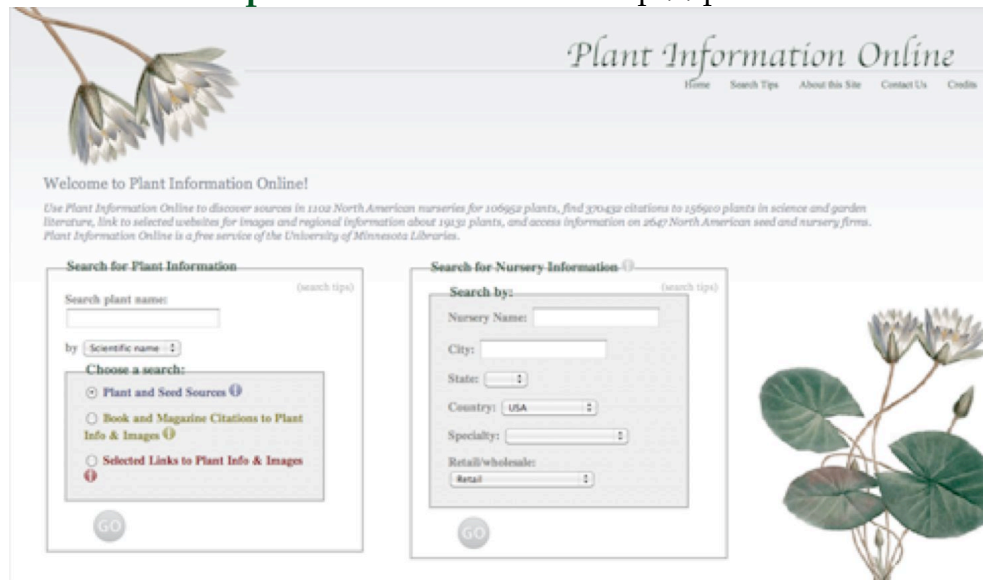
plant offerings, despite the fact that there are just too many great plants for any one place to carry them all.

What we do when we're looking for specific plants is to take or send our shopping list to one of our local garden centers. We **buy local, first**, to support those businesses. (Please do likewise: See *Shade plants for sale*, below and on page 3.) **Next, we look to the Internet** for sources.

What a great tool the Internet is! Pre-internet, we had to go through each of the mail order catalogs we received in the mail, or keep up to date on printed material such as *The Andersen Horticultural Library's Source List of Plants and Seeds*. Even when we used that great book, we could only hope that the information we found there about a nursery's offerings and contact information had not changed since the book's print date. Today we can do an Internet search for "buy (scientific plant name)" or, joy of joys, **go to <http://plantinfo.umn.edu>** where Minnesota Landscape Arboretum's Andersen Horticultural Library still compiles and provides growers' plant lists and contact information. From there we can go straight to growers' information or plant lists.

Fast finds for plant sources

<http://plantinfo.umn.edu>



Simple to use, currently listing over 1,100 growers and +100,000 types of plants.

You can use the "Specialty" field to select a category of plants. Since so many of the great shade plants are woodland natives, we select "wildflower" from this list. That won't get us a final list, since full-sun prairie wildflower growers will be there along with the woodland natives, but it reduces the amount of winnowing.

Shade plants for sale...

Plants for shade tend to be outnumbered by sun lovers at garden centers, and truly unusual shady species hard to find even by mail. One reason for this is that growing shade plants is more expensive.

The more light it has, the faster a plant grows, but a true shade lover will scorch if put out into full sun. Erecting pavilions covered with cloth that blocks just enough sun is the usual work-

around. Even then, the plant takes longer to reach saleable size. Extra time plus tenting that's unnecessary for sun-lovers, means each plant costs more to produce.

There are operational difficulties, too. Consider watering. A few high power, high arcing irrigation can cover a sunny field. It takes more finagling to sprinkle a crop that's covered with cloth. The alternative, growing in the shade of trees, is as much a challenge for pros as it is for home gardeners, with all the attendant hassles and need for extra, costly water.



All this to say that when you find a grower or garden center with a good selection of shade plants, give them your business. Supporting plant growers is especially important when the economy is slow. During the last 30 years, more specialty nurseries started and grew than the world has ever seen. Now, newcomers are rare as the time is all wrong to begin a business. At the same time, we're losing growers. The field isn't particularly lucrative -- the majority of nursery owners work primarily for their love of plants! -- so many are now closing down, retiring, or selling to larger concerns. New owners -- bigger businesses interested mainly in the customer list of their acquisition -- tend to do the smart financial thing and convert specialty growing operations to production of more common, higher-return plants.



Top left: Shade cloth is essential but adds to cost, and can slow operations, too. So shade plants are not the most profitable crop.

Above: This whole bed area at Plant Delights Nursery is under shade cloth -- see the shadows of its support beams? The cloth covering the foreground area casts less shade than the one covering the far bed. The trick is to use a cloth that gives the particular crop enough shade to prevent burn, but enough light for quick growth.

Support that specialty plant business!

