## What's Coming Up:



Raised beds, working under trees, and design all came together in our work and your questions this week. So this issue answers: Is it okay to raise a bed under trees? Can you have a great garden on a wooded lot? What can be used to create the walls of the raised bed? It's what's coming up!

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns Issue 83, March 6, 2010

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## How raised beds elevate plants' prospects

Please comment on or direct me to information on Raised Garden beds. Advantages? Disadvantages? How to set them up? Thanks for your thoughts. – E.P. –

Pile soil above existing grade, a few inches or a few feet, in an unrestrained mound or within walls, and you have a raised bed. Gardeners and farmers have done this since way back in our earliest recorded history. The main advantage is higher yield, primarily from better drainage plus enhanced root growth in soil that's deeper, better aerated and likely to remain that way longer since it's not trod on or rolled over. In addition, greater productivity occurs in a raised bed because space that might in a flat field be needed for walking or plowing can be planted, and even the vertical sides can be planted if planting holes are left while creating the walls.



It's easy to fit a floating row cover over this raised bed so you can start growing earlier, keep growing longer.

The growing season can begin earlier and go on longer, too, since raised beds drain and warm sooner in spring and -- if walled -- can be fitted in a snap with a glass- or plastic-topped frames to keep cool season crops growing into December.

Some other pluses have to do with tending these beds. For every inch plants are raised, the gardener stoops less. If the bed has a permanent frame with a wide, sturdy edge its caretakers may sit to work. It may also be easier to guard a raised bed crop, if the target varmints are of a type that can be fenced out. That's because the side of a permanent raised bed effectively increases the height of any fencing.

Raised beds are sometimes used to **grow** plants with special needs. Rock gardeners

rely on raised beds to give alpine species the sharp drainage of a gravelly mountain scree, for instance. Other gardeners yearning to grow species that cannot abide the local pH fill raised beds with special mixtures meant to create a different, more alkaline or acid environment. The Schedel Gardens\* in Elmore, Ohio sits on alkaline soil yet its Japanese garden is full of broadleaf evergreens dependent on soil acidity for proper nutrition. The secret: Much of that garden is a huge raised bed filled with peaty soil.



Above: If you raise a bed when you garden in the alkaline soils of the Midwest, buying the fill is an opportunity to bring in low pH (acid reaction) peat to give your rhododendrons better growing conditions.

Right: At the Detroit Zoo, our group would have a much tougher time gardening this spot if it had not been raised. Underneath that raised bed are the nearly indestructible 1928 faux-rock walls, formerly an otter exhibit! (R.H., you said you'd like to see the wattle fencing I described -- those in this photo are woven from redtwig dogwood and weeping willow branches.)

As we were about to ask if it was easy to work these raised beds with such nice capstones to sit on, the gardeners' dog hopped up to demonstrate the beds' improved accessibility!



Finally, there's the fact that a raised bed can enable gardening in some impossible places -- on rocky soil, above mucky ground, on steeply sloping ground. On the thin, boulder filled hills in some parts of New England, raised beds were standard at colonial homesteads.

Setting up a raised bed can be as simple as deeply digging the soil in an area so that it's fluffed up above grade for the year it takes to settle. Or it can mean loosening existing soil, then building walls and filling the enclosure with loose soil. The soil can be native soil, or it



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can be amended with compost or supplemented with trucked-in soil. (If your raised bed's within a tree's root zone you might cover the loosened base with hardware cloth or permeable landscape fabric before filling over with new soil. However, don't bet your house on that root-

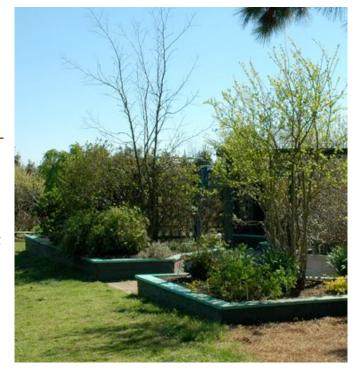
barrier's effectiveness, as a single tree root that finds an opening can capitalize on the better drainage and air to explode with growth, branch out and fill the bed.)

\*Copy this URL to your browser for more schedel-gardens.org/schedel/main.asp

## The down side to raising a bed

Some of the disadvantages to raised bed gardening come with dollar signs attached. If you build walls, even of the least expensive type (such as baled straw or blocks of peat) that's a cost you wouldn't have had in flatland gardening. Time involved may also be considerable, even if you use wood or stone available free on site.

Sometimes, raised beds incur more plant losses because cold can penetrate the sides and reach roots that would otherwise be insulated by all of Mother Earth. Since roots are the least hardy part of a plant, species that are marginally hardy in-



Pretty retaining walls... but not cheap!

ground may succumb to root loss in a raised bed. This disadvantage is **offset by** the fact that many plants prone to winterkill in poorly drained soil may survive in a raised bed because the overall better conditions there make them **more vigorous and resilient**.

On a very **dry or windy site** where plants dry out quickly, beware of **making matters worse** by raising plants further above the water table or up into the wind. Better in some cases, if the drainage is good, to grow plants in trenches than to elevate them.

## Is it really okay to raise a bed under trees?

Conventional wisdom is that we should not raise the grade within a tree's root zone more than 2 or 3 inches. More than that, we're advised, can kill the roots through added pressure and reduced oxygen level.

