

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich answers your growing concerns
Issue 77, January 23, 2010

Here you'll find:

Bathe a mealybug, save a kumquat, pages 1 - 4
Advice from a great white bug hunter, page 5
Gerbera: Ungrateful winter guest, pages 6 - 7
New perennials, excite the experts, pages 7 - 8
Turn cold shoulder on indoor ingrates, pp. 8-9
In my garden: Notice pruning issues, take
issue with bird, issue new books! pp. 10 - 11
Who's Janet? How do I contact her? Page 11
Where to catch Janet in-person, pages 12 - 14
Invite Janet & friends to your town, page 14
Garden images for your wall, page 15
New: Order your *Trees, Landscape, &*
Garden Care journals, pages 16 - 19
New: 2009 newsletters on CD, page 20
New (& right): Daydream screensaver, pg. 20
Six years of Janet's advice on one CD, page 21
At last: A proper order form! Page 23

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If you're reading this as a forward from a friend or at your library, great. If you'd rather receive it directly, just email and say "add me to the list!" - JMaxGarden@aol.com -



Mealybugs lurked in kumquat, now threaten orchids

Hello, Janet. My son gave me a kumquat tree. It's beautiful, over 4 feet tall and with probably 50 little fruits on it. But something's on it now, like little dots of fuzzy white. Bugs of some kind?

What can I do for it? How should I take care of it so this doesn't happen? Should I be worried about my orchids that are right near this tree, about the bugs getting on them? I don't want to ruin them, they're just starting to flower. - Trudy -

Sounds like mealybugs, Trudy. They're the bane of greenhouse growers. Given a mealybug-prone plant like a kumquat or any of its citrus kin and knowing the prevalence of mealybugs in greenhouses, we should expect both from any purchase. Fortunately, these trees are enough fun to grow that mealybug suppression tactics can be an acceptable part of the bargain.

These insects suck on the foliage, drying and deforming it while stressing the plant. Eventually, the host plant and objects below become covered with mealybugs' sticky, clear excrement, which turns black as sooty mold fungus begins to grow there.



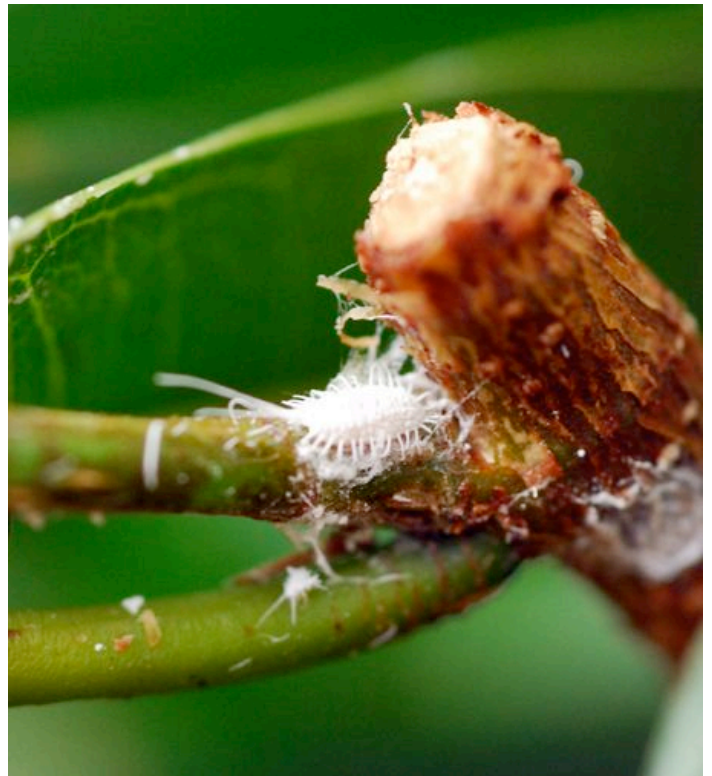
Mealybugs take a specially hard toll on new growth, since that's where they find the best shelter and most succulent tissue. They hole up in the folds or crooks of growing points at stem tips and where a leaf stalk emerges from its branch.

Killing them isn't hard but it requires persistence. Whatever you do, plan to do it again at 7 to 10 day intervals so long as you see any signs of their presence. All the while, do all you can to beef up the plant's health. Eventually it, the bugs and you will reach a balance.

If you can manage the balancing act until it's time to put the plant back outdoors, you'll have some rest. Better light, moving air and hard rain will take over your role.

Left: Mealybugs love to imitate lint or dust. Below: They also favor those tiny niches at leaf axils and stem tips. Hard to reach them in there!

Photos
©2010
Steven
Nikkila



Mealybug control = regular patrols

You can wash the plant every few days with a forceful spray of water. This kills some of the pests outright, knocks others off. Once down, mealybugs can't find their way back.

Another approach is to mop them up with rubbing alcohol. (See "Steven speaks" on page 5). This takes patience on a good sized plant such as you describe, because it means swabbing every stem tip and leaf-stem juncture. During the years when I had a large orange tree, my family grew accustomed to my routine which began with, "Let's watch a movie," and progressed through setting up my gear and cleaning leaves from FBI warning to final credits.

You can spray the plant with insecticidal soap, or a mix of oil soap and water. Don't miss stem tips and leaf axils (above).

To control mealybugs you can apply a systemic insecticide to leaves and soil so the insects will ingest what the plant has absorbed, and die. I hope you don't eat the fruit anytime soon afterward, as such compounds aren't wise to eat but tend to build up in the rind, which is as much a part of the eating experience as kumquat flesh.

Mealybug destroyers (*Cryptolaemus* beetles) are much like ladybugs. However, their young are not so simple to pick out from among a mealybug mob. This is a mealybug destroyer larva. (Right.) Its appetite for mealybugs is probably even greater than that of an adult, but its chances of being mistaken for a mealybug and squashed by a gardener, higher.



Can mealybugs kill?

In a natural environment where they contend with natural predators -- lacewing larvae, mealybug destroyers, parasitic wasps -- and suffer the effects of rain and wind, mealybugs are a nuisance, no more. In still, warm, weather-less places devoid of hunter insects, they multiply rapidly. A new generation comes on in just ten days and a female can produce hundreds of young at a time, even without males.

If an outbreak occurs in winter and the plant's at low ebb because light's scarce, mealybugs' collective feeding can push a plant quickly toward oblivion. A dark film of sooty mold on the leaves cuts the light when none can be spared. Stressed by loss of moisture and nutrients and weak from lack of light, the plant's less able to produce natural defensive chemicals to discourage the insects. It slides further downhill.

Mealybugs everywhere! How could this happen so fast?!

It was fine last week, people say, of a plant covered with mealybugs.

