

## What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns

Issue #172, January 29, 2012

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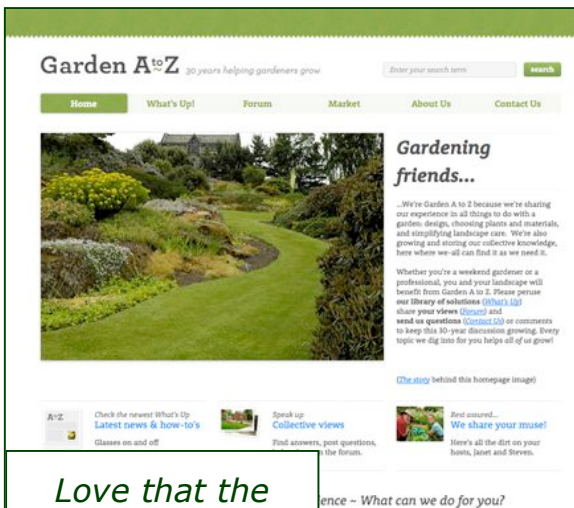
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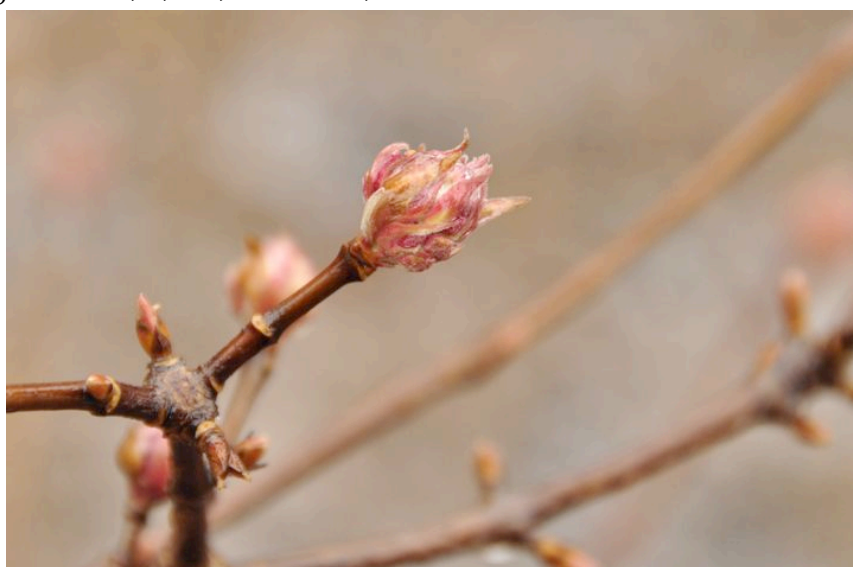
## What follows from warm winter?

Although I've rather liked this warmer winter for a change, what pluses and minuses can this mean for my perennial flower garden and newly planted trees? – T.K. –

A mild winter's no problem for plants so long as it doesn't entirely deprive rest-dependent species of their time out. Many plants geared to zone 5 winters can be fine in a zone 6 or 7 year, where the coldest day is 10- or even 20 degrees warmer than it could be.

Plants need time at or below 40°F to acquire full hardiness and remain dormant. Once top growth stops in late fall those with chill requirements -- such as flower formation dependent on a certain number of cold hours -- begin to tick off the time. They remain "dormant" until they reach their species' target, which might be 500, 1,000, or even 1,500 hours at 40°F or less. There is no bonus for extra cold. Every hour below 40°F counts, no matter how far below that mark.

Racking up that time may take 3 - to 6 weeks in a real winter, below 40°F 'round the clock. If days are warm so that only sunless hours count, it may take 6- or 10 weeks. Either way, the need is met and result's the same. What's different is that in the warmer scenario a plant may come through with every branch tip, flower bud and root intact, rather than losing bits to extreme cold.



Most hardy plants won't 'wake up' until they've had an extended period at 50°F or warmer. If that warmth comes early, at the end of winter when time's up, it can dissipate the blocks plants developed during hardening in fall. Then plants' tips begin to grow (*here comes a maple flower bud, above, in March!*), pulling water up (the 'sap rises'). If it's too early, and frigid air touches new growth that has no secondary freeze defense, it can be a killer.



Yet that situation -- late warm-up followed by hard freeze -- can happen in any winter. Warm year or cold, unsettled springs happen.

### Chill before opening

Some species that require cold to bloom fully:

- Common lilac
- Peony
- Bleeding heart (left, *Dicentra spectabilis*)
- Apple/Crabapple
- Tulip
- Daffodil



## Other consequences of warm winter

### Water shortage

Dehydration is indirectly related to winter warm-up. An evergreen planted where the soil's dry can dehydrate in a warm winter because the leaves or needles are photosynthesizing at an unusual rate and there's none in the soil to replace it. Watering evergreens or shading them can alleviate this.