This is true but not always applicable to us. It's based on noted after-effects of raising the grade in an area via standard grading procedures; i.e., with heavy machinery. A gardener with a wheelbarrow adding loose soil in a limited area is another matter. Our own experience parallels that of a professor of landscape technology Janet met one winter at a workshop at University of Minnesota, Waseca. He had almost three feet of soil on a birch's roots in an experiment he'd begun hoping to use the necessary loss of a birch tree to a building project as a demonstration to students of the negative effects of burying roots. When the tree refused to show any negative effects, he'd upped the original level, and again, still without effect. His conclusion and ours

based on similar events: if you keep the soil off the trunk, use loose soil and cover only part of the root system, the tree will be fine.

This and many other topics for gardeners working under trees are what we cover as we help you develop plans for your wooded lot at the March 20-21 workshop, *Natural Gardening and the Wooded Lot*. (See pages 16 and 21 - 24.) Space is limited. Email or call to join us there!

## Good sources for the why's and how-to of raised beds

Most general gardening references include coverage of raised beds. The topic may not occupy its own chapter but appear within a dozen other topics where this kind of bed is useful. Here are some excerpts from a few of our favorite general gardening references:

From *Taylor's Master Guide to Gardening*, Houghton-Mifflin, Editor Frances Tenenbaum:

"You can raise a bed 6 to 8 inches above ground level without building a wall to hold the soil in place. Just keep the bed tidy with a rake or a hoe. Contained beds require more initial work but if they're well built, they'll last. ...a casually built wall won't last as well... The higher the wall, the stronger it must be to withstand the pressure of the soil it contains -- and wet soil can exert a great deal of pressure."

From *The American Horticultural Society Encyclopedia of Gardening*, Dorling Kindersley Books, Editor Christopher Brickell:

"Ideally, brick beds should be built with frostproof bricks."

"Railroad ties are particularly good for

low raised beds... Ensure that they have not been treated with a preservative that is toxic to plants."

"If plants that require acid soil are to be grown in the raised bed, line the inside of the walls... with a butyl rubber liner or several coats of a waterproof paint. This stops lime in the mortar from leaching into the bed."





expansion of roots. Learn what it means to batter a wall and tie it into the hill with a deadman, before you build. If you hire someone to build for you, ask as references to see walls that contractor built more than two years ago.

Plenty of pressure builds up behind this wall, from weight of soil, water and

From *The Complete Book of Gardening*, Mermaid Books, Editor Michael Wright:

"New brickwork can look rather harsh, and occasional planting holes should be left about two to three courses down, so that the vertical face can be utilized; such holes should be the size of a header (end) of a brick."

"Natural stone walls constructed dry (without mortar)... leaving the occasional gap... and carry out vertical planting as you go. Tilt the stones back slightly to direct rainwater inwards into the bed..."

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From Complete Guide to Basic Gardening, HP Books, Editor Michael McCaskey:

"In some respects a raised bed is like a gigantic, open-bottom container. As such, it needs to be filled with a lightweight soil mix that is easy and relatively inexpensive to make in large quantities... One of the most successful is equal parts fine sand, peat moss and ground bark."

ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1641.html

"Many of the same principles used in raised beds are being adopted on a larger scale in field crops. Ridge tillage, solid seeding and controlled traffic are all new techniques designed to deal with drainage, weed or compaction problems and to increase productivity. Traditional gardens with orderly rows on wide intervals have mimicked their larger farm counterparts for years. Maybe it is time for them to change their role model to the new farm, or the ancient garden."

In *Raised Bed Gardening*, from one of the private philanthropic organizations working to improve farming and land use, at noble.org/ag/Horticulture/RaisedBedGardening/index.html

Examples of raised beds retained by straw bales and others by sand bags. (page 4) Also mentioned: retaining beds with rubber lumber from old tires, corrugated sheet metal, high density plastic mesh (as used for erosion control at construction sites).

## Chemically-treated lumber in the landscape: Debate continues

From the University of Missouri Extension, in *Raised-Bed Gardening* at extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G6985

Regarding toxicity of treated lumber: "Pressure-treated lumber uses CCA (chromated copper arsenate) or ACA (ammoniacal copper arsenate) as a preservative. However, studies done by Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service showed insignificant movement of these

compounds into surrounding soil..."

"Creosote, which is used to treat railroad ties, may cause injury or death to plants that come into direct contact with it. After a few years the effect diminishes. Old, discarded ties do not injure plants (Figure 3). However, injury may occur if ties are still oozing black, sticky creosote or smell intensely. If you are uncertain about the safety of treated lumber, place a heavy plastic liner between the treated lumber and soil used for growing plants to prevent direct contact of plant roots with the treated lumber."

From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, regarding

Worried about chemicals in treated lumber? Consider untreated wood. We gardeners make changes so often, it's not problem to use "temporary" walls. We've had plain wood edging last 15 years on well drained soil.

compounds used to treat lumber, at www.epa.gov/oppad001/reregistration/cca/And

epa.gov/oppad001/reregistration/cca/cca consumer safety.htm

"...some chemical may migrate from treated wood into surrounding soil over time... Do not use treated wood under circumstances where the preservative may become a component of food."

## Raises the question: Was that perennial hardy but too low?

Every spring we overhear people say, "Oh, that wasn't hardy for me. Tried it three times, lost it over winter every time." It should be an unremarkable statement. After all, we all like to push the limits on hardiness. Yet this statement catches our attention when the perennial mentioned is one that's been hardy in our gardens.

Then, it may be drainage rather than cold that's the problem. A perennial that requires very well drained soil may survive in less than perfect drainage in summer because it's growing fast enough to replace roots that die from lack of oxygen. (Water that lingers anywhere in the top 18 inches of soil can push out all the air. Roots die in that soggy space.) That same plant may be unable to cope during winter, dying because it had no chance to recover between episodes of root loss. Some of these just fail to return in spring, others begin to grow, and then collapse, killed by root-and crownrotting organisms that took hold in dead tissue during winter and spread as temperatures increased.

