

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns
Issue 137, March 23, 2011

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Oh no, winter returns! Hmm... but those purple crocuses now show up better amid snow and ice, than against plain, dark soil!

Bare root trees fare well

I received a flyer about a group selling trees that are 6 feet tall but only \$32.00 each. Is this a good deal? The trees are "bare root." How do I plant that? - D.H. -

It may well be a good deal. Bare root trees are easier to lug around than anything so big with a soil root ball. All they need is to be moved expeditiously from grower's field or cold storage to buyer and planted right away. So you pay less than you might for a comparable tree from a garden center but must commit to pick it up on the distribution date and plant it straightaway.

Bare root trees can draw water from an area four to five times larger than the same plants grown in containers, because their roots are spread wide, not coiled or bent back on themselves. A wide base also makes the tree more stable.



Groups such as Global ReLeaf buy trees in bulk for sale within their communities. Global ReLeaf is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating us about the value of trees, selecting, planting and maintaining them. The organization's members, many of them our City Foresters, utility company arborists, nursery owners and local tree care professionals, volunteer their time to select and distribute the trees, which keeps the cost very low. Commonly, proceeds from such tree sales go to community planting projects, such as the ongoing replacement of park and street trees lost in Michigan to emerald ash borer.

I trenched around the drip line and then peeled the soil away to make a bare root tree of this 10' ginkgo. That was almost ten years ago. Today it's fine, well settled in its new site.

To find out about bare root tree sales in your area, check your local Extension, regional Soil Conservation District office, or a Global ReLeaf website. We see that the sale in our area is on*, taking orders and arranging for buyers to pick up their trees April 30. We also see two favorite trees on that list -- swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) for shade and pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*; more on this tree on page 5) for the understory.

* In SE Michigan www.globalreleaf.com/Tree_Sale_2011_rev_final_opt.pdf

Planting a bare root tree

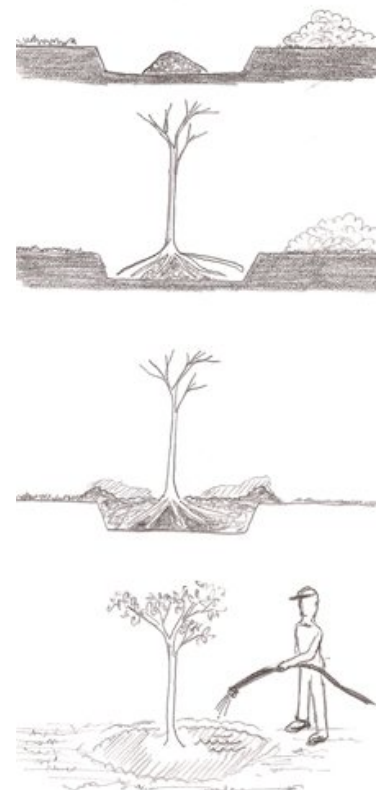
First, dig a hole wide enough to hold the spread roots. Make it just deep enough that the trunk's flare will be at ground level and the roots can radiate out and angle down, with a few inches of soil covering them. The typical hole for a bare root tree will be maybe 40 inches wide and 12 inches deep.

Top right: In the hole, make a firm mound of soil in the center to support the base of the trunk, keeping the flared bottom of the trunk at ground level or a little above -- since it may settle a bit over time and it is not good if the flare settles to below grade. Clip any broken or ragged-end roots.

Set the trunk on the mound. Spread the roots out and down over the mound. (Right, first from top.) Now add soil, and water the soil to settle it. You may pat the soil to firm it but don't stamp it down, since that would eliminate vital air space. It's the weight of all that soil over the roots that gives the tree anchorage, not any cohesiveness of stamped soil.

To be sure water added around the tree stays and soaks in where it's needed, build a ridge of soil an inch or two high around the outer edge of your planting hole. This ridge acts like a dam, trapping rain and sprinkler water there to seep in to the root zone. Mulch the root zone and cover the watering ridge, but don't let any mulch rest against the trunk.

For a tree with a 2" diameter trunk, expect two years until the tree re-establishes. Keep the soil around the roots moist but never soggy for one year for every inch of trunk diameter.



Only exceptional trees need a stake

Most of the time, a new tree does not need and is better without stakes. You might need to stake on a steep hill or windy site, however.

Before placing the tree in the hole, pound in a six-foot stake near the center of the hole, driving it down into undisturbed soil. Place the tree so the trunk can be loosely tied to this stake with wide, soft material -- sections of discarded panty hose work well.

The aim is only to prevent the tree from tipping over, not to stop it from moving in the wind. Trees need to move in the wind to build trunk strength. So if you must stake a tree, remove both stake and ties after one growing season.

More, in Janet and Steven give you Trees:

- Why every back yard should have a big tree
- Tree selection charts in *Replacing an ash or other big trees*
- Planting a balled and burlapped tree
- After you plant: Stakes, water, fertilizer

See page 20 to order *Trees*.



I read the Tree magazine... now I'm anxious to start cutting back my Redbud.

- Terri Law -

Shrubs transplant well now. Our new shrubs and trees come in starting in April -- in many cases they were just dug from a field, the same as transplanting. If the soil is workable, put them in. Given a month or more of cool weather and good soil moisture, they'll often out-perform shrubs planted later.

