



So many plants in bloom at once (pg. 8)
makes a seedy year (elm seeds here)...

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila
answer your growing concerns
Issue #144, May 11, 2011

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Covering ground:

Short plants rate a long, deep story

What kinds of plants can I use to replace a section of my **front lawn**? I've attached a photo of the section I'd like to **plant with something else other than re-sodding it**. At it's widest it's about 8 feet and at the narrowest about 3.5 feet. - M.B. -

Cool project, M.B. As promised, here are some plants and arrangements. Thanks for letting us use your photo.

Short stature and low-care are key features for an alternative lawn. You can plant that area with all one kind of groundcover from the lists on page 5. You might divide it in sections then plant it with two or more species, stand back and let them mix it up. Couple-species mixes are shown on Page 2. (For specific combinations of two or three species, see the diagrams on page 5, especially where area 'A' is surrounded by 'D', and 'B' is sandwiched between 'E' and 'C'.)



You might plant in a pattern, as well, and might eliminate shrubs entirely -- no more annual pruning! We show you **a couple of pattern possibilities**, beginning at the bottom of page 2 and running through page 6, along with how we developed them.



Left Simple lawn substitution scheme, Japanese pachysandra edged with hosta: Choose one well suited groundcover species, remove all perennial weeds from the bed, plant, mulch, water and keep the area weeded for a year or so until your chosen "living mulch" fills the space.

Left, below. A quilt of groundcover. We designed this alternative lawn with *Ajuga* (foreground), lilyturf (*Liriope*), white leaf *Lamium* and sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*). At the far end of this shady rectangle is a shrub that acts as a punctuation mark -- Japanese andromeda (*Pieris japonica*). 'Way in the background, out in the sun with the gardener, is a true ground-hugging mat, a dwarf species of thyme. (*Thymus praecox*).



Some who look at this will say, "*Liriope*? I know that thug, and I don't see its evergreen grassy self there!" Similarly, those who have watched *Lamium* spread like a blanket will figure we must be mistaken. Yet both are there, in bands between the *Ajuga* and woodruff, although currently compressed and muffled. We call this a "quilt" of groundcover and prescribe for it a hands-off management technique best described as "See who wins." Although the *Lamium* and *Liriope* are not holding their space very well this year, they will pounce on their chance to expand in any year when their neighbors run into tough times. The *Lamium* had such a chance two years ago, for instance, when this alternative lawn's owner was fairly certain the *Ajuga* had gone south and wouldn't recover.

Developing a patterned design for an alternative lawn

On the next pages we go step by step from bare- to covered ground!

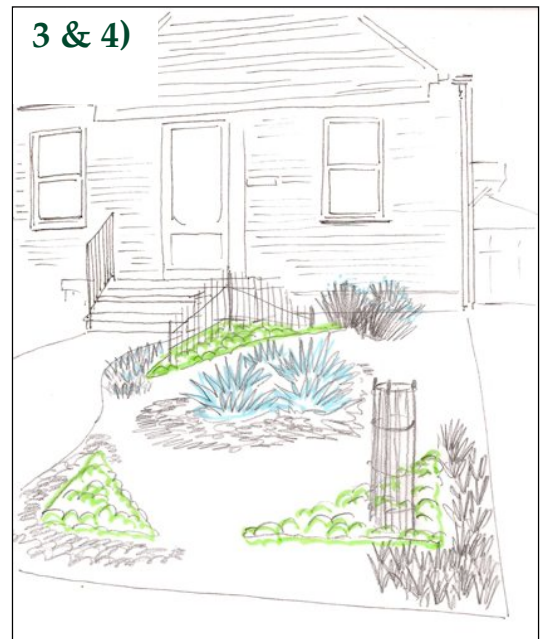
1) Pick a focal point location, such as the middle of the area. Imagine something there -- you don't even need its name right now so much as to settle on how much area it should occupy and a foliage color, height, texture or other significant feature.



2) Frame that focal point with a different plant. (Right)
3) Add more frames as appropriate. (Far right.) Keep in mind that the more complex the design, the more work it is to maintain!

4) As you add plants and other elements, consider the overall setting and relate to it as you can, with foliage colors that complement the brick of a backdrop, sculpture to match existing fencing, etc. (Far right.)

