

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich answers your growing concerns
Issue 52, August 1, 2009

Here you'll find:

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Late summer, and a garden still looks fine, thanks to plants like this
giant coneflower (*Rudbeckia maxima*) just coming into full bloom. In
this issue are readers' picks for what looks best and has the fewest
problems as July turns to August. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila *

Thank you readers, for plants that shine in late summer

You answered my call for help in filling my 17th anniversary issue with what's best in a late summer garden, giving me names of plants both beautiful and so healthy they need nothing except admiration. Now, thanks to you I **begin my 18th year of weekly gardening newsletters** in grand style. I do believe this is my **most joyful and colorful issue ever**.

Here they are, straight from award-winning performances in your gardens:
The **plants** a flower lover simply must have **to make August shine!**

(Please note that because I think this week's multitude of pictures can do their job of decoration at-a-glance, and want to restrict this newsletter's file size, most of these images are low-resolution. Which means if you zoom in on them they'll be grainy. To those of you who love to enjoy flowers pixel by pixel: Sorry!)

Astilbe



"My *Astilbe (simplicifolia)* 'Sprite' looks great, a haze of pale pink flowers over shiny green leaves," says Kathy Krasity. Janet: I've always liked that *Astilbe*, too, but by August I've switched allegiance and taken up with the dwarf, spreading, Chinese astilbes (*A. chinensis*, above right). Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila





Cardinal flower hybrids

Linda Hintz votes to award late summer honors to, "Lobelia 'Monet Moment', given to me by my super gardening friend, Cindy, last year." Holly Pilon feels 'Ruby Slippers' lobelia is great, too. (Pictured, a lobelia that's neither of those varieties but one of the many great *Lobelia speciosa* and *L. x gerardii* cultivars -- hybrids based on the North American native red cardinal flower.) Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Coneflowers



On Coleen French's list of best-right-now plants are, " Plain old regular *Echinacea* (purple coneflower)....nice and pink and healthy and robust..." (Above). Others commended the white varieties (below) and the new yellow and orange hybrids as well. Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Gaura

"My *Gaura lindheimeri* has planted itself artistically in the beds along my front walk. It works particularly well next to my Russian sage. For such a delicate looking plant, it is a real toughy," says Fran Knorr. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Daylily

"Things that look spectacular this year and right now are tons of happy *Heimerocallis*, The cooler weather prolongs the blooming. Also, never before have the hydrangeas' blooms been the size of Newfoundlands. The mighty monarda have never been so tall and large-flowered, although I see mildew setting in -- time for a trim." (Observations by Susan McClarty.)

In the Ryan garden, the daylily flowers are great but Nancy reports an even better aspect, "one for Steve's 'finding things you don't expect to find' category. I was out removing faded daylily blooms yesterday and found this little frog

enjoying the day. I didn't have my camera so I ran inside hoping that he would still be there when I got back. Not only was he there when we got back, he spent the better part of the afternoon napping in the daylily!!" Photo ©2009 Dan Ryan



Hibiscus



"My hardy hibiscus (*H. moscheutos*) cheers me up every year about now as it comes into bloom 'cuz it has special meaning. It is the first perennial given to me, to put into my first garden back in Southfield, 1986-'87. It was given by a special friend who for 23 years has brightened my life by sharing her gardening knowledge." Judy Root. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Hollyhock

"The plants doing well in my garden right now, besides the purple coneflowers, are the hollyhocks. Mine are deep purple and beautiful with many buds still to open," writes Dorothy Baldori. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Helen's flower (*Helenium*)



"One of my favorite and pest- and disease-free plants is helenium. (Left.) ...I'm not sure what variety mine is (I think it's 'Mardi Gras') but it sure provides lots of color in August," writes Bobbi Kuschel. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Ironweed

"I love ironweed -- *Vernonia* species, below -- blooming right now and a sure place to see butterflies nectaring," says Steven Nikkila. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Lily (*Lilium*)

"About August bloomers," writes Bobbi Kuschel, "my garden doesn't really gear up until the first week of July so I have lots of blooms from July through sometime in October. I think I was always so busy with the business in the spring that I never started enjoying my own garden until the middle of summer so that's where my peak bloom time is... I have lots of lilies and 'Black Beauty' is a late bloomer starting in August."

