

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and
Steven Nikkila answer
your growing concerns
Issue #149, June 29, 2011

In this issue:

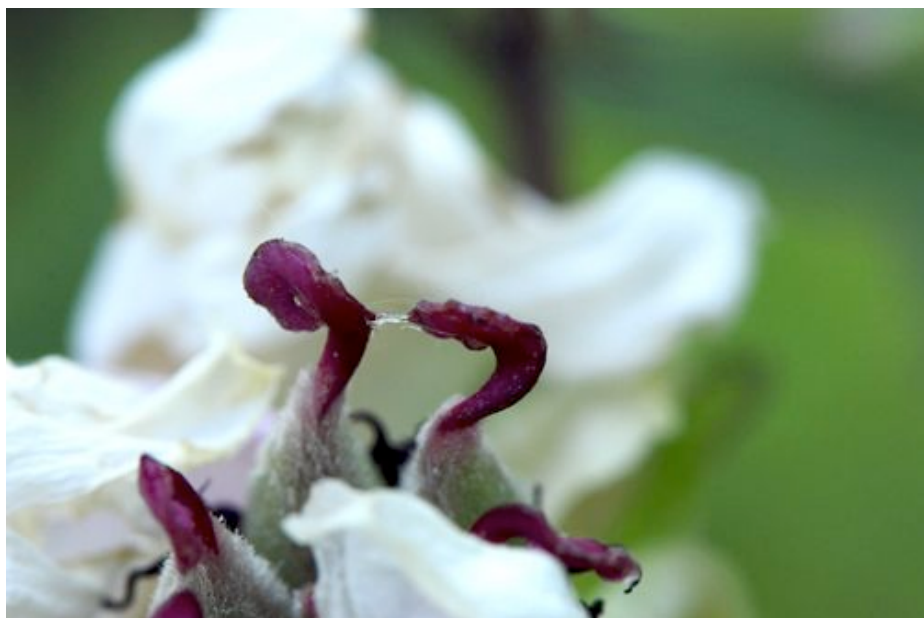
Cheeky chickweed, page 1
B'fly bush fades away, pp. 2-3
Grrr-oundhogs!, pages 3-5
Peony cuts & saves, pp. 5, 11
Color from fertilizer, pp. 6-7
Grosbeaks, deer, mantises,
fish & the brain, pp. 7-10
Watering time, page 11
Buying new, losing old trees
page 12
Squash, map & prune! Pg. 13
Up & down to trial plants and
kids, pages 14-15
Who are Janet & Steven? P. 15
Website update, page 16
Where to see us & how invite us to town, pages 16-18
Buy our photos, books, magazines and CDs, pages 20-22

A weed where none was before: Chickweed

My vegetable garden is covered in **a weed I never had** before. Tiny little tear-drop shaped leaves... What is it and what can I do about it? It's an all-organic garden so don't mention weed killers. - D.K. -

That's **chickweed** and it probably **came from lawn** nearby. Maybe a mower sucked up the seeds and spit them over your way. Perhaps you used grass clips as mulch, and when that greenery finished decomposing what was left resting on the moist soil was a more decay-resistant contaminant -- weed seeds.

Weed it, hoe it, or smother it under new mulch. (Grass clips are OK!) Be aware that chickweed's now a presence in your garden and that, although an annual, its seed germinates in cool weather and waits out winter to mature the next spring. What sprouts in fall is there and ready to bloom by late winter, then deposit a new batch of seed by May. So, this fall you'll know to mulch to dissuade it, or sow a cover crop -- something like oats, sown so thickly as to crowd out all comers, right from the time it sprouts in fall. Even in death, oats are a good mulch, keeping the bad guys out until the time you turn that dead foliage under in spring.



Above: Relating to kids is easy if you can see why Steven calls this aging tree peony flower, "Here be dragons." More kids' perspectives on pages 14 & 15.

Right: Chickweed getting chummy with the soaker hose!



Not to belittle D.K.'s weeds or make light of aggravating chickweed, but it could be worse. We who battle pernicious, perennial, prickly Canada thistle and twining bindweed (the two together at right), would be glad if our worst worry was annual chickweed!

Ifs, ands, butterfly bushes

Your advice about **butterfly bushes** was to **trim them back** substantially in April (Issue #145). Unfortunately I followed your advice and am now heartsick. My once beautiful butterfly bush is basically a stump with one green sprout still valiantly **trying to grow** while 2-3 other sprouts have **failed** to do so. What was the logic behind this recommendation? This past winter was only its second winter, the first spring I did not trim it at all and it had a very good summer after that. Will I ever have a bush again? It's in a nice, sunny spot and I am making sure it gets plenty of water and fertilizer. What else can I do? - L.B. -



First, we're sorry for your loss. Second, it almost certainly **had nothing to do with your cutting**, or not, or how far.

