

What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns
Issue #171, January 18, 2012

In this issue

Flat top fir fit to mend, pages 2 - 3
Yule protection for upfront maple, pages 3- 4
Close focus, muddy fingered stumpers, pages 4 - 5
Burly kind of scrabbling, page 5
Mentors: Who we want to be when, page 6
Popcorn plants fall flat in greenhouse, page 7
Magnolia mania, page 7
We prune, assess, plan and design, pages 8 - 9
45mph creepy weepies, pages 9 - 10
Up to peat alternatives, down to squirrels, page 10
Who are Janet & Steven? How to contact them
or invite them to your town, pages 10 - 11
Where to catch Janet & Steven all this year, pages 11 - 17
Art for your walls, page 18
Books, magazines and CDs, pages 19 - 20

Right: Seen one of these beauties along the road, and wondered what it is?
Your link to an answer is on page 10 in our 45mph garden.



It's fun, photos and great info. Come see <http://www.GardenAtoZ.com>

**Remember when we covered here *just what*
you were wondering about that day?**



*Wow!!! Great work you
guys. Can't believe you
have put all this great
stuff on one site.*

- Nick & Rosemarie -

Now, over 20 years of those happy coincidences await your click
on our website. 800 articles, 1,000 photos... and we're still compiling.
Take a look: <http://www.GardenAtoZ.com>

Fir to go to regain tip top shape

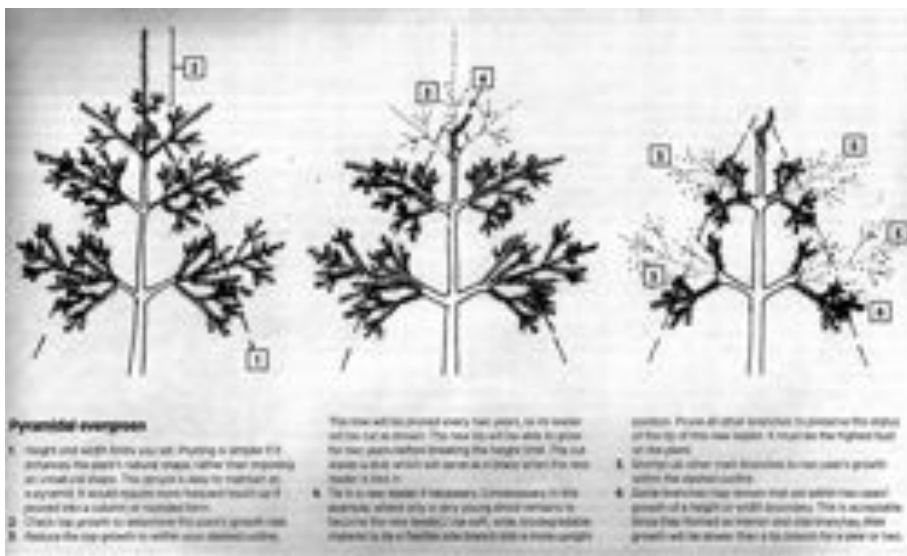
1) A tree trimming crew is coming to prune the fir in my back yard, which **lost its top to borers**. I'm giving the crew pictures from your *Trees* magazine, about how to establish anew leader, to give the tree a new pointy tip rather than a flat top. We did that at your workshop but I have to give the crew the picture because I can't go up on the ladder to show them how, or I don't think they will let me anyway.

2) Well, the top is off my spruce, and wow, can you see the holes made by the borer! It ended up with **one side shoot that might become the new leader**. The tree company wanted to trim it off with the pole pruner but I said NO.

Will that branch take over eventually? It looks funny at this time, but so what. – M.M. –

Great photos, M.M. -- they really tell the tale.

We think **that tip will turn up and turn into a good new leader**. It could have been started on its way with some temporary support to train it upright but we think you'll see it turn vertical **so quickly** in spring it'll make your eyes pop.



Above: Our diagram from *Trees*, magazine,* a collection of our best articles to help you choose, plant and care for trees.

*All of our work, including the contents of *Trees* magazine**, will be available on <http://www.GardenAtoZ.com>. We have posted over 800 articles there so far, an estimated 25% of our archives. Each remaining piece is important to us as a building block in our library, essential because we have adhered for over 20 years to a "no repeat" policy as we write. However, before we post the magazines we're posting items which are not available elsewhere. In the interim, please purchase a magazine to keep this operation moving forward. Pages 19-20 here, or the Market on our website. (<http://www.gardenatoz.com/market/>)

**<http://www.gardenatoz.com/market/browse-books-magazines-cds/a-look-inside-trees/>



Borers killed it, so the fir's tip comes off. It'll shape back up.
Photos ©2011 Margot McCormack



Firs and spruces are pretty good at recovering from borer damage. See it for yourself, in the brand new 45 mph garden article* on our website.

* <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/the-45mph-garden/tip-off-to-odd-spruce/>



Above: All the side branches look to be well below the new tip's level. Good! Otherwise, there would be work for your pole pruner. Photo ©2011 Margot McCormack

Help height and gravity make a new tip

The highest point on a tree begins growing first in spring and is able to regulate growth in cells below so that none match its speed or overall extension. This is called apical dominance and it's at work in any plant but particularly strong in fir and spruce. It's the force that keeps those pyramidal evergreens in shape. It will be in effect on this tree in spring.

A gardener can encourage and direct this natural re-shaping by giving an advantage to a particular branch:

Regard M.M.'s fir top at left as in the diagram on page 2. You could strap a cane to the trunk to extend it vertically. Tie the chosen limb to that cane to keep the growing tip in a higher plane than any others. Tie loosely and use cotton cord as you strap the cane and train the branch, so that year's growth won't be girdled and ties will rot away before causing trouble.