Holly Pilon agrees that lilies deserve an August acclaim, "My orientpet 'Sheherezade' is gorgeous, as is 'Lady Diana' and some of my orientals are filling the air with fragrance."

Pictured, left: One of the many oriental lilies that intoxicate Steven Nikkila with their sweet smell so that he never remembers to write down the variety name. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Pickerel Weed (*Pontederia cordata*)



Steven Nikkila feels that, "In a water garden, you must have pickerel for late summer. Scott Bates at Grass Roots Nursery always points me in the right direction about water gardens and that's who pointed me to this plant!" (More about Scott on page 18.) Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*)

Janet once teased her friend, naturalist and writer Beaufort Cranford, about his placing this common plant (below, right) in a garden he was otherwise filling with odd and rare items. "I know, I know," he said, "But come on, just *look* at it!". She did, and admits it really does add a lot of color to the August scene.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Russian sage (*Perovskia*)

Aw, you guys are kidding me, right? Just playing up to my Russian heritage? Otherwise, how can you list as "great" a plant that likes to lay down on the job in any climate more humid than Nevada's, and which suckers so vigorously it can overtake an adjacent walkway?! Yet Judy Root wasn't alone in her praise, "My sage lights up my garden magnificently for some reason, which I'll never question, it loves me."

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Shasta daisy

Coleen French nominates, "Shasta Daisy 'Becky'... going strong and looking good."
(Not pictured.)

Shining coneflower

Rudbeckia nitida (a.k.a. *Rudbeckia laciniata*)

Many plants seem to show different faces to different people. This can be because the sites differ or the plant's genes do. Here, two almost-the-same, tall *Rudbeckia* plants found their way onto two different gardeners' great plants lists. Their descriptions point out the important distinctions:

A pro gardener with two+ generations of horticulture in her veins, Bobbi Kuschel reports, "*Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Hortensis' or 'Golden Glow' is a favorite (August bloomer) with mum-like blooms on 6'+ stems. I cut it back drastically in May to keep it just a bit shorter but it still shoots up high. It also is very invasive but I have it between a patio and driveway with lawn on the other side. It is also called the privy plant because it used to be planted alongside outhouses." (Photo, right.)

Meanwhile, Karen Bovio of Specialty Growers writes this about a hybrid variety of the same species, "MY AUGUST VOTE goes to... *Rudbeckia* 'Herbstonne'. (Below.) Sometimes listed as *R. nitida* 'Herbstonne', sometimes listed as *R. laciniata* 'Herbstonne', it is neither, but a hybrid. 'Herbstonne' means Autumn Sun, but we find that they come into bloom in August (not quite yet, more like a mid to late August bloomer for us). Gets my vote for a totally disease- and pest free, late summer stand-out plant! ...the color is fantastic, (true glowing yellow, not gold, with green cones) and the foliage is deep green and dramatic. The stature is what gets most people – it's stately! In the pots, it gets up to 5 or 6 ft tall. In the garden, even taller! Yet it is not invasive – rather, it's just a big plant. Spreads by clumping up, not running about or seeding in."



Snowball hydrangea

Coleen French of French Garden Creations in Portland, Michigan, grows herbs to create herbal products and help others learn "how to." She writes of the large-flowered form of snowball hydrangea (*H. arborescens*): "*Hydrangea* Annabelle... huge blooms for the past 3 weeks, still going strong." Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Zebra grass

Another of Coleen French's picks is dwarf zebra grass, "one of my best looking plants right now," along with "Miscanthus Summer Lights (and) my lovely daylilies...the nice hybrids are just starting their gorgeousness..." Janet loves zebra grass too, especially because it's a tease. The grass blades are ordinary green until the Fourth of July, when the horizontal stripes suddenly appear. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila





Annuals

Many readers wrote to nominate annuals they planted, gave room to grow and then forgot about. Those plants have now come into their own as the fresh new face on the block. Among the nominees: New Guinea impatiens, *Mandevilla* and volunteer annual sunflowers.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Gray headed coneflower (*Ratibida*)

Says Ruth Hart, who looks to native plants for late summer fun, "At the moment, my *Ratibida* also looks great... (and) I believe this is about peak bloom time for a lot of the prairie flowers such as blazing star." (No illustration.)