As for the logic behind our advice (as at right) it's this: Since it will die back anyway, cut back to good live wood, even right to the ground. It's how we've treated our own butterfly bushes for 30 years.

So why is this bush struggling, and why do some die? It happens when the plant doesn't have enough energy to come back, or was killed back into the roots.

It could be that your butterfly bush variety is **not reliably hardy** -- *Buddleia davidii* 'Dark Knight' and 'White Profusion' come to mind. In a mild winter or a great place, they make it through a zone 5 winter, or colder. In those same conditions, many *Buddleia* don't die back at all. If they don't die back, they

Hard cuts for butterfly bush

Throughout our 19 years of publishing advice we've written this in spring:

In zone 5 and colder, butterfly bush is usually a die-back shrub. That is, branch tips and even whole branches die by spring but the roots stay alive. So treat it like that other, more common die-back shrub, the tea rose. In early April, cut back hard, to a few inches above ground or to just above the most vigorous surviving leaf buds.

How to decide to cut hard, or harder? It's an aesthetic choice. See Photos in Issue #145!

become huge by season's end, akin to what they can be down South. Then, they also have an earlier bloom season -- which may not be an advantage if you're growing the plant for *August* color. Perhaps your plant survived one winter because it was mild, but not the next.

Another reason we see ***Buddleia* fail: poor drainage**. These plants like plenty of air around their roots, and struggle if the soil remains soggy. Sometimes they hang on through the growing season in such a place, by growing so fast they keep making up for roots lost to low-oxygen death. However, while dormant in winter the problem catches up to them, and a fungus called *Phytophthora* becomes established on their crown, jumping from there to infect and kill new shoots, as well. That plant may fail to grow, or its developing shoots die back.

We know how it feels to lose something so pretty. One of our butterfly bushes, almost 20 years a fixture in our garden, struggled one year. It had proved its hardiness, so we know it wasn't winter alone that put it off stride. Perhaps it was slowed in energy storage by shade in the previous year (as a nearby tree encroached) then wasted its

reserves in that silly habit *Buddleia* has of leafing out in any extended winter thaw. Maybe it lost ground to some tunneler disturbing its roots. Maybe it's just age. At any rate, we watched it until June, hoping it would build itself back up. It was still less than vigorous in July so we took it out.

Fact: Plants sometimes fail to follow our rules. For instance, we are *still* waiting for most of the yews we cut back hard this spring to sprout from the bare branches. In most years, they've flushed out already. Most will yet do so. Before then, some will be pulled out as the gardener's patience expires. However, in no case have we "lost" anything except plants that weren't right for us, like these at left that used to belly over the walk.



Beauty bush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*) might ask, "So how come the name 'butterfly bush' went to *Buddleia*?! I attract tons of them, too!"

We don't see gardeners mourning plants for long. Every loss quickly becomes an opportunity for a new planting. - Janet -



Mulling over a groundhog problem

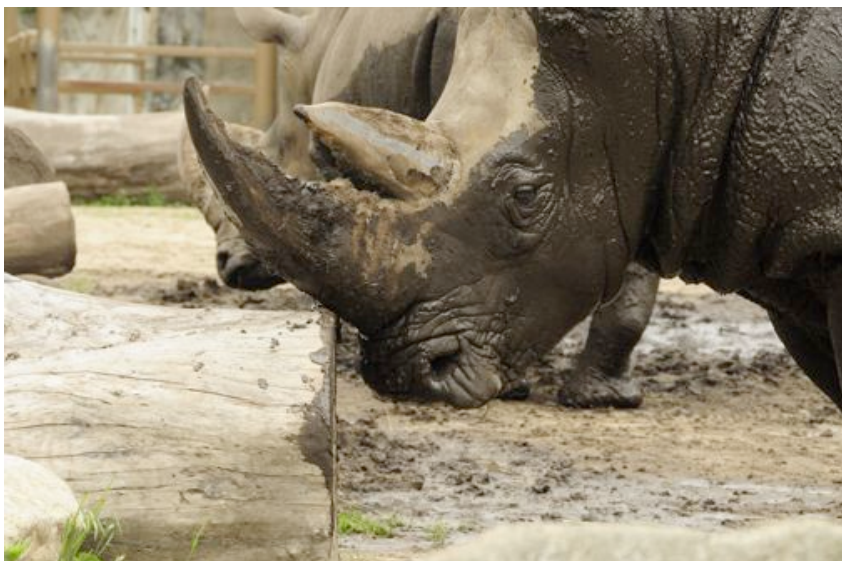
I have a groundhog that eats, among other things, my favorite mulberry tree. I have tried everything to keep him out of the tree, from "bells" to anti-groundhog spray. The tree is now looking pretty lame so I probably need to replace it. The only thing I can think of is a

tree with large sharp thorns but think it takes more sun than my very shady back yard spot. Suggested replacements? We have trapped several ground hogs and taken them to the country woods but more groundhogs appear to take up residence under my deck. My neighbors report the same results. - D.B. -

They drive us crazy, groundhogs do. We've never gotten around one except to trap it and even so it costs us a lot of time and money putting tempting fresh fruits and vegetables into the trap. The first one of the season likes cantaloupe, but the one that fills the vacuum created when we move the first away, snubs everything but Andes mints. Sheesh.