Many gardeners don't know how well their soil drains. (Drainage has brought Janet closer than anything else to breaking her "no repeat topics" policy. We've run out of new ways to say, "dig a hole 18 inches deep, fill it with water and let it drain so the sides are all moist, then fill it again and see when all drains; 12 hours for great drainage, 12-24 hours for acceptable drainage.) If the surface is puddle free they may think their drainage is fine

and never connect plant losses to drainage.

Here are some plants that are hardy in zone 5 but likely to die if the drainage is not perfect. Even a little bit of moisture sitting around their crown for a day can kill them:

Artemisia schmidtiana 'Silvermound'

Baby's breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*) Blue oat grass (Helictotrichon sempervirens)

Butterfly bush (Buddleia davidii)

Biennial foxglove (Digitalis purpurea)

Cotton lavender (Santolina chamaecyparis)

*Lewisia* (and probably 2 out of 3 other choice alpine plants)

Pinks (Dianthus, evergreen species)



If your butterfly bush (Buddleia davidii) doesn't make it through winter to push out new growth, check the roots, and bases of those branches for rot. You'll know it when you see it, as well as you know a bad vegetable in your refrigerator. If that's what you find, improve that drainage or raise the bed before you replant this species.



There are others that need well-drained soil but may survive winter only to tell you in other ways that they need help. One red flag is stems that flop on species that should be sturdy, such as in yarrow (*Achillea*). Another telltale is root rot and stem dieback during the growing season (*Artemisia* species -- showing root rot and stem dieback, above -- and *Ajuga* are examples).

#### Designers bear down and draw before spring planting season

Winter is a great time to design, and a garden's look, economy and labor are much improved by thinking before buying. As the season turns, **capture your ideas on paper** before our enjoyable but undeniable spring madness takes hold.

One of the best things you can do when you plan a new bed or a new landscape is to bounce ideas off others. You can hire\* a designer or consultant. Search the phone directory and the Internet, and check local garden centers to see who offers design services.

When you work with a designer or consultant, especially one who doesn't come to your site but works from your photos, be prepared for back-and-forth to make the most of the effort. That means: Explain your situation and provide pictures. Then receive ideas, go home and think about or test the suggestions. Then go back with additional information and collaborate to revise the plan.

You are the person who has the most information about the site, its history and your desires but sometimes you won't know what the designer needs until you see the first suggestions. So don't feel like it's too much trouble or an imposition to go back for those revisions. A good designer knows that's part of the process and makes for a better product.

\*As an example, search "landscape associations southeast Michigan" and you would find www.landscape.org for Michigan Green Industry Association, which lists its members by geographic area and services offered. Another site that comes up for southeast Michigan gardeners is www.associationofprofessionalgardeners.org Always ask for and check references before you commit to work.

Do we do this? You bet. Here are notes and sketches from Janet's back-and-forth discussion with a landscape design student who attended one of her recent classes.

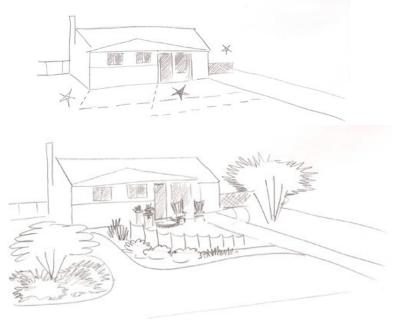


Photo ©2010 by DC



DC: I want to change our front landscaping. Redo the porch and walk, for one thing, to make them bigger. And give room to get around the car to the walk.

Janet: Do you need the porch roof? Can you lose that, so we can see the door? And it wouldn't be bad to put a hard surface over the whole triangle from porch corner to driveway. I see a three-point design, three places to stop the eye (stars, above, right). Then I could see this happening... (right)



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Photo ©2010 by DC

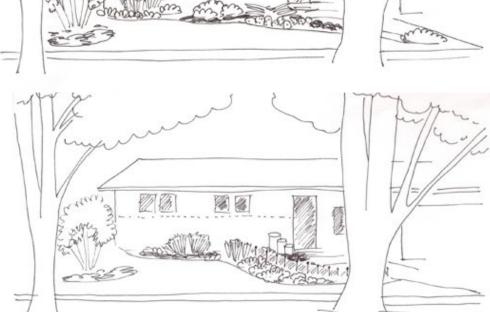
Back-and-forth round two:

DC: My picture might have been misleading. Does having these big trees in front, matter? And here's what I drew up based on things you said in class.



Janet: I like it, DC. The lines are clean and I like your plant combinations and open spaces. Not so garden-y as what I first sketched out, either. And you never asked me for garden-y, did you? I just made an unconscious assumption and went with what would please me. Shame on me!

I made some notes on your sketch: I'd probably go with dwarf white pine rather than mugo pine, for instance. You'll have to prune the pine to keep it to size, but that's only an every-two-years job. It's worth it for how much more tolerant of tree roots and shade the white pine is compared to the mugo.



#### The juniper under the upright

fragrant *Viburnum* (tree-like shrub) gives me pause in the half day shade of trees, too. Junipers tend to handle shade if they were established before a place became shady. They aren't too good at establishing in shade. If you plant juniper and at the end of a year a check of its roots doesn't show significant growth, think about *Pachysandra* or *Epimedium* there, instead.

variegated







Above left: Here's a dwarf white pine (*Pinus strobus nana*), and above right, the same plant ten years later. Compare it to the corner of the deck, to see how much it grew and understand what I mean about keeping it pruned not being a huge chore.