Garden phlox

Mildred reports, "I love old fashioned garden phlox for late summer. It's blooming away now and keeps on and on. I like the ones I have that don't get mildew. I have one that's salmon colored and one that's bright pink. What kind are they? I can't say. I just kept buying phlox and throwing out any that mildewed. These are the two that are left!" Sounds like a good plan, Mildred. I have a dwarf, salmon colored one called 'Orange Perfection' that would make your muster, and pink 'Alpha'. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Oakleaf hydrangea

A number of readers commended oakleaf hydrangea as a star. This shrub is still looking great because of its enduring, colorful bracts (below) even though the actual bloom finished weeks ago.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Stokes aster

Among the stars in Anna Marie Christenson's late summer firmament are Stokes aster. Also, "all the daylilies and lilies. It has been the best year in the garden that I can ever remember!" Right, *Stokesia laevis*. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Big boys: The sunflower clan

Late summer is the time of the sunflowers, and we in middle North America treasure these big species and the wildlife they attract both in the wild and in our gardens. Ruth Hart, for instance, writes, "My favorite plant this time of year and way on into the fall is tall sunflower *Helianthus giganteus*. Several years ago, I pricked out some seedlings at a native plant workshop that Suzan Campbell did at the Belle Isle, Detroit nature center. Once they 'took off,' they have bloomed beautifully every year and attract migrating goldfinches in the fall."

Steven and I love our prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*, right, and lower right) which are simply masses of huge, low leaves until mid-July, and now for three or four weeks get all the attention in our neighborhood as a forest of 10-12' tall, leafless, sunflower-topped stems. We don't deadhead but let them ripen into goldfinch food."



And there's *Silphium perfoliatum*, left, about which Mar Sclawy writes "Cup plant. A sure bloomer in August and who can resist those cup-like leaves."

Janet wonders if anyone has actually seen a bird or butterfly sipping water from the cup that's formed by the base of cup plant's leaves and the stem. She says, "I haven't. Yet. Water certainly does tarry there after a rain so I can believe this plant really may be a wildlife boon." Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Bear's breeches

Acanthus spinosissimus. (Not pictured.) My friend Dick Grady says, "we shall have *more* of those next year!" And Mar Sclawy lists it number one, also, "It's been blooming for more than a month along a garden wall, mostly in shade. Its purple and white stalks of flowers and prickly pointy leaves perk up that part of the garden after the globe centaurea blooms and dies (too quickly) and the (Japanese) anemone is still making up its mind."

And more!

Other plants that earned your praise for sparking the last part of the season: Ornamental grasses, tall sedum, butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), blackberry lilies (*Belamcanda chinensis*), moon flower (*Datura*), the foliage and also the flowers of many hostas, and the big purple leaves of *Ligularia* varieties such as 'Desdemona.' (One such leaf is shown with Astilbe, on page 1.)

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, plants and tools they gave us** are precious.

Is there such wisdom in your hands now? Let's pass it along.

Here, Kay Cease shares what she learned about small starts yielding big returns:

"I'm somewhat new to gardening, but interested and learning. Last summer I converted lots of lawn space to a perennial garden, so was actively accepting plant donations. My lovely (~90-year-old) gardening neighbor gave me many 'babies' (below, left) from her garden last fall. These flowers that she called 'gloriosa daisies' are certainly one of my success stories."

"It was fairly late in the season when I got them and I was running out of time, so I put them in the ground without a lot of thought, and frankly not sure if it would work at all. The babies, as you can see (below left), were fairly unremarkable. They are certainly glorious this summer (below, right) and have thrived! I've already promised my own 'babies' to other gardening friends this fall."