Chances are they escaped notice at first because they were tiny, nearly clear critters. They nestled into natural hidey holes on the plant. Even after 10 or 15 days when that generation became old enough to have accumulated its distinctive, waxy coating and begin laying eggs there may have been so few you didn't notice. Yet that first group could spawn a second wave several hundred times more numerous.

Once you know a given plant has a mealybug problem you'll notice the damage or telltales before you see insects. You'll start hosing the plant down as soon as you notice deformed new growth, shiny honeydew spots on leaves or stickiness on tile floors or furniture under the plant.

Mealybug migration: Will they infest the rest of my collection?

Mealybugs don't look out from the tips of branches and leap off to conquer new territory. Yet they do move with falling leaves and twigs, dust rags and hands, and they are able to live on a wide range of plants, including orchids. So when you notice mealybugs, separate that plant from others until you have its pest's numbers in check.

Kumquat: Hardier than the orange but that's not saying much

Kumquats were once classified as a citrus and were only recently placed a step apart by botanists. They are still considered a citrus by many and require all the same growing conditions and care... except when it comes to cold.

All citrus are frost sensitive but some more so than others. Those listed first, below, are most sensitive to cold. The hardiest -- least likely to have wood killed by freezing -- are at the bottom of the list.

- Lime (*Citrus aurantifolia*)
- Lemon (*C. limon*)
- Grapefruit (*C. paradisi*)
- Orange (*C. sinensis*)
- Tangerine / mandarin (*C. reticulata*)
- Calamondin (*X Citronfortunella mitis*)
- Kumquat (*Fortunella* spp.)
Wood might survive 20 degrees of frost, to 12°F.



Despite being frost sensitive, citrus trees are fine ornamentals. Glossy evergreen leaves, fragrant flowers, round forms that need no pruning, and fruit that's ornamental as well as edible all commend them for a zone 8-9 back yard or as a potted tree. Should frost come, the homeowner can say, "Oh well, no fruit!" The pot plant can be covered with a blanket.

Above: Trudy starts mealybug cleanup on her kumquat. Even if this plant can survive temperatures into the teens, that cold would take its fruit and leaves. Photos ©2010 Steven Nikkila

Below: What's that monarch doing here? Oh, it was kumquat colored and I was just daydreaming about page 15.



Care and feeding of a kumquat

Kumquats need the same kind of care as their citrus relatives:

- Grow both in lots of light, and keep them cool in winter.
- Never let the soil go completely dry; replenish it when the top inch of potting mix is dry.
- Fertilize with a water soluble (blue powder) balanced formula such as 20-20-20 that also contains micronutrients, as for acid loving plants. At least once

a year, spray this fertilizer on the plant so leaves as well as roots can absorb it.

Steven Speaks: Straight scoop from the short shovel about hunting mealybugs



Sometimes I get so caught up in explanations why and how that I forget the power of a short, sweet, just-do-it approach. Until, that is, I hear Steven Nikkila saying:

Trudy: Just dab at them?

Steven: Yeah, get some alcohol on them to dissolve their waxy stuff and dry them to death. But you're also physically wiping out the little buggers too, so put some oomph into the dab. Right!

All I asked was that Steven take a picture of Trudy's kumquat tree. He turned the afternoon into mealybug destroyer training for one of the longest term members of this network.



That's a long-tailed mealybug Trudy's after with her swab. It's one of the three most common greenhouse mealybugs. We told her to be glad it's this one and not the tailless citrus mealybug. Citrus mealybug females lay many more eggs.

Just look at these pictures -- what an eye and a focusing power Steven has. I can see the mealybug in every shot including when it's scrubbed up and then off the twig.

In the photo below, Trudy's swab got the older, waxy mealybug but the younger mealybugs remain on the stem of the fruit. However, they've now been swabbed with alcohol and at least some will die as a result.



A gem outdoors, gerber's a baby in the house

Hi Janet,

I have a very pretty pink gerbera daisy that I had outside this summer. I brought it in and it was doing very well. Then the leaves started turning yellow and I found what might be mildew on them. I took off the old ones since new leaves were coming up, but now I see they have patches too.

Can I do anything? If not, I have seed and can start new ones. Did I create the circumstances to cause the mildew? This is the first gerbera I have had. Seems like I picked a doozy to try to keep. But I read the propaganda stick on the plant and thought it would be a snap - ha ha. - J.A. -



Mildews, stem rots, leaf spots, and botrytis -- a.k.a. gray mold -- are all fungal infections. (Here, botrytis on an overwintering *Aeonium*. If you look sharp you can see the gray fuzz that explains this infection's common name.) When water sits in dark, still nooks like the places where these leaves meet stem, ever-present fungal spores may find all they need to get growing. If at that time the plant is stressed because the air's overly dry and low in energy because the light's dim, its cell walls and internal chemical defenses are weak. The fungus gains ground. Photo ©2010 Steven Nikkila

That gerber may have downy mildew problems, J.A. If it does, higher humidity and light will help. Although even if you include fungicide applications in your remedy -- and I do not like to see anyone use fungicides, especially indoors -- downy mildew can be a bugger to contain once it's started.

I checked with Cheryl Bennerup, a friend who knows every perennial and annual inside out and whose job now includes plant problem diagnosis for one of the country's best perennial growers, Sunny Border Nursery. She says:

"My guess is too much water, and water on the crown. *Gerbera* daisies are prone to powdery- and downy mildew as well as many, many other diseases."

"Gerbera are perennials, most of them hardy to zone 7 or 8, so they expect a period of dormancy especially during times of low light; i.e., winter. My growers and I all agree that they are a bear to keep as houseplants over winter. Having said this, they still do make great outdoor plants for summer where they have high light and natural wind blowing to help keep both disease (and insects) at bay as well as drying out excess moisture."

"Indoors over winter, overwatering is generally the culprit in the demise of many plants, because it brings on all sorts of disease issues. For this gerbera being grown on inside: Never, ever get the crown wet, don't get the leaves wet, water the soil thoroughly then let the soil DRY OUT before watering again. They can actually go to the wilt stage before needing water. It is ok to either water the soil from the top or place the pot in sink to let capillary action pull water up through the pot. Fertilize it, but not at full strength while it's nearly dormant. In winter, it's better to fertilize with a weaker fertilizer solution, more frequently."

Over watering kills more house plants than under watering.

- Roberta M Coughlin -

Expert Gardener Afield: Report from a national nursery's new plant department

The world is full of great gardens and even the widest ranging traveler can't see them all. Here's a peek through expert eyes at such a place.



Dear Janet,

You asked what I've been up to so I'm sending you these pictures to brighten your day. That's what we're doing: Looking at all our new beauties! We're busy describing all the new plants and making sure we have their vital stats right in our catalog -- how to grow them and so on.