Here are just some of the growers of shade plants we've met over the years. We checked past source lists we compiled (since 1981!), then verified who's still at it after 20 years or more. These growers all deserve both our "thank you" and encouragement to "keep at it, please!"

Local to some of our readers; no mail order

Howell, MI: Specialty Growers 4330 Golf Club Rd., 48843

517-546-742 <http://specialtygrowers.net>

Troy, MI: Telly's 3301 John R Rd., 48083 248-689-8735

www.tellys.com

Winfield, IL: Planter's Palette 28W571 Roosevelt Road,

Winfield, IL 60190 630-293-1040 www.planterpalette.com

Karen Bovio started Specialty Growers almost 30 years ago and is one of the best perennial growers in the country. How fortunate we who are within shopping distance of her world class local nursery! Bovio and others on today's source lists have a passion for plants. It's what keeps them in the business of growing even though it's hard work with marginal profit.



Check wildflower association plant sales

Bloomfield Hills, MI: Cranbrook Gardens, Lone Pine and Cranbrook Road, spring wildflower sale; in May; check www.cranbrook.edu/housegardens/events

Framingham, MA: Garden in the Woods, 180 Hemenway Road, 01701 508-877-7630; May plant sale; check www.newfs.org/visit/Garden-in-the-Woods

Mail order



Arrowhead Alpines 1310 N. Gregory Road, Fowlerville, MI 48836, 517-223-3581, arrowhead-alpines.com

Broken Arrow Nursery, 13 Broken Arrow Road, Hamden, CT 06518, 203-288-1026 info@brokenarrownursery.com

Eastern Plant Specialties, P.O. Box 385 Rahway, NJ 07065, with its nursery in Georgetown, 732-382-2508, ME.easternplant.com

Forestfarm, 990 Tetherow Road, Williams, OR 97544, 541-846-7269, forestfarm.com

Gardens of the Blue Ridge, P.O. Box 10 Pineola, NC 28662, 828-733-2417, Gardensoftheblueridge.com

Fancy Fronds Nursery, Gold Bar, WA, fancyfronds.com

Mary's Plant Farm Hamilton, 2410 Lanes Mill Road, Hamilton, Ohio, 45013, 513-894-0022, marysplantfarm.com (Where Mary Harrison herself is leading a May 1, 2011 woodland wildflower walk. Happy upcoming 90th, Mary!)

Niche Gardens, 1111 Dawson Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, 919-967-0078, nichegardens.com

Plant Delights Nursery, 9241 Sauls Rd., Raleigh, NC 27603, 919-772-4794, www.plantdelights.com

Tony Avent operates Plant Delights Nursery as the "public face of Juniper Level Botanic Garden." He has made over 60 expeditions over 17 years in quest for new plants in North American and abroad. The nursery is a leader in new plant introductions, it has a special dedication to growing and propagating rare and endangered U.S. native flowers, and its catalog is known not only as a reference book but as a humorous read.

Are you for our forum?

We've been working on our own web site, with an open library of our work and a real-time forum where everyone can be part of all of the discussions that go on now in email to individuals between newsletters. There, references like garden center lists are "live" -- as broad as the latest question and answer can make them.

We aim to have that site up this year but have to cross a big hurdle in terms of development and hosting cost.

We would love help. **Send your donation**, check or money order payable to Janet Macunovich, to 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328.



Introducing the **Donatella** coneflower, for those of you who have asked "How much do you need for the website?" We'll keep it here to show how far we are toward our goal. When it's **all blue**, we're gold!

Pony tail palm in trouble

I have a houseplant that is dying. It's a ponytail palm or elephant's foot palm, I think. It has a bulb-type root. The bulb comes up above the dirt.

It has long, thin, green leaves. The **leaf tips are brown**, but they shouldn't be.

I know this information is vague but I thought I would write in case you recognized it and could tell me what to feed it and whether to keep it wet or dry.
- K.R. -

You give a great description of *Nolina recurvata*, which goes by the name bottle palm as well as ponytail and elephant foot palm. This native of Southern Mexican deserts uses its bulbous trunk base as a water reservoir. The "ponytails" of downward-curving leaves are very narrow, to present minimum evaporative surface to the sun. It's well suited to hot, dry environments. All it asks is full sun and careful watering.

Keep the soil moist but never soggy and apply a dilute fertilizer monthly while the

palm is actively growing. It has a slow growth rate so it may take a bit of watching, but you should see that it's growing from April through October. Let it run a bit drier and stop fertilizing during winter. Overwatering is a problem that can cause dead tips, limp or faded leaves, soft stems, root rot and death of the plant.

Brown leaves or leaf tips may be from **underwatering, overwatering, or pest damage**. If watering is an issue, correct it and then trim off dead leaf ends. If watering isn't suspect, check leaf surfaces with a magnifier to identify pests that can host on *Nolina*, such as mites or scales.