At least, as it applies to mulberries, they aren't the only villains. Everything loves mulberry. At the Detroit Zoo, when we trim a mulberry or cut down volunteer mulberry trees we take the clippings to the keepers because every browsing animal goes for it in a big way.

It does occur to us that all the mulberries we know grow so fast we might almost welcome a groundhog to help us keep them in line. You mention shade. Maybe the answer is to plant something that simply grows more lustily in shade so it stays ahead of the groundhog. A pygmy weeping beech (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea nana*) is not so simple to find as a weeping



We've seen what elk, moose and wild pigs do to a garden, and heard about the damage from grizzlies and monkeys. We've watched the rhinos and hippos graze near our Detroit Zoo gardens for years, and imagined the gardeners who share territory with such big herbivores. We're left wondering whether Great Lakes gardeners might want to stop complaining about groundhogs, or accept being called "wimp!"

Groundhog in a tree? You bet!

They're good climbers and fast, and may remain aloft for hours eating new shoots or fruit. Their only misstep may come if, like birds, they over-imbibe very ripe fruit, which can lead to a staggering descent.

mulberry, but they are out there, less likely to be browsed and in any case better suited to growing in shade than mulberry.

We kind of doubt that thorns will stop a groundhog, having watched a groundhog eat an entire, very prickly old fashioned rose shrub one day, thorns and all. (Yeah, how dumb, to just sit and watch. However, we wanted to see, and did, how far it would go.)

Try to avoid offering this animal rose family plants -- apple, crab, pear, cherry -- or sweet stuff like mulberry or rose of sharon.

Groundhog trapping?

Keep in mind that a groundhog -- a.k.a. woodchuck or whistlepig -- operates dawn to dusk, not at night. Close the live trap by sunset so you won't have to deal with skunks, opossums and raccoons that will come for what the groundhog didn't.

While we're here: Swap an animal tale to stay ahead

From bits and pieces we learn what works and what doesn't, in staying a step ahead of hungry critters in our neighborhood. This week, C.K. contributed a note about *Lantana* -- news to us!

(I focus on plants that) can grow on my decks in containers (shady, because I back to a woods), and that are critter proof (the usual squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, etc.). I plant tomatoes in large pots (one per), put 6-foot bamboo sticks in the sides, and wrap deer netting around them. They seem to do well, and I certainly enjoy the tomatoes, grape and cherry tomatoes!! My son made a 6' x 12" "cage" with a screened cover into which I put herbs. That seems to thwart the critters for the basil, parsley, mint, etc. that I love. But I would like to plant flowers in the 6' x 18" flower box that critters won't dig up or eat. My hummingbirds love *Lantana*; but so does my resident groundhog, Snuffy!! He also likes *petunias*; but not marigolds. It is a constant challenge and a source of great entertainment!!! - C.K. -

Bowl 'em over with clover

We've seen it and also had many credible reports: A great browse control strategy is to hark back to the early days of the modern lawn, to grow a mix of grass and white clover. Small grazers including rabbits and groundhogs will spend their time browsing clover and leave more of your garden to you.

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** may include facts that took many years to develop and generations to confirm and tweak.

This week one of our own mentors dropped us a line and an infusion of her infectious delight in all things green. She gives so much, we figured she'd already poured her whole 70+ years experience into our 30 year friendship, but once again she's surprised and gifted us:

Dear Janet and Steve. We have an abundance of peonies. I picked two buckets this evening. The weather is perfect. I pick them in the marshmallow stage and put them in our very cold basement.

I would like to find a way to give them away so they could be enjoyed. I sell them at the little



In issue #99 we used our mentor's garden in pictures and diagrams to show how to reclaim leaf-spot and botrytis-troubled peonies. Issue #107 again featured Burdette Chapman, regarding peony nematodes.

vegetable store but the July (vacation) crowd isn't here yet. I sell about ten bouquets a week. If I had a huge refrigerator I could wrap each one in the bud stage in Saran wrap. They will keep till September.

The plants are so healthy! I am so proud of them. Thank you for your help in saving them. We dug them and divided them last year, and cleaned up the pieces we replanted to get rid of the diseased parts, after you pointed out why they were so runty and not blooming well anymore. Then we sprayed them every week this spring as they came up, with a fungicide to help them avoid getting infected again. Now they're recovering and will be healthy like they were for so many years.

*Gardening is so wonderful.
Burdette Chapman*

Is there pass-along gardening wisdom in your hands now? Want to pay public homage to all those generations of effort? Tell us about it -- we'll pass along all we can.