You mentioned that you were explaining to a reader recently how there are several plants

all called Joe Pye so she shouldn't think hers was mislabeled just because it

wasn't the same as one you showed. How about *this* Joe Pye?! How's that for a different look?

I'll tell you more about it when I see you next week in Detroit at the Detroit Garden Center seminar.

I hope this makes you smile,
Cheryl Bennerup



Eupatorium 'Frosted Elegance' (previous page) and Trollius 'Cheddar' (left, above) are perennials. This *Torenia* 'Yellow Moon' (center) and *Osteospermum* 'Zion Copper Amethyst' (right) are "temperennial" -- hardy somewhere but not for us; candidates for indoor overwintering. Photos courtesy of Sunny Border Nursery

Cheryl Bennerup is a horticulturist at Sunny Border Nursery in Connecticut.

There's more about Bennerup on pages 12 and 14. She also answered J.A.'s question on page 6.

You call this winter fun -- whining and dying?

While talking to Bennerup of Sunny Border Nursery about this week's *Gerbera* problem I began to think about taking plants indoors in general. In particular I pondered what ingrates these plants are. Here we keep them alive when they would've died outdoors at the first dip below 20°F, make room in our homes for them, fuss over them and tell them how wonderful they are, and all they seem inclined to do is whine and develop one sickness after another.

Banana, *Bougainvillea*, *Mandevilla*, passion flower, *Fuchsia*, *Lantana*, *Begonia*... the list of our sulky houseguests is long. Yet there's one short answer for most of their troubles: Convince them with a dry-down and a cool-down that it's their off season, and hope they'll take the bait.* Then, keep them very cool and in lots of light -- or downright cold and dark.

To do otherwise, such as to try to keep them actively growing, requires a lot more light than comes in any window in winter. If we give a plant more light with a fluorescent fixture, then we have to water oh so carefully because the dry air in our homes weakens it so it can't fight off fungal infections.

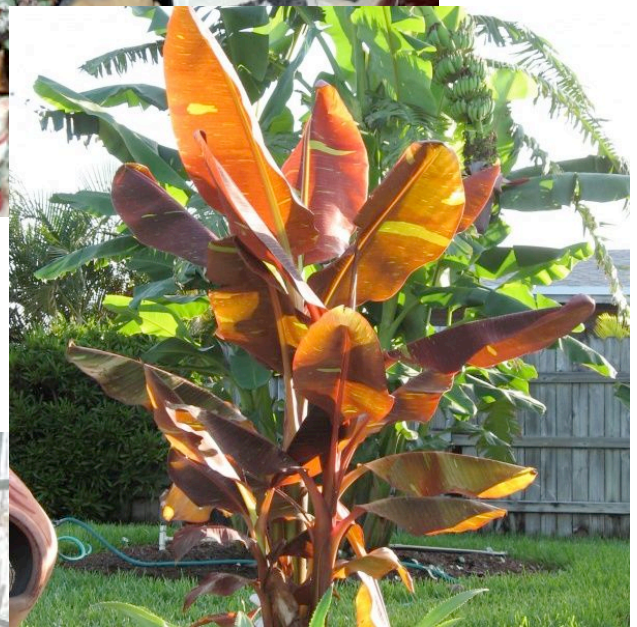
*But Professor Perry of University of Vermont -- whose lessons I love! -- says some tender perennials would rather be warm and sunny because they *do not have* a natural off-season. Then what? I say cool them down anyway and too bad for those that kick off! Let them go -- you're well shed of them. The grower with a greenhouse can re-supply you next year.

To sample Professor Perry's work on this topic, copy this URL to your browser: perrysperennials.info/articles/tender.html

I loved this banana while it was in the garden. In a living room, its kind don't appeal to me. Now, the banana Cheryl Bennerup showed me (bottom, right: *Musa 'Siam Ruby'*) I might love that anywhere, even listening to it whine all winter!



Bottom, left: At another of the great nurseries of our time, Glasshouse Works in Stewart, Ohio (glasshouseworks.com), no one's fussing over-much about overwintered plants. They're set out en masse on a barely heated glassed-in porch and left to keep each other company. Photos ©2010 Steven Nikkila



Flowers are restless to look at. They have neither emotions nor conflicts.
- Sigmund Freud -

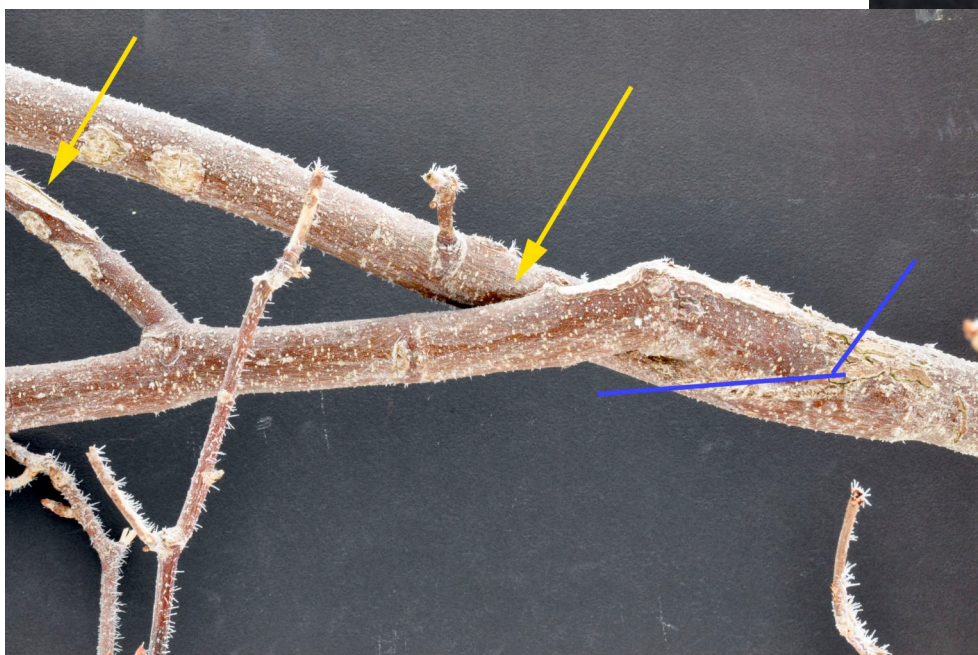
This week in Janet's garden

Grow with me! This week I will:

Notice trees that need pruning. Leaflessness is a great thing in this regard.

We went out to admire hoar frost (right,) on our red horsechestnut's twigs and saw this 2" branch (below).

It's rubbing in two places (yellow arrows), which damages the wood and leaves it open to infection and insect attack. It's also growing at such a narrow angle from its point of origin that it's bound to break one day from the weight of snow, ice or even rain. Then it would rip away, ruining both limbs.