In the wild, pests are suppressed by strong winds and wide temperature swings -- hot desert days alternating with cold nights. In the home where air circulation is less than brisk, scales and spider mites can become a problem. Frequent, firm wiping of the leaves with a soft, dry cloth can dislodge as many pests as a windstorm, though. (For more on indoor mite and scale control, refer to issues #128 and #32.)

Looking for back issues? See pp. 6 & 7!

Rx for a potted plant that's gotten too wet

It happens: We leave someone in charge of our plants and they think "more is better." Which it's not. Excess water is a quick ticket to dead root tips and chronic problems related to the ensuing rot, such as new top growth that suddenly dies, and aborted flower buds.

If the soil is too wet, remove the overflow dish from under the pot and set the pot on a stack of newspaper to drain. If the plant has a firm root ball that will remain in one piece without a pot, slide it right out of its container and set it naked on the stacked paper. The paper will help draw out excess moisture. Keep changing the paper as it becomes too wet to act as a wick.

Looking for back issues?

If you've lost one, or weren't on board 'back when', you can:

- 1) Send us an email. We may be able to re-send an issue or two. (Our availability and computer time varies; be patient with us.) Or,
- 2) Ask a friend who also reads *What's Coming Up* to relay a copy. Or,
- 3) Order our CDs. Or,
- 4) Donate to help us get our website up where all back issues will be available at a click. \$20 is great but even \$1 helps! Send checks payable to Janet Macunovich to 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328.

Touch of sour when it comes to sweetgrass

My husband and I are seeking information on grasses and would welcome your advice on a **guide to the grasses**. We would also like to grow some sweet grass, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. - C.K. -

In issue #105 we published **a guide to our favorite ornamental grasses**.

Other great references: *Ornamental Grasses: The Amber Wave* by Carol Ottesen (McGraw-Hill, 1995) or *Taylor's Guide to Ornamental Grasses* (Houghton-Mifflin). Grasses that are native, used for forage, helpful in erosion control, etc. are described in *Grass Varieties in the United States*, Agriculture Handbook 170 of the Soil Conservation Service. (It's on the Internet but if we print the URL here it'll take up more than 11 lines. Simpler to type this into the search field: Grass Varieties in the United States Handbook 170. Then select the link to the National Agricultural Library Repository Google Books.)

The perennial Old World grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* goes by the name sweet vernal grass. It's a self-seeding clump former naturalized throughout North American hardiness zones 5-10. *Hierchloe odorata*, a vigorous runner native from the Arctic to Tennessee, is also called sweet



grass. Both release the vanilla smell of coumarin when crushed or dried, both are used in making baskets and incense, and both are invasive spreaders.

Catalogs are often good sources of information -- the straight scoop from growers with first-hand experience. To **buy sweet grass**: Plants of *Hierochloa* from Prairie Moon Nursery (operates from Winona County, MN) prairiemoon.com, 866-417-8156. *Anthoxanthum* plants from Goodwin Creek Gardens (in Williams, OR) goodwincreekgardens.com, 800-846-7359 and seeds from Fragrant Path Nursery (P.O. Box 328, Fort Calhoun, NE, 68023) fragrantpathseeds.com.



The Master Gardeners of Petoskey, Michigan designed, built and maintain for their community the garden shown here and on the page 6. One section displays plants used by people native to the region and includes sweet grass (here, foreground corner, and at arrow on page 6). It's good to have paving between sections, since:

Sweet Grass is an aromatic, cool-season perennial growing 10-24 inches and spreading about 2 feet per year by underground rhizomes.

- Prairie Moon Nursery, from catalog description of *Hierochloa odorata* -

Three more growers who deserve our support

Prairie Moon Nursery, Goodwin Creek Gardens and Fragrant Path Nursery don't make shade plants their specialty but otherwise fit right in with the honorable gang on page 4.

If you miss an issue

Send us an email and we'll re-send.

Download the current or last week's issue at

www.gardenatoz.com. (It's not a site yet, only a page. Make a donation so we can expand it to include a full library and a live Q&A forum. Checks to Janet Macunovich, 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328.)

For collected issues purchase our CDs. Each CD is completely indexed. Every issue of *What's Coming Up* includes descriptions and ordering information for these and our other publications. (See pages 18 - 19.)

About our CDs

- Our first, *Asking about Asters*, presents 6 years of weekly Q&A articles, including issues 1-22 of *What's Coming Up*.
- The second CD, *Potting Up Perennials*, has issues #23 - 122 -- that's more 1,700 pages and 2,400 images.
- Each CD includes an index that covers everything on the disk and newsletters, so you can find any detail in the whole collection.
- There's more. We added 70 of Steven's most beautiful images on *Potting Up Perennials*, in a ready to play screensaver. Order the CDs to have us all in one place, fully indexed. Your order also helps keep this newsletter free. To order, see pages 18 - 19.



Don't let fungus spoil tomato experience

We purchased **Daconil to stop tomato fungus** and it worked wonderfully well. Do you know where to purchase it now? I have had no luck in finding it. Someone told me it is off the market. Is that correct?