Aiming for Answers: Hit or Miss? Fertilizer makes a hit

There are no sure bets in dealing with living things, but every situation we face shows us more possibilities -- especially when we share what we've observed. So we're always glad to hear if you used our suggestions, and what happened next.
Here's a "hit:"

In spring you suggested that due to the rain and cool weather plants had grown so much so early that some fertilizing would be appropriate. So I put fertilizer into the old hose end sprayer and went at it.

I cannot believe the results! Every plant is standing up and clapping and saying, "It's about time!" The most amazing reaction was from a pale pinkish *Allium giganteum* which bloomed vibrant lavender. I did not realize that fertilizer could do that. I do not want to do this too often for fear I will end up with "The Little Shop of Horrors," but this once fertilizing really produced positive results. Thank you, Fearless Leaders. – F.K. –



Digital photography allows much tweaking of image color. Steven does not use color-altering filters or computer enhancements, but knows their power. See how orange lilies can change with just one keystroke. (Untouched, top; note the computer didn't alter the insect!) It's no wonder flowers don't always live up to their catalog images!

You're welcome.

It's true that fertilizers can be over-done. Too much can promote rank, soft growth, winter kill, and a proliferation of plant-eating insects. Although we fertilize annuals right through Labor Day we stop fertilizing most perennials and woody plants by the end of July.

As for flower color, most of us link human health and color -- "Isn't he pale?" Or "Look at those rosy cheeks and glowing hair!" So, why are we surprised at nutrition's impact on flower color?

Flower color can also be influenced by temperature, moisture, and light.

- Some plants' blooms are more vibrant when they develop in cool weather, some are washed out after a very wet or cold period.
- Too little or too much light can inhibit or destroy pigment.
- The overall lighting on the scene changes our perspective -- when plants bloom earlier or later than usual, the sunlight's angle can be very different than it is when we normally view that plant.

Then there's leaf color (below). Leaves that are dark of vein but pale between may have a nutrient deficiency. Try "feeding" with a water soluble product and monitoring any color improvement.



Tip cuttings: We grow 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:



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



Gross error, corrected

Someone has probably already written to correct the grosbeak cutline in issue #144. The "evening grosbeak" is a rose-breasted grosbeak. - N.P. -

Thank you! Nope, no one else pointed that out. We've corrected the issue so that it will be correct in any re-use, and in archives on our website.

Pruners aim higher in deer country

Janet& Steven:

In issue #148 you wrote:

Rejuvenated, the lilac will then go on an annual pruning program, where one of its oldest trunks is removed each year. That keeps it full of young, borer-resistant wood and, as a bonus, full of trunks that never get much taller than six feet. All the fragrant flowers are at nose level rather than two stories up.

The only problem with

this is that MY NOSE level is DEER TEETH level!! Better the lilacs bloom at one story and I climb the fence to reach them. At least so far, deer can't climb the split rail fence! - C.S. -

A very good point, C.S., and a reason that some of us will want to keep lilacs tall as we rejuvenate them!

Mess of mantises

Steven has an eye for all the life forms in a garden.



His notes left on Janet's desk:
Far left: A *lot* of daddy long legs this year. Maybe have fewer milkweed beetles?
Left: Found this gall on a rose. Related to the mossy- or spiny rose gall wasp?

This week he got a bit closer to one life form than he expected.
Excerpts from family-garden email:



...That praying mantis egg mass wasn't empty! We had a hatch on the desk. Took me awhile to realize they were praying mantis babies. I thought they were stick bugs. Man could they move and jump. I killed a few before I realized "Hey, they're not running from me like plant eaters, they're coming *at me*" and realized what they were. Then I spent

quite awhile 'rescuing' as many as I could, maybe 60 of 200. - Steven -

Awesome, Dad! Slightly skin-crawly, but higher brain function reasserts itself -- mantises are cool.

And we TOTALLY could've used your wee predatory hatchlings last night -- our windows don't have screens, and we've had one open about six inches or so just to keep the air moving in here. So last night, late, Cam looks up at the wall/ceiling area over our two wall-mounted living room lights and... YECHHH. Gnat-ish, whitefly-ish congregation everywhere. We beat them with wads of paper towel for a bit, but I bet a bunch of teensy baby preying mantis would've been FAR more effective. - Sonja -

Right: How big are just-hatched mantids, the "mean little dudes" Steven realized were sizing him up as a meal? Here's one next to a plug in an electric outlet.



See what it's doing --
how it's *looking* at you?
That's a predator insect.

- Dr. David Smitley, Michigan
State University Entomology -

Of fish, gardens, and brain waves...