So during the next thaw I'll cut it off clean at the blue lines.

Strain my ears. Gosh darn you, cardinal! One morning this past week you forgot yourself and cut loose with four notes, the start of your territorial song. It's something I don't believe

I've ever heard from you in January. However, someone next to you on the perch must have nudged you and muttered, "Hey Mac, it ain't Groundhog Day yet," because you stopped abruptly. Since then, I've been listening for you to pick it back up.

Watch Steven's computer screen play pretty pictures for me, let my mind wander and maybe take a nap. We've worked hard to finish a new CD and 3 journals. Now the print company's taking over for a while on those projects.

Please look at what we've done (pages 16 to 23). We hope you'll like it enough to add some portion of it to your garden library.

To those of you who've said and written this past year, "You should charge a subscription," this is one of the things I told you we had in the works that should make that unnecessary.

We don't intend to charge a subscription, for reasons including these:

- Don't wanna: One of us would have to administer subscription renewals, etc. Ugh.
- Not gonna: It's just *wrong* that everything these days is for a fee or for advertising.
- Prima donna: If there is a fee, this network will shrink; fewer voices means fewer questions, which is less fun and means less learning for us.

Yet we do have bills to pay. So we hope that by telling you about the books, CDs, journals, screen savers (right) and images we have available, you and others will buy them. So we can keep on keepin' on!



Green thumbs up to the gardeners everywhere who devote their own time and organizational skills to make fun and educational events happen for their fellows. Every day I meet, hear of and hear from these get-it-done gardeners. One is Diane Munson in Madison, who I met because she was arranging a bus for local Master Gardeners to take advantage of a group price at a Chicago Botanic Garden design symposium. That's today! Have a great time!

Green thumbs down to watering without checking the weight of an indoor pot. Potting mix that's dry at the surface may be wet below, especially during winter when plants' water use drops right along with the light levels. Soggy roots become dead tips unable to take up water even from wet soil. Wilted branch tips may come next. Adding more water will only make the roots' situation worse. So heft those pots. Water only the lightweights. Anything wilt-y but heavy should be moved to better light so it has enough energy to grow more roots.

Who's Janet?

A professional gardener with many hats. Versatility's essential to making gardens one's business in a region with an eight-month growing season. In 1988 Janet Macunovich turned a part-time gardening business into a full time affair. She had to plan off-season work, too, since husband Steven was then their chosen full-time, award-winning child-raiser. So she drew on college and career skills -- she'd once studied to be an art teacher, and also spent 11 years training telephone technicians and managers -- and started spending winters teaching and writing about gardening. Says Macunovich, "It's more up my alley than the standard answer -- plowing snow!" Since then she's written nine books, over 900 newspaper and magazine articles, taught more than 15,000 gardeners and green industry professionals, and run a gardening school, a gardening website and a weekly radio show. "All the gardens I've made or helped others make, and the lively network of gardeners sharing information that's evolved, they make the effort worthwhile. I know I'll keep on doing this until I 'spade' away!" Email questions to her at JMaxGarden@aol.com.

Where to catch Janet and friends* in-person:

*See January 30, February 1, February 6, February 11 and "Invite Janet or Steven" on page 14.

Saturdays, January 30 and February 6, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

You can still join us for parts 2 & 3 of this three-part series focused on design:

Garden Design, New Plants, and Janet & Steve's 50 Favorite Before-Afters.

These sessions featuring Janet Macunovich, Steven Nikkila and Cheryl Bennerup (more about Cheryl on page 14) are sponsored by **The Detroit Garden Center** as part of its 19th annual winter seminar series. Session one (today!) walks through how to develop a design; session two helps you find the right new perennial and "temperennial" plants for a design, and session three wraps how-to and plants together in dozens of examples. Classes are held in the auditorium at Historic Trinity Church, 1345 Gratiot in Detroit. Parking is in a fenced, guarded lot. It's a stone's throw from the always-bustling Detroit Eastern Market. Register by calling The Detroit Garden Center at 313-259-6363, emailing detroitgardenctr@yahoo.com or printing the mail-in registration form at www.detroitgardencenter.org.

Coming from afar? Ask about car pooling when you contact the Detroit Garden Center.

Monday, February 1, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. *Why I Grow the Plants I Do*, a talk sure to be both enlightening and entertaining, by Dr. Tony Reznicek. (More about my friend Tony on page 14.) At the Hardy Plant Society meeting in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan at the Congregational Church on Woodward at Cranbrook Road. Members free, others \$3. To learn more call 248-589-2286.

Tuesday, February 2, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. *The Collector's Garden*. Janet describes how to bring harmony to beautiful diversity. At the monthly meeting of the **South Lyon Garden Club**, at the South Lyon high school. Contact John Keast at KeastSouthLyon@aol.com for more information

Thursday, February 4, 10:00 a.m. - noon, *Garden and Landscape Renovation*. For gardening professionals. Janet explains her approach for remaking a garden or landscape. At **Ray Wiegand's Nursery Wholesale Office, Macomb, Michigan**. Contact Wiegand's wholesale office at 586-286-3658 for more information.

Sunday, February 7, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. *Janet & Steven's annual Tool Cleaning party*. Bring your tools and learn how to clean and sharpen them. Then set a spell and do just that. Bring a snack to share -- all that honing and oiling burns the calories. We're co-hosting this year with our professional gardener, arborist buddy **Deb Hall in Milford, Michigan**. Free. Space is very limited so don't wait to email JMaxGarden@aol.com or call 248-681-7850 to reserve a spot and learn the address.

Tuesday, February 9, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., *The Challenging Garden*. Janet's design, planting and maintenance answers for tough places. At **Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin**. \$44 (\$35 for OBG members). For more information, contact the gardens' office at 608-246-4550 or copy this URL to your browser bar to read about classes and download a registration form www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm#workshops

This is the first of three topics Janet will address at Olbrich this season.

Watch here and on the gardens' website for *Saving Time and Money in the Garden* (March 23) and *Getting the Garden Ready for Spring* (April 13).

Thursday, February 11, noon - 1:00 p.m. *Spring Start-up for Your Garden.* Janet describes what to do when, from late winter through spring to make this year your garden's best ever. At the monthly meeting of the **Brighton Garden Club**, at the **Brighton, Michigan** Community Center, 555 Brighton Street. Contact Sandy Markham at sanji@isp.com for more information

Thursday, February 11, 10:00 a.m. - noon, *The Gardener's Eye for Wildlife.* For gardening professionals. Steven Nikkila takes you on a virtual tour of great gardens that attract wildlife, to explain how to design or manage such a garden. At **Ray Wiegand's Nursery Wholesale Office, Macomb, Michigan**. Contact Wiegand's wholesale office at 586-286-3658 for more information.