Gloriosa daisy (*Rudbeckia hirta*) seedling (left) seems too humble in the beginning for a plant that will sport dozens of blooms when it matures the next summer (below). Photos ©2009 Kay Cease



Let no one be discouraged by how much there is to learn.
- Gertrude Jekyll -

More reason to bid farewell to 'Goldsturm' blackeye Susan: Downy mildew

Karen Bovio, owner of Specialty Growers and one of the finest perennial growers in the country, sent this note to continue the discussion from *What's Coming Up* #51, of things gone wrong with what was once a carefree plant:

Hi Janet,

Here's **another woe for *Rudbeckia* 'Goldsturm':** We gave up on growing this once-stalwart plant here at Specialty Growers about 5 or 6 years ago. Not only did that time-frame coincide with the arrival of the purple black Septoria leaf spot you mentioned, but also of a very deadly (and I think much more serious) **Downy Mildew**.

Without realizing it at first, we received a batch of infected 'Goldsturm' plugs in April or May, from a plug supplier. By July, I was wondering why the **plants looked stunted** -- they remained short, and the developing **flower stems were very stubby, the flowers never developing** properly. Then we began to see worse symptoms -- **white patchy fungus** on the undersides of the leaves, accompanied by **pale green discoloration** on the upper leaf surfaces, and severe **distortion of the leaves**.

Doing some research on this disease, I discovered just how **hard it is to control Downy Mildews**. (Powdery Mildews are milk-toasts compared to the Downies!) There seemed to be no "natural" controls, and chemical controls were all in the range of \$400 per gallon -- too rich for my blood, considering how "basic" a perennial 'Goldsturm' was at the time!

We decided to see if we could eliminate the fungus by NOT growing 'Goldsturm' for two years. Maybe **"starve it out"** by not having its host available. **No dice**. We tried it last year, and the Downy Mildew was back again, despite having started with CLEAN stock. Perhaps the Downy Mildew spores are overwintering in the fibers of our black plastic ground cloth? We are not sure, but in any case, we do not grow 'Goldsturm' any more. Two strikes and it's out.

We do like the ***Rudbeckia hirta* cultivars** (mentioned as alternatives in *What's Coming Up* #51), although they **have "issues" too** -- mainly plain old ordinary **Powdery Mildew**. The new cultivar 'Tiger Eye Gold', which made its debut as a seed-grown strain this year, claims greater mildew resistance than previous varieties. We won't know, as we won't be able to trial it ourselves, because we sold out of it REALLY fast! It's shorter than other strains, and has really nice big golden flowers. (However, my vote for favorite *R. hirta* cultivar still goes to 'Prairie Sun' -- I'm asking my customers to let me know if it returns as a true perennial for them -- I've had it return in our Grass Garden for 3 years now.)



Impressed by **Karen Bovio's knowledge and practicality?** I always am, and have been for 20+ years. So I encourage you to take the opportunity to go on tour with her. **Bovio is the guide** for The Association of Professional Gardeners and their guests on Wednesday, **August 19, 2009, 10:00 am.** at **Michigan State University's Annual and Perennial Trial Gardens** in East Lansing, Michigan. Contact President Gail Morrell at thegardener@comcast.net about attending that event or joining the A.P.G.

Hemlock tree dies but tells a tale of killer burlap and cage

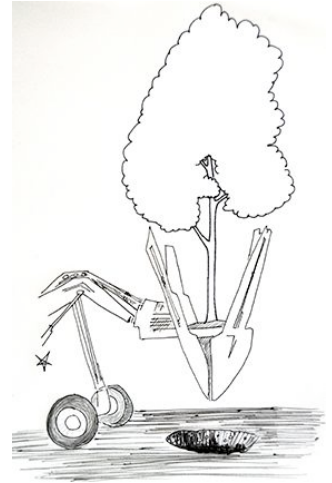
A nursery planted a hemlock tree for a customer. It struggled for several years then gave up the ghost. Its owner tried his best to give it extra help and wondered what he might have done wrong, or what he should change if he planted something like it again.