Steven took the white pine pictures at Hidden Lake Gardens in Tipton, Michigan. There is a very good dwarf conifer collection there. Now is a good time to go someplace like that to see if there are other plants you might like. Take a close look at the plant labels; many botanical gardens, including at Hidden Lake, indicate on labels the date the plant was planted. Assume they were small when planted, because that's the norm at botanical gardens. Then you can even estimate growth rate for each one as you look at it.

Read more by copying this URL to your browser: hiddenlakegardens.msu.edu/

Left: a standard dwarf mugo pine (*Pinus mugo mugo*) on its way to a 5-6 foot height.

It's been fun so far, DC. I'm ready for Round 3, so tell me what you think now.

## Peak pruning season's coming soon, so it's twig I.D. time

Time for woody plant identification. Here are three more common landscape shrubs' twigs. Knowing what you are growing is the key to growing it well and pruning it most effectively.

Identify your plants now, because we'll include our chart of what to prune when in the next issue. You won't be able to make full use of our guide unless you know what those bushy things are, out in your yard!

You can send us twigs or photos of twigs and we'll keep posting them here, with their names, right up to and through peak shrub pruning season. This week's set is on pages 10 and 11.

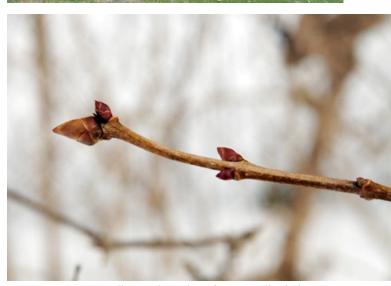
Here are twigs from dwarf burning bush (below, left) and its standard form (below, right: the full size or standard plant is 12-15' while dwarf *compacta* generally grows only 8 - 10' tall). A key trait are the "wings" on the twig -- those flanges running lengthwise between the buds. They gave the species its scientific name -- *Euonymus alata* means winged *Euonymus*. They are also a second difference between the standard and dwarf in this species -- the wings are more pronounced on the standard.







Bottom, right: Common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris* and its hybrids the French lilacs) has twigs (bottom left) that will tell you if they plan to bloom. This opposite-branched plant can have two fat flowering-shoot buds at each tip. This one has only one blooming-size bud there. The smaller bud will yield only a leafy shoot.





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

Old fashioned Snowmound spirea (*Spiraea x vanhouttei*) has warm brown, thin twigs with alternate branching and buds. This 8' x 8' species blooms in May from buds set last year. Like the lilac, if it must be kept small it is best pruned in the month after bloom, so you can see as much flower as possible this year plus allow the most flower buds to form for next year. However, it can be pruned any time without reducing bloom if you are removing dead wood or old, poorly budded branches.



Grow with me! This week I will:

Wish we could open our windows and air the house now in the spring breezes blowing around our friend Linda's South Carolina home! Still too cold here, so I'll bring in some lavender, sage or thyme clippings so their fragrant leaves and twigs will make the house smell better. In just a few weeks I'll be clipping those plants back hard anyway, and letting them grow back from stubs. So taking some branches now is no loss.

The leaves of scented plants never become oppressive as do certain flowers.

Roy Genders, in Scented Flora of the World

\*\*\*\*\*

Cut away any time to remove suckers from below the graft of fruit trees.

Unfortunately, some trees and some tree-graft combinations are simply prone to suckering. New shoots will develop and I will always need to do some clipping. Yet I can avoid facing an increasingly dense forest of suckers each year. One key to accomplishing that is to do my cutting before spring growth begins -- before budbreak.

Right now I can walk on beds without fear of compacting the soil too badly because it's not wet. If the ground's wet, I walk on bagged leaves or some other cushion. (You've seen in past issues that I sometimes use my snowshoes in the garden in spring.)

My goal will be to take basal suckers off right at their points of origin. Often, that means cutting below ground level, so I need a trowel as well as clippers for this job.

Suckers behave as most woody plants do when clipped during active growth in spring. That is, if they lose their tip they develop from lower buds at double time. You will soon see two and three shoots where there was just one. To curtail a sucker most effectively, cut the whole sucker away so you don't leave any lower buds. Do it while the plant's dormant, and the shoot is even less likely to be replaced so quickly.

Are there **alternatives** to this pruning? There are some chemicals developed to reproduce growth hormones that occur naturally in some plants. These can shorten or slow the elongation of shoots. Sucker Stopper® is one. I have no personal experience with it but my good friend, forester Dan Kurkowski (I miss him, Judy and Dan Sr.!) did use it in his work at the nursery and in the landscape and was pleased with it.

#### From that product's label directions, regarding root suckers:

Prune existing sprouts and apply SUCKER-STOPPER® RTU during the dormant season prior to green tip stage or during the summer pruning season when the new shoots are 6 to 12 inches in height. The later applications have been the most effective. On bearing trees do not treat suckers during bud swell, bloom or fruit set. This period is from the start of growth to 4 weeks after petal fall. Application during this time can result in excessive thinning.

Green thumbs up to going out for a walk when you hear chain saws in the neighborhood. We can't stop people from removing trees that don't please them but sometimes knowing what trees were removed helps us understand otherwise puzzling changes in our local environment. For instance, we began having trouble with plants in a client's garden one year — things that seemed to be drainage related. Yet we'd never had drainage issues there before. Then we looked up and realized a big elm had been removed two yards distant. Since one big tree can draw up a thousand gallons of water a day, losing that elm meant soil moisture in the area certainly did change. Air flow, sun, the absence of a given bird, the list of a tree's ripple effects goes on. Our best chain saw walks have been when a troubled tree was coming down, we happened upon the owner, chatted as we watched the arborists at work and were able to suggest replacement trees that could round out the neighborhood forest.