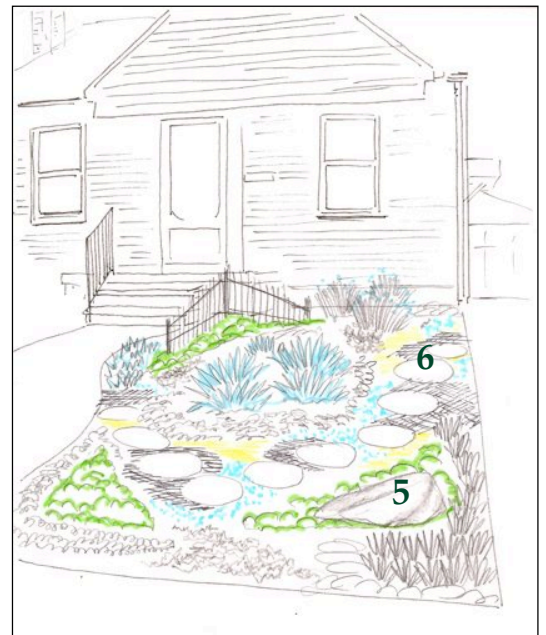
5) Practical adaptation might come from trial and error. Put one high point near a corner or a public way and you'll probably find that passing



dogs favor marking it, and the salty build-up from urine kills plants there. (A flat boulder may be as decorative as the obelisk, but less attractive to canines.)

6) Include paving stones where foot traffic will be heaviest, since no groundcover accepts that wear so well as lawn.

7) Below: Choose a different spot for the step one focal point and use fewer types of plants -- a new design appears.



8) Plants for these plans are legion. The public gardens listed on page 4* have groundcover display beds. (If you know of other public gardens with labeled groundcover displays, please tell us so we can pass on that information. We have found few too few such displays, good for a visitor to see and compare a variety of groundcovers all in one area.)

9) If you can't go see plants in real life, turn to books and the Internet. A great place to view and consider options is the Hortech website (see next page**). Almost as good: the book *Perennial Ground Covers* written by David MacKenzie, Hortech nursery's founder).

***Public gardens with groundcover display areas:**

- a) Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, www.longwoodgardens.org/
- b) Bellevue, Washington, Bellevue Botanical Garden, www.bellevuebotanical.org/fmvisitor.htm
- c) State Botanical Garden of Kentucky in Lexington, www.ca.uky.edu/arboretum/gardens.php
- d) University of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens' low care mass planting display www.lsa.umich.edu/mbg/
- e) Cornell University's Plantations in Ithaca, New York,
www.cornellplantations.org
and
www.cornellplantations.org/sites/default/files/Botan.Map_NoBox.pdf



Above: At Cornell University Plantations Botanical Garden, Ithaca, New York, you can look at groundcover displays to compare various plants in looks and relative effectiveness in weed suppression. Here (center and right foreground) is the North American native *Pachysandra*, (*P. procumbens*), a species that is more friendly to our native wildflowers than the very common Japanese pachysandra.

**** At the Hortech nursery website**, there are many groundcovers and photos.
www.hortech.com/Foot_Friendly_Ground_Covers.php

In addition, from Hortech's www.premiumplants.net you can click to use the Plant Selection Wizard, take advantage of the Quantity Calculator, or read advice about Perennials and Groundcovers, including:

...ground covers range in height from less than an inch to about 4 feet tall...
...may be succulent, herbaceous, or shrubby... clumping, vining, or sprawling, and may be deciduous, evergreen, or semievergreen...

... Reduced maintenance expense (in comparison to turf grass) is the primary financial advantage... Generally speaking, turf is less expensive at first, but considering its ongoing maintenance needs (frequent mowing, edging, fertilization, irrigation, disease and weed control, etc.), it proves to be more expensive in the long run...

Much annual cleanup work (and expense) can be eliminated by using ground covers...

The environmental benefits of ground covers... control erosion, reduce snow drifting during winter, and humidify, oxygenate, and cool the air...

...the four basic rules of ground cover use...

10) Decide on plants. It's entirely possible to make a design and decide on plant names afterward. You might find multiple options. For instance, here are possibilities for the designs we sketched.