- Ed Allemon, Allemon's Garden Center -

Practical fence still can't please the eye

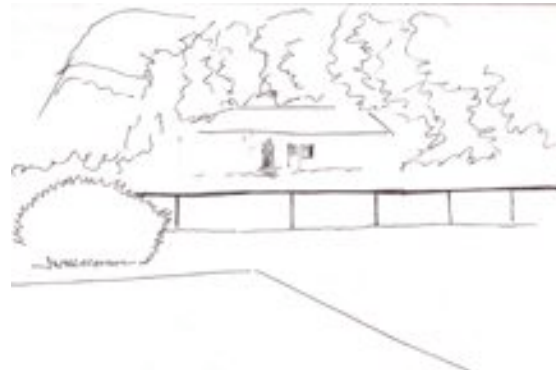
I recently put up a perimeter chain link fence. Though I like the sense of security it gives me, I don't care for the looks of it. I have considered growing vines to cover it, but it runs just behind a large silver maple and three lilac trees, so between the thirsty roots and the shade there aren't many options. Besides, I would like year round privacy.

Could I cover the chain link with rolled fencing? I found sources for split bamboo, willow, reed, fern, and even some heather fencing. They look easy to install, but I wonder how they hold up.

Also, I think it could be cool to paint it. I might choose a forest green, then put a pagoda dogwood in front of it. (They don't need that much sun???) Could be a nice look in the snow during the long Wisconsin winters. - S. R. -



What does a chain link fence look like? A line!



Chain link fence can support materials to give it a more attractive look. We've seen lattice, bamboo mats, and even textiles strapped to it, and plastic strips woven through. None of those is quite as durable as the metal but if kept out of contact with wet soil -- suspended above soil line -- they can have a long life.

Painting chain link dark green or black makes it less obtrusive. It will need periodic repainting.

But we have more for you to think about, regarding that fence. We're sending you a copy of *What's Coming Up #36*, which considers these other points:

1) That it's good to identify *what about the chain fence* you don't like, so you will focus on altering that aspect. Many people try to "hide it" and end up simply re-drawing the same straight line or combination of horizontal and vertical segments that, as they realize too late, is what they did not like in the first place. A planting may simply transform a straight horizontal line of metal (the top rail of the fence) into a straight line of green leaves.



Above: If it was the fence's color and texture you didn't like, this planting works. It was white and coarse, vertically patterned. Now



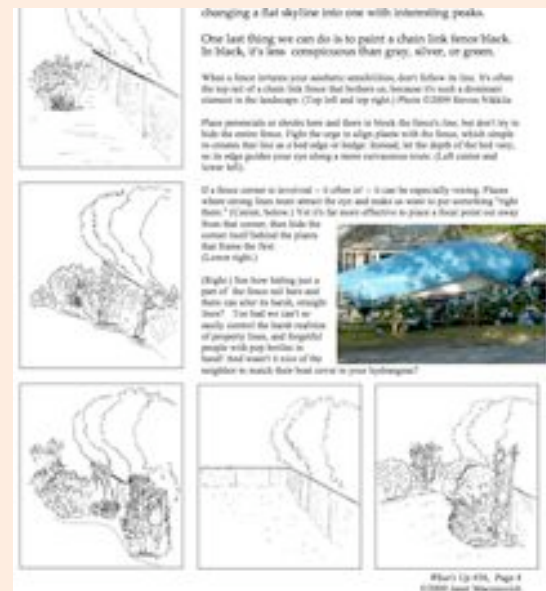
it's green and fine in texture. However, if it was straightness of line that bugged you, you still have that!

Left: If a straight line doesn't fit your idea of beauty in a back yard, then don't cover a chain link fence with anything that's also straight across the top. Think about breaking the line of the fence as done here, with taller or projecting features at intervals.

Our CDs are quick access to back issues...



We write for ourselves as well as you. We want to keep learning, and do that as we research and figure how to explain "how to." Thus we'd rather go back to topics we've already covered only when there's high demand or we see a chance to advance what's gone before. Fence line design is such a case. Today in #137 we expand on *What's Coming Up #36*. (Below.)



If you didn't save that issue or weren't in this network then, you can read that issue along with about 300 additional weeks' topics on our fully-indexed CD compilation *Asking About Asters*.

On a limited basis, we can also send individual back issues to those who ask.

...and soon we'll have an on-line library!

We're working to get our website up, and your help is speeding the action. The site will have a complete, open library of our work, links to others' references and a free-for-all, moderated Q&A forum. For how you can help, see our Donatelltale flower on page 17.

2) For privacy without feeling like you're walled into a fortress, pinpoint the places that you really must block. From where you most often sit or stand, draw a line to neighbor's windows or doors, places where passersby stop to look in, and uglinesses such as the back sides of storage sheds. Then block those views by placing plants or other features on those lines. AS you do, notice that setting blockers right on the fence line is not the most effective means of creating privacy. Blockers can be more effective, more quickly and lend more dimension to a scene if some are planted closer to you.