In addition, shorten competing or potentially competing leaders. If a tip of a side branch is in or very near the plane of the selected tip, it can become a co-dominant leader. Multiple tops will develop. Those tops will have a higher risk of splitting away from each other as weight builds above their points of attachment to the trunk. They are also likely to deform the tree's shape.

Big mistake, big lesson: Understory tree + upfront position = down low damage

Since **mistakes are learning experiences**, our big blunders could be viewed as great treasures. If only we didn't have to pay the price!

I didn't know it was a mistake but I think my landscaper should have known not to put thin barked understory trees like Japanese maple and flowering dogwood in places where their trunks would be exposed to the worst, west and south sun in winter. Damage was already done by the time you pointed out the problem.

Somewhere recently I read an article about protecting Japanese maples from freeze/thaw in winter. I think by one of you two, perhaps in Michigan Gardener, or in one of your newsletters? Anyway, it gave recommendations and examples and I was surprised it didn't mention or show propping a Christmas tree top against the south side of the maple trunk.

This is what you suggested I do about three years ago. It seems to be helping. I head out with my saw and grab a top before the composting truck gets it. - B.S. -

So right! The last time we wrote about this** we did completely forget that simplest of tactics in favor of "dressing up" the tree. Now your photo in our latest article*** helps keep our website library complete! ** <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/ensemble-weekly-editions/late-fall/what%27s-up-68-looper-control.-pests.-gall.-guard-maple/> *** <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/big-mistake.-big-lesson/upfront-maple/>

Right: Here's B.S.'s maple with its Christmas tree shield. B.S., "also put one at the base of my dogwood which (has) the same exposure, and bark damage low on the trunk. It also seems to be doing well now." Photo 2011 B.S. c/o this site

Below: Whatzzat and whyizzit?! Too close to the eye, too near the lens to be identifiable. Answer's at

<http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/stumper-whyizzit-that/glasses-on-and-off/>



Stumper #1: Eyes worst when hands dirtiest

Some problems have no solution. We can only share the pain and ease it a bit with laughter. For instance:

Whyizzit that our hands are always muddy when we're confronted with a glasses on - glasses off situation?

We see something that looks so familiar, and feel sure we'll recognize it and its importance once we bring it into focus. Just then, we muddy our corrective lens!

Stumper #2: Right in our face yet we need to be told to look!

Whyizzit that what's clearest and closest is so easy to overlook?

Current example:

I would like to take close-up pictures of flowers. Right now I have a small Coolpix digital camera and I know I need a bigger one to take better pictures but I don't know what to buy. I don't want to spend a whole lot of money. Can I get a fairly good camera for 2-\$300? If so, what do you suggest? -- M. S. -

Good question and one we'd like to know how others answer, too! So we've posted it* on our Forum. (Once you create your free membership there, you can elect to get a buzz from our computer every time there's new information posted there in reply.)

* <http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?topic/45-camera-for-flower-close-ups/>

Sure, some cameras with certain lenses might do more for you but you may want to give your current camera a second chance. Janet had her Coolpix for two years before realizing she could hold the zoom button down and go to macro.



Janet says, "I knew to press that wide (W) and tight (T) toggle to zoom. But I never in the first years kept my finger on that button long enough to realize the yellow bar would go past the vertical white line, closer to the T which are Macro settings. The day I noticed it I laughed about being so impatient all that time. It's only a spit second pause the yellow bar makes, as if to ask, 'Are you sure you want to go *that* close?' I just never gave the camera the chance. Now I know it and I can shoot very close."

If the camera won't focus in Macro, move the camera itself further from your subject, because it operates within a certain focal

distance. Or try angling for a plainer background, since the camera seems to want to focus on the highest contrast item, too. Watch for the camera to give you the green light and show you your subject in focus.

And the wrap-up Janet and M.S. are *both* laughing about:

Oh! I see! And now, here's something more to laugh at -- I never noticed the green light before! - M. S. -

Scrabbling in the garden: Give burl a twirl

<http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/scrabbling-in-the-garden/>

We gardeners earn admiring murmurs when we display our garden's produce. We could stir up a bit of that admiration by tossing a nifty horticultural term or two on the table during the next Scrabble game. For instance:

Burl: noun; BUHRL; A rounded knotty growth on a tree, sometimes created as the tree grows over damage caused by fungi, insects or mites. Prized by carvers as very hard wood with interesting character when polished.

*Have you noticed that tree in the woods with the **burl** on its trunk that looks like a face?*



Alone in the Garden? Never! Our mentors will always be with us:

Most of us had a **parent, neighbor or other veteran gardener** to guide us through our first attempts to grow. The **gardening advice they gave us** comes in acts even more than words. We studied catalogs this weekend and hear about this year's light table set up while visiting our mentor, Burdette Chapman (right). She continues to seek new things to grow in her cutting garden and advice for starting seeds even though she's trialed and sprouted in farm-size quantity for... well, many decades.



Bob Biggs, described below by his daughter Bobbi Kuschel, seems to be leading in that same direction: Keep on reaching, keep on growing, don't let others' limits confine you.



My Dad, Bob Biggs, owned a nursery and grew plants all his life. He and my mom moved into a big retirement community in April. My dad wasted no time in getting green things going and growing. He got the community management to pay for and build raised beds for veggies which he cared for.