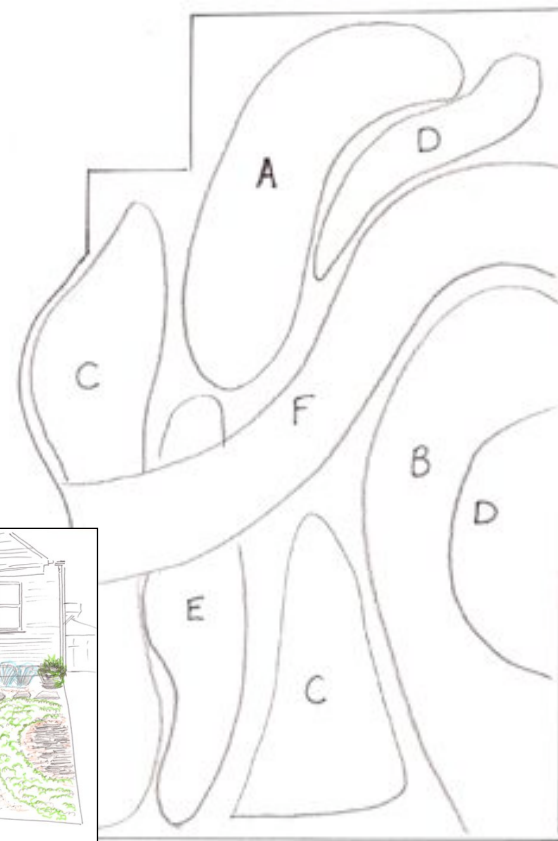
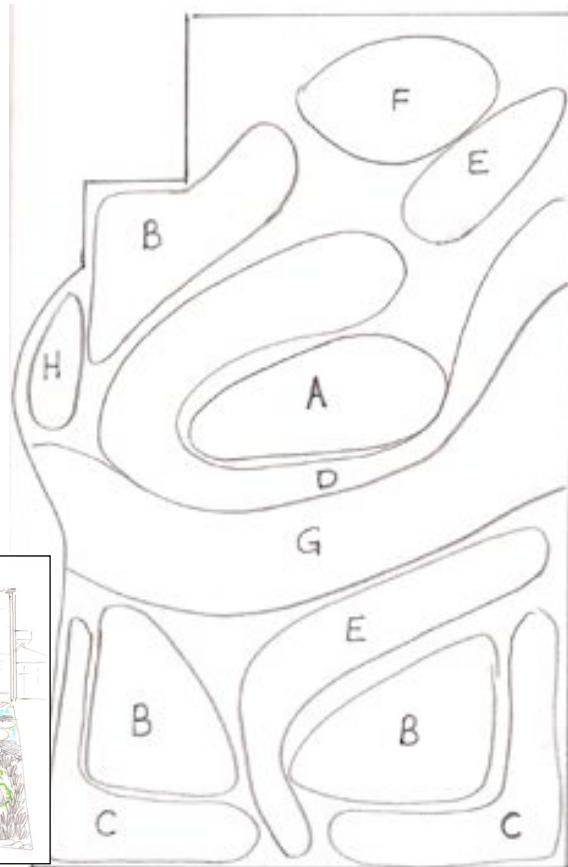
In sun (top right):

- A:** 'Color Guard' yucca; blue oat grass (*Helictotrichon*); zebra iris (*Iris* 'Argenteo-variegata'), bluestar juniper (*J. squamata*)
- B:** Orange stonecrop sedum (*S. kamschaticum*), non-flowering lambs ear (*Stachys* 'Big Ears') or creeping St. Johnswort (*Hypericum calycinum*)
- C:** Hens & chicks, snow in summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*), queen's clover (*Oxalis* 'Atropurpureum'), golden creeping veronica (*V. repens* 'Sunshine')
- D:** Creeping thyme or wooly thyme (*Thymus praecox*; *T. pseudolanuginosus*), *Sedum* 'Angelina', Scotch moss (*Sagina subulata*)
- E:** *Dianthus* 'Bath's Pinks', creeping phlox (*P. subulata*)
- F:** Blue mist spirea (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*), dwarf butterfly bush (*Buddleia* 'Lo and Behold'), little bluestem (*Scoparium*)
- G:** Paving stones with dwarf sedum (*S. dasyphyllum*, *S. requienii*) or ice plant (*Delosperma* 'Mesa Verde')

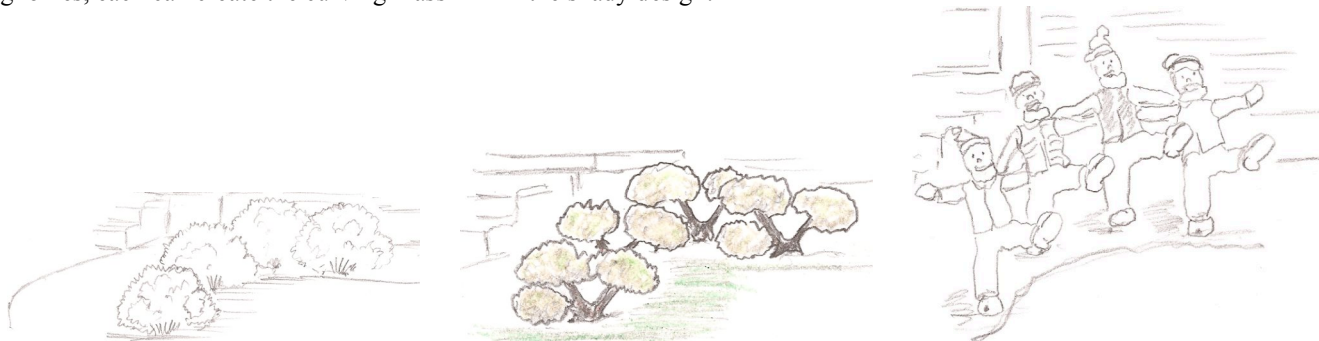


In shade (bottom right):