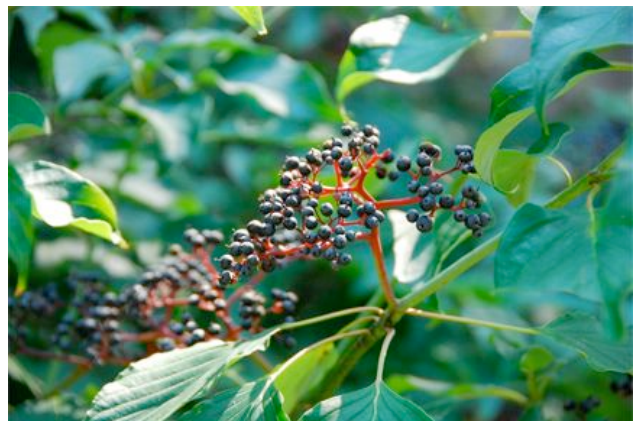
When you plant for privacy, consider every leaf as an asset. If you do, you'll think twice about concentrating your assets too low. Pyramidal evergreens, for instance, are tall but all their width is down low. Do you really need a block there, from ground level to 3 feet? There's a quicker, often more effective reward if you choose plants and features that insert a visual stopper *above* the fence line.

Pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) is a good choice as a small tree in shade. It's pretty in bloom, in fruit, and in autumn, plus its horizontal branching is distinctive. In addition, this and other small trees can block out bigger eyesores more quickly than most shrubs because a tree's crown begins and extends higher on your --the viewer's -- horizon line.

However, pagoda dogwood (below, in bloom and fruit) does need some light plus moist well drained soil to "take." A mature tree is a tough bedfellow. If you put a dogwood in competition with a mature silver maple, create a bed for the newbie and drip water to its roots in an expanding ring as its roots find their way out. That can take several years. The smaller the new tree at planting, the better chance it will have to quickly adapt its root system to that spot.



Above: It's not the fence and low plantings but what's above six feet that creates privacy for those on the porch and first floor of this home.



Add dimension: Put a name to that pretty face

I need help in finding out the name of my perennial. It seeds itself and grows in bunches, flowers colored pink, white and blush. It's just beautiful out there, never stops blooming all summer. Some years it's still blooming in November. What I like most is that it fills in where bulbs were in spring. It's about a foot tall or a little taller.

I've tried everywhere and can't get the name. I give away so many starts, and it's frustrating that I can't name them when I give them away. I'm enclosing a couple of stems and seed pods from the plants, and hope you will recognize it. - B.F. -

It's not a perennial but a self-sown annual, which can be as reliable as a perennial but provide a longer bloom period.

You're growing annual candytuft, most likely *Iberis amara*, *I. umbellata* or a hybrid. Its seeds drop in the garden and can survive the winter in the soil. They sprout readily and quite early so that they're up and growing by the time we look in May. We just thin them out or remove them from places where they aren't wanted.

If you ever run out of seeds and seedlings to give away (not likely!), give out the plant's scientific names. Plug that into an internet search engine to find seed sources, such as Stock Seed Farms (stockseed.com 800-759-1520) and Sand Mountain Herbs (sandmountainherbs.com 321 County Rd 18, Fyffe, AL 35971).

Given a name, we can build dimension into a relationship with a plant. In this case we learned it is also called bitter candytuft, in reference to its taste and its use in homeopathy to treat gout and bronchitis.



Planting a new tree?

Read:

Why every back yard should have a big tree in the magazine Janet & Steven give you Landscape Ideas.
Order form, page 20.

We call it doubling up, when annuals fill in after bulbs or plants share space in order to cover up for each other's shabby seasons. In *Janet and Steven give you Landscape Ideas* we help you fill garden gaps with a chart of 60 plants that can be doubled up in about 200 combinations.

Tip cuttings: Growing on from what people said this week

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

Longing to lounge at the feet of that beech!

Re issue #136: Where is that wonderful beech????!! Where are those wonderful woods it's standing in??!



...For many years I looked out the window of my room in Georgia at just such a patriarch of a beech in the woods across the circular drive. - B.C. -

The beech pictured in issue #136 is at the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain outside Boston. It's in a grove with others of equal flare and flair.

We've been seeking great roots for nearly 20 years, since we determined to learn and write more about the nether parts of plants. We can recommend the dawn redwood flares at Sarah P. Duke



Gardens, Duke University, Durham NC (one was pictured in issue #136). There are princess trees (*Paulownia*) at Longwood Gardens near Kennett Square, Pennsylvania that appear to have elephant legs folded beneath them. There are some outstanding arborvitae flares -- bared not so much by time as by their co-existence with rock and water -- in the Presque Isle unit of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park in the northwest corner of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

This venerable birch is along the Long Trail in Vermont, and like the arborvitae/cedar bases we love in Michigan's U.P., the presence of rock and action of water have a lot to do with its grand flare.

We could go on! (Steven's itching to load about 40 photos on here... Janet's fending him off until we can devote a whole issue to it, as we already have too many photos here and WhatsUp files that have been running too big.) But let's build the list further, through networking. We'd like to hear nominations from you -- share your favorite public-place flares with the rest of us. Photos are appreciated but a simple "where" and "which tree" will be enough for those who wish to commune with the great ones!

You think *your* weedy bulb is bad?

These squill (*Scilla sibirica*)!!! I may never get rid of them. They're in the beds and the lawn... - S.P. -

You're right, Siberian squill (*Scilla sibirica*) belong in the bad actor category of bulbs. They're beautiful in bloom but quite the spreaders-by-seed... the bane of people who would rather not have their May garden filled with mats of dense, grass-like foliage turning yellow and doing a disappearing act.

We have never met anyone who has successfully eradicated them from a lawn. (Never yet? Maybe someone reading this knows otherwise!). ...most people who like a lawn well enough to try to rescue it from these blue spring charmers don't want to go two full years without lawn, while the squill is first removed and then smothered and removed some more.