My daughter has always encouraged me to pursue a Master Gardeners degree. Maybe now is the time since I am currently unemployed and am soul searching at the moment. I would like to start by reading your newsletter that a friend emailed me. And, I find it interesting that Steve fishes. I, too, am a fly fisherwoman. I have spent many a Sunday morning in the creek with my rod and waders. I call it my "church" where I am surrounded by nature (deer, beaver, etc.), wild flowers, and all in all, inner peace. - D.C. -

Go for it, D.C. It is scientific fact that peace and much more comes to us from weeding, fishing, and other things that put us in contact with plants. Those who study how our brains work have recorded increased alpha waves when people touch or even look at plants. Alpha waves are those associated with creativity and innovation.

Below, and right: Steven was fishing when he spotted these roots along the bank. He titled the image "Kilroy was here."



Email took the elegance from stinkhorn

....Have you ever seen anything like this? A friend found it growing in his garden.

- M.Z. -

Steven photo'd what we think is the same thing (left), a 'shroom we used to say was "elegant stinkhorn." Now that your email caused us to look more closely (taking care to hold our noses) we see it's *dog stinkhorn*.

Left: Dog stinkhorns (*Mutinus caninus*) do indeed smell bad. They're relatively common throughout eastern North America but, like all mushrooms, they can be abundant one year, then absent for long periods of time. When it comes to producing mushrooms, fungi respond to environmental cues even the most sage mycologist can only guess at.

This week in our garden

Grow with us! This week:

We're watering! Sure, the wet spring is large in our memory but long gone from a plant's root zone. A good rain only lasts a week or so in the best loam and gone much more quickly from sandier stuff. A lot of summer leaf scorch and die back are simple manifestations of heat and drought stress. Watering after leaves discolor or die won't repair the damage but does help the plant produce replacement foliage.

Plants that love moisture and cool weather came on like champs this spring. Below: In that group was creeping forget me not. (This is *Myosotis scorpioides*, a true perennial of summer-long attraction, not the usually-biennial *M. sylvatica* that's blue froth in a spring garden, a blackened mess in summer).



Above: Tricolor beech (*Fagus sylvatica roseo-marginata*) trees are also showing great color this year, thanks to cool weather and plentiful rain. Yet if we let them go dry those pretty leaf margins may scorch. Once damaged by drought, fungus may infect them, masking water's primary role.

Looking twice at damaged leaves. If the damage is already finished, there's no use trying to kill the pest insect or prevent the disease. We mark a few leaves near the damaged area -- remembering that sucking insects prefer new top growth while fungus and leaf-notching insects favor low, protected leaves. We check after a day or two to see if the damage is continuing or has stopped.

If it's sickly, we're removing it. Summer heat is hard enough to deal with, without having to look at the same plants struggling along each year. Do we really want it so badly as to keep babying it? No! So we've yanked and replaced a crabapple that was consistently defoliated by August, composted a mildew-prone bee balm (*Monarda didyma* 'Cambridge Scarlet'), said adios to a wimpy delphinium, and placed a yew where shade's made a juniper thin and pale.

Being fussy over peonies. Speaking of damaged leaves, we're making a point of not overlooking peonies this year. Spent flower petals, damaged / discolored leaves and stems, and unopened, decaying flower buds are weak spots where leaf spot and blight fungus can get a

foothold. Spores produced there spread to leaves and stems during humid summer weather. They multiply, come to rest on the plant's crown and on fallen bits of leaf, then infect and kill even more flower buds next spring.

Right: What a gorgeous peony! Especially lovely in combination with 'Goldheart' bleeding heart. We like our peonies to stay pretty and that means they have to stay healthy. We've seen far too much disfiguring, bloom-killing, stunting fungal diseases on peonies lately. So we're clipping off every discolored bit this year. For more peony problems and renovation, refer to issue #99 and/or #107.

Appreciating good growers. We try to do this always, and to support them with our purchases. This week we are especially glad to know Carl Joerin of Highland Tree Farm (below, left), who grows very healthy trees and, in his smaller trees, produces them so that you get 100% of the roots in a natural wide, shallow pan -- no loss in transplant, and no pot-induced set-up for girdling.

We called him to ask, "Who grows pines without shearing them into those dumb, dense pyramids!" (We thought he was out of white pines, yet we knew he would selflessly point us to some fellow grower if he knew of one.) Turned out he still had a few and we snatched 'em!



Said **goodbye to old friends.** Trees downed by storm and other forces are sad losses. Although we know they make a difference, only once they're down do we really feel it. Every part of the garden or house once shaded begins to burn, and shade-lovers lose their lush beauty in the glare. Below: Shade became sun when this elm fell in a storm.