- A:** Hosta, dwarf amsonia (*A.* 'Short Stack' or 'Little Blue Star')
- B:** Lily turf (*Liriope* variety), musking carex (*C. muskingiensis*), Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*)
- C:** Woodland phlox (*P. stolonifera*), *Lamium*, ginger (*Asarum canadensis*), bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*)
- D:** Irish moss (*Arenaria verna caespitosa*), brass buttons (*Leptinella squalida*),
- E:** Dwarf carex (*C. morrowii* 'Ice Dance'), crested iris (*I. cristata*), foamflower (*Tiarella*)
- F:** Paving stones with *Mazus reptans*, dwarf *Ajuga* 'Chocolate Chip'



Below: It's the line as much as the material that defines the design. Dwarf conifers, miniature topiary or can-can line of gnomes, each can create the curving mass "A" in the shady design!



Below: When we smother ordinary lawn we say, "Smother by September and you can plant in May; smother by May and plant in September." This front yard, a couple of stages gone into lawnlessness, still had some lawn last fall. Now, its remaining lawn areas are being smothered under newspaper and mulch. Since we didn't smother that lawn until mid-October we know the grass is not dead yet this May. We may be able to plant by mid-summer, but more certainly during September. We check and wait to see there's nothing but dead sod under the mulch and paper. Then, at this house in the shade of the right-side ricer birch, we'll plant a collection of hostas to the left of the walk, and bigroot perennial geraniums (*G. macrorrhizum*) on the right.



Smother and plant right away: Like having cake and eating it, too!

Can we plant right away after we put newspaper and mulch on a bed to smother what's growing there? - L -

Sometimes you can. For instance, we've planted right away where our reason for smothering was to limit trauma to a tree's roots. There, the immediate planting included only **major plants**. We set each shrub and tree into a space where we had removed a circle of sod as we made the smothering layer. We held off planting perennials and groundcovers until the next year. That way we didn't un-do our smothering by releasing grass blades into the light around the edge of each planting hole -- a good way to end up with grass as a weed at the base of each new plant.

We **don't even consider** planting within an area that's just been buried under paper and mulch, **when what we're smothering is particularly adaptable, persistent and aggressive**. Quack grass, lily of the valley, horsetail/scouring rush (*Equisetum*) and bishop's weed/snow on the mountain (*Aegopodium*) come to mind. It's just too likely in those cases that our smothering will be undone by any break in the cover.

Looking for back issues?

Maybe we mention it, or you're directed to it as you use the index we send to all readers each winter. If you've lost one, or weren't on board 'back when', you can:

- 1) Send us an email. We can often re-send an issue or two. (Our response 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. (Pg. 19) Or,
- 4) Donate to help us get our website up so 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.

Website to the rescue

We delayed a week in replying to L (above). Sorry, L! Likewise, apologies to some others who emailed last week! We lost a bunch of email in a really dumb overwrite-the-wrong-files error. Afterward, we recalled only the gist of L's question and that we had yet to answer it. So it's good we could answer here in the newsletter as we no longer had the whole name or email address!

This is one of the main reasons we will be very glad to conduct these discussions on a live, illustrated forum **on our website**.^{*} There, everything will be available to everyone, all find-able by a search!

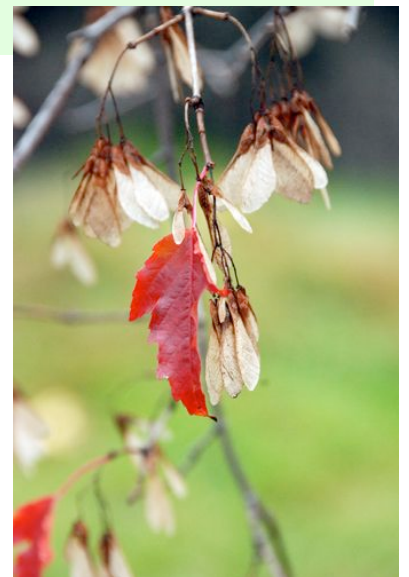
Even now, you can find more on this topic if you're a long time reader who's been saving our newsletters, or you own our CD archive, *Asking About Asters*. Look at our March 29, 2008 newsletter in your own files, or at JMsGC762.pdf in the *Asking About Asters* CD, or in that CD's index by seeking for "smother".