This Hippeastrum, (a relative of the holiday amaryllis) grows so well (in our Florida garden) if they are not dug up and separated every three years you get lots of green leaves but no flower. Two years ago we literally gave away hundreds of nice sized bulbs in addition to the hundreds we tossed into yard waste as too small to pass on.

- Dennis and Carole Groh -



Evasive plant I.D.

There has been a perennial, or I guess it could be a bulb, that I saw everywhere last year. It is at least 3 to 4 feet tall, has spiky leaves on the stem kind of like a lily, and the flower is at the top of the stem, one flower per stem. The flower is usually purple to pink with some white. It's a very interesting flower, in terms of shape and color, that I would like to consider for my perennial garden. But I don't know the name or anything about it. - F. -

Without more detail we can only guess Several plants that are purpl-ish in summer and grab attention are perennial purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), the weed purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and the annual spiderflower (*Cleome hasslerana*).

Take a sample stem or pod, even one that's been standing all winter, or clear photo of leaf and flower or seed pod to your local Extension (search your County government listings on-line or in the phone directory). Or send the sample or email the photos to us. If you send samples, just fold them in paper -- don't wrap anything in plastic. Address it to Janet & Steven at 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328.

Shade gardener looks for a ray of hope

I'm asking for my friend : What kind of plants bloom in the shade? -F.K. -

Perennials hold sway over annuals in shade, simply because they can manage in the low light by growing a little each year until they attain sufficient size to bloom -- or even wait until a tree falls to make hay and seed for a few years in that sunny window. Light colored flowers tend to predominate in shade: white, yellow, light pink and lavender. Tiny individual flowers or small flowers in clusters outnumber those that are individually large.

We can recommend George Schmid's *Encyclopedia of Shade Perennials*. And in our magazine *Janet and Steven give you Trees*, we feature our favorite shade perennials, including goatsbeard,

(*Aruncus* species), turtlehead (*Chelone obliqua*), Japanese anemone (*A. x hybrida*), *Tellima*, *Tovara* and some such as Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium goeringianum* 'Pictum') and *Hosta* which don't have/aren't grown for flowers.

Once we have our website up, visitors to the site may elect to receive articles on specific topics, as they come out. You'll have to keep that in mind for your friend.



Can't cover everything, every week..

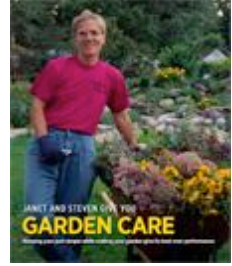
...but thousands of topics we've already covered are always at your fingertips in our CDs and magazines. For instance:

Landscape Ideas:

Designer solutions for spring bulbs' disappearance
Shady gardening

Garden Care:

Sharpen pruning tools
Cure fertilizerphobia



These magazines are just EXCELLENT. The stewardess on the airplane did come to check on me because I laughed out loud... - Alain Bush -

The calculating gardener -- figuring which fertilizer

Can I use up a mixed bunch of old fertilizers under my trees this spring? I'd like to start new with some kind that's actually right for my plants. Some of these I need to use up are for azaleas, and tomatoes, not trees. -L.F. -

Fertilizers supplement *soil* deficiencies. One that supplies what's scarce in a given soil is good for almost anything that grows there. So you can use "tomato food" on trees and "azalea conditioner" for hosta. During early spring, use only products that are slow release in action, and carbon-based. On their ingredients label you'll read that all or almost all of the nitrogen they contain is "water insoluble."

Save granular, faster, water soluble products and blue powders for during the active growing season.

Fertilizer lasts years if dry.

If people want to fertilize early to beef up a thin or pale lawn, they should use a slow release fertilizer. - Mary Wilson, Michigan State University Extension

Going to pieces over sharpening

Can you show pictures of how to take tools apart to sharpen them? I have sharpeners and can not get them into the pruning blades. - L.H. -

We do all we can to avoid taking pruners apart because it means extra work that's not necessary unless sap or soil have gotten into the joint. Try switching to the smaller stone called a pocket stone, just 1" x 3", before you take them apart.

Scrabbling in the garden, word play gets serious about problem I.D.

We gardeners earn admiring murmurs when we display our garden's produce. Let's stir up a bit of that admiration by solving plant puzzles, too. Unearth answers, fast, by starting with the right word as you scan a book's index or use an Internet search engine.



Combine a troubled plant's scientific name with a symptom described in words commonly used by plant pathologists. You'll quickly find a problem name plus answers, in Universities' Extension bulletins.



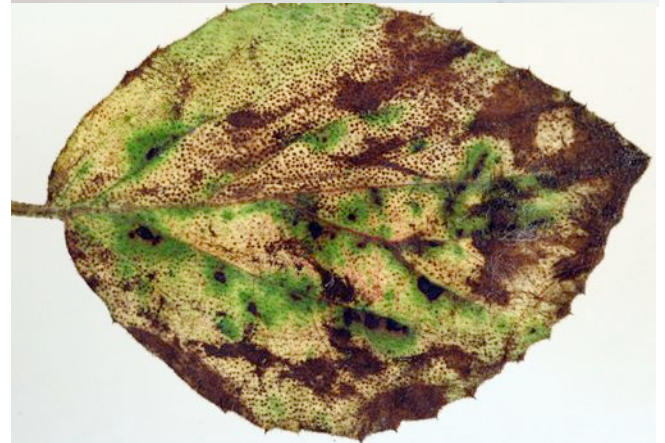
Scorched: adjective; a browning of plant tissues often at tips and margins of leaves, symptomatic of some diseases or caused

by heat; We typed *Mahonia scorched leaf* into a search engine when our Oregon grape holly looked like this (above, right). Hits 2, 3 and 10 were bulletins from Oregon State U, Missouri Botanical Garden and Texas A&M, all saying grape holly will "scorch in sun."