I helped dig out the tree and clean it so we could read its story. It told us that simple things were its undoing, that is struggles came from multiple disadvantages caused by several planting practices that are, sadly, common among landscapers.

This hemlock's story can help your trees and shrubs. To understand it fully, consider what came before it arrived at our site:

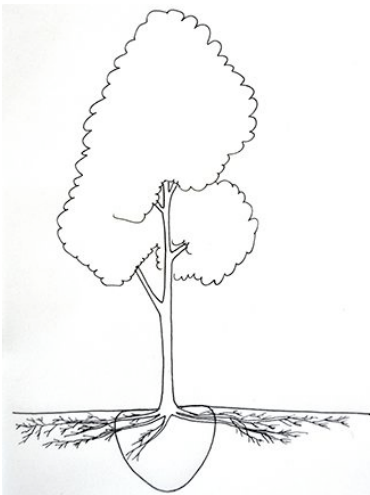
Trees and shrubs grown large in a nursery field are most often dug using a tree spade. That device pushes four triangular blades into the soil around a plant to cut a cone-shaped parcel of soil and roots. The spade then lifts the plant-plus-roots and deposits that parcel into a burlap-lined wire basket. Nursery workers pin and tie the top of the burlap and bend wire flaps over the shoulders of the ball to keep that cone of soil from crumbling.

Right: Tree spade. (Imagine a tractor at the star, plus lots of hydraulic lines linking the four blades, lifting arm and tractor. I can't draw tractors.)



Although the tree spade takes a large plug of soil it often leaves as much as 90% of the plant's root mass behind. That's because root systems are naturally broad, rather than deep (diagram, below, left). With so little root mass to collect water for the leaves, and the leaves the only parts able to create fuel that can drive new root growth, the tree struggles. Until it manages to replace its lost root it will be in a weakened state and will be more susceptible to all its species' ailments.

Below, left: Typical root system compared to the area captured by a tree spade. The uppermost roots tend to be dominant since they get 'first dibs' on water that falls on the soil. The roots branch more and more toward their tips. The whole system is as wide or wider than the tree's branches.



So, next time you look at a new plant and think there must be some malady that's holding it back, look harder for simpler things. Consider what you might do to just plain help it get enough water and nutrients while it gradually creates a new root system wide enough to meet its needs. I hope reading the story on pages 12-14 helps your own new trees and shrubs prosper.

Right: The hemlock in our story arrived with, and had little more at its end than, a typical tree-spaded root system. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



A hemlock with quadruple handicaps

Disadvantage #1: The tree's major roots were cut in the nursery field, as in the diagram on the previous page. Each cut root lost many branching tips that were the tree's major source of water and nutrients. Looking at this cleaned stump can you see why the major roots are "flare roots?" They flare from the trunk like spokes from a wheel.

The roots of this hemlock changed little in the years between being planted on our site and when we dug them up (right, photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila). We did not cut any of these major roots in removing the tree after it died but dug outside their mass to be able to lift and examine them. Connect the cut tips and you can see the outline of the root ball the tree had at planting time.

Although a plant can survive with such a greatly reduced water-collecting system it's often hard-put to support all the branches and leaves it developed while it had more roots. As a result, evergreens go pale, deciduous trees have smaller, paler leaves than they should, both may sacrifice branches (dieback) and grow very little each year.

Disadvantage #2: The tree had two trunks, probably as a result of being topped as a seedling to make the tree bushier -- customers like bushy trees!

Look at the growth rings. Can you see where those two trunks were pressing against each other? They were unable for many years to unite through the bark (arrow, below). They limited each other's growth. In the cambium (sheath of special cells just under the bark) where the trunks pressed against each

other the transfer of starch from leaf to root that should have taken place there -- and which can *only* happen in the cambium -- was slow or stopped.