^{*}See page 17 if you'd like to help us in this effort. Our website development remains on schedule thanks to your donations. That help allowed us to hand the work off to a programmer and designer -- people who can do what we can't -- during this time when we must see to the spring work outdoors. So right now the project's mostly on others' desks. If the estimates for time and our funds stay on track, their work will be done shortly after we finish spring planting. Then we'll pick it back up, load data into the prepared templates, and have the site operating later this summer.

Seedless dream

I have an 'Autumn Fire' maple tree. It is a beautiful tree in the fall but not nice this time of year. Its **seeds (helicopters) make a mess of things** in the yard. Do you know of anyone who might be able to safely extract the tree out of the ground in order to plant one that isn't so messy? - T.M. -

We may see a bumper crop of maple "keys" this summer, since so many trees are blooming simultaneously. Lots of pollination going on!



You can cut down a seedy tree, have the stump ground level, move over a few feet, and then replant a seedless tree. (See below, right *When seeds and fruit are not wanted*.) Look in a business telephone directory under "Tree Service" or "arborist" for companies that do tree removal.

When you contract tree work...

...ask for references -- other people that company has served. Call those people to ask if the firm can be relied upon to do the work as agreed, work neatly and safely.

Want someone to buy and dig a tree from your yard?

If you are thinking that someone may pay you to dig out this beautiful but seedy tree, dream on. Trees of all types and sizes are available from nurseries, in fields free of underground obstructions and readily navigable by truck. Digging there bears no risk of damaging utilities, septic fields, or buildings, so it's the rare landscape company that will pay to dig a tree from a residential site.

Pretty birds, messy garden!

Why don't books and catalogs tell the whole story? I wanted **birds**, **hummingbirds** and butterflies in my garden so I planted just about everything on every list I found for **attracting them**. Over the years I've learned that **many of those plants are big mistakes**. I refer to the ones that run all around like weeds. I wish someone had told me what a mess it was going to be when Queen Anne's lace and milkweed (for



Baltimore orioles are colorful and have a sweet and liquid song. But they love nectar and fruit so are not likely to frequent a seedless, berry-less area. Photo ©2011 Deb Hall

When seeds and fruit are not wanted

Tired of seeds or fruit from maples, ashes, hickories, horsechestnuts, apples, cherries and other trees? It's not practical to try to prevent fruitset each year and not possible to "neuter" a tree, but those who plan ahead can choose fruitless varieties such as:

Seedless cutleaf silver maple: 'Silver Queen'
Seedless red maples: 'Celebration', 'Autumn Flame'

No-pod honey locusts: 'Fairview', 'Moraine', 'Shademaster', 'Skyline'

Seedless ash: 'Autumn Applause', 'Fallgold', 'Marshall', 'Patmore'

Podless Kentucky coffeetree: 'Espresso', 'Prairie Titan', 'Stately Manor'

No-snow cottonwood: 'Siouxland', 'Robusta'

Nutless horsechestnut: 'Baumanii'

Fruitless ginkgo: 'Princeton Sentry', 'Fairmount', 'Lakeview'

The price of seedlessness

Nothing is perfect! Some seedless varieties maybe nearly, but not entirely free of fruit.

Also, seedlessness may have hidden costs: Young 'Autumn Purple' seedless ashes have a tendency to develop bark splits at the base. 'Sunburst' honeylocust may have traded its seed pods for an increased susceptibility to nectria canker fungus disease.

Fruitless crabapple? Prone to scab or blight.

When seedlessness is a function of tree "gender" -- in a tree species where "male" individuals produce only pollen-producing flowers and others that are "female" produce only seed-producing flowers -- selecting seedless trees can make things tough for people with allergies since the local pollen count will increase.

Seedless red maples tend to be less colorful in fall than their seedy female counterparts.

Birds and small mammals that enjoy maple- or ash "keys" or hickory nuts may depart if you eliminate such food sources.



The rosebreasted grosbeak (female, above and male below) loves seed and its appearance in an area may be greatly influenced by the presence of seedy female maples known as box elder trees -- a favorite winter grosbeak food. Photos ©2011 Sheryl Kammer



Want to see hawk moths at your butterfly bush? Then if you see leaf damage on other plants in your yard...

butterfly caterpillars) became weeds all through the garden, when graystem dogwood (berries for the birds) changed from one shrub to a huge suckering colony, and trumpet vine (nectar for hummingbirds) showed its true colors -- its sprouts are popping up everywhere within twenty feet of where I first planted it! To add insult to injury, the trumpet vine never even blooms! - P.B. -

The problem isn't books but life. We have a tough time fitting covering some questions with answers that can fit into this space for the same reason that books sometimes lead potential wildlife gardeners astray. That reason? Life isn't simple. People rarely seek a single objective, but want **gardens to fulfill multiple purposes. If's, and's and but's go with** every real-life answer.