Spot: noun; discolored place resulting from natural causes (as injury, disease), where spots caused by a given fungus or bacterium are generally rather constant in shape, size and color; The leaf *spot* on this Viburnum foliage (right) may be marks of *Cercospora* fungus, "scattered, small, roughly circular brown or purple spots, with centers that eventually become tan or gray and are surrounded by a brown or purple halo."



Left: A leaf spot called maple tar spot has a different color pattern, pale with a halo at first, becoming shiny back in late summer.



Right: When a leaf has many spots of infection the damage may coalesce. A leaf with so much damage may no longer produce its share of sugar and starch so may be shed

Blotch: noun; a symptom of disease involving dark, irregular spots on the leaf or fruit, where the edges of the discolored area are often blurred rather than sharply defined; In *Diseases and Pests of Ornamental Plants*, P.P. Pirone explains that if a diseased area of a leaf is irregular in shape and size the disease is usually called *blotch* rather than *spot*.

Canker: noun; more or less localized diseases of woody plant parts which cause shrinking and drying of tissues which later crack open and expose the underlying wood; *Some fungi responsible for Viburnum leaf spot are also called **canker** when they infect breaks and weak places in young twigs; the canker enlarges and twig reacts each year so the site may look sunken, scarred or knobby.*

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**.*

Right: This cherry branch had a canker, a bacterial infection that had been growing in a weak spot. When it became large enough that water- and nutrient flow there ended, in late spring that year the new leaves wilted and died very suddenly of *fire blight*.

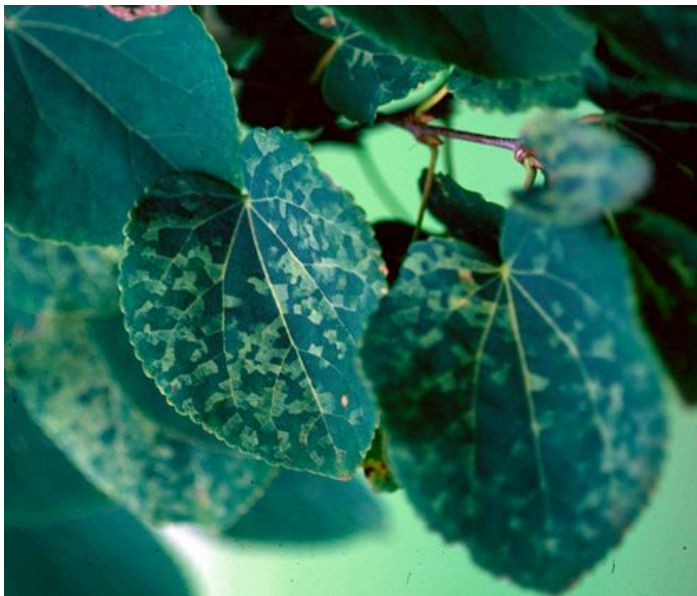


Mosaic: noun; moh SAY ick; an effect of virus that appears as light and dark mottling of a leaf, but tissues seem otherwise healthy and do not brown and die; *Pretty patterns on a leaf may be variegation but may also signal **mosaic** virus.*

These *Clematis* leaves (right) and katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum*) leaves (below) are both saying to their gardener, "I have a virus infection." Plant viruses, like human viruses, are not curable. They remain in the plant for life. They are also quite variable in effect, some gradually weakening the plant and eventually killing it, others quickly deadly, and some so minor that a plant can persist by simply growing vigorously.



Below: These two rose leaves are discolored in a pattern opposite that of chlorosis. This is a symptom of rose mosaic virus and reason to dig and destroy the plant.



Chlorosis: noun (adjective: chlorotic); kluh ROH sus; blanching or yellowing of normally green tissue; ***Chlorosis** is often a result of nutrient deficiency and then may be most pronounced at places farthest from the nutrient flow -- dark green on veins, pale between leaf veins and along the edge.*

Aiming for Answers, Hit or Miss: A miss on explaining crop rotation!

There are no sure bets in dealing with living things, nor in communication. We're certainly glad you can share with us the stories you have that are warnings for others, and also tell us when we miss or misconstrue something!

So I came to your talk about edible landscapes last week and understand that I should pay attention to what family a plant is in. But I don't follow "why!" - A.V. -

Oops! You're so right -- Janet skipped right to families without defining rotation! Crop rotation is essential to annual plant health. Rotate crops in family blocks so that plants from a given family don't remain in any spot for more than a couple of years. Rotate that plant to a different area so that pesty insects and diseases that tend to build up, may starve for lack of a host plant.

The handout material from that talk was a chart with many annual, perennial and woody vegetables, fruits, nuts and herbs. It grouped the plants by family and, for the sake of those panning to mix these in with their ornamental landscape, listed ornamental relatives, too. Any reader who would like a copy of that chart, which won't fit into this newsletter until website time, can email and ask for the *Edible Landscape Chart*.