In the hemlock's final two years the annual growth rings became one as the cambium finally united. That was too late. By then the smaller trunk had lost most of its foliage, did not have enough greenery to support its woody cells' energy needs and so it died. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Disadvantage #3: Another hindrance to this tree's growth was the burlap and wire basket. Both were left in place at planting time. The burlap eventually rotted but its presence during the first season or more, and the support it had from the wire basket, forced new roots at the edge to circle. If these roots had instead grown out away from the tree's trunk on a radius they could have done the tree much good. However, they were confined in the original planting ball, beneath the tree's water-blocking branches and in competition with all other roots there. At the time we dug the tree out the circling roots you can see below were brittle and dry: They had grown for a time in that poor environment but then died.

(Note: These were girdling roots. If the tree had lived longer and those roots had survived, too, they would have been a problem. One day the trunk would have become as wide as that circle. Then, pressed against those roots it would have been girdled.)

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila



Disadvantage #4: If someone had cut away the wire cage and the burlap at planting time, they would have seen a large flat rock trapped between the cloth and the vertical side of the ball. Probably the point of one of the tree spade's blades had pushed on the

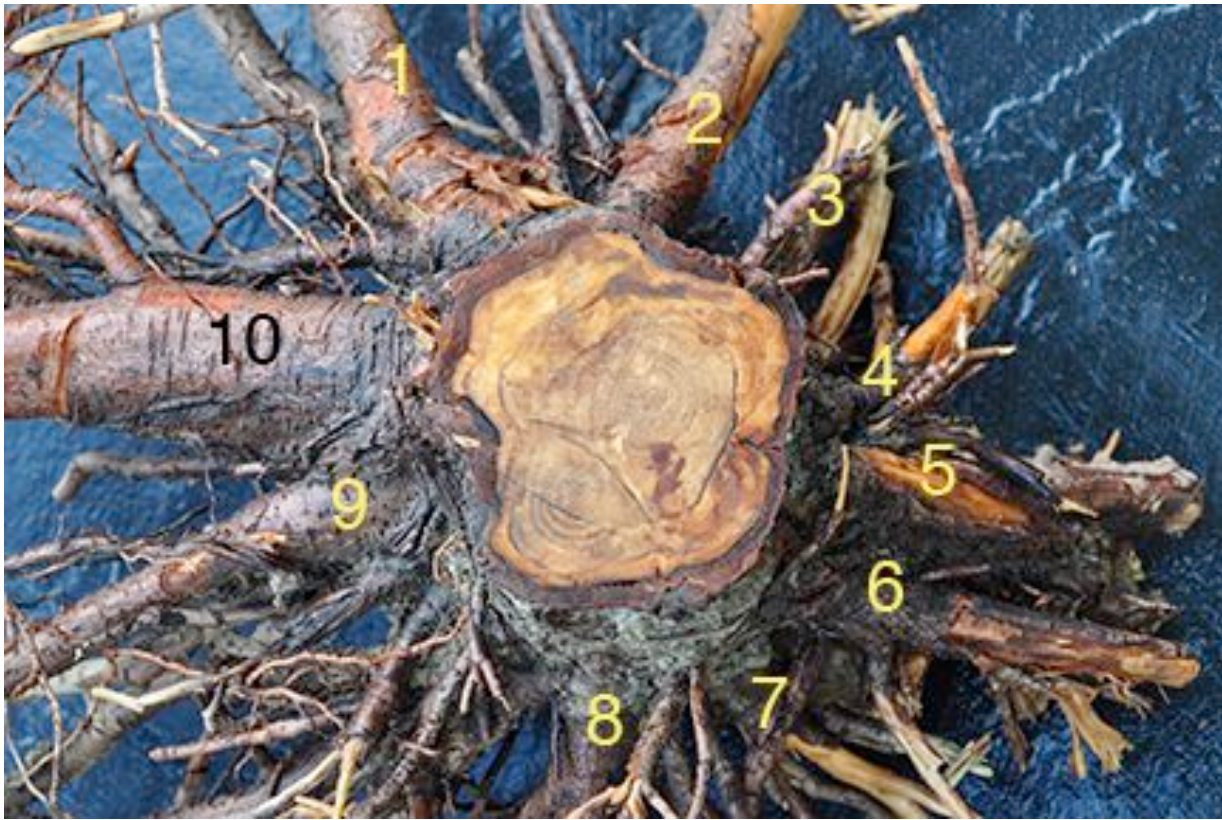
edge of a rock that had been lying horizontally on the nursery field's rocky surface. That pressure tipped the rock to the vertical and carried it down like a wall outside the cut roots. (Below).