When designing, we always ask why the person wants that garden. (It's chapter one of Janet's book *Designing Your Gardens and Landscape*; see page 18.) We have never yet been given just one reason, and people who agree in most of their reasons may disagree in others.

You probably knew **you wanted neatness as well as wildlife**. Trouble lay in assuming that everyone shared those aims and would propose plants to suit. It's tough to learn the hard way that we don't all walk the same garden path. Don't be upset -- diversity is a joy! Focus on replacing bothersome plants with neater alternatives.

Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) feeds monarch caterpillars and butterflies, but forms clumps rather than running amok like its relative, field milkweed (*Asclepias syriacus*).

Dill and carrots also feed black swallowtail butterfly caterpillars, and both are simpler to control than Queen Anne's lace. Remember that larval plants' foliage is meant to be chewed and must be safe to eat. Put up with damaged foliage. Don't use *any* pesticides in a butterfly garden!

...such as from boxwood leaf miner, it's probably best to let the boxwood tough it out, or switch to miner resistant 'Vardar Valley' boxwood, rather than taint plants and their nectar with pesticide.



Trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*), a notorious runner, needs lots of sun and heat to bloom well. Clump forming, perennial **butterfly bush** (*Buddleia davidii*) or **Lantana** are neater hummingbird food sources.

Focus on masses rather than single plants. Masses are more of a draw to wildlife than single plants, as a feast draws more than a snack bar. Plant three butterfly bushes, a dozen *Lantana* plants, or sow several rows of dill.

Incompatible objectives, internal compromise

When teaching garden design we ask students to think about a garden that attracts animals but also provides lots of cut flowers. It's a dilemma, since cutting flowers means removing nectar and potential seeds. The only answer is compromise. **Animals prefer messy**, seedy, more natural gardens and a gardener who doesn't interfere too much. Clip fewer flowers, net more birds.

The **gardener has to suppress the urge to deadhead** flowers. Let fruit develop and stalks ripen to golden brown seed pods. If these make a mess of a path or patio surface, relocate the plants. **Curb your tidiness through winter, too**, since birds also collect dry plant parts for spring nest building -- this week we were entertained by a grackle sifting through last year's plant stems for just the right one. The price of the show? Messiness -- leaving last year's plant stalks standing even as the new ones emerge.

It's a fine line we gardeners walk, but in doing it we get lots of mileage from our gardens.

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

So many email exchanges between newsletters! We wish we could include it all. Excerpts:

Oh, for great-great grandma's diary!

...wettest April in Michigan since 1895... - D -

This year everywhere we go, people are asking, "You said this year you would (insert almost any task name). Why haven't you done that yet?"

It's comforting to speak with others who truly understand the frustration and working difficulties of a record-breaking year. Perhaps we'll find that in gardening diaries from 1895. Maybe *our* notes from this year will be of help to others a century hence!

Draw the line early against four-lined bugs

...thank you... solved a mystery for me. I had wondered what disfigures my mint every year (and saw it in) the picture you showed of damage from four-lined plant bugs... I never see them. Do they feed at night? - R.H. -



Left: Pock marked mint foliage is the result of four-lined plant bug feeding.

Below, left, the adult bug has the four lines -- two on each wing. Yet it's the wingless young, orange-red like this adult's head, that do most of the feeding damage.

Below, right: Look for similarity in pattern of damage to learn which plants are targets for an insect with broad tastes like 4-lined plant bug. Note the same pock marks on this *Vinca* vine leaf, as on the mint.

The bugs feed only during the day.. often not until midday when the sun warms everything. ...look for the first damage, then squish all you find, you can make considerable inroads on this season's damage...



...four-lined bugs duck under the leaf they're feeding on when they sense movement. So turn leaves up, look under, and squish what you find.

The bugs are red when young, until they've molted several times so that their wings (their four-lined part) are big enough to hide their bright bodies...

...hatch out when the wisteria blooms...from eggs laid in clusters on leaf undersides... are red-orange and also squishable.

Other options are chemical... ...chemicals such as soap must contact the insects... makes it tough since they're shielded by the leaf they hide under. ...if you decide you need to use a plant-absorbed (systemic) product, accept the broader impact and increased collateral damage of Merit in Bayer Advanced, or Concern with imidacloprid, etc.

Soil moistening polymers: Read between the lines

... soil moist container doesn't say how much water to add, or how much crystal to add to water... but I remember you did add water first. So I added some water and they absorbed it. I added some more water and they absorbed that, too... pretty amazing.... - P.M. -

Those particles absorb 100 times their weight in water. Less than a cup of the dry polymers will absorb five gallons of water. ...mix them into soil without wetting them first, they swell so much afterward they can push a plant right up out of the soil.