Funny, I have mentioned the newspaper mulch thing to him many times in the last 20+ years but he didn't really pick up on it until he found a new friend, Pat Lanza, who wrote a book about it. Now he thinks it's the best thing since sliced bread. He shredded paper and used it as a top mulch much to his neighbors chagrin in Florida. It worked though. :-)

He is in the process of having lots of shelves built in the little plant room at the retirement community and also having lights installed on chains for seed starting. He also spoke to the Brighton Garden Club on Bonsai a month or so ago. They even brought the meeting to him. He is consulting with the current chef to build a kitchen garden in a mostly vacant courtyard next to the kitchen. The beautiful 3 story atrium there had all artificial plants. That is changing little by little. He will always be a mentor and gardener. Fellow residents call him Gardener Bob. He's making lemonade out of lemons, so to speak.

Above: Bob Biggs, "retired" but producing for his community. Read all about it in the Livingston Press & Argus, 7/26/11 issue, pages 12-13 of the Experience section at

http://livingstoncounty.mi.newsmemory.com/default.php?pSetup=livingstoncounty_experience

Newspaper clipping courtesy of the Livingston Press & Argus 2011

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

So much goes on in email exchanges between newsletters! We have always wished we could include it all. Now we can, if you send your questions our way by posting them on our Forum! Here are excerpts from this week's topics:

Popcorn plant poops out in production

I work at a greenhouse and we are having problems growing Popcorn Plant from cuttings. Do you have any info? The cuttings look droopy. Maybe too much misting or not enough, not hot enough or too hot... Looking for suggestions. - D.D. -

We know *Cassia didymobotrya* as popcorn plant or peanut butter senna, one of those perennials we in zone 5 must grow as an annual, or bring into a cool greenhouse for the winter because it can't take any freezing. We don't know how it behaves as it strikes roots from cuttings, but were glad to look into it for you.

Meanwhile, we'll post your question on our Forum* to see what others there can tell you -- two Moderators have already contributed their thoughts!

* <http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?/topic/58-popcorn-plant-cassia-from-cuttings/>



Popcorn plant (*Cassia didymobotrya*) puts on an impressive late summer show. Here it is at the equally impressive Kent County Michigan State University Extension aster Gardener gardens.



Saw many magnolias, want more

...on your website... interested to see there are so many other hardy magnolias, beyond the saucer magnolia and star magnolia. Wishing for more photos! - C.P. -

Us, too! We have posted more since we published that article (*Many Magnolias***). We'll keep looking for others but we're finding gaps in our catalogue system, regarding which magnolia occupies a given photo. Could be that our failure to capture

specific names is related to the trees' bloom time -- during the busiest weeks of our gardening season. If we don't sort out the pics we currently have, we'll be more careful about recording new shots this year, and post more, afterward.

We think that's one of the best aspects of reporting via website -- that we can keep updating what we've already written, rather than developing a different angle to create a new item.

Above: Now *that's* a big magnolia flower! See and read more about *Magnolia* options the link below.

** <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/tip-cuttings/many-magnolias/>

This week in our garden

Grow with us! This week:

Prune! We're jumping on a thaw to do a *Garden By Janet & Steven* trim job for a Japanese maple in Troy. Its gardener called us in because, "I have already moved the sidewalk once rather than resize the tree but I really would rather not do it again." Photos will be at GardenAtoZ.com in *Aiming for Answers*, since feedback tells us that real-life photos*, before-after, are a hit that "Give me courage to cut!" * <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up/aiming-for-answers-hit-or-miss/courage-to-cut-precious-maple/>



Left: What's with the string-tied Japanese maple branches? We're considering a drastic cut, looking at "what if that's gone?" More on the website - follow the link above.

Notice and evaluate trees' and shrubs' contributions to the landscape and decide what to do. When limbs are bare, plants' structure and relative sizes are so much more apparent.

It's good to talk to others about what you see, and there's time now. Talk to who? How about us, and others like us? Lots of experienced gardeners and Moderators at our Forum!

What you need to do is to help us see, and our Forum is a good place to do that. Post photos and a summary of the situation you're working on.** There, we can see your photos and discuss situations where all we do together might also help others.

** <http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?/topic/15-winter-thaws-great-time-to-prune/-entry141>

Right: B.S. sent us photos, now on the Forum. She snapped what stands out in her lakeside landscape in order to ask, "about pruning a Japanese maple to keep it small and give it better shape. (There are) four weeping red Japanese maples. ...the one closest to the lake ...was obviously planted too close to the evergreen, 8 to 15 years ago. Also another evergreen tree (spruce?) is getting too large in girth... could it be reduced?"

Photo ©2012 B.S. c/o Steven Nikkila

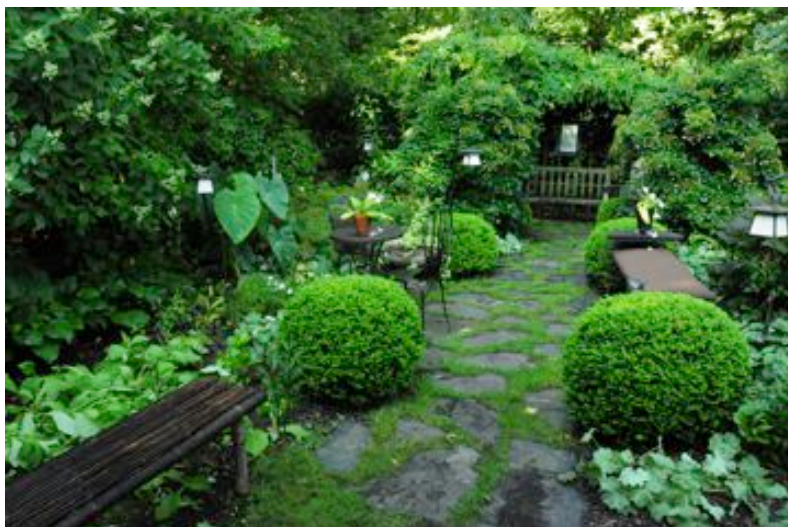
Plan, with an eye toward keeping our New Year's resolutions. Number 5: Resolved, we shall find ways to use dependable "usual" plants in unusual ways. So much better than saddling anyone (including ourselves!) with the extra work of finding and learning to care for exotic things.