Friday, February 26, noon - 4:00 p.m. *Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools!* We'll be **pruning to shape and improve** a full sized hawthorn tree to clear the walkways and increase the air circulation within the canopy as a disease control measure. This is the season when orchardists' work toward the classic goal: That a robin should be able to fly through my apple tree. **Livonia, Michigan**. Want to come learn? Email or call me (JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850) to reserve a spot and learn the location. Include your phone number so I can call you when we set that date. This is a limited-space workshop.

Other dates coming up

Here's a summary of what Janet has scheduled through the end of March. Watch here for details or email JMaxGarden@aol.com for more information:

February 20 in Detroit, Michigan at the Wayne County Extension office: 9:00 a.m. to noon, Master Gardener training: *Flowers* class.

March 1, March 8 and March 22 in Rochester Hills, Michigan: *Do it! Easy Beautiful Landscape Design*, a three-part series at the main library, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Janet provides directions for creating the landscape of your dreams, one with four seasons of interest, that increases your home's value and decreases your yardwork.

March 3 in Port Huron, Michigan, at the St. Clair County Extension office: 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., Master Gardener training: *Flowers* class

March 4 in Wayne, Michigan, at the Western Wayne County Master Gardeners' Association meeting, 7:00 p.m., *Weeds*

March 6 at Chicago Botanic Gardens, *Estimating Garden and Landscape Work* and *Water Gardens*

March 11 in Corunna, Michigan, hosted by the Owosso Garden Club, meeting in St. Paul's Episcopal church, 111 S. Shiawassee: *Spring Groundwork*, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free, no reservations necessary.

March 13, Jackson, Michigan, Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich present *Great Plants and Combinations*, *Eco-conscious Controls for Garden Pests and Disease*, and *Perennials for the Collector*. At a conference for Jackson Master Gardeners and guests. (A good time to find a Master Gardener and make a friend!)

March 15, March 29, April 12 and April 26 in Dayton, Ohio at the Cox Arboretum, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. programs by Janet on *Garden and Landscape Renovation*, *Cutting Back the Rambunctious Garden*, *Making a Four-season Landscape*, and *Shade Gardens*.

March 16 in Dewitt, Michigan 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Millennium Garden Club meeting, *Continuous, Crafty Color*

March 17 in Northville, Michigan at the Northville Library, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., *Saving Time and Money in Your Garden*.

March 20 and March 21 in Ortonville, Michigan at Hadley Hill Farm, a two-day intensive workshop where Janet, Steven and Celia Ryker help you who are *Gardening a Wooded Lot*.

March 27 in Champaign, Illinois at the Master Gardeners' Conference, Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich present *50 Favorite Before-After's*

More, throughout spring and summer. They'll be posted here!

About attending Gardens by Janet sessions:

We gardeners are let-me-see, hands-on people and that's how we learn best. In these sessions, I offer you that kind of chance to grow. You can visit me where I'm working and either watch or work with me. Of course, I hope you'll join in so you realize the most value for the time. At the **gardens I tend through my business, Perennial Favorites**: My clients understand my enthusiasm for teaching. Some open their gardens to small groups who want to see and practice "how to." When the work I'm scheduled to do may be of interest to you, I invite you in.

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 expand our horizons by developing new material or "hybridizing" from what we already have.

So, we're game, whether it's...

- a **how-to lesson for a garden club**,
- a **hands-on, on-site workshop**, or
- a **multi-part class** for a group,

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 six months to a year in advance, so give us some lead time. Then we can meet you in *your* garden.



Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich have been digging, shooting and teaching how-to for 22 years. They ran a gardening school for 12 years, featuring instructors who knew their stuff in the garden as well as knowing how to get their messages across in front of a group. That line-up includes people like Tony Reznicek and Cheryl Bennerup (above). Bennerup joins Janet and Steven for the January 30 session described on page 12. Cheryl and Janet met 20 years ago when Cheryl's Gardens in Milford, Michigan grew perennials for Janet's business. They still collaborate now, as Janet taps Cheryl's know-how as chief of propagation and troubleshooting for one of the country's largest perennial growers, Sunny Border Nursery in Connecticut.

Janet and Steve are glad to help you themselves to meet your group's need but just as happy put you in touch with others like Cheryl or Dr. Tony Reznicek (above, left and on page 12). Tony's a friend who's not only a local horticultural star as curator of the University of Michigan Herbarium but a traveler in international gardening circles via his renown as a world expert on sedges, plant swaps with foreign botanical garden managers and involvement as past president of the American Rock Garden Society. Contact them at JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850 when you want to set up a talk, workshop or class.

Time to garden your walls...

Steven's decorated our walls with beautiful images from gardens and Nature. He can help you do the same.

Any of Steven's images, such as those in *What's Coming Up* can be made to hang on your wall. Email us at JMaxGarden@aol.com for details and to place an order.

Prices depend on your choices in format and size.

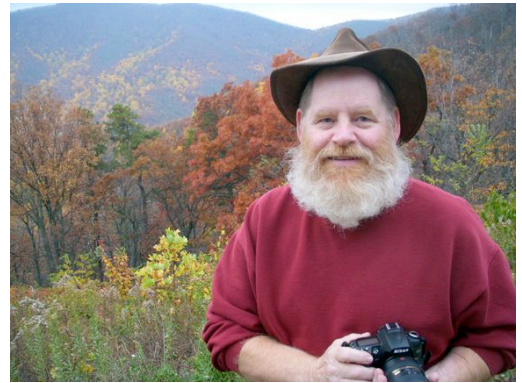
For example:

Framed, matted, image 8" x 10", frame 11" x 14-1/2", \$48
Cloth tapestry*, 3' x 4' (photo-quality print, museum-grade cloth) \$215

*My favorite; I change a display by rolling up one, unrolling another.

... and your computer screen!

It's here, your chance to own the complete set of 2009 *What's Coming Up* plus a library of high quality photos for your screen saver that includes Steven's dancer, egret, a golden forest and dozens of other gorgeous images. Simply order our new *Potting Up Perennials* CD described on page 20 -- use the order form on page 23.



Photos ©2010 Steven Nikkila



We've been busy this year.

As a result, your landscape can do more for you in the upcoming season.



Introducing:
Three new publications
plus **one new CD**
collection of newsletters.

Together, our new works give you:

- **144** oversized, sturdy, color pages of "how-to"
- **750** digital pages with in-depth, searchable index
- Over **200** detailed articles with no repeats
- More than **300** quick-look boxes, lists and charts
- **1,500+** photos and diagrams
- **And a bonus** on the CD: A double edition of Steven Nikkila's Daydream screen saver



Asking About Asters CD collection (left) now has a mate: *Potting Up Perennials* (right).