This week in our garden

Grow with us! This week, we are:

Resigned: About a jade tree. We cut it back and set it out on the back porch to acclimate to the outdoors and grow back thick in the better light. It can take a couple degrees of frost, but whoo boy, winter blew back in quite a bit colder! Ah well, we shall see. Why else have three big jades, and how else learn except by going to the edge?



Observing this critical landscape design time. What looks good in March is a winner. So we pay attention to which twigs color nicely, which ornamental grasses glow, what combinations of red-brown bark and blackened stems stand out best against blue-green evergreens, etc.



Scattering seeds of plants that will become self-sowers among the spring bulbs. Bells of Ireland (*Mollucella laevis*), garden balsam (*Impatiens balsamina*) and alyssum are on deck. Yup, we do that even right on top of the icy coating. The tricky part is remembering not to mulch those spaces.

Expecting some moldy snow. The fungus called pink snow mold* may appear temporarily when the lawn emerges from under snow that was heavy and unrelenting. Sun and raking are probably the best curative.

*extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/BP/BP-102-W.pdf

Nanook of the neighborhood?

...at your talk at the library... you said don't walk on the garden until the ground drains but we can go out to cut back shrubs if we stand on bags of newspaper that "distribute weight like a snowshoe." Can we just wear snowshoes in garden, when it's this early? - L.P. -



Yup! Just look at how that foot -- especially up on toe -- gouges into

the ground. A person on their toes exerts more soil-squashing pressure on every square inch of soil than a bulldozer does. Snowshoes spread the weight. Here they keep our daughter, Sonja, afloat in March.



The 45mph garden: No flares, just pot holes!

You can put a gardener behind the wheel but you can't take the flowers out of his eyes. Here's something that's caught a driver's eye this week.

So, you told us to watch for flares on trees and we are -- watching, that is. We're not finding any! Except on big, old trees.

Enjoy the scenery
but do beware the
potholes!



So many new trees, so few visible flares!

Both young and old trees have visible flares but we are not surprised at your observation. On a recent trip along a main artery cutting through 11 different communities, we noted dozens of new tree plantings but only one group planted properly, with flares visible at 45 mph.

A batch of unfortunate factors came together during the past forty years that add up to this fact: The majority of trees sold at nurseries are already

planted too deep in their ball or pot, and they end up even deeper in-ground because of poor planting and mulching techniques. So if a tree's old, it was

planted right or planted itself properly and has had a flare since day one. If it's young, the odds are that it was planted with the flare below grade, or had it buried after planting, so it's unlikely to ever become old.

The problem's been recognized and there are task forces of experts from universities, botanical gardens and arboreta, arborists' organizations, professional growers' groups and landscape architects' associations working to correct it. However, there are so many linked causes -- we'll recite them another time -- that it's going to take a considerable time to turn the situation around. In the meanwhile, it's up to us end users who plant and invest our years in those trees to recognize what a flare is, find it when we buy and plant, keep it above ground, and protect it from those who don't know and won't learn.

Green thumbs up to gardening at least once in your life in your good clothes. Come on, 'fess up, you've probably already made that grade. It was fun, wasn't it -- pulling weeds while wearing nylons, holding your tie out of the way of hedge shears...

Green thumbs down to winter's reprise being not only cold but gray. Like insult to injury!



Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

An eternal student of gardening, Janet Macunovich has embraced 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 keep studying all her life, in classrooms and in gardens. "It's such 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 even 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. "I think one of the most important things about both teaching and photography is 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 essentially the same materials I'd put together for the Master Gardener program and an Extension Educators' workshop. But it was a whole different class once I tailored it for the Scouts' perspective."

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

Where to catch Janet, Steven and friends in-person:

It's time to *Garden by Janet and Steven - bring your gloves and tools!* These five sessions are free. You must 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, in case weather changes the plan. All are limited-space. See page 18 for more about such sessions.

March 30, Wednesday, 5:00 p.m. to 7 p.m., *Garden by Janet* in Wakefield, Massachusetts, doing *basic garden clean up and pruning*.

April 2, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, *Garden by Steven* at the Detroit Zoo, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance to volunteer at the zoo in exchange for hands-on instruction in cutting back after winter, early season weed prevention, and pruning. To join Steven at the zoo, email mstgarden@yahoo.com with the subject line "I'll garden at the Zoo."

April 6, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, *Garden by Janet* in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, *cutting back burning bushes and doing a garden check up*.

April 9, Saturday, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., *Garden by Janet* in Waterford, Michigan. Come shadow her in *assessing a landscape and planning renovations*.

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

March 26, Saturday, 10:00 a.m., our friend, student and fellow professional gardener **Sandra Healey** is at the **Westland Public Library** (6123 Central City Parkway between Ford Rd. and Warren Rd.) in **Westland, Michigan** to help you with *Landscape Design and Renovation*. Free, no advance registration necessary.

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.

April 4, Monday, *Landscape Renovation*

& April 5, Tuesday, *Placing Trees in the Landscape*

These two classes are help for those who've decided to make a change or who are faced with an unexpected change, such as the loss of a large tree to emerald ash borer. Janet explains how-to at the **Cox Arboretum in Dayton, Ohio**. Attend one or both sessions. 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Monday and 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Tuesday. More information, fee and registration at 937-434-9005 and at the arboretum's website. <http://www.metroparks.org/Parks/ViewEvents.aspx?Park=Cox>

April 5, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. The Beverly Hills Community Garden presents *"An Organic Vegetable Garden Primer: Planning and Planting Q&A"* especially for beginning gardeners. Led by Janet. At the Beverly Hills United Methodist Church, 20000 West Thirteen Mile Road, **Beverly Hills, Michigan**. Email JMaxGarden@aol.com or call 248-681-7850 to reserve a spot.