**Green thumbs down** to **relying solely on chemical repellents** to keep hungry animals away. Remember that you are conditioning the animals, teaching them that your garden's not a good place to be, that multiple deterrents are most effective and that Ma Nature sends you new animals every year. As reader Becky Schultz puts it so well: *I have set up a perimeter in my mind around our house. If the deer enter it and I see them, I run out screaming like a banshee. I have to train the yearlings every year, but this does seem to help.* 

We are the noble profession. We plant. The doctors, the lawyers, all the others, they want to come in from the Dark Side to where we are! When Bonnie and I move on to that next place and we're asked why we should be allowed into Heaven, I will say, "I planted noble trees."

Bonnie, she'll say "And I helped."

- Michael A. Dirr -

Gardening is restorative. It brings us back to the things we thought we had lost in childhood. It brings us back to our senses -- to the downy feel of the leaves of silver sage; to the perfume of jasmine and gardenias; to the taste of spearmint; to the sound of bamboo rustling in the sudden rush of wind before a storm; to the cool white beauty of a moonflower unfolding as dusk turns to night.

- Allen Lacy The Inviting Garden -

#### Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

A gardener who got carried away. Janet

Macunovich has been known to two generations of neighborhood children as "the lady at the flower house, the one with no lawn." Her lifelong interest in plants grew to a passion after she spent the summer of 1973 working in England, where she had the privilege of apprenticing to tenth-generation gardeners in a 300 year old garden. By 1981 the last of the lawn disappeared from her yard just as her hobby -- helping others in their gardens -- grew beyond its bounds into a

gardening business. Eventually her talent as a writer and speaker crossed with her experience in the garden to grew on as books (such as "Designing Your Gardens and Landscape" and "Caring for Perennials"), a weekly newspaper column, a radio talk show and a gardening school.

Horticultural photographer Steven Nikkila was a hobbyist with a great eye who went back to college for a photography degree once he ushered his own children into grade school. Needing an elective one semester and thinking to bring home good information for his wife's gardening business, he took a class in ornamental horticulture and found himself hooked. Soon the leaps and bounds he'd been recording as his children grew had rivals in files of leaf and ground. He went on to earn a degree in horticulture, while illustrating his wife's books and lending a hand digging gardens. He calls it, "A great combination," and says, "I love this job almost as much as the best one I ever had -raising my kids."

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

#### **Janet** and Steven?!

You bet. We took that 'big picture' look, the last time we talked about upcoming topics:

Janet: You know what. It started as my newspaper column but once we went to illustrating it...

Steven: ...we've worked together on every one.

Janet: I need to break the habit of saying *my* newsletter!

Steven: No, you don't. You do the writing for the weekly

stuff.

Janet: Yeah, but what "sells" it and what really lets

people see, are the photos.

Steven: And the drawings you do.

Janet: Yeah, those work, but not like color, and not like real life. I mean, think about those plant bug photos we were looking for. Remember?

Steven: Yeah. I still don't know where those went. I looked for an hour, then you said, 'never mind, stop looking, I'll just refer to an Extension bulletin.'

Janet: Right. But all the good bulletins had only black and white, remember? Even though we *knew* what that bug looks like, we had to look hard at those illustrations before we could say 'oh yeah, that's it.'

Steven: But to be *our* newsletter you'd have to change stuff. We've got enough to do.

Janet: Not all bad: I could change the format so I didn't have to find the © symbol so many times. Just once per page! Seriously, I should take a critical look at the templates and form letters I use, anyway. They'll be better, and I can change "I" to "we" and "my" to "our." Come on, can I make it Janet & Steven" from now on?

Steven: It would be neat... My mom would love it.

So there you have it. For Mom!

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

\*See March 20-21, April 3, April 20 and "Invite Janet or Steven" on page 17.

Sunday, March 7, noon - 1:30 p.m. *Lunch at the Chicago Flower Show*, Navy Pier, Chicago. If you're going to the show on Sunday (info at chicagoflower.com), come meet Janet in the hall by the seminar room doors and have lunch together. This is just for fun and just for whoever shows up. Janet's meeting two other pro gardeners there to talk shop and we figure the more, the merrier! If you miss the noon meeting time, check with the staff ushering people into the seminars -- Janet will leave word where the group went for lunch.

All seats filled; waiting list: Mondays, March 8 and March 22 in Rochester Hills, Michigan: Do it! Easy Beautiful Landscape Design, classes two and three of a related 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.

Tuesday, March 9, 1 - 4 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 air circulation within its canopy as a disease control measure. Livonia, Michigan. (West side of the Detroit metro area.) This is the season when orchardists work toward the classic goal: "That a robin should be able to fly through my apple tree." If you're interested in this work, email or call JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850. Include your phone number so we can call you with the date and tell you the location. This is a limited-space workshop.

Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. *The All-Dimension Garden*, hosted by the Lakes Area Garden Club and the Walled Lake Library. At the library, 1499 E. West Maple Road in Walled Lake, Michigan. (That's northwest of Detroit.) This talk's got lots of tips toward year-round interest and plants that go well together: small trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs that can be planted in groups or added to combinations you already grow. Free, but you must reserve a seat in advance by calling the library at 248-624-3772.

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. *Spring Groundwork*, hosted by the Owosso Garden Club, meeting in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 111 S. Shiawassee in Corunna, Michigan. (That's between Flint and Lansing.) A look at how your garden can make you happy in earliest spring and keep on glowing right through fall. Janet's talk and demonstration includes what to do in the garden today and throughout spring, refreshing the soil, planting early container gardens and making perfect places to showcase favorite plants. Free; just walk in.