These items are a great addition to 1,200 pages and 1,500+ topics already in your hands on our first CD, *Asking About Asters*. When we indexed *Potting Up Perennials* we included the content of *Asking About Asters*. So you can use the new index to search both disks: That's a huge harvest of ideas and solutions.

Keep in mind that our *free* weekly email newsletter, *What's Coming Up*, expands prior discussions and covers new ground. We don't repeat content from our collections there. We aim to offer *new* information to our friends as we ourselves keep learning. "No repeats" is possible -- 18 years' continual discovery tell us so. So tuck our library into your garden work room and remain in our weekly network. We all have nowhere to go but up!

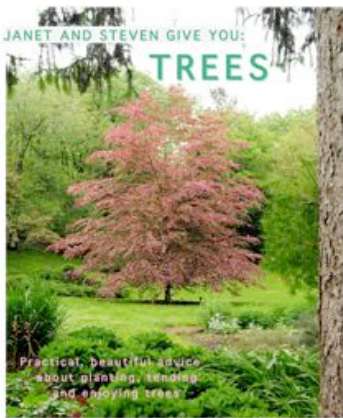


Free, weekly:
What's Coming Up.
To subscribe, email
JMaxGarden
@aol.com

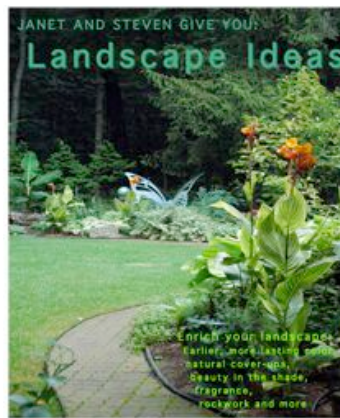
We are accepting orders now for these three new journals and our new CD, and will turn each item around as it arrives from the printer. Order by February 10, 2010 for a pre-publication discount and have all four in your hands by mid-March. They'll cure your end-of-winter blues and make a great difference in your gardens this year.

Read on to learn more about these offers. **To order now, see page 23.**

Janet and Steven give you:
Trees



Landscape Ideas



Garden Care.



You said you wanted **our advice on paper**. Here it is.

To order now, see page 23

Each of these large-format journals (10" x 13") has 48 sturdy, ad-free pages loaded with our thoughts and pictures. Each journal has 15 to 20 articles that cover its topic of trees, landscape ideas or garden care.

True to our commitment to write-to-learn, we wrote each article, premiered it in *Michigan Gardener* and then waited, not repeating the information in other media as we wrote related items. Now, after ten years of building that collection we've assembled it here for comprehensive coverage of gardening's top topics.

Perhaps you're one of those who've told us, "I love your articles. I save every one." Now you can start sending that collection of clippings to the compost or use it to smother ground for a new garden. These journals are all-Janet, all-Steven, without advertising.

Inside *Janet and Steven give you: Trees*:

Contents

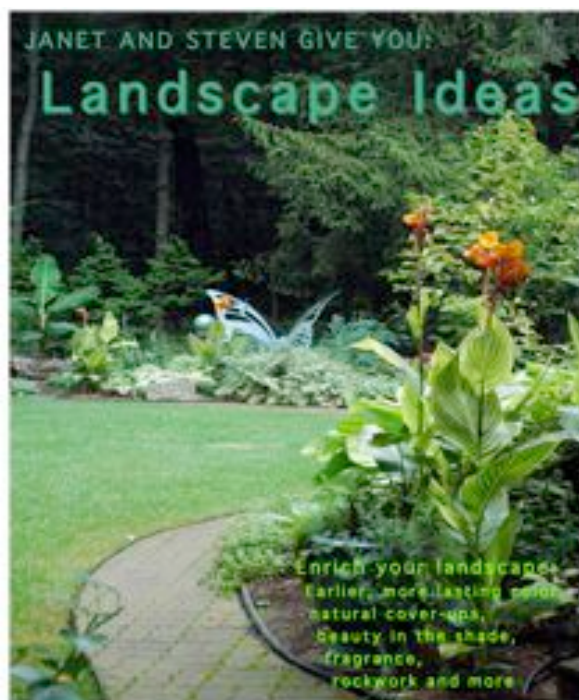
Why every back yard needs a big tree
Select trees for a landscape
Choose arborvitae for a hedge
Making more of fall color
Losing our ash trees
Replacing a big tree
Buying big: don't do it

Planting a B&B tree or shrub
Planting to insure great growth
Stakes, water, fertilizer
Mulching
Rescuing a tree from the lawn
Preventing construction damage
Pruning to keep a tree or shrub small

Removing suckers
Detecting trouble:
Mysterious pine decline
Girdling roots, the silent killer
Tar spot on maples
Sticky, bumpy critters: Scale
Good even when down: Treecycle



(Cover and introductory pages shown here are draft copies.
Details may change before printing is completed.)



To order now, see page #23

Inside Janet and Steven give you: Landscape Ideas:

Contents

Designs that "spring" from foliage color
Solving bulbs' disappearing act
Doubling up perennials:
A singularly great plan
Spotlight on shade gardens
Usual plants starring in unusual ways
Wheeze-free gardens

Murphy's Laws hop over the garden gate
Renovating a garden:
Make it better, simpler, more pleasing
Plant to please the nose!
Inviting wildlife into your garden
Take the "hard" out of working with rocks
Approach with caution: Invasive plants

Discovering hidden assets,
anticipating the unexpected
Herbs: They don't stay in the garden
When your cheating will be appreciated



from: **Spotlight on Shade Gardens**

"From the sunny side, all shade is mysterious. The details of the spot become clear only when you step within the dark. Drawn to a dark corner by the prospect of a cool retreat, I am sometimes disappointed to find shade but little refreshment. Barren ground can do that -- hard-packed, lifeless soil can't provide visual and mental refreshment to accompany the cooler air.

If you have a shaded spot that doesn't measure up as a garden retreat, chances are that you can change the situation in three steps.

First, beef up the soil. Plants that grow under and around trees in nature do so in decades or centuries of fallen leaf litter. High in humus, it's moisture retentive and returns to the soil almost all of what was removed to produce those leaves. Soil animals -- worms, insects, and microscopic creatures -- team in the rich leaf mold, adding nitrogen and changing leaves into easily-absorbed nutrients

from: **Renovating a Garden**

All things pass. All gardens eventually need renovation. Although it can be difficult for us to recognize the need for a makeover in our own garden, once we make that first leap it's easy to see that now is the time to act. Fall is the very best season for restoring what's been great to its former glory or transforming it into something even better.