April 6, *Garden By Janet*, Grosse Pointe, Michigan. See pages 15 and 18 for more.

April 12, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. The Beverly Hills Community Garden presents *"The Vegetable Garden is Planted; Ongoing Care and Troubleshooting Q&A"*. Moderated by Janet Macunovich. At the Beverly Hills United Methodist Church, 20000 West Thirteen Mile Road, **Beverly Hills, Michigan**. Email JMaxGarden@aol.com or call 248-681-7850 to reserve a spot.

April 9, Saturday, 11:30 a.m. *Spring Start Up* and *Canned Goods: Gardens in Containers* are Janet's topics during the Ray Wiegand's Nursery Open House in **Macomb, Michigan**. Free. No reservations required. Call 586-286-3655 for more information.

April 10, Sunday, 11:00 a.m. Steven Nikkila will be discussing *Shade Gardens* and *8 Months of Color* during the Ray Wiegand's Nursery Open House in **Macomb, Michigan**. Free. No reservations required. Call 586-286-3655 for more information.

April 11, Monday, 7:00 p.m. Janet will cover *Great Plant Combinations* at the Huntington Woods Library, 26415 Scotia Road, **Huntington Woods, Michigan**. The program is hosted jointly by the County Downs Garden Club and Huntington Woods Tree Board. Free. Open to the public.

April 17, Sunday, 3:00 p.m. Plymouth Nursery's Open House in **Plymouth, Michigan** features Janet's *Best Foot Forward: Ideas for Entrance Gardens*. Free. No reservations required. Call 734-453-5500 for more information

Time to Tend your pond! Above: 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, but gave us humorous, helpful pond puzzles.

Pond Mystery, I caught someone

ScottBates Jan 11 2008, 08:51 AM

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

Perhaps a mink had invaded the pond? Not the case. Upon arrival and after careful examination of the pond, I found 1 functioning heater, 1 functioning air pump, and no equipment failures. Most pond people do not spend much time checking for equipment failures.

could cause this type of mortality rate. The plot was that the water being thawed and relatively clear I could see the bottom. The one thing that stood out was the small, cylindrical object, soft consistency, and had a white fungal growth on it.

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

At this nursery in New Boston, Michigan, Scott offers free weekend how-to sessions for pond owners. Check his website, grassrootsnursery.com or call 734-753-9200 for more information.

Saturday, April 30: Janet's double-header in **Saginaw, Michigan** at Abele Greenhouses:

Gardening on Clay Soil 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. How to work the soil and what to plant so you can reap the rewards of the richness of clay without breaking your back.

and **Hardy Hydrangeas 1:00 -2:30 p.m.** For those coaxing blue hydrangeas to bloom in zone 5, perplexed about pruning hydrangeas, fighting the Annabelle hydrangea flop, and more. Abele's is on Wadsworth Road in the crook of the I-75 / I-675 elbow. \$6 per session or \$10 for both. To register, call 989-752-5625.

Janet, Steven, how does your website grow?

We're making an open library of our work, for the quickest connections between all that we and this network have come up with over years, on any topic. It will include a real-time, moderated forum where everyone can be part of all the discussions that take place now only in email with individuals, between newsletters.

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

Right: Our **Donatell** tale coneflower is tracking our website development progress and answering the question, "How much more do you need for the website?" We'll feature it here so you know how far we are toward our goal.

When the flower's **all blue**, we're gold!



What's Up #137 Page 17

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**,
 - a **hands-on, on-site workshop** 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 ahead for spring weekends, and six months ahead for other weekends and evenings. Give us your dates. Then we can meet you in *your* garden.



Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich (above, with their friend Chuck Martin, horticulturist at Dow Gardens in Midland, Michigan) have been digging, shooting, teaching how-to and appreciating the instructional skills of other experts for 22 years. They began producing conferences in the early '90s and ran a gardening school for 12 years, featuring expert instructors such as Martin who not only knew their stuff in the garden but how to get their messages across to a group. Contact them at **JMaxGarden@aol.com** or **248-681-7850** to set up a talk, workshop or class.

About Garden by Janet & Steven dates:

Since gardeners are let-me-see people who learn best with hands-on, from time to time we list *Garden by Janet & Steven* sessions here to afford you that chance to grow. You visit us where we're working to watch or work as you choose. Generally, there is no charge and we're in one of two types of locations:

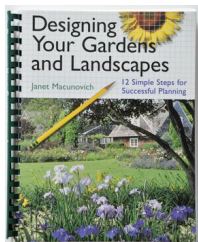
- 1) At a **garden we tend through our business, Perennial Favorites**: Our clients understand our enthusiasm for teaching. Some open their gardens to small groups who want to see and practice "how to." When our work may be of interest to you, we invite you in.
- 2) In the **Detroit Zoo, Adopt-A-Garden** program where we're 23-year veterans. Many people have worked with us there, some for a day and others for years. You can check out this program by coming in as our 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."