Some of our most satisfying designs simply give a twist to normal plants. We picked this yew for its fanned branches, planted it and pruned out what it wouldn't need in its new role as a flat wall shrub. Almost 20 years later, this ordinary plant still gets extraordinary notice from passersby, who ask, "Is that just a yew?!" This is before and after its annual pruning (including the annual rescue from encroaching Boston ivy). Yup, we prune it just once a year in August or during a winter thaw.

Right: Number 6 resolution is to leave room for people in the design. More on that in issue 173. For now, just wanted to say that setting a thing up as a target does serve to keep it in mind. That helps us notice aspects of a scene we might otherwise miss, and realize why great designs like this work. Is room for people, important here? Just try to imagine this space without that destination alcove bench! (This is an area managed by one of our Forum Moderators, professional gardener Dawn Trainor.)* <http://www.gardenatoz.com/forum/moderated-by-experts/>



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 caught a gardener-driver's eye and raised questions this week.

From L.M., " trees... in Palo Alto, California. ...indeed a break from the usual foundation plantings ...trees with a great deal of character. They remind me of the Ents in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*."



Photo ©2011 L.M. c/o Steven Nikkila

Dennis Groh** (past president of American Conifer Society) says those are weeping sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum* 'Pendulum'), and they're used extensively in Oregon, too.

** <http://www.gardenatoz.com/forum/moderated-by-experts/dennis-groh/>

He also sends this link* to information about those plants, from the web-catalog of one of the biggest growers in the country. (A wholesale operation, no use seeking direct retail sales.)

*<http://www.monrovia.com/plant-catalog/plants/2088/weeping-giant-sequoia.php>

About that Page One picture: Our www.GardenAtoZ.com 45 mph coverage** features not only these weeping sequoias but spin-offs such as the Alaska falsecypress (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) that headlines this issue. *In addition* this week's website news department, What's Up, includes a second 45mph eye-catcher -- flat-topped spruces that lost their heads.

** <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/the-45mph-garden/tip-off-to-odd-spruce/>

Green thumbs up to seeking alternatives to peat in potting mixes, following a gentle prompt by R.H. that caused us to see we've missed chances to exercise the caution we urged in articles years ago. Go to www.gardenatoz.com in the Green Thumbs*** department of *What's Up* and the Forum# to get both the past and current news in this area. *** <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/green-thumbs-up-green-thumbs-down/for-peat-sake/>

Green thumbs down to squirrels. Grrrr. Bad enough these hyperactive rascals chew and scrape new trees, leaving lifelong scars. This winter a troupe of five (siblings? Quite a tight and organized gang, at any rate) have done what no other squirrel in 20 years managed -- to get their seed-shoveling paws into our counter weighted Hilarious feeder.



<http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?/topic/47-looking-for-peat-less-potting-mix/>

Please note that everyone can read throughout the Forum but only those who "Create (a free) Account" by clicking in the Forum's upper right corner, can post questions, answers or comments. Excuse this extra step. We have no other way to handle bad actors than to have an email address to associate with unwanted ads for pharmaceuticals (and worse) -- an address we can then ban. We do not use Forum members or subscribers addresses for anything except contacts you have requested, nor do we share our list with anyone.

Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

An eternal student of gardening, Janet Macunovich has embraced the perspectives of Thomas Jefferson, 'an old man but a young gardener' and philosopher-garden writer Allen Lacy who can 'spend an entire lifetime in one corner of one garden and still not know all that's going on there'. She aims to keep studying all her life, in classrooms and in gardens. "It's such a privilege to work in other peoples' gardens," says Macunovich, "where the same plants I grow in my yard show me faces I wouldn't see otherwise. Some years I work in 100 gardens and don't see the same thing twice. To observe, research and experiment, then develop my understanding even further by writing it down for others, it's all better than gold.

An instructor who finds ways to reach every student. Horticultural photographer Steven Nikkila earned his degree in Landscape Technology from Oakland Community College in 1989. Since then he's helped thousands of people learn about photography, plants and gardens at gardening conferences, professional plant societies' symposia, community education organizations and botanical gardens. He also served as a senior instructor for The Michigan

School of Gardening from 1996 to 2008. "I think one of the most important things about both teaching and photography is the angle you take. Everything has to make sense and be useful to the particular audience. When a Boy Scout troop asked me to help them with tree I.D. and photography, I used essentially the same materials I'd put together for the Master Gardener program and an Extension Educators' workshop. But it was a whole different class once I tailored it for the Scouts' perspective."

Email questions to Janet or Steven at info@GardenAtoZ.com or call 248-681-7850.

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

We go where we're invited! That's taken us all over the country and then some over the past 20 years. We address many topics, drawing from our list of **100+ talks**. We also continue **to meet groups' needs** and expand our horizons 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 topics or get a referral. **info@GardenAtoZ.com or 248-681-7850**. Our calendars fill about a year in advance for spring weekends, and six months ahead for most other times. So give us some lead time. Then we can meet you in *your* garden.



Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila have been digging, shooting and teaching how-to for 22 years. They began producing conferences in the early '90s and then ran a gardening school for 12 years, featuring expert instructors who knew their stuff in the garden as well as knowing how to get their messages across in front of a group. Above, Steven with our good friend and fellow instructor Deb Hall (see February 9 listing). Janet and Steven 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.

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

*See "Invite Janet or Steven" (above), and the February 9 listing on page 12.

Tuesday, January 24, Troy, Michigan, See *Garden by Janet & Steven* on page 16

Saturday, January 28, 2012, Janet & Steven give you design help in ***Continuous Color in the Landscape*** and share ideas in ***50 Favorite Gardens, Before-After*** at ***A Winter Day in the Garden***. This is a conference sponsored for all gardeners by the Crawford County, Illinois Master Gardeners, in **Robinson, Illinois** at Lincoln Trail College. For registration information, contact hdennis@illinois.edu or 618-546-1549.

Thursday, February 2, 2012, Steven helps you employ *8 Months of Color* in your landscape designs. This is a talk geared for professional gardeners and landscapers who are patrons of Ray Wiegand's Nursery Wholesale Department, 47747 Romeo Plank Road north of 21 Mile Road, **Macomb, Michigan**. To register, call 586-286-3658.

Saturday February 4, 2012, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The conclusion of the 21st annual *Winter Seminar Series* offered by **The Detroit Garden Center** (DGC) at Historic Trinity Church near Detroit's famous Eastern Market. Janet wraps up three great weeks with a *Propagation Workshop*. You pay a pittance for a great deal of fun and learning, thanks to generous educational outreach by the DGC. For more information or to reserve a seat for one or all three, contact the DGC at 313-259-6363 or detroitgardenctr@yahoo.com

Top right: Gardeners in groups put a new knowledge to the hands-on test.

Lower right: What a grand place to learn about gardening! Lots of room to practice design techniques and also plenty of comfortable chairs. What wonderful people gather there!

That's why we've been meeting on winter Saturdays for 21 years now. Join us! Call or email the Detroit Garden Center to reserve your seat! 313-259-6363 www.detroitgardenctr@yahoo.com



Sunday, February 5, Taylor, Michigan, See *Tool Cleaning* on page 17.

Wednesday, February 8, Hartland, Michigan, See *Tool Cleaning* on page 17

Thursday, February 9, 2012, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. hear our friend **Deb Hall**, certified arborist, columnist and owner of the garden service Twigz. Deb will explain how to do ingenious and beautiful things with *Found Art for the Garden*. This talk is sponsored by The Shelby Gardeners Club at their regular meeting. The public is welcome. At the Burgess-Shadbush Nature Center, 4101 River Bends Drive off Ryan Road south of 22 Mile Road in **Shelby Township, Michigan**. For more information call club president Karen McCuen: 586-786-0816.

I love your Garden A to Z website!!! It clearly shows a great deal of thought, time, and effort to make it so comprehensive and useable.

- Kerry Holley -

Thursdays, February 9, February 16 and March 1, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Janet leads *Rev up the Veg!*, a three-part series for eco-friendly gardeners whose aim is for their best year ever of growing edible plants. Hosted by the Beverly Hills Community Gardeners.

February 9, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. It's *Learn from Last Year*: The thinking gardener's review of last year's successes and challenges. What was best about last year and can we make it happen again? What were the problems and what might we do about them this year?

February 16, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. *Dreams and Visions* An in-depth look at tried-and-true methods plus new twists for growing specific plants. We discuss old standards as well as new varieties.

March 1, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. *Countdown to Get Growing* This session starts at step one and goes through all the basics of growing edibles. It's an essential "what to do first, and next, this year." It's great for anyone brand new to gardening, with plenty of tips for the experienced grower, too.

All sessions meet in the lower level social hall, **Beverly Hills, Michigan**, United Methodist Church, 2000 West Thirteen Mile Road, on the northeast corner of Evergreen Road and Thirteen Mile Road.

The public is welcome but you must reserve a seat. To do so, contact Matt Roman at msroman6@gmail.com.

Sunday, February 19, Janet & Steven in **Taylor, Michigan**. See *Garden by Janet &...* on page 16.

Tuesday, February 21, Pewaukee, Wisconsin, Janet's explaining *Maintaining the Mixed Border* and how to make winning *Perennial Combinations*, at the *Midwest Perennial Conference* for green industry professionals. If you're a Milwaukee-area pro you know this annual educational event hosted by Shady Acres Perennial Nursery and W. & E. Radtke Inc. or can call 262-253-1412 for registration information.

Sunday, February 26, Janet & Steven in **Monroe, Michigan**. See *Tool Cleaning and...* on page 17.

Tuesday, February 28, 7:00 p.m., Janet helps you *Save Time and Money on Yardwork*. At the Howell Carnegie District Library, 314 W. Grand River in **Howell, Michigan**. Free. To reserve a seat call 517-546-0720.

Thursday, March 1, Steven in **Wayne, Michigan**. See *Tool Cleaning and...* on page 17

Sunday, March 4, Janet & Steven in **Macomb, Michigan**. See *Tool Cleaning and...* on page 17.

Monday, March 5, 7:00 p.m., in **Northville, Michigan**, Janet helps you plan and complete a *Garden- or Landscape Renovation*. At the Northville Senior Center, 303 W. Main Street, hosted by the Northville Public Library. Free. Call the library to reserve a seat: 248-349-3020.