Everyone involved is up for the change. Plants with months of growing time behind them have plenty of energy socked away so their comeback's assured. Should we decide to simplify transplanting by cutting plants back ahead of their natural fall, there are no recriminations. The plant, like the person, is willing to give a little as days shorten and temperatures drop. They switch growth gears to cease leafy growth and take hold of the earth with new roots.

Gardeners are raring to go, too, because they're in shape, loving the cooler weather and able to frolic at last. With fall comes an end to the careful moves and kid gloves necessary to avoid offending plants in full summer extension and bloom. We can romp, rather than pussy-foot around species with brittle branches.

What's Up #77, Page 18

All text plus otherwise uncredited photos ©2010 Janet Macunovich JMaxGarden@aol.com



Inside Janet and Steven give you: *Garden Care*:

Contents

Dig a fertile, well-drained bed
Answers beneath your feet: Testing soil
Weed-free beds are no accident
Springy start up to a great new year
Improving hard-packed soil
Cure fertilizerphobia
When to break the rules with fertilizer

Critical skills: Watering in July
Cut as you will, it makes more plants!
Repairing irrigation lines
Gift to yourself: A drought tolerant garden
Tough love: Deadheading,
cutting back & pinching
Sharpen those pruning tools

High summer, time to tweak
Tricks to make a summer garden shine
Staking: Two-step in May becomes
quite the dance in summer
The art of fall garden clean up

To order now, see page 23

from: **When to Break the Rules with Fertilizer**

For many years now I've broken the rule: "Withhold fertilizer in late summer around woody plants and hardy perennials." The experts spoke on this topic as with one voice, with such dire predictions of winter kill fostered by late fertilization, that I parroted their advice to those I coached in gardening.

Yet, I did not follow the rule.

Often, I went my own way because I deal with mixed borders. There, perennials and woody plants that "shouldn't" be fertilized during August share root space with plants such as annuals and late-emerging perennials that need fertilizer right through summer. It's impossible to apply fertilizer to any one group without affecting all that's rooted there.

Sometimes, the weather caused my deviation. When rain is heavier than usual during spring -- this year my area had two extra inches of rain during May and June -- essential elements are flushed out of the root zone. They're "leached away" just when plants are leafing out and need nutrients most. Then, trees, shrubs and perennials may limp all year, energy deprived, with

from: **Time to Tweak**

Tweaking consists of removing flowers and disfigured foliage, snipping the tips of plants yet to bloom, thinning crowded stems, supporting top-heavy stalks and making careful additions. You can do most of it with a pair of sharp clippers, some straight sticks and string. We'll start with the tweaking that requires the most thought, which is deadheading.

Clip spent flowers. Be observant.

Keep a plant from ripening seed by deadheading -- removing flowers as they fade. Deadheaded plants are likely to produce more flowers and, sporting more petal color than brown pod, remain more pleasing to the eye.

The trick to deadheading is to take each flower out of the picture while it's still pretty, while the plant is still intent on attracting the pollinators for which it produced those firm, wide, colorful petals. Don't wait too long. Even before petals begin to fall or turn brown, the plant's momentum shifts to seed production.

Potting Up Perennials

Janet Macunovich's
Growing Concerns
Volume 16* on CD

In her weekly newsletter *What's Coming Up*, Janet answers readers' growing concerns and explores new ground. On this CD you receive:

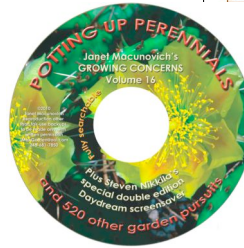
- 52 issues of *What's Coming Up*
- 750 digital pages in all
- Over 150 in-depth articles
- More than 250 quick-look lists and boxes
- A complete index of those issues
- A comprehensive index combining this newest release with volumes 1-6 and 15, previously released on the CD *Asking About Asters*. If you own that first CD, use this updated index so you can continue to search all your digital *Growing Concerns* with one tool.

To order now, see page 23

Bonus!

Steven Nikkila's Daydream screen saver

- A collection of digital images ready to pop into your computer, a delight for your eyes and imagination while they prevet screen burn-out.
- 74 images, a double order of crisp color from nature and the garden, selected to carry you both far afield as well as close in to fascinating plants and scenes.



What's Coming Up:
Janet Macunovich answers your growing concerns
Issue 32, March 14, 2009

What you'll find:

ing plants for hot, dry places, pages 1-2
design plus new plants may resolve
oblem planter, pages 2-4
insects suck lemons, page 5
grind to remove a tree stump, page 6
y garden: Taking notes on plant health,
ge 6
and-tuck cutting creates new shrubs,
ges 7-8
s salt from trees. No strain! pg. 8
's Janet? How do I contact her? Page 8
re to catch Janet and friends in-person,
ges 9-12
t's on Janet's 6-book CD, how can I buy one? Page 13



Why plant was crumb? Page 2! Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

How time and deep reach for perennials in hot, dry places

I need some ideas for some perennials that can go near a building facing south with no shade and occasional water. Thanks! - Bill -



Here are some perennials that have served me well in that kind of spot, Bill:
Birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), 6" bright green mat, yellow flowers in June
Catmint (*Nepeta Mussini*) (pictured, left) 18" mound, purple blossoms, May-June
Gray leaf yarrow (*Achillea tobyetoi* hybrids such as 'Moonshine') 30-36" mound, gray-green foliage, lemon yellow flowers, June-July
Hens and chicks (*Semprevivum* varieties) 3" tufts of interesting evergreen foliage
King Edward yarrow (*Achillea tomentosa*) (pictured above) gold flowers stand 8" above dense, soft evergreen mat
Lamb's ears (*Stachys lanata*) large gray wooly leaves in a 6" mat, 18-24" in bloom in June
Pinks (*Dianthus gratianopolitans*, other *Dianthus* spp.) blue green evergreen foliage, mat or mound, with white, violet or pink carnation-like flowers



Sea crambie (*Crambe maritima*) mound of big blue green leaves, blooms white, fragrant, 18", June
Yucca (*Y. filamentosa*, other Yucca species and varieties) (pictured at left) a fountain of sword-like evergreen leaves, 2 to 4 feet tall

Keep in mind that it isn't only the species that counts. A plant must be healthy to tough it out on a difficult site. Like many natives of dry spaces, those on my list are healthiest in loose, deep, well drained soil. They may take a year or more to become established - self sufficient - and until then regular water is a good idea. With crowns dry and warm and roots spread wide and deep, they are beautiful, long-lived creatures. However, if their site is poorly drained they will give you grief, perhaps growing and blooming poorly to start, and then dying of crown rot.