We normally do all we can to avoid connecting home grown produce and fungicides. However, growing good tomatoes in the backyard is getting tougher, given the prevalence of tomato diseases and the recent appearance in North American tomatoes of late blight, the fungus that caused Ireland's devastating potato famine in the 1840's.

When we first looked into your question, it did seem that Daconil, a fungicide/disease control pesticide, had gone off the market. After some more digging we've understood it's Daconil as a *trade name* which vanished from many home-market products. The active ingredient involved, chlorothalonil, is still available in Bonide's Fungonil, Scott's *Ortho Max Garden Disease Control*, Monterey's Fruit Tree, Vegetable & Ornamental Fungicide, Gardentech's Daconil Fungicide, etc.

Fungicide isn't enough

You can **beat fungus without fungicide** if other control measures are up to snuff. The flip side of that coin can't be played the same way -- anti-fungal sprays won't carry the day on their own.

Perhaps the most important fungus control is putting plants in proper light, where drainage is good and inspecting them daily to remove any unhealthy leaf or stem. It's also a big help to choose disease resistant tomatoes ('Black Plum,' 'Floramerica,' 'Matt's Wild Cherry,' 'Mountain Magic,' 'Plum Regal,' and 'Yellow Pear' are some to look for.) Sterilize tomato stakes and cages before you re-use them. Wash your

Pesticides too shifty for inattentive gardeners

From the April, 1999 EPA Reregistration Decision regarding Chlorothalonil:

...Due to risk concerns and uncertainties in the risk assessments, the registrants have agreed to prohibit the following uses on manufacturing product labels, and delete them from their end-use product labels or cancel end-use products registered only for these uses: home lawn, in-container preservative, and antimildew additive... These uses will not be reregistered or allowed on new labels in the absence of appropriate data and an Agency risk management decision.

This was a tiny part of the Environmental Protection Agency's ruling made after this pesticide came up for re-registration in 1998. Some EPA-required changes had to be reflected on new product labels by 2003. However, material already on retailers' shelves and in garden sheds would have kept the name in circulation. Meanwhile, Daconil as a brand for chlorothalonil has remained more prominent for those licensed to apply pesticides. Since we rarely deal with fungicides, we and our reader were among those 5- to 10 years behind in noticing any change.

Chlorothalonil, copper and azoxystrobin are the products available to home gardeners that have some effect on tomato diseases. So look for those active ingredients if fungicides are involved in your tomato disease control. Keep in mind as you do that fungicides are preventive, not curative. Don't wait for symptoms but apply the product early, according to the label's direction. Most call for application every 7 to 10 days all through the growing season.

In addition, do all you can to avoid using just one fungicide. Plant disease can become resistant to a chemical, just as human germs can change to shrug off our antibiotics. So rotate between using chlorothalonil and copper or azoxystrobin (in the product *Heritage*).

hands well after you handle suspect foliage. Drip irrigate tomato plants so the leaves can stay dry much of the time -- their diseases require moisture to spread.

Right: There is a white sheen on the tomato foliage here. That's not a problem but the residue of a foliar spray to prevent fungus infection. Fungicides must be applied to clean foliage. Leaves that are pale or spotted from fungus, can't be saved.

Can we stop a dreadful disease?

Late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*) made a grand appearance in North American tomatoes in 2009. It wiped out many commercial plantings and back yard plots. This is the potato famine disease, a pathogen that can infest potato, tomato and other members of the nightshade family. We should all do anything we can to stop its spread, which is why anyone who grows tomatoes or potatoes should learn to recognize late blight symptoms. There are clear images at <http://blogs.cornell.edu/hort/2010/04/12/avoid-the-late-blight-blues/>



Be quick about removing and be sure to destroy blight-suspect plant material. That includes *all* volunteer potatoes coming back from bits missed during the fall dig. Although late blight spores die out in zone 5 winters, they can survive on live, buried potatoes, so buy new seed potatoes each year from a grower that certifies for disease-free plants.

Any spotted or damaged tomato or potato leaf or stem (above) should be removed right away. Tissue infected with *Septoria* leaf spot, early blight and other fungi gives rise to more infection -- a spread that can kill if left in place.



Most fungus diseases take hold on lower, inner branches where air and sun reach last so moisture lingers. Spores from last year's debris or already infected material accumulate there, and splash up to take hold on more foliage.. So clean up at year end and take away all discolored parts as soon as you see them during the year. Covering the ground with plastic can stop some of the ground splash. (Any color will do; for tomato plants, there may be a link between red mulch and more, bigger fruit.)