Saturday, March 13, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Cascades Manor, Jackson, Michigan. (That's south of Lansing, west of Ann Arbor.) The Jackson County Master Gardeners present Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich in:

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 call the MSU Extension Master Gardener Coordinator for Jackson County about becoming a Master Gardener, or to look up a Jackson county Master Gardener and make a friend!)

A four-part Garden Renovation series with Janet at

the Cox Arboretum, 6733 Springboro Pike, Dayton, Ohio:

Monday, March 15, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

*Garden and Landscape Renovation*, a simple process for making changes to express yourself, do only as much as you can handle *and* maintain unity between new and old areas.

Monday, **March 29**, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

*Cutting Back the Rambunctious Garden*, for new gardeners who have plants in their garden growing bigger than they expected and for confirmed gardeners who must have it all — whether there's enough room or not. Basics and secrets to pruning hedges, shrubs and trees to shape them, keep them small or cut them back to start over.

Monday, April 12, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

*Making a Four-season Landscape*, how to reap four seasons of interest from your landscape. Choosing species and varieties carefully is only part of the answer, along with placing and maintaining plants and other garden features. Design steps and maintenance tips for those making their own four-season landscape

Monday, April 26, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

*Shade Gardens*: Critical steps for success in the shade. Plant selection, design, maintenance, being smart as you plant among tree roots, and treating the soil in ways so it serves not only the new plantings but established trees or shrubs on the site.

Students who complete all classes may submit their completed renovation plan worksheet to Janet for individual comments. \$40. To register: 937-434-9005 or copy this URL to your browser http://bit.ly/bde6Zq

Tuesday, March 16, Continuous, Crafty Color. 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. at the Millennium Garden Club meeting at Redeemer United Methodist Church, 13980 Shavey Road in Dewitt, Michigan: (North of Lansing.) Janet's plant suggestions and practical techniques toward a good looking, colorful garden. It's not just the plants that you use for neat form, interesting foliage, and long bloom, but how well you "tweak" it all to extend, delay, coax repeat bloom and "double up" to fill gaps. Open to the public. Tickets \$5 and it's recommended you buy them in advance. For more information or tickets, contact Sandy Lockwood at 517-669-8813 or Pat Molitor at 517-669-5654. Tickets also available at Twiggy's in downtown DeWitt.

Wednesday, **March 17**, *Saving Time and Money in Your Garden*. 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Northville Library, 212 W. Cady St. **in Northville, Michigan**. (Far west edge of the Detroit metro area.) Janet helps you reduce the work you do and money you spend in your garden. Free. Limited seating. To reserve your seat, call 248-349-3020.

Friday, March 19, Landscape Ideas. 4:00 p.m., repeated at 6 p.m. Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila share some of their favorite, most practical and most beautiful ideas for gardens and landscapes. At the Lansing Home & Garden Show, in the MSU Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane at Mt. Hope, East Lansing, Michigan. No fee for the talk, but you must pay admission to the show, \$8. For information and directions:

http://www.showspan.com/LHG/DatesTimesAdmission.aspx (hours and prices) http://www.showspan.com/LHG/Venue.aspx (directions)

Saturday and Sunday, **March 20 and March 21**, *Natural Gardening and the Wooded Lot* 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Sunday, at Hadley Hill Farm, 1344 South Hadley road **in Ortonville**, **Michigan**. (Southeast of Flint.)

In this two-day intensive workshop Janet Macunovich, Steven Nikkila and Celia Ryker help you develop a wooded lot in ways that edit Nature without upsetting its balance. In the classroom as well as out on a wooded demonstration site you'll learn about native trees, shrubs, vines, and perennial wildflowers, their advantages and how best to use them in your own spaces. You'll look into the legal, ethical and practical issues involved in turning space below trees into garden. The topics you will be guided through:

Native Trees and Shrubs of Great Lakes woodlands

Working with Your Woods: Assessing, modifying and designing wooded spaces Woodland Wildflowers

Register for the full two-day workshop or a single day. Every participant will be provided with a workbook which is both a collection of important facts from the workshop and a step by step guide for applying that information to a specific wooded lot. Those who participate in both days of the workshop may also register to submit their workbook plan to the instructors for written review and suggestions.

Two-day Natural Gardening and the Wooded Lot workshop \$195.00 Two-day workshop plus workbook review \$245.00\* Saturday only (basics and woody plants) \$115.00 Sunday only (design steps and wildflowers) \$115.00

\*Register by March 10 to have time to receive and complete a pre-class assignment important to your plan development.

See pages 21 - 24 for a detailed brochure with mail-in registration form. For questions or to register by phone, contact Janet (248-681-7850, JMaxGarden@aol.com) or Celia (248-627-2356, HadleyHillFarm@aol.com)

Sunday, March 21, Landscape Ideas. Noon. Steven Nikkila shares some practical and beautiful ideas for gardens and landscapes. At the Lansing Home & Garden Show, in the MSU Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane at Mt. Hope, East Lansing, Michigan. No fee for the talk, but you must pay admission to the show, \$8. For information and directions:

http://www.showspan.com/LHG/DatesTimesAdmission.aspx (hours and prices)

http://www.showspan.com/LHG/Venue.aspx (directions)

Tuesday, March 23, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., Saving Time and Money in the Garden. Janet's help for you to reduce the work you do and money you spend in your garden. 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