Saturday, March 10, in **Grand Haven, Michigan**, Janet's just part of the all-day line-up that is the West Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association's March Garden Day. She'll contribute design tips and practical maintenance techniques toward *Continuous Color in the Landscape*, and help you see how you can tweak or critique a garden design if you're aware of *What Your Garden Says About You*. \$45 in advance, \$50 at the door. For more information call 616-847-8955. To download a registration form with complete program information: <http://www.wmnl.com/html/gardenday.html>

Tuesday, March 13, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. in **Walled Lake, Michigan**, Janet's speaking at the Walled Lake library on Maple Road, hosted by the Lakes Area Gardeners. The topic is ***Doubling Up in the Perennial Garden*** which is a look at ways to fill the spaces that appear as perennials peak, then fade away throughout the growing season. Time and registration information will be posted here, or you can contact Linda at 248 684 5049 or lindagardengal@aol.com.

Saturday, March 17, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in **Norwalk, Ohio**, Janet & Steven conduct a hands-on design workshop, hosted by the Huron County Master Gardeners. The topic is ***Persuading Perennials to Delight us for all Four Seasons***. Seating available now to Ohio State Master Gardeners, and to all gardeners after February 17. At the Norwalk High School's Fisher-Titus Learning Center. More information at huron.osu.edu, where you can click on the "Persuading Perennials" story to find a link for registration.

Monday, March 19, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in **Pontiac, Michigan**, the Pontiac Garden Club hosts Janet at their meeting, where the topic will be garden folklore and fun in ***What the Groundhog Won't Tell***. The public is welcome to this meeting in the Creative Arts Center at the corner of Lawrence and Williams streets in Pontiac. Contact Lenora at Pondlady19@comcast.net or 248-673-2805 to reserve a seat.

Sunday, March 25, noon - 2:00 p.m., Janet's predicting ***Gardens of the Future*** and prescribing ***Perennial Combinations*** for your garden in the Garden Day Expo at **Saginaw Valley State University, Michigan**. Hosted by the Saginaw Valley Nursery Association at the Home & Lifestyle Show at the University's Ryder Center. Between Saginaw and Bay City, Michigan. \$5 at the door. More information about the event will be posted at <http://www.svnla.org/gardenday.cfm> (Also, look for the \$1 off coupon at the Home Builder Association website, hbas.org).

Monday, March 26, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Janet and Steven are at the Waterford Township Library in the township campus 5168 Civic Center Drive, **Waterford, Michigan**. The topic is ***Beginning Green***, which helps both beginner and veteran gardeners take stock in spring to begin a garden or begin a year in an ecologically friendly way. Free. Call the library's Adult Services at 248-674-4831 to reserve a seat.

Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., at the Bloomfield Township Library, **Bloomfield, Michigan** Janet helps you develop ***Great Plants and Combinations*** for your landscape. Corner of Lone Pine Road and Telegraph Road. Free. Call the library at 248-642-5800 to reserve a seat.

Saturday, March 31, Steven's the keynote speaker at the Huron County, Michigan Master Gardeners' "Spring into Gardening Day", in **Udly, Michigan**. Start the day with ***Great Plants and Combinations***, enjoy his lunchtime program as well (***The Gardener as 21st Century Shaman***) and there are more classes during the day. More information and registration will be posted at http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/default.cfm?pageset_id=27408&page_id=44700&msue_portal_id=25643 or contact Carol Holtrop at 989-553-2992 or orholtropc@gmail.com.

Tuesday, April 3, Janet's speaking at an evening event for gardeners in and near **Hillsdale, Michigan**. Hosted by the Hillsdale Garden Club. Details to follow.

Monday, April 9, Janet & Steven in **Lathrup Village, Michigan**. See *Tool Cleaning...* on page 17.

Wednesday, April 11, Janet's speaking at the library in **Royal Oak, Michigan**. Details to follow.

Saturday, April 14, Janet's part of the Putnam County Master Gardeners' Spring into Gardening Day, in **Kalida, Ohio**. Janet's topics in this all-day event are *Thank You Great Grand-folks* and *Gardens of the Future* describing a two-way look at our gardening roots and expectations. It's all about how history and our forebears have shaped our gardens today and what we should carry forward from here as we shape the gardens of tomorrow. Registration information to follow.

Saturday, April 21, Janet and Steven are conducting their workshop *All the Best Sense in a Garden*, for those who want to explore the non-visual aspects of a garden and enhance a garden's sound, scent, feel and taste. At the Inn at the Rustic Gate in **Big Rapids, Michigan**. Details to follow at www.innattherusticgate.com or by calling 900-319-5867.

Sunday, April 22, Janet's presentation is part of Plymouth Nursery's spring celebration in **Plymouth, Michigan**. Details to follow at Plymouth Nursery, 734-453-5500 or <http://plymouthnursery.net/>.

Wednesday, April 25, Janet's speaking about gardeners and allergenic plants at Botsford Hospital in **Farmington Hills, Michigan**. Details to follow.

Saturday, April 28, Janet's leading two classes at Abele Greenhouse in **Saginaw, Michigan**. Details to follow or contact Sally at the Greenhouse, at 989-752-5625.

Wednesday, May 9, *Garden by Janet & Steven* to shoot with Steven at Garden in the Woods, **Framingham, Massachusetts**. Details to follow.

Tuesday, June 12, Janet's speaking in Iosco County at the Sunrise Side Michigan Master Gardener Association meeting in **East Tawas, Michigan** area. Details to follow.

Saturday, June 16, Janet's leading workshops on native plants and garden color at **Chicago Botanic Gardens**. Details to follow at <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/school/index.php>.