If the burlap had been cut away, the planter may have seen and removed the rock, or perhaps it would simply have fallen away from the roots' cut ends as the burlap released it. However, it remained inside the burlap, a barrier those roots could not penetrate. They formed branching tips which could go nowhere. The tips and the whole root eventually died. My clue to go back into the hole and look for an obstruction was the roots' peeled bark. I thought when I first unearthed them that I had shaved that bark with my spade but then realized the roots were dry and brittle -- long dead.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Faced with so many barriers, the tree nonetheless did keep growing. One of its 10 primary, radial flare roots (below) managed to overcome the handicaps and grow.



See how much that one root increased in diameter as well as extending radially from the trunk? (Left.)

The feeder roots at its tip, which I cut in digging to remove the tree, extended an additional two feet.

That one root, one tenth of the system the tree should have had, was enough to keep the upper portions of the plant going for a while but not enough so that it could regain its vigor.

Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

The 45mph garden

You can put a gardener behind the wheel but you can't take the flowers out of his eyes. Look at what's catching driver's eyes and raising questions this week.

It's not flowering yet **tree of heaven** (*Ailanthus altissima*) has enough color right now to make people wonder. This tree featured in the classic novel *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is tough enough to grow almost anywhere.

The species is dioecious -- each plant has **either male or female flowers but not both**. So right now we're **noticing the female, seed-bearing trees**.

As for the **male trees of heaven**: People in some cities, Toronto among them, may wish that their town planners had asked more questions before planting them. Male (seedless) *Ailanthus* were **used as street trees in some areas**. Although the trees are certainly good in tight spaces along the curb, **hay fever** sufferers and those who dislike **rank odors** notice the males for the pollen that sheds and scent that wafts from the flowers

during
spring
bloom
time.



This **tree spreads by seed and** also can **sucker** to form colonies. Once, a large solitary tree we cut down burst forth in hundreds of suckers from its remaining roots. What had been a grassy back yard with one tree became a thicket in a matter of days.

As if those characteristics aren't enough to make it a survivor to rival the cockroach, it's also an **allelopath**. That's a plant that **creates a no-grow area** within its root zone by creating chemicals in roots and leaves that slow and stunt other plants' growth.

Tree of heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*. Native to eastern Asia but naturalized and weedy in almost all of the United States plus many other places throughout the world. Photos ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste.

- William Shakespeare -

Wrap-up with Grins and Grow-ans that turn our green thumbs up or down

Grins: To a **polka dot umbrella**, a **hummingbird** and a gardener with a big heart. Susan McClarty contributes both the grin and the grow-an this week:

"Last week I was out in the driveway, enjoying the rain with my multi-colored polka dot umbrella. A hummingbird buzzed an arm's length from my nose for several seconds before



deciding I was too big to be a flower. That was a gift and so was the rain."

Grow-ans: To **disturbing nature even as we improve on it**. Again, from Susan McClarty, "What bothers me the most at the moment is trying to trim oregano, monarda, phlox, malva, etc. that the bees are harvesting. I don't want to remove their food, just trying to cut down on seed production. I'll just have to leave them alone for a bit."

Hawk moth feeding at *Monarda*. Photo ©2009 Steven Nikkila

Who's Janet?

The toddler who asked "Why?" grown up and out in the garden.

One day when her daughter was two and peppering her with "why," Janet Macunovich's parents laughed and said, "Now it's *your* turn! You used to drive us crazy with 'why' when you were little!"

"Used to?" said Janet's husband. "She's still doing it!"