Just a tiny pinch of water-absorbing polymers swell to make a handful. If they do this swelling when already in the soil under a plant, they can work hydraulic magic -- pushing big root balls up and forcing their way out of the soil like gelatinous escapees.



Lightweight answer for hefty rabbit problem

Here is what I do about rabbits eating my new baby leaf lettuces. I use a fabric floating row cover loosely placed over the row (staked but allowed to blow a little in the wind). The rabbits stay away, and the lettuce loves the bit of increased heat. - Linda -



Good strategy, Linda, and one that works for many plants. We'll pass it on.

Above: It's hard to admire a plant through the lightweight cloth called floating row cover. Yet it can work to fend off bunnies, Japanese beetles and other pests and that can save the harvest or the cut flowers.

Left: Weight the edges of row cover with lumber or rock to deter determined rabbits.

Below: It's a mulberry, not a weeping cherry but takes on the same look when treated to pruning such as our poet-gardener describes!

Lesson from pruning school of experience

I HAD a weeping cherry tree. It now has another name! After I finished pruning it, I called it a "Crying Shame"! I held my shears at a certain height, and walked around and round.

Everything below that height, fell forlornly to the ground. So now it looks like Moe, the Stooge, and his inimitable "hair-do"--

So if you need some pruning done, take lessons, don't do as I "dared to do."

- Frank Harney -



Green thumbs up to the slight consolation there is in knowing *why* one's eyes and nose are streaming so fiercely. When cold weather delays many plants' bloom and the first warm spell brings on both latecomers and the regulars, the pollen count skyrockets. This year is phenomenal for such overlap -- we can't recall another instance of Norway maples, silver maples, yews, redbuds, cherries and crabapples blooming together. (Of those, only the maples' and yews' pollen is airborne; the others rely on insects to carry their pollen.)

Green thumbs down to **volcano mulching**. We break our no repeat policy all the time for this very important announcement: Do not pile soil or mulch against a tree trunk's base. Let the flare have air!



Above, left: Do not stack mulch or soil against the base of a tree.

Above: This young tree's a goner, its trunk base rotted after being buried for several years in damp mulch.

Left: Proper mulching leaves the tree's beautiful flared base visible. Even a tree as big as this strapping 50 year oak youngster can be killed by "volcano mulching."



Who's Janet? Who's Steven?



The toddler who asked "Why?" grown up and out in the garden. One day when her daughter was two and peppering her with "why," Janet Macunovich's parents laughed and said, "So now it's *your* turn! You used to drive us crazy with 'why' when you were little!"

"Used to?" said Janet's husband. "She's still doing it!" Janet's been gardening professionally for over 25 years and loves to solve garden puzzles, from what to plant where to meet diverse expectations, to why a plant acts one way in one situation and differently elsewhere. She's studied at colleges, botanical gardens, professionals' workshops, in her own garden and extensive library but finds the most answers in talking to people with questions. "I'm glad to be able to help others garden better at the same time as I indulge my own need to know 'why'."

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



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

Where to catch Janet and Steven in-person:

May 17, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. at the Plymouth Library, 223 S. Main Street in **Plymouth, Michigan**, Janet discusses the *Garden of the Future*. Free. 734-453-0750 for information or to reserve a seat.

May 21, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. at Four Seasons Garden Center in **Oak Park, Michigan**, 14471 West Eleven Mile Road, between Greenfield Road and Coolidge Road. Janet explains why to use more *Fabulous Foliage* this year. Free. Call 248-543-4400 to reserve a seat.

More chances to *Garden by Janet and Steven* - bring your gloves and tools! These sessions are free.

May 28 or June 4, Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to noon: *Garden by Janet* at the **Detroit Zoo**, in Huntington Woods, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance to volunteer at the zoo in exchange for hands-on instruction in **trouble-shooting** a perennial garden on May 28, and **planting annuals** on June 4. To join Janet at the zoo on either or both of these days, email mstgarden@gmail.com with the subject line "I'll garden at the Zoo." See page 16 for more about these sessions.

June 10, Friday, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.: *Garden by Janet* in **Orchard Lake, Michigan**, pruning those shrubs we like to touch up after spring bloom is done: *Weigela*, ninebark, *Forsythia* and others. This is a limited-space session. Email or call Janet & Steven to reserve a place and learn the location: JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850. See below "About..." for more on this session.

June 16, Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Janet helps you get more out of your garden by focusing on the tactile sense, in *Touch: Feeling your way around a garden*. This is your chance to spend some time going beyond the visual to discover why you and others might like and dislike certain plants, why some are well suited to welcoming entranceways, others are great for barriers, some are guaranteed conversation starters and others make an elegant finish to a bouquet. Warning: some delightful touching of samples involved! For all volunteers at the Michigan State University Tollgate Farm and Education Center in **Novi, Michigan**, Meadowbrook at Twelve Mile Road.