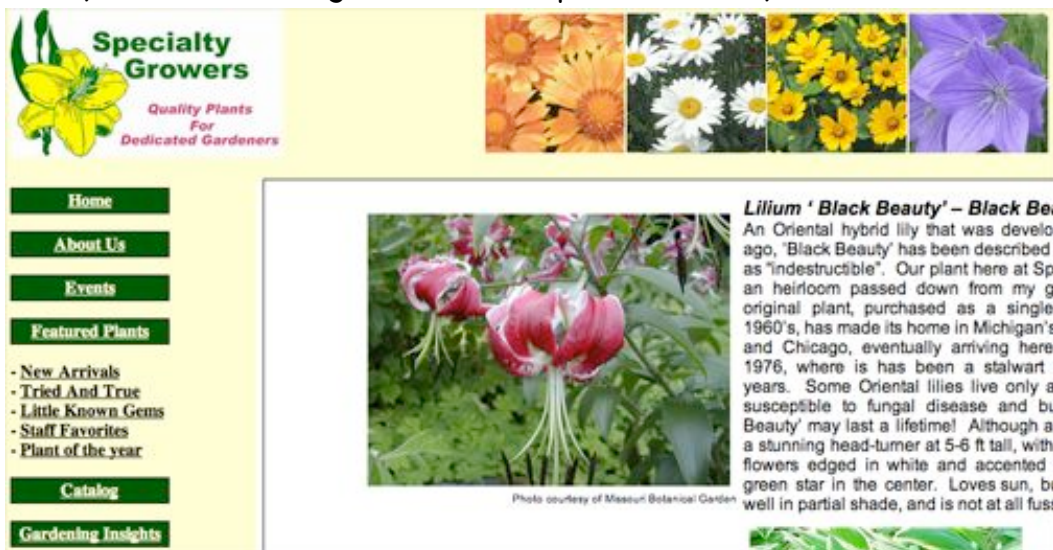
Up in the mornin'
out in the garden,
Get you a ripe one
don't get a hard
one.
Plant `em in the
spring, eat `em in
the summer:
All winter with out
`em's a culinary
bummer...
Homegrown
tomatoes!

From Homegrown
Tomatoes
by Guy Clark

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

Most of us had a **parent, neighbor or other veteran gardener** to guide us through our first attempts to grow. The gardening advice they gave us shines on for a lifetime, and more. So do **the heirloom plants they handed down** to us. Karen Bovio, owner of Specialty Growers (more about her and her nursery on page 4) told us about:

...my grandma's favorite "black" lily, 'Black Beauty.' I've listed it as a "Tried and True" on Featured Plants on my website (www.specialtygrowers.net). That bulb went from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (where my U.P. grandma purchased a single bulb in the 1960's from a mail-order catalog; at that time it was a relatively "new" variety and she spent some money on it!) to Chicago (where she spent her last years) and then on to me in Howell, in



1976. That bulb still puts on a show each spring. I know the bulb is at least 40 years old! And still going strong, unlike many Oriental lilies which give up the ghost after only a few years!

Do you have special heirloom variety plants? **Tell us about them** and we'll pass it along!

Above: Karen Bovio's website tribute to her heirloom 'black Beauty' lily.
Right: Ann Gehrke, a client friend, gave us a start of this blue globe thistle (*Echinops exaltatus*) many years ago. She said it came to her from a friend who got it from her mom... We wish we knew the variety name so we could spread it more quickly, since it re-blooms reliably in September if we cut it down after its first bloom in July!

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:

Living in a thicket but too timid to cut trees

You said that person with the wooded back yard should thin the trees. It's such a huge step! We need to do that but can't get started...



Try this: Hire an arborist to identify and evaluate your trees, then recommend to you which to save, which to cut. Afterward, take a photo of the yard, put tracing paper over it and trace only the "keeper" trees. We bet you'll love this preview of thicket becoming a forested park.



Beautiful as it is, this wooded area is too crowded to support healthy trees plus an understory or garden. Use tracing paper over a photo to imagine some gone.

Ready to care for the lawn as soon as the snow goes

V.Z. wrote, determined to improve the lawn this year:

When to fertilize? How often?
What specific organic product?

When to topdress? How often?

With what product?

Fertilizing's best in April and October with almost any slow release organic. If you have soil test results, buy the brand with the formula closest to the result's three-number prescription, such as 5-3-2 Groganic or Fertrell 8-1-4...

Topdressing is to spread compost on top and rake it smooth. You don't actually mix it in. ...if you have just core aerated, raking will deposit compost into the little holes the aerator has made. ...start with once a year aeration but some soils and situations may need more, or less.

They waited until he went out of town and thinned the trees. He didn't notice for nearly a month.

- Anonymous -



Find an arborist

The International Society of Arboriculture is a great source of information for all who grow trees. Its certification program for tree care professionals is well respected by U.S. Forestry Service and University arborists. At its website you can get help finding a qualified tree service. www.isa-arbor.org, click on *Public Outreach* and then *Find a Tree Care Service*.

This week in our garden

Grow with us! This week:

Sharpen one more blade. We forgot about **the lawn mower blade!** Grass blades that are cut clean rather than torn look better and have fewer disease problems!

Look for recommendations to **start fungus control on tree peony**. Yes, L.S., we have seen spotted and even dead leaves on tree peonies (*Paeonia suffruticosa*). But until you described what you've been dealing with and we looked into it, we didn't realize that the this Asian import's ancient nemesis, a twig blight named *Pestalotiopsis paeoniicola*, has now arrived here from overseas.