Janet's been gardening professionally for over 25 years and loves most to solve garden puzzles, from what to plant where to meet diverse expectations, to why a plant acts one way in one situation and differently elsewhere. She's studied at colleges, botanical gardens, professional associations' workshops as well as in her own garden and extensive library but, "I find the most answers in talking to people with questions -- lots of people in lots of gardens -- until I recognize the important patterns and underlying causes. I'm glad to be working in the field I love but even happier to be able to indulge my own curiosity to help others garden better." Email questions to her at JMaxGarden@aol.com.



Where to catch Janet and friends* in-person:

*See "More reasons" item on page 10, "Shoot!" (below) and "Invite Janet or Steven" on page 18

Garden by Janet - Bring your gloves and tools! for

Pruning Trees and Shrubs: Keep them small and shapely

August is prime time for pruning woody plants to keep them small. All around the Detroit, Michigan area Janet has appointments with trees and you can attend. Janet covers: How well and how long popular landscape plants hold up to pruning, and simple techniques for keeping plants within the bounds you set. Free. You must contact Janet for location details.

Select one or a combination of these locations:

- **CLOSED (full up!) Thursday, August 13, 9 a.m. in Grosse Pointe Shores.** Prune **yews, oakleaf hydrangea and more.**
- **CLOSED (full up!) Thursday, August 13, 7 p.m. in Rochester Hills.** Prune **crabapples** and evaluating the performance and future needs of a serviceberry tree last pruned in this way in 2008.
- **Saturday, August 15, 8:30 a.m. in Grosse Pointe.** An upright Japanese maple and a coral bark maple are the focus.
- **CLOSED (full up!) Saturday, August 15, 2:00 p.m. in Farmington Hills.** A magnolia, serviceberry and fir tree.
- **CLOSED (full up!) Monday, August 17, 6:00 p.m. in Livonia.** A weeping Japanese maple, yews and a dwarf white pine.
- **New date: Thursday, August 20, 6:00 p.m. in Dearborn.** An upright juniper being kept in its place and flowering shrubs of several types being evaluated to establish when they will begin being pruned to remain small.
- **Questions? Or to reserve a spot** in these limited-space workshops, call or email Janet: 248-681-7850 or JMaxGarden@aol.com. Include your name and phone number on the phone message or in your email, and make the subject of your email "pruning with Janet."

CLOSED (full up!) Saturday, August 15, 7 a.m., "Shoot! That's Steven!" Bring your camera and join horticultural photographer Steven Nikkila on a photo shoot in one of his favorite gardens. Too early in the day for you? Then that may be his first lesson to you: Shoot when the light is soft! This is a free but limited-space workshop. Call or email Steven to reserve a spot: 248-681-7850 or hortphoto@gmail.com. Include your name and phone number on the phone message or in your email, and make the subject of your email "shooting with Steven."

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 you can either watch or work with me side by side. I hope you'll bring your gloves and 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.

In the **Detroit Zoo Adopt-A-Garden** program: I'm a 21-year veteran of this great program. Many people have worked with me there, some for a day and others for years. We have fun, we learn, we accomplish much. The official program requires that regular garden volunteers complete an interview and orientation process but you can come as my student on an temporary pass for a day or two. **To join me at the Zoo**, email mstgarden@yahoo.com. Make the subject line of your email "I'll help at the zoo with Janet." That email will connect you to my friend Deb Tosch who keeps our group's schedule straight. You'll receive upcoming work dates, directions for meeting up with my group at the zoo as a temporary helper, plus all you need to sign up officially in case you decide to stay on.

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

Steven and I 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 own horizons by developing new material or "hybridizing" from what we already have.

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 weekends and evenings, so give us some lead time. Then we can meet you in *your* garden.



Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich (left) 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 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 Scott

Bates (above, right) who knows more than any six other water garden experts. Even better, he can convey that knowledge to others with creativity and humor. Janet and Steve are glad to help you themselves or refer you to these others to meet your group's need. Contact them at JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850 when you want to set up a talk, workshop or class.