June 26, Sunday, 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. at Shades of Green Garden Center in **Rochester, Michigan**, 496 East Avon Road, East of Rochester Road. Janet explains how to *Keep the Color Going* this year after your garden's big spring fling is done, and then helps you make *All the Best Sense* of your garden with ways to enhance its dimensions of touch, scent, sound and taste. Call 248-651-1620 for more information or to reserve a seat.

About *Garden by Janet & Steven* dates:

Gardeners are let-me-see people who learn best with hands-on. So 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.
- 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, subject line "Help at zoo."

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

We go where we're invited -- 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 **meet groups' needs** and expand our horizons by developing new material or "hybrids" from what we already have.

Whether it's a **how-to lesson for a garden club**, a **multi-part class** for a small group, or a **hands-on, on-site workshop**, 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.**

Janet, Steven, how does that website grow?

It's our dream, an open library of our work where you can find what you need while we keep going forward (no repeats!) with this work we love... perhaps for another 30 years.

It will have a live forum, so everything we discuss with any of you is available for all to see, and join in. We're planning webinars and video... We don't have a launch date yet but it will be this year, thanks to you. You've been adding your dollars to ours, so we've been able to keep design work going while we prepare the library and newsletter archives.

Thank you to those who've given us a boost toward meeting the development and hosting costs. If you can help, too, **send your donation**, check payable to Janet Macunovich, to 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328. \$20 is great, but every dollar is appreciated.

Blue is such a cool color!

Below: Our **Donate**!tale coneflower shows our website development progress and illustrates how much more we need for the website.



Steven's Photos for You --

Would you like to own some of Steven's images? Perhaps you're wishing to decorate your kitchen with

garden songbirds, hang a sunset in your kitchen, make greeting cards, or have a cloth banner for your patio. You might be looking for something you saw here in a newsletter*, an image from one of our presentations, or you have your own wish list of subjects. Send us a description of what you would like, such as "a goldfinch close-up," "a collection orange flowers", a specific flower, seasonal event... You name it, Steven will show you what he has! He'll assemble a custom sampler for you and then size, frame, matte, print on cloth or create greeting cards to your order.

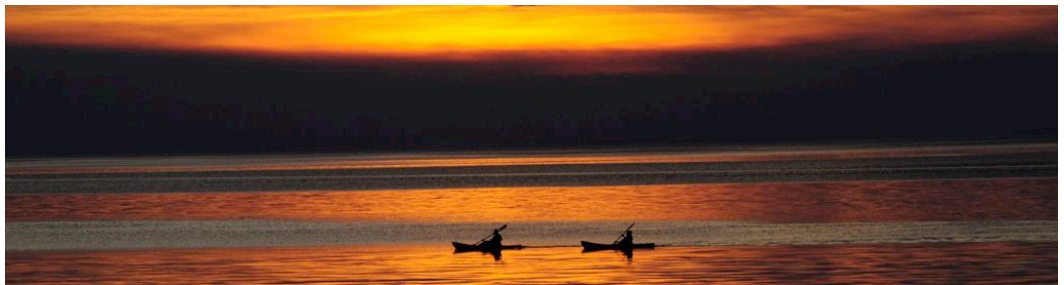
Prices vary based on the project. For example:

Matted, framed, 11 x 15", \$48

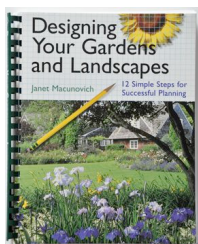
36 x 48' no-fade **cloth tapestry**, \$215

Call or email for your custom sampler.
JMaxGarden@aol.com 248-681-7850

*Please note that images in our newsletter are in low resolution format in order to maintain a manageable newsletter file size, and may lack clarity when enlarged. Images available through *Steven's Photos for You* are at full resolution with so much clear detail that they are sharp even when printed poster-size and larger.



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



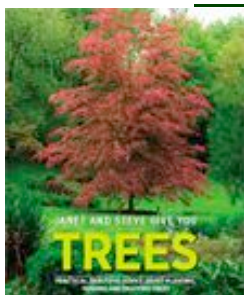
Potting Up Perennials CD. New for 2011

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.

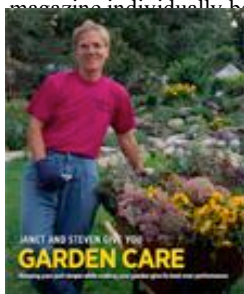
10" x 13" magazine, 48 pp. Color Ill.'s. \$12.00



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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