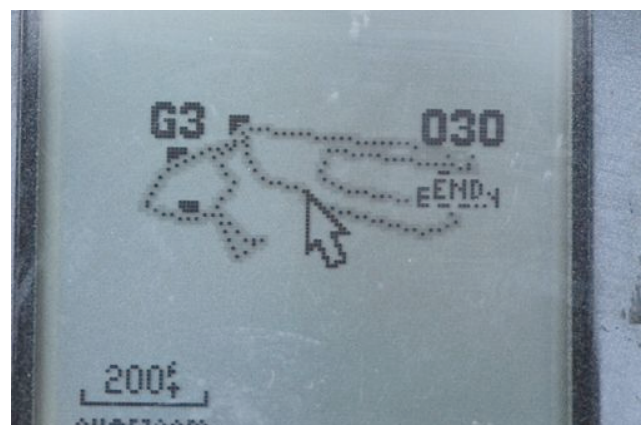
Said **Grrr-oodbye to our glove supplier!** It is so hard to stay on top when it comes to tool- and clothing sources. The latest headache is that Janet's favorite gloves are being discontinued. So, we bought what we could afford and put them away against future need. There may be only a



few hundred pairs left in southern Michigan, so grab them while you can from any of the Do-It Best hardware stores that draw off its central warehouse.

Checked for squash vine borer, a nasty insect that causes sudden collapse in cuke, squash or pumpkin plants. We must notice if one has bored into the base of the main vine, and if we see the hole or "sawdust" from its work, we slice into the vine there, carefully, longwise, and kill the bug. With the vine buried at several places along the main branch so it develops extra roots, we can salvage some of the crop if borers get ahead of us, as they'll kill only one section.

Played with new toys to map a garden. Steven took his GPS device for a walk along a big garden's trails, and we used the plotted course to draw a map.



Pruned, and planned to prune. We finished cutting back spring bloomers and out-of-bounds foundation plants. For other plants, such as Japanese maples being kept small and crabapples being reduced in size, we made dates for later. Read more about these *Garden by Janet & Steven* sessions in "Where to Catch Janet & Steven" on pages 17 - 19.

Be in an upcoming special issue: Share your gardening-for-others

A whole generation of **avid gardeners** is now happily **lending a hand to** its grown children and young friends as they acquire property. We think this is a learning opportunity for others who are looking forward to helping the next generation grow on and up. If you're assisting your **son or daughter** with a landscape or garden, or sharing your experience, plants or muscle with **young**

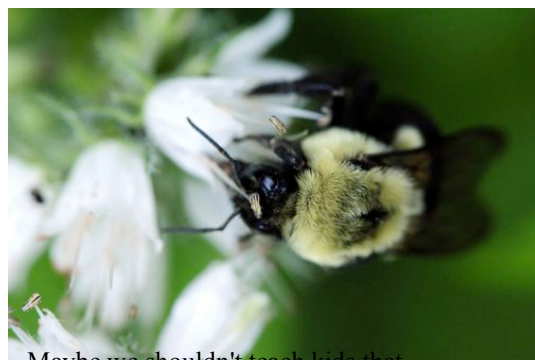
neighbors, send us a photo and drop us a line of what you've done. Your efforts will be in a special issue of the newsletter or a page on our upcoming website!



"My new neighbors, young kids, were going to plant a barberry hedge. I asked why barberry and they said, 'What else is there?' I showed them cranberrybush *Viburnum (V. trilobum)* and they loved it. Now we share a hedge we both like." - C.T. -

Green thumbs up to growers who offer perennials in small pots as well as large so we can afford to try out more species. When we **plant more, smaller perennials** we increase our chances of success with species that are new to our garden. Instead of buying one large pot, we buy three little pots and plant them in three different places. A small plant's approval or dislike of a site is more quickly apparent than a large plant's -- if it has only ten leaves when you plant it, you will notice two leaves yellowing and dropping off; if it has 100 leaves it may lose 20 or more before you notice the loss! We watch them and move those that struggle.

Green thumbs down to coming down hard on little kids who pick flowers. Now dealing with our third generation of neighborhood flower-pickers we sail a different tack, which is to hand out flowers right and left, reciting our rules as we do (box, below). Heck, we *want* those kids to love our garden, develop a high opinion of gardeners, come back to see us, and to want their own garden one day. To the repeat visitors we point out the nail where safety scissors hang. We have similar feelings about older kids, and regretfully sound a raspberries to the person we overheard chastising a teenager for "your generation that isn't carrying on the gardening tradition." Do you know that even if that young person waited two decades to start she'd beat out our own generation, as our median age to begin gardening is 50!



Maybe we shouldn't teach kids that honeybees are gentle and can be petted. But we do it, because kids come back for more!

Garden rules for flower-loving kids: Keep 'em simple

Any time you want some, you go right ahead and cut them.

We have just two rules.

Cut, don't pick, because picking can hurt the plant so it doesn't make more flowers.

Second, never take the last flower -- leave that one for us.



Want to interest a child in gardening? Feed them from a garden! We used to say that we never get any of the sweet fruit from the serviceberries (*Amelanchier* species) we tend, because the birds get there first. Yet where we've introduced kids to those trees, even the birds have competition.

Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

The gardener's trainer. For over twenty years Janet Macunovich has been helping gardeners grow through her classes, books and other publications. She shares what she learns in attending classes herself at educational institutions all over the country, reading, participating in professional symposia, and applying it all in her own and clients' gardens.