Saturday, **March 27** in **Champaign**, **Illinois** at the Master Gardeners' Conference, Steven Nikkila and Janet Macunovich present 50 Favorite Before-Afters. Janet and Steven's presentation on Saturday is part of a Friday and/or Saturday event with many great topics and speakers including author Rosalind Creasy on edible landscaping, PBS TV's Joe "The Gardener" Lamp'l on landscaping mistakes and an all-day landscape design workshop with landscape

architect Kaizad Iran. Saturday only, \$90 to the general public, \$80 to Master Gardeners; both days for \$120 to all. For more information and to register copy this URL to your browser https://webs.extension.uiuc.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=3779

#### Other dates and events coming up:

April 3, Detroit Zoo: Garden by Janet

April 3: Steven's in Macomb, MI for Master Gardener Training: Woody Ornamentals

April 8: Janet's in Chesterfield Twp., MI, The Ecological Gardener

**April 10**: Janet's in **Ubly**, **MI** (In MI's thumb): Huron County Master Gardeners' symposium

**April 12**: Janet's in **Dayton**, **OH** (see March 15)

April 13: Janet's in Madison, WI at Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Getting Ready for Spring

April 17: Janet's in Mt. Pleasant, MI (north of Lansing) at the Master Gardeners' conference

April 20: Steven's in West Branch, MI at the Ogemaw County Master Gardeners' conference

**April 20**: Janet's in **Hartland**, **MI** at the Cromaine District Library

April 22: Janet's in Gladwin, MI at a Master Gardeners' community educational event

**April 24**: Janet's in **Macomb**, **MI** for Master Gardener Training: *Flowers* 

**April 24**: Janet's and Steven in **Macomb**, **MI** at Ray Wiegand's Nursery

**April 26** in **Dayton, OH** (see March 15)

Details will be posted here soon. If you need information, email JMaxGarden@aol.com.

#### Invite Janet, Steven or their expert friends to your event.

We go where we're invited! That's taken us all over the country and then some for 20 years. We address many topics, drawing from our list of 100+ talks. We also continue to expand our horizons by developing new topics 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. **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.

Simply 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 ran a gardening school for 12 years, featuring experts who know their stuff in the garden as well as how to get their messages across in front of an audience. Janet and Steven are glad to help you themselves for presentation but also happy to connect you to experts they know or send you a list of people, topics and contact information. One of their expert friends, Celia Ryker (above, right), owner of Hadley Hill Farm and Gardens, conducts a workshop with Janet & Steven

(see March 20-21 entry on page 16). Running a farm takes energy and know-how and Celia has plenty of both. She designs gardens, and consults on wooded lot management and watershed issues based in part on her experience in tending wooded acreage on her Michigan farm as well as a Vermont family retreat. A get-it-done person who can communicate and inspire! Email JMaxGarden@aol.com or call 248-681-7850 for a speaker/topic list or to set up a talk, workshop or class.



## Time to garden your walls...

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

Any of Steven's images, such as this graceful fern frond or serene woodland perspective, can be made to hang on your wall. You may also request a sampler of images to consider, or a particular flower or type of scene. All it takes is an email to us at JMaxGarden@aol.com







Prices depend on your choices in format and size. For example:

An 8 x 10" image, matted in an 11 x 14.5" frame, \$48.00 A 36 x 48' image printed on museum-grade cloth\* \$215.00 \*Janet's favorite: "I can change our display by simply rolling up one photo tapestry, storing it and unrolling another!"

Email us at JMaxGarden@aol.com for more details, to request a customized photo sampler or to place an order.

## You asked for our advice "on paper". We wrote and sell these books plus CDs:

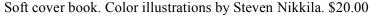
#### Designing Your Gardens and Landscape

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.





## **Asking About Asters CD.** A digital library of six years of

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 this one file.

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

#### Potting Up Perennials CD. New for 2010

A digital collection of 2009's *What's Coming Up*: 52 issues, over 750 pages with more than 150 articles, 500 images and 250 quick-look lists and reports. Includes a comprehensive index of this collection plus Janet's previously-released digital library, *Asking About Asters*. If you own both *Potting Up Perennials* and *Asking about Asters* you can search all the *What's Coming Up* newsletters plus six years of *Growing Concerns* columns and books from this new index.

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. \$15.00

Janet's complete digital library New for 2010

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



#### Janet and Steven give you: Trees. New for 2010\*

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

#### New for 2010\* 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 2010. Now they're collected in this set for your design library.





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 New for 2010\*

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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  Make checks payable to Janet Macunovich.

  Mail to 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328-3041

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We accept orders by mail with check or money order, and in-person orders any time you come to one of our educational events or handson gardening session.

# Janet Macunovich, Steven Nikkila and Celia Ryker present Natural Gardening and the Wooded Lot: Editing Nature without upsetting its balance

At Hadley Hill Farm, 1344 South Hadley Road, Ortonville Saturday, March 20 and Sunday, March 21, 2010

Study with expert practitioners to create harmony between a wooded property and your garden dreams. This two-day workshop gives you tools and helps you develop insights to transform a tree-filled space into a haven for wildflowers, wildlife and peaceful fun.

In the classroom as well as out on a wooded site you'll learn about native trees, shrubs, vines,



and perennial wildflowers, their advantages and how best to use them in your own spaces. You'll look into the legal, ethical and practical issues involved in turning space below trees into garden. The topics you will be guided through:

Native Trees and Shrubs of Great Lakes woodlands Working With Your Woods: Assessing, modifying and designing wooded spaces Woodland Wildflowers

Register for the full two-day workshop or a single day. Every participant will be provided with a workbook which is both a collection of important facts from the workshop and a step by step guide for applying that information to a specific wooded lot. Those who participate in both days of the workshop may also register to submit their workbook plan to the instructors for written review and suggestions.