Like most fungal problems, the best controls are going to be those we take early, before symptoms appear. Almost certainly some steps will mirror what's done **for herbaceous peony** afflicted by spotty, bloom killing *Botrytis* or stem infections. That will involve improving air circulation around and through the plant, and cleaning up every bit of last year's leaf debris.

We'll let you know what we learn, and post it here, as knowledgeable peony growers reply to us about what's been tried or is predicted to prevent that late summer sudden death of branches and foliage.

Which reminds us of how valuable it is to **submit a plant sample to the Extension** for problem diagnosis. There is a charge for the service but no cost to fill out the form. Yet we've found that by the time we answer the questions posed on the form, we often have enough information to make the diagnosis ourselves.

Michigan State University Extension's *Plant Diagnostic Form* asks about:

Activities near the spread of plant branches in the past 5 years

Plant location

Soil type

Exposure N, S, E, W

Sunlight hours

Mulch type and depth

Irrigation

Chemicals applied to the plant or within its root zone

Area of plant affected

Nature of symptoms

Prevalence in a group of that plant, and

Extent of damage

As we look for and consider these answers, light bulbs can click on above our heads. Such was the case when we thought about L.S.' tree peony symptoms, when "twig" as an area of plant affected came together with "blight" for nature of symptoms. Those two words plus the plant scientific name in an Internet search called up a 2009 report by the American Phytopathological Society, *First report of Pestalotiopsis paeoniicola*...

PLANT DIAGNOSTIC FORM
(Indicate all that apply)

Name: _____ Address: _____ Date: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Type of plant: _____ Size: _____

Trees / Shrubs: ☐ B&B ☐ Container ☐ Spaded ☐ Unknown
Lawn: ☐ Seeded ☐ Sodded ☐ Unknown

Plant Source: ☐ Nursery ☐ Landscaper ☐ Retail Store ☐ Garden Center ☐ Mail Order ☐ Unknown

ACTIVITIES NEAR THE SPREAD OF PLANT BRANCHES IN THE PAST 5 YEARS
☐ TRENCING ☐ FILL-DIGGING ☐ GRADE CHANGES ☐ PAVING ☐ CHEMICAL SPILLS ☐ CONSTRUCTION ☐ HEAVY EQUIPMENT MOVEMENT

CHEMICALS APPLIED WITHIN ROOT ZONE: (list type/label apply)
NONE: _____
FERTILIZER: _____
INSECTICIDE: _____
FUNGICIDE: _____
HERBICIDE/WEED KILLER: _____
LAWN/ROADSIDE WEED KILLER: _____
CRABGRASS: _____

LOCATION
☐ YARD/GARDEN ☐ HOUSEPLANT ☐ NEAR STRUCTURE ☐ NEAR ROAD/PAVED ☐ RIGHT GROUND ☐ LOW GROUND ☐ CONTAINER ☐ NATURAL AREA ☐ SLOPE ☐ OTHER: _____

SOIL TYPE
☐ CLAY ☐ SANDY ☐ MUCK ☐ LOAM ☐ BRAINAGE ☐ GOOD ☐ FAIR ☐ POOR

EXPOSURE
☐ NORTH ☐ SOUTH ☐ EAST ☐ WEST

SUNLIGHT HOURS
☐ <4 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 6-8 ☐ 2-4 ☐ >8

MULCH
TYPE: _____ DEPTH: _____

SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION
INGROUND: ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ 1-2 times/week ☐ Once
FREQUENCY: ☐ DAILY ☐ 1-2 times/week ☐ Once

DURATION
WATER SOURCE: ☐ WELL ☐ CITY

CHEMICALS APPLIED TO PLANT: (list type/label apply)
NONE: _____
FERTILIZER: _____
INSECTICIDE: _____
FUNGICIDE: _____
HERBICIDE/WEED KILLER: _____

AREA AFFECTED
☐ ENTIRE PLANT ☐ TWIG ☐ BRANCHES ☐ LEAVES/NEEDLES ☐ BUDS ☐ BULB ☐ OTHER: _____

NATURE OF SYMPTOMS OR INJURY
☐ SPOTS ☐ WILT ☐ BORING ☐ DIEBACK ☐ GROWTH ☐ BUDS ☐ SPLITTING ☐ MISSING BARK ☐ PEELING ☐ BROWNING ☐ POOR GROWTH ☐ YELLOWING ☐ STUNTING

PREVALENCE
☐ SINGLE PLANT ☐ FEW SCATTERED PLANTS ☐ ENTIRE PLANTING ☐ # OF PLANTS

SYMPTOM DISTRIBUTION
☐ LOWER SECTION ☐ UPPER SECTION ☐ EVENLY DISTRIBUTED ☐ ONE SIDE

EXTENT OF DAMAGE
☐ LIGHT ☐ MODERATE ☐ SEVERE

Scrabbling in the garden, word play

We gardeners earn admiring murmurs when we display our garden's produce in vases and on plates. Why don't we stir up a bit of that admiration by tossing a nifty horticultural term or two on the table during the next Scrabble game? For instance:

Winnow: verb; WIN noh; to rid of undesirable parts; *It's common to **winnow** the chaff from seed or grain by tossing the harvested material a short way on a breezy days, letting the lighter debris blow away while the heavier see falls.*

Chaff: noun; rhymes with staff; loose seed covering and extraneous small bits of leaf and stem collected with grain; *For less spoilage, remove the **chaff** before you store see.*

Thresh: verb; rhymes with fresh; separate seed from a plant; to strike repeatedly; *We watch junco birds jump up and down repeatedly, striking a plant and realize they are **threshing** the seed from those plants!*

Blight: noun; rhymes with light; sudden conspicuous wilting and dying of affected parts, especially young, growing tissues; *The evil sorcerer gestured and all the plants drooped suddenly, killed by **blight**.*



Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

Janet's a lady who gets a lot of mileage out of a garden. That's how Macunovich was once described by a client of her business, Perennial Favorites. "I love what you plant for me, Janet, and think I get to know them pretty well. Then you come here with your stories about the plants and *why* something is growing a certain way, it's like you open up windows I didn't know were there." Janet brings the same depth and enthusiasm to books and articles she writes, classes she

teaches and practical how-to materials she develops.

He's a guy who sees not a beautiful plant but exactly where a gardener fits into a picture. Steven Nikkila's a horticultural photographer who's also planted hundreds of gardens in dozens of different situations in running a gardening business with his wife, Janet Macunovich. That work's paired him with people whose gardening experience levels have ranged from just sprouting to heavily branched. Steven's history of showing so many people "how to" plus his own broad knowledge of what has been or needs to be done in a garden adds to his photos. His alterations in composition, angle or light have caused thousands of gardeners to say "Oh, I see!"



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

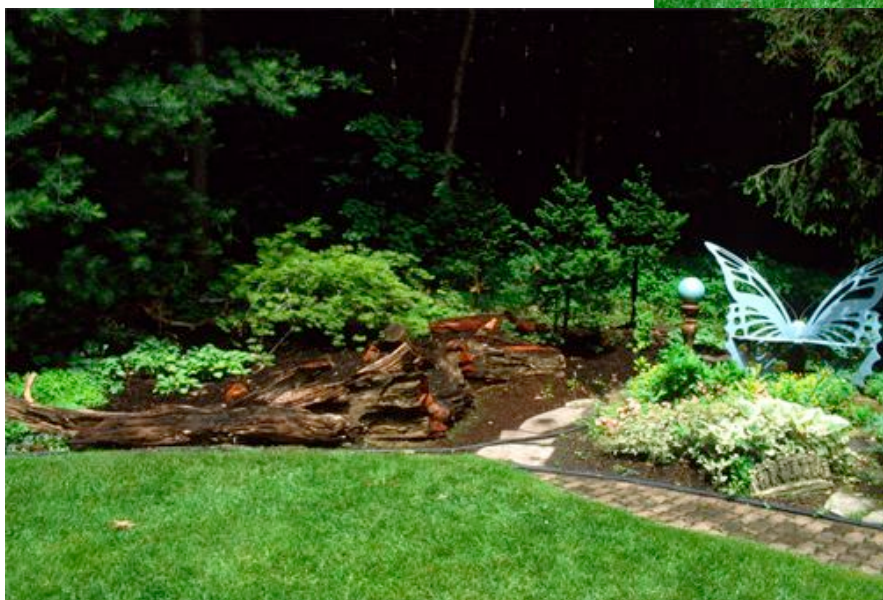
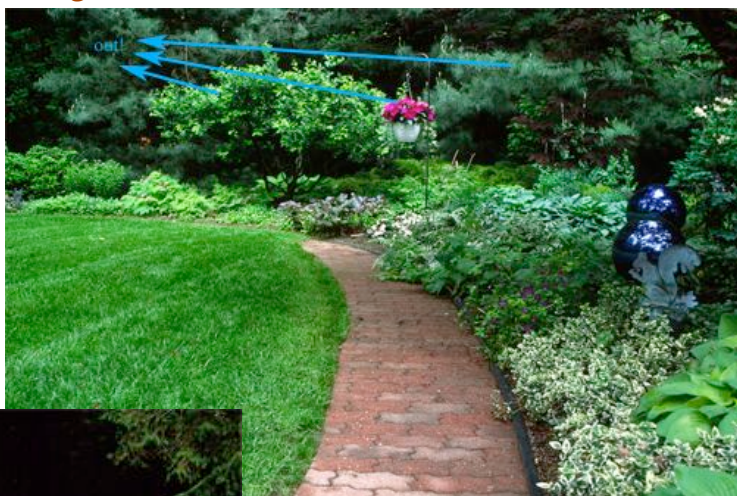
Where to catch Janet & Steven in-person:

March 14, Monday, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., *Great Plants and Combinations* by Janet at the Lathrup Village Gardeners 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**. 248-618-7694 for more information. Free.