The gardener's eye. Steven Nikkila is a professional gardener and horticultural photographer who finds dimensions and makes connections others miss. "Maybe it comes from having to sit so still and wait for just the right shot," he says, "but I see the greatest things



happen out there. I love to show and tell others about them." One of his favorite instances is the changed outlook people have after seeing his images of a butterfly successfully defending its flowers against a hungry hummingbird. His photos have solved mysteries, too, such as when he noted and captured water droplets from a sprinkler glistening prettily on a plant, but obviously on only one side of it. He solved that plant's "unknown ailment" by putting a riser on the sprinkler head to carry its water over the top to wet the entire root zone.

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

We've been dreaming it -- an open library of our work where you can find what you need, quickly and easily. With our archives at your fingertips, we can keep going forward with this work we love, via our 'write new- no repeats' policy. Maybe from an Internet base we can even keep doing this for *another* 30 years.

The website will have a live forum, so everything we discuss with any of you is available for all to see, and join in. We're also planning webinars, video, notification services so you know whenever we post the types of information you are most interested in, and a catalog and/or links so that worthwhile products can be easily accessible to you.

**You're true blue...
and so is our
coneflower!**

[illegible]

You've helped us pay for the expert help we need to insure that our site will be clean, easy to use and secure. Now the project's back on our desks, our labor of love to load and run the site. We plan to keep our site ad-free and we will need to eat to keep working, so we will always accept donations. **Send donations,** check payable to Janet Macunovich, to Orberta, Waterford, MI 48328.

Saturday, July 9, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m., *Fun and question time* in a **South Lyon, Michigan** garden. Meet Janet in a woodland garden -- bring your questions! The Reichenbach garden is on the Four Seasons Garden Club tour. Tickets for the entire grand tour, \$10. Purchase tickets at McHattie Park, 300 Dorothy Street in South Lyon. The tour is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call or email for more information: 248-437-1539, Solumbia@comcast.net

Tuesday, July 26, 6-9 p.m. *Great Perennial Combinations*. This is a hands-on workshop by Janet in **Dayton, Ohio** for the Montgomery County Master Gardeners and their guests. Master

Gardeners, contact your program director or Montgomery County counterparts to register for this continuing education opportunity.

Wednesday, July 27, 1-4 p.m. *Great Plants and Combinations for your Garden -- Right NOW.* This workshop by Janet in **Cheboygan, Michigan** is sponsored by the Perennial Garden Club at St. John Lutheran Church, 8757 N. Straits Hwy. Call 231-625-2827 or email jmateer49711@yahoo.com for more information.

Wednesday, August 3, 7-9 p.m. *August Garden Magic.* This talk in **Belleville, Michigan** is Janet's round-up of what can shine in a garden in August and how you can make great changes even in high summer is by Janet at the Belleville Area District Library, 167 Fourth Street. For more information or to reserve a seat call 734-699-3291.

Tuesday, August 16, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. *Garden Rooms and Structures: Creating outdoor rooms and entrance areas with plants and hardscaping.* This talk by Janet in **Novi, Michigan** at Tollgate Farm (28115 Meadowbrook Road at Twelve Mile Road) is sponsored by Michigan State University Extension in Oakland County in cooperation with the Tollgate Garden Volunteers. \$20. Contact Linda at 248-858-0887 or smithlin@oakgov.com for more information about this and other classes in the Evening in the Garden series. Mail-in registration required; print a registration form from www.oakgov.com/msu/assets/docs/brochures/2011_eitg.pdf

More chances to *Garden by Janet and Steven* -- observe or try your hand. These sessions are free but require registration. Here's the what, where and when. See page 19 for more about the why and how of such sessions.

Saturday, July 9 and Saturday, July 30, 8 a.m. to noon, *Garden by Janet & Steven* at the **Detroit Zoo**, Huntington Woods, MI, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance to volunteer at the zoo in exchange for Janet's & Steven's hands-on instruction in summertime garden care. For instructions how to join us on one or both of these dates, send an email to mstgarden@gmail.com with the subject line "I'll volunteer at the Zoo with Janet."