Two-day workshop \$195.00 Two-day workshop plus workbook review \$245.00\* Saturday only (basics and woody plants) \$115.00 Sunday only (design steps and wildflowers) \$115.00

\*Register by March 10 so you will have time to receive and complete a pre-class assignment important to individual plan development.

## Natural Gardening and the Wooded Lot Topics and Program Schedule

#### Saturday, March 20

8:30: Welcome, introduction; refreshments

9:00 a.m. - noon: **Native Trees and Shrubs.** Horticulturist Steven Nikkila introduces you to dozens of great native trees and shrubs and helps you see what can come from adding or encouraging these plants in your woods or

wooded lot. You'll learn keys to identify woody plants and receive help in making an inventory of what's on your own lot now. Also covered: How to determine which native woody plants are suitable for your site, finding sources for specific plants, and tips for planting and tending these plants. Please dress for the weather as this session includes a plant identification walk outdoors.



noon - 2:00 p.m. **Lunch** (provided) and an "**In** *my* **woods**" **Q&A period** Janet Macunovich, Celia Ryker and Steven Nikkila conduct group discussion of individuals' projects. Includes an optional leg-stretch preview of the site used in Day Two instruction.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m: **Working With Your Woods, Part 1** Celia Ryker, Master Steward of Woodlands and Conservation, looks with you at what to expect from your woods or wooded lot, what advantages and

disadvantages may come from changing its make-up, as well as environmental and economic aspects of modifying the site. You'll be guided through assessment of the site's assets and liabilities and learn which information to gather to be able to produce a sound design. Please dress for the weather -- this session includes a tour of Ryker's wooded lot demonstration area.

## Sunday, March 21

8:30: Welcome, continental breakfast and "In my woods" Q&A period

#### 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: Working With Your Woods, Part 2

Celia Ryker shows you how to create a design from what you've considered and discovered about a wooded lot. Using the demonstration area on the farm and other specific sites as examples, Ryker walks you through steps to make a design that meets your goals.

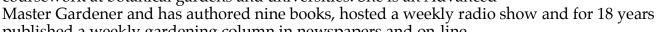
12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Lunch (provided)

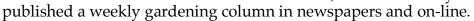
#### 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. Woodland Wildflowers

Designer Janet Macunovich works with you on materials and design techniques for the floor of your woodland garden. This session begins with the groundwork and general site aspects woodland plants need to prosper and how to determine if a particular wildflower will adapt to your garden. It outlines legal, ethical and practical aspects of obtaining wild species and planting the site. Then it ties it all together in a guide for designing beautiful, natural, simply tended wooded gardens.

## **Natural Gardening and the Wooded Lot Instructors:**

**Janet Macunovich** is a professional gardener and instructor recognized for her down-to-earth style and taking the mystery out of gardening and design. Macunovich has developed and presented seminars and workshops to meet the needs of all types of people in community, professional and horticultural organizations throughout North America. Through her garden design and maintenance firm, Perennial Favorites, she has designed and tended hundreds of gardens in several States since 1984. Her education includes extensive coursework at botanical gardens and universities. She is an Advanced







Steven Nikkila is a horticulturist and photographer who has helped gardeners see and manage their gardens since 1983 as an instructor of classes on all aspects of landscape plant selection, planting and care. His photos have illustrated over a dozen gardening books and hundreds of how-to articles. His presentations have been enthusiastically received by Master Gardeners in Midwest and Northeast States, members of professional organizations such as the Perennial Plant Association and Michigan Nursery Association,

landscapers, homeowners in community groups and clubs, and students at institutions such as the Michigan School of Gardening, Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Chicago Botanic Garden. He has planted and managed landscapes for clients since 1983. Nikkila received his degree in

Landscape Technology from Oakland Community College and holds a Certificate of Gardening Fine Arts from The Michigan School of Gardening.

Celia Ryker owns Hadley Hill Farm and Gardens, which offers consulting, design and garden care. Celia grew up among her mothers' flower- and vegetable beds but did not realize the depth of her gardening connection until injuries caused her to retire from training, teaching and showing horses. In gardening she found a passion that matched her enthusiasm for the equine world. She became an avid gardener, an advocate in her community for ecologically sound landscape management, and received certification from Michigan State University as an Advanced Master Gardener, Woodland Steward and Conservation Steward. She also earned certificates in Gardening Fine Arts and Landscape and Garden Design from the Michigan School of Gardening. She has instructed courses in Michigan and Vermont on wooded lot management, gardening for wildlife, design and conservation topics. She is a member of the



Association of Professional Gardeners and the Ecological Landscapers Association.

Registration form
Name
Mailing address
Email address or phone number

I would like to attend the workshop Natural Gardening and the Wooded Lot

On (check one)
\_\_ the complete workshop on March 20 and 21, 2010

\_\_ only the session on March 20, 2010

\_\_ only the session on March 21, 2010

At Hadley Hill Farm, 1344 S. Hadley Rd., Ortonville, MI



I've enclosed my registration fee (check or money order; sorry, credit cards are not accepted) for:

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\$115 (for either Saturday or Sunday)

\_\_\_ \$245 (for the complete workshop plus a personal review and suggestions from the instructors regarding your wooded lot plan; mailed or emailed to you after the workshop.)

Make check payable to Janet Macunovich

*Lunch is provided.* If you have dietary restrictions (vegetarian, vegan, etc.), please let us know about them:

Please send your registration fee and this form to Janet Macunovich, 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328.

You will receive confirmation of your registration plus an information-gathering list to help you come prepared to apply workshop steps directly to your own property.

If you have any questions before the workshop, please call Janet Macunovich 248-681-7850 JMaxGarden@aol.com or Celia Ryker 248-627-2356, HadleyHillFarm@aol.com