Wednesday, June 27, *Garden by Janet & Steven* to shoot with Steven at the Arnold Arboretum, **Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts**. Details to follow.

Tuesday, July 3, Janet's speaking about *Never Too Late* summertime garden planning and planting at the meeting of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County in **Bloomfield, Michigan**. Details to follow.

Thursday - Saturday, July 12 - 14, Janet and Steven are speaking at the American Conifer Society National Meeting and Conifer College in **Ann Arbor, Michigan**. Details to follow at <http://www.conifersociety.org/cs2/index.php>.

Sunday, August 19, come shoot with Steven and explore with Janet at the **Toledo Botanical Garden**. Details to follow.

Saturday, August 25, a pruning workshop by Janet & Steven at Belle Isle Nature Zoo, **Detroit, Michigan**. Hosted by the Detroit Garden Center. Details to follow.

Tuesday, September 18, Janet & Steven are on the program at the Washtenaw County Master Gardeners' Association meeting in **Ann Arbor, Michigan**. Details to follow.

Friday and Saturday, September 28 -29, the Midland Area Master Gardeners host a two-day workshop, ***The Natural Gardener and the Wooded Lot*** instructed by Janet and Steven with Celia Ryker. In **Midland, Michigan**. Public is invited. Details to follow. To register, contact Carol Brown at carolbrown@hotmail.com or 989-705-7337

Friday and Saturday, October 5-6, Janet and Steven are speaking at the ***Indiana Master Gardener Conference***. Details to follow.

Saturday, March 23, Janet's conducting a workshop at the Fon du Lac area Master Gardener's garden conference in **Fon du Lac, Wisconsin**. Details to follow.

Garden by Janet & Steven - Bring your gloves and tools! for
Pruning Trees and Shrubs: Keep them small and shapely

A winter thaw is one of our two prime times for pruning woody plants to keep them small. We have these two appointments with trees and you can attend to learn, and try your hand at: How well popular landscape plants hold up to pruning, and how to keep plants within the bounds you set. Free, but space is limited. Call or email Janet & Steven to reserve a space and learn location details. Provide a telephone number in your email or when you call:
info@GardenAtoZ.com or 248-681-7850.

You can join us at these sessions:

- **Tuesday, January 24,** 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. in **Troy, Michigan**. Pruning a **Japanese maple** to keep it small and give it better shape.
- **Sunday, February 19,** 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. in **Taylor, Michigan**. Our focus is a **Magnolia** tree that's become too big for its place near the house.
- **Watch here for more dates** throughout spring and summer. We schedule them as the work presents itself during the growing season (see below for more on how these are scheduled). Most of the time that allows only one- or two weeks' notice. We invite you to those activities you question most often, such as pruning, design and transplanting.

To attend a Garden by Janet & Steven:

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

- 1) At the **gardens we tend through our business, Perennial Favorites:** Our clients understand our enthusiasm for teaching. Some open their gardens to small groups who want to see and practice "how to." When work we're doing may be of interest to you, we invite you in.
- 2) In the **Detroit Zoo, Adopt-A-Garden** program where we're 23-year veterans. Many people have worked with us there, some for a day and others for years. We have fun, we learn, we accomplish much. You can check out this program by coming in as our student on a temporary pass. **To join us at the Zoo,** email mstgarden@gmail.com, subject line "Help at zoo."

How we schedule our *Garden by Janet & Steven* sessions:

People ask, "Can you come do one of your workshops in my garden?" It's possible! At these sessions:

- A client is paying for the time, or we're on a site where we volunteer regularly.
- The client knows our work well enough to allow us free rein, even to experiment.
- The client allows strangers on site and trusts our supervision if they pitch in.
- We know the site and plant history enough to explain how that affects the work's "what" and "why."
- We've determined that the plants and site will serve as clear examples.
- We know from questions we've received that the work is of common interest.
- In most cases, we choose sites visible from a road so students can drive by to see "what happens next."

Tool cleaning and sharpening parties!

Bring your tools, learn how and then make them like new.

Each winter for the past 9 years we've volunteered at gardeners' get-togethers to help you make your tools like new. We demonstrate how to, then help you tend your tools in work space provided by the party host. The company is grand -- other gardeners working and chatting.

Sunday, February 5, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the **Taylor Conservatory**, 22314 Northline Road, **Taylor, Michigan**. Email taylorconservatory.sbcglobal.net for more information or to reserve a seat.

Wednesday, February 8, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Janet explains and demonstrates *Garden Tool Care*. The Hartland Garden Club hosts this session at the Hartland Educational Support Service Center, 9525 Highland Road (M-59 west of Old US-23) in **Hartland, Michigan**. Public is welcome. For more information or to reserve your seat, call Judy Knitter at 517-552-8725.

Sunday, February 26, 2:00 p.m. at **Monroe County Extension**, 963 S. Raisinville Road, **Monroe, Michigan**. Hosted by the Monroe area Master Gardeners. \$5 at the door plus materials fees if you need materials from the community bin. Call Diane at the Extension at 734-240-3170 or msue58@msu.edu for more information or to reserve your place.

Thursday, March 1, choose one of two sessions with Steven: 2:30 - 4:30 or 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. At the **Wayne County MSU Extension**, 5454 Venoy Road south of Michigan Ave. in **Wayne, Michigan**. Hosted by the Extension and the Master Gardeners of Western Wayne County. Limited seats available. Email Char to reserve a spot: mgwwcorg@gmail.com or check the website www.mgwwc.org

Sunday, March 4, 2:00 p.m. at **Ray Wiegand's Nursery**, 47747 Romeo Plank Road, **Macomb, Michigan**. Call 586-286-3655 for more information or to reserve your place.