Friday, July 15, 6 p.m., *Garden by Janet & Steven* in **Macomb Township, Michigan**, to diagnose and determine what to do for an ailing shade tree. Come to observe or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register, and to learn the address. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

Thursday, August 18, 9 a.m. - noon, *Garden by Janet & Steven* in **Waterford, Michigan**. The objective this session is *transplanting and pruning* Japanese maples. Come to observe or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register; we'll provide you then with the address and directions. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

Friday, August 19, 9 a.m. - noon, *Garden by Janet & Steven* in **Rochester Hills, Michigan**. The objective this session is *pruning* to reduce the size of a crabapple. Come to observe or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register; we'll provide you then with the address and directions. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

Friday, August 19, 6-8 p.m., *Garden by Janet & Steven* in Dearborn Heights, Michigan. The objective this session is *pruning* to reduce the size of a weeping white pine, star magnolia and other woody plants. Come to observe or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register; we'll provide you then with the address and directions. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

Saturday, August 20, 9-11 a.m. and noon - 2 p.m., *Garden by Janet & Steven* in the northwest Detroit metro area. The objective these sessions are *pruning* Japanese maples to keep them small. Come to one or both sessions (driving between locations required) to observe or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register, and to learn the address. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

Monday, August 22, 8-10 a.m., *Garden by Janet & Steven* in West Bloomfield, Michigan. The objective this session is *pruning* a full size yew tree to maintain its size and natural appearance. Come to observe or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register, and to learn the address. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

Friday, August 26, 9-11 a.m., *Garden by Janet & Steven* in Hartland, Michigan. The objectives this session is *laying out a garden* and determining what to do for a young tree that won't "take." Observe, or to pitch in with any work and learn by hands-on. This is a free, limited-size workshop. Call or email Janet & Steven to register, and to learn the address. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call. JMaxGarden@aol.com, 248-681-7850.

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

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

So, whether it's...

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

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

JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850. Our calendars fill about a year in advance for spring weekends, and six months ahead for most other times.



Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich (above, flanking their friend and fellow instructor Chuck Martin of Dow Gardens, Midland, Michigan) 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.

The Garden by Janet & Steven series:

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

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

Where we Garden by Janet & Steven

Sometimes we are asked "Can you come do one of your workshops in my garden?" It's possible! 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 so we can explain to you how that affects 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."

Below: With occasional exception, we plan *Garden by Janet & Steven* sessions in front-yard sites so that anyone who comes to watch us work or try their hand can drive by later without special invitation or arrangements, to track "what happens next." *What's Coming Up* readers have pruned here, for example, reducing the juniper at right by 4'!

Not only did I learn new things and gain confidence, I also... want to get out and start doing things.
-Terri Wolfe -

Thanks so much for coming... It gives me confidence to try things...
- Barb Soyster -

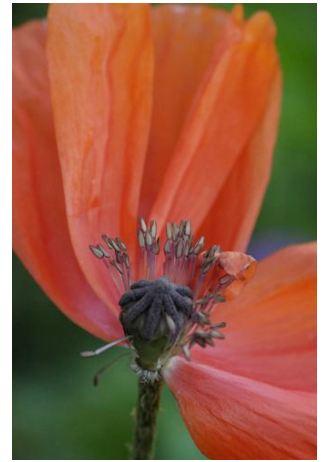




Time to garden your walls...

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 purchase hard copies or high-resolution versions of any of Steven's images you see in *What's Coming Up*.^{*} Or name a flower, type of scene or hue in mind you can request that dream. His library includes tens of thousands of plants and natural images. Email us at JMaxGarden@aol.com for details, to request a sampler or to place an order.

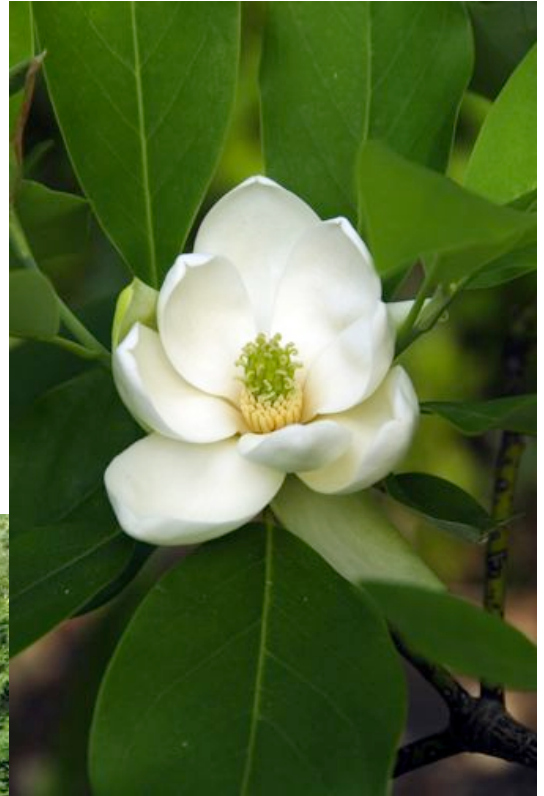


Prices for **Steven's garden art** vary with your wishes in format and size. Examples:

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

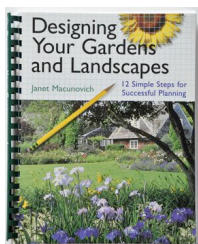
36 x 48' no-fade **cloth tapestry**, \$215

Describe your dream image or color to Steven at JMaxGarden@aol.com. He'll send you a photo sampler and price list.



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

We also put our advice "on paper". We wrote and sell these books plus 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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