Scheduling a Garden by Janet & Steven

Sometimes we are asked "Can you come do one of your workshops in my garden?" It's a possibility! At these sessions:

- Someone pays for the time, or we're on a site where we volunteer regularly. Although we love to share what we know, we need to eat and pay our bills.
- Our client knows our work well enough to allow us free rein, even to experiment.
- Our client allows strangers on site and trusts our supervision if they pitch in.
- We know the site and plant history enough to explain how these affect the work's "what" and "why."
- We've determined that the plants and site will serve as clear examples.
- We know from questions we've received that the work is of common interest.
- With rare exception, the site's visible from a public way so students can drive by to keep track of "what happens next."

You asked for our advice "on paper". Here are our books and CDs:



Designing Your Gardens and Landscape

First published in 1990 as *Easy Garden Design*, a 150-page step-by-step recipe that's become a design classic. Janet developed, uses and has trained thousands of others to use this process. People say: "This is exactly the simple, clear approach I need!" This design process is applicable world-wide.

Soft cover, spiral bound. B&W illustrations by Janet. \$19.00

Caring for Perennials

Janet's unique approach to perennial care how-to, the real-time story of one bed from early spring to season's end. The 180 engaging and fact-filled pages make you part of all Janet does and you might ever need to do in each task's appropriate season and sequence. Includes a chart of what to do, when for 70 top perennials. Advice in this book is applicable in all of temperate U.S. and Canada. The perennial chart includes a key to adapt its timing for far southern or northern edges of that range.

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



Asking About Asters CD.

A digital library of six years of Janet's work: weekly columns, newsletters and over 200 extra Q&A letters to individual gardeners. 1,681 questions answered about soil preparation, fertilizing, pruning, design, choosing plants, foiling bugs and much more. No repeated topics. Fully indexed; the entire collection can be searched from one index.

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



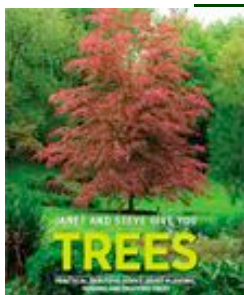
Potting Up Perennials CD. New for 2011

Practical, beautiful answers about perennials and all kinds of flowers, trees, shrubs, design, pruning and much more is in this collection of 2009 & 2011's *What's Coming Up*. Includes 101 issues with over 1,700 pages, 1,600 articles and 2,400 images. Has a comprehensive index with how-to guide so you can search for any topic or detail in any of the 101 issues. Bonus on this CD: Steven Nikkila's Daydream Screen Saver, 74 of his most vivid works from gardens and nature.

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

Janet & Steven's complete digital library New for 2011

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



Janet and Steven give you: Trees*

A choice collection of Janet and Steven's advice for tree selection, planting and care. Each article made its debut in *Michigan Gardener* magazine and has been on hold since, awaiting completion of its fellows until this comprehensive compilation became possible. Topics include: Selecting trees; fall color; what's happening to ash trees; replacing a big tree; descriptions, lists and photos of great trees; why starting small is a good idea when planting; planting how-to, why's and why not's; staking, watering and fertilizing; mulching; rescuing a tree from the lawn; preventing construction damage; pruning to keep trees and shrubs small; removing suckers; detecting girdling roots; and dealing with maple tar spot and lecanium scale.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 pages. Color illustrations. \$12.00

Janet and Steven give you: Landscape Ideas*

Janet and Steven's favorite articles on landscape design and renovation: Designing with foliage color; covering up after the bulb season; doubling up perennials for 3-season color; shady solutions; using usual plants in unusual ways; designing hypo-allergenic gardens; Murphy's Laws applied to gardens; renovation how-to; fragrant plants and designs; attracting wildlife; rockwork; invasive plants; discovering a site's hidden assets; using herbs in a landscape; and how to cheat to improve a garden quickly. These articles appeared first in *Michigan Gardener* magazine individually between 1999 and 2011. Now they're collected in this set for your design library.

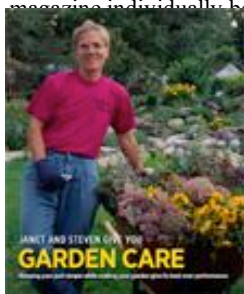
10" x 13" magazine, 48 pp. Color Ill.'s. \$12.00



Janet and Steven give you: Garden Care*

Vital how-to for tending a garden, from Janet and Steven's favorite articles on: bed preparation; soil testing; making a weed-free bed; spring start-up; improving hard-packed soil; fertilizing; watering; cutting back and deadheading; repairing irrigation; drought-tolerant plants; sharpening tools; tweaking in summer; staking; and the art of fall garden clean up. Items in this collection were selected from among Janet and Steven's ten years of *Michigan Gardener* articles. Each made its debut in that magazine, waited for its companion pieces and now they all join your library in this more durable and comprehensive form.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 pages. Color illustrations. \$12.00



Janet and Steven give you: Trees, Landscape Ideas and Garden Care *

Set of three 10" x 13" magazines, 48 pages each. \$30.00

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

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Potting Up Perennials CD, all of *What's Coming Up*
from 2009-2011, with Daydream screen saverqty. _____ @ \$20.00 ea.=\$ _____

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Designing Your Gardens and Landscapesqty. _____ @ \$19.00 each=\$ _____

Caring for Perennialsqty. _____ @ \$20.00 each=\$ _____

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Janet and Steven give you: Garden Careqty. _____ @ \$12.00 each=\$ _____

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