Monday, April 9, in the evening, in **Lathrup Village, Michigan**, at the meeting of the Village Gardeners. Only a few seats remain. Call or email Nancy, 248-552-5095 or nstrodl@yahoo.com.

These are limited space workshops, so **call or email early to reserve a seat**. Most hosts offer seats free of charge or ask only a small contribution toward community-use materials.

Come prepared -- check our *What's Coming Up* #29 for a description of what we do and what supplies you may wish to bring with you, along with your weeder, pruners, spade, etc. (For a copy of #29, email us or ask the party host.)
See you there!

Time to garden your walls...

Steven's decorated many walls with great garden and Nature images. He can help you do the same with photos that capture the garden beauty you love, framed or on canvas to your specifications.

You can own any of Steven's images from *What's Coming Up*.^{*} Or if you have a flower, type of scene or hue in mind you can request your dream. His library includes tens of thousands of plants and natural images, so Steven can assemble a customized photo sampler for you. Email us at info@GardenAtoZ.com for details, to request a sampler or to place an order.

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

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

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

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

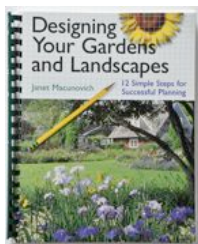
^{*}Images in our newsletter are depicted in low- resolution to facilitate e-mail transmission. Steven's originals and art created from them are full resolution, with so much clear detail they are sharp even as wall-size cloth banners.



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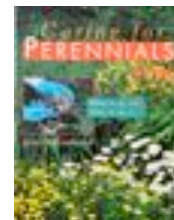
First published in 1990 as *Easy Garden Design*, a 150-page step-by-step recipe that's become a design classic. Janet developed, uses and has trained thousands of others to use this process. People say: "This is exactly the simple, clear approach I need!" This design process is applicable world-wide.

Soft cover, spiral bound. B&W illustrations by Janet. \$19.00

Caring for Perennials

Janet's unique approach to perennial care how-to, the real-time story of one bed from early spring to season's end. The 180 engaging and fact-filled pages make you part of all Janet does and you might ever need to do in each task's appropriate season and sequence. Includes a chart of what to do, when for 70 top perennials. Advice in this book is applicable in all of temperate U.S. and Canada. The perennial chart includes a key to adapt its timing for far southern or northern edges of that range.

Soft cover book. Text by Janet Macunovich. Color illustrations by Steven Nikkila. \$20.00



Asking About Asters CD.

A digital library of six years of Janet's work: weekly columns, newsletters and over 200 extra Q&A letters to individual gardeners. 1,681 questions answered about soil preparation, fertilizing, pruning, design, choosing plants, foiling bugs and much more. No repeated topics. Fully indexed; the entire collection can be searched from one index.

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



Potting Up Perennials CD. New for 2011

Practical, beautiful answers about perennials and all kinds of flowers, trees, shrubs, design, pruning and much more is in this collection of 2009 & 2011's *What's Coming Up*. Includes 101 issues with over 1,700 pages, 1,600 articles and 2,400 images. Has a comprehensive index with how-to guide so you can search for any topic or detail in any of the 101 issues. Bonus on this CD: Steven Nikkila's Daydream Screen Saver, 74 of his most vivid works from gardens and nature.

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



Janet & Steven's complete digital library New for 2011

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

Janet and Steven give you: Trees*

A choice collection of Janet and Steven's advice for tree selection, planting and care. Each article made its debut in *Michigan Gardener* magazine and has been on hold since, awaiting completion of its fellows until this comprehensive compilation became possible. Topics include: Selecting trees; fall color; what's happening to ash trees; replacing a big tree; descriptions, lists and photos of great trees; why starting small is a good idea when planting; planting how-to, why's and why not's; staking, watering and fertilizing; mulching; rescuing a tree from the lawn; preventing construction damage; pruning to keep trees and shrubs small; removing suckers; detecting girdling roots; and dealing with maple tar spot and lecanium scale.

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Janet and Steven give you: Landscape Ideas*

Janet and Steven's favorite articles on landscape design and renovation: Designing with foliage color; covering up after the bulb season; doubling up perennials for 3-season color; shady solutions; using usual plants in unusual ways; designing hypo-allergenic gardens; Murphy's Laws applied to gardens; renovation how-to; fragrant plants and designs; attracting wildlife; rockwork; invasive plants; discovering a site's hidden assets; using herbs in a landscape; and how to cheat to improve a garden quickly. These articles appeared first in *Michigan Gardener* magazine individually between 1999 and 2011. Now they're collected in this set for your design library.

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



Janet and Steven give you: Garden Care*

Vital how-to for tending a garden, from Janet and Steven's favorite articles on: bed preparation; soil testing; making a weed-free bed; spring start-up; improving hard-packed soil; fertilizing; watering; cutting back and deadheading; repairing irrigation; drought-tolerant plants; sharpening tools; tweaking in summer; staking; and the art of fall garden clean up. Items in this collection were selected from among Janet and Steven's ten years of *Michigan Gardener* articles. Each made its debut in that magazine, waited for its companion pieces and now they all join your library in this more durable and comprehensive form.

10" x 13" magazine, 48 pages. Color illustrations. \$12.00



Janet and Steven give you: Trees, Landscape Ideas and Garden Care *

Set of three 10" x 13" magazines, 48 pages each. \$30.00

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