Focus on foliage color and plant form to see the possibilities in hens and chicks (left) and variegated yucca (right). Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Planter problem best solved with fresh look at both design and plant choice

D.S. writes, "This is a south facing brick planter that I can't seem to find the right combo for. Last year I purchased 'Wave' petunias, coleus, and geraniums, with a few impatiens to use on the side with less sun. The coleus on the left were nice and big, the right ones faded and small. The impatiens were wimpy, and the petunias were flat on top. I had the same plants at my home in large pots and all thrived and looked much better."

"Last year I used an annual bunny tail grass, one on each end of the planter, one in the middle. It looked like the 'Three Bears', shortest 'Baby Bear' on the left, medium size 'Mama Bear' in middle, and large and beautiful 'Papa Bear' on right."

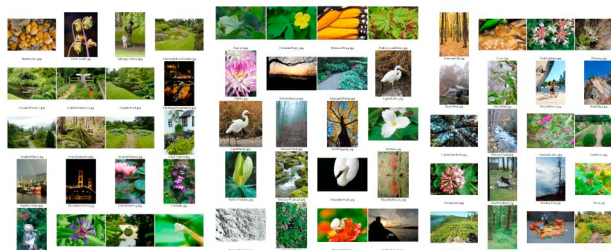
"What do you think about some perennials in the planter? Do you have alternate annual ideas?"

"I have added compost every year and mulched. I use a time released fertilizer, and Miracle Grow every couple weeks. On either side there is a downspout hidden behind euonymus vines."



What's Up #72, Page 1
©2009 Janet Macunovich

Mac and Windows compatible



* Volumes 1-5 and volume 15 were previously issued on *Asking About Asters* Special Edition CD. Volumes 6-14 have not been reissued in any form since first publication as weekly newspaper or internet articles between 1999 and 2008. More of that story on the next page!



***Asking About Asters* Special Edition CD** Volumes 1-5 plus volume 15* of Janet Macunovich's *Growing Concerns*

On this Special Collection CD:

- Decades of discovery, thousands of ideas
- 1,346 questions answered in-depth
- No repeated topics
- 240 illustrations



- More than 1,200 pages
- Six books ready for fun, enlightening ramble
- One awesome index, your direct route to facts
- Moderated and captured with exceptional clarity

6 books on *Asking About Asters* CD:

Asking About Asters
Bunches of Bushes
Clipping a Crabapple
Dividing the Daisies
Evergreen Entries and
Outlooks on Oaks,
 Plus one awesome index,
Anemone to Zinnia

To order now, see page 23

***The history**

Growing Concerns began in 1993 when Janet Macunovich started answering readers' questions in a weekly article in The Detroit News. The volume of

questions outpaced column space but not Janet's determination to research and learn. She replied to all questions, then issued a bound collection of columns-plus-private letters from the first two years.

***The gap**

Afterward, the number of questions she received and answered increased. She kept collecting and printing books for the next four years. Those five volumes, with answers to all the gardening basics and much more, were conceived as a one-time offer and so were unavailable between 1999 and 2009. Then Janet, still publishing weekly but with photographer-horticulturist Steven Nikkila adding visual dimension to each issue, saw that not only was she still addressing new subjects but was often able to expand old topics visually and otherwise. Reviewing the ten years of material she'd produced since issuing her *Growing Concerns* collections, she decided to make the whole body of work available to readers, beginning by adding 2008 to the first five volumes and reaching back to add more from the archives as she could.

Janet named each volume as an alpha-order series starting with *Asking About Asters*. That name also served as title for the first, special collection of the original five books plus the 15th year, *Outlooks on Oaks*.

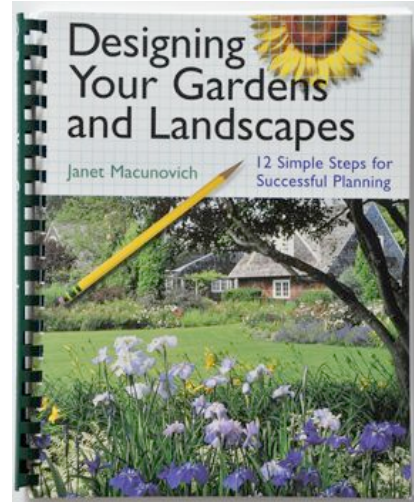
Each book is wide-ranging and covers gardening basics plus advanced topics, every page packed with information but presented in simple, clear and often, joyful terms.

Designing Your Gardens and Landscape and Caring for Perennials:

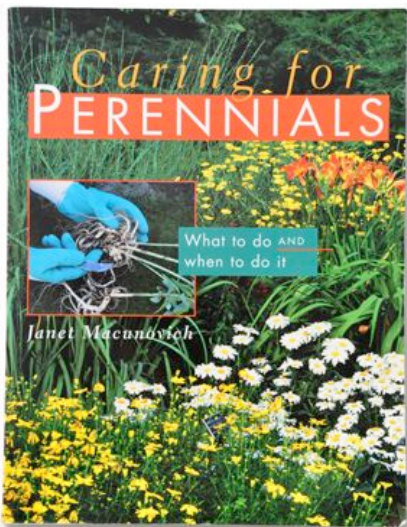
Janet's books, gardening classics.

Designing Your Gardens and Landscape was first published in 1990 as *Easy Garden Design*. It moves step by step through the recipe for design that Janet developed, uses successfully and has taught to thousands of others since. People have said: "This is exactly the simple, clear approach I need; thank you!" and *"I not only made a great new garden using your steps, I finally figured out and fixed what bothered me in a bed I already had."*

This design process is applicable world-wide.



Caring for Perennials takes a unique approach to tending a perennial bed, following Janet from early spring to the end of the season in one big garden. It covers all the things you might ever need to do in a garden, in the seasons and sequence you are likely to encounter them. You learn what she does, why, and exactly how plants look and behave afterward.



This all takes place in a real year and a real garden. It's practical and the explanations "why" fit so well into the overall picture that each successive step becomes simpler. For some, those steps have taken on a life of their own. A reader once summed up that effect, *"I knew that what I needed was probably toward the end, in the fall chapters, but I took a look at the beginning and got so hooked on what would happen next that I read straight through from spring."*

This book contains a novel, detailed reference chart that tells 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 can be adapted in its timing to suit areas far south or north in that range.

Please note that these two books are widely available in book stores and from on-line marketers, some of whom are able to offer them at a discount. Please shop around if you would like to spare your gardening budget a few dollars. However, if you would like an autographed copy or are ordering other items from us and wish to avoid making a separate order elsewhere which might mean higher total shipping costs, we are glad to be of service. **To order now, see page 23.** Be sure to indicate on your order form the name of the gardener Janet should address as she autographs the book.

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with Steven Nikkila's Daydream screen saver..... @ \$15.00 each..... Total _____

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Total order..... Total _____

Tax (Michigan residents, 6%)..... Total _____

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Total enclosed...... **Total** _____

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