March 19, Saturday, *Improving an Established Garden* is Janet's part of the afternoon sessions at the 12th Annual spring education event, "The Art of Gardening Seminar", hosted by the Allen County Master Gardeners in **Lima, Ohio**. Registration forms and more information is available at www.allen.osu.edu or contact Gretchen Staley, Allen County Master Gardeners Association, at 419-302-4234.



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. Call the library at 248-618-7694 for information.

March 26, Saturday, Janet's at the Huron County Master Gardeners' Spring Into Gardening Day in **Udly, Michigan. *Naturalized***

Gardening and *Perennials for the Collector* will be Janet's contribution to the day long event. Pre-registration is required to attend. Go to the following website:

http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/default.cfm?pageset_id=27408&page_id=44700&msue_portal_id=25643 for more information.

April 2, Saturday, Janet is part of English Gardens "Garden Party" weekend in its southeast Michigan stores. **Low Maintenance Landscape** will be discussed at the West Bloomfield location (248-851-7506) at 10:00 a.m., at the Royal Oak store (248-280-9500) at 1:00 p.m. and in Ann Arbor (734-332-7900) at 4:00 p.m.

April 3, Sunday, The "Garden Party" continues at English Gardens' southeast Michigan locations. Janet will be advising on the **Low Maintenance Landscape** at the store in Clinton Township (586-286-6100) at noon and in Eastpointe (586-771-4200) at 3:00 p.m.

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 meeting**,
 - a **hands-on workshop** at a site of your choosing or
 - a **multi-part class** for a 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 talks or get a referral and list of speakers. **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.



Pond Mystery, I caught someone



ScottBates Jan 11 2008, 08:51 AM

[size=2]Yesterday I caught someone xxx xxxx yesterday. The call came into HQ from a distressed pond owner who had walked away, or left the scene of the crime.

Perhaps a mink had invaded the pond? Not the first time. Upon arrival and after careful examination of the pond, I found 1 functioning heater, 1 functioning air pump, and no other failures. Most pond people do not spend much time checking for equipment failures. The pond could cause this type of mortality rate. The plot was clear. The water being thawed and relatively clear I could see the bottom. The one thing that stood out was the small, cylindrical object with a soft consistency, and had a white fungal growth on it.

near their ponds, so they are not looking or checking for equipment failures

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 yourselves or refer you to these others to meet your group's need.

Left: Scott Bates, owner of Grass Roots Nursery, is one of the most knowledgeable people in the country regarding water gardens. More than that, he explains how to and makes you laugh at the same time. As a moderator of the website forum that Janet and Steven administered along with expert friends, Bates not only answered questions and checked the accuracy of others' statements on the site, he would post humorous but helpful pond puzzles from time to time.

Contact Janet or Steven at JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850 when you want to set up a talk, workshop or class.

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.

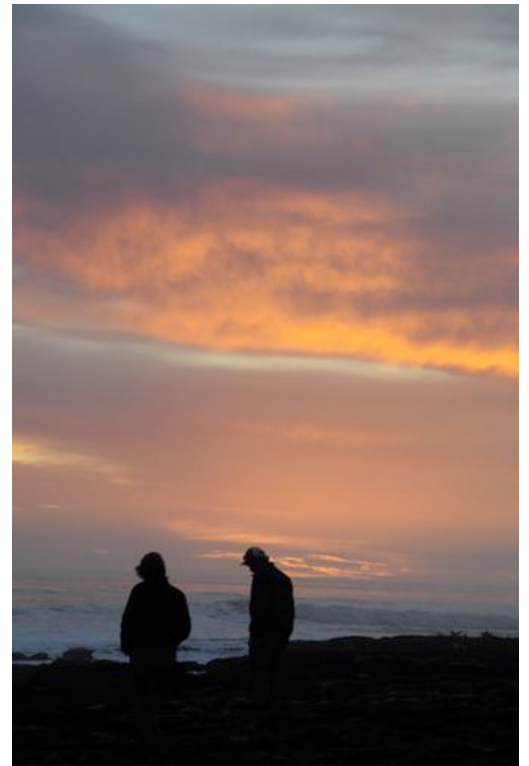
You can own any of Steven's images from *What's Coming Up*.^{*} Or if you have a flower, type of scene or hue in mind, request your dream. His library includes tens of thousands of plants and natural images, so Steven can assemble a customized photo sampler and price list for you.

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

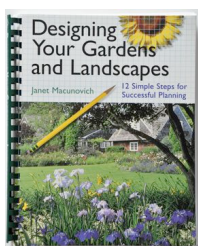


^{*}Images in our newsletter are depicted in low- resolution to facilitate e-mail transmission. Steven's originals and art created from them are full resolution, with so much clear detail they are sharp even as wall-size cloth banners.

Laura and I picked milkweed pods and opened them to feel the scale-shaped seeds, overlapping like the skin of a dragon...

- Margaret Atwood -

Support our work! Add friends to our mail list, or buy them our publications:



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.

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Practical, beautiful answers about perennials and all kinds of flowers, trees, shrubs, design, pruning and much more is in this collection of 2009 & 2010'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 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.

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 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.

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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