### Early bloom

Some bulbs may bloom ahead of schedule because, "Well, we are up, no stopping now." The bloom may last, or not, but that's not a big blow to the plant. Even if it loses flower, flowering stem and leaves, it's already benefited from their photosynthesis, may have more greenery yet to arise from below ground, and has added that to the starch reserves in its bulb. It'll be back.

### Insect outings

Insects "count hours", often in close step with the plants that are their hosts. The insect develops inside its egg or pupal case during every hour when air around it is above 50- or 55°F. Too much warm weather can result in early emergence. Those that took shelter under the siding on a building in fall often come out through interior cracks during winter; if they were human they'd be saying, "What am I doing up at 3 a.m. and where's breakfast?"

An insect that emerges early in the outdoors, ahead of its food plants or mates, might freeze or starve. However, it's hard to kill an insect with cold. We don't even wish for that in most cases, since early warmth that draws out bugs may also call plants back to life. Both risk freezing.



### Rodent romps

Rodents such as meadow mice (voles) and chipmunks may be more active in a warm winter. That can mean perennials and grasses lose more roots and crowns by

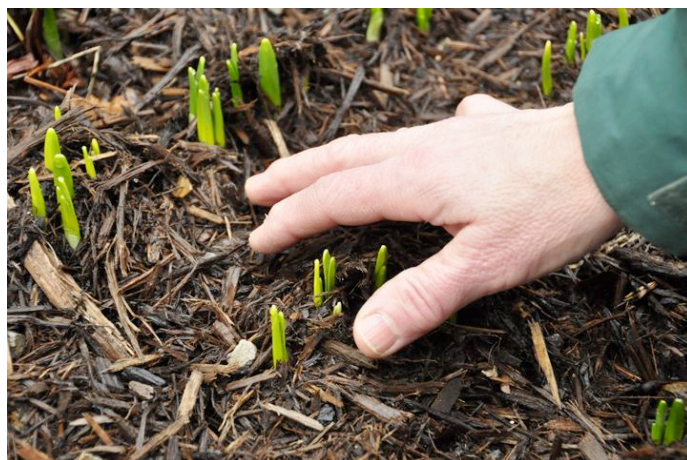
spring, while woody plants have more bark chewed, underlying cambium consumed and trunks girdled.

More on chipmunk issues on page 4.

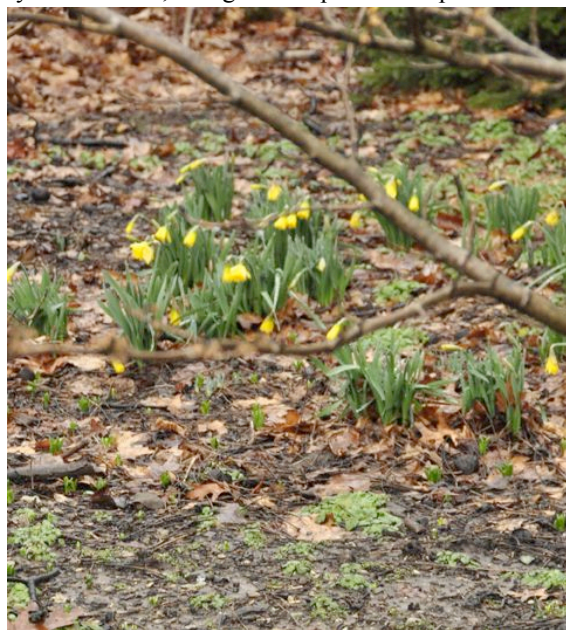
### Avian feasting

When there is less snow, hawks and owls that hunt rodents may have easier pickings. Late winter is breeding season for many birds of prey, and ample food then can mean bigger broods, and healthier young.

Left: This sharp-shinned hawk is probably having a normal year, despite the warmth. Its diet consists almost entirely of birds, which is why it posed this way, staking out our bird feeder last week. It'll settle for frogs and we've seen it perched as here, shredding a garter snake held under one talon. However, the red tailed hawk that shares our yard with the sharpie has probably been having a great winter, dining as it does on rodents and other small mammals that have had no snow to cover their movements.



Close to the heat the Earth is always exhaling, these daffodil leaves will be fine, and flowers should follow. However, the daffs below, fooled into bloom in zone 6 on January 27 will probably lose their heads to some big chill in February. No worries, though. Both plants will persist.



## Soil stomps

Wet, ice-free soil gets abused in a winter if people are accustomed to doing things that put extra weight on it during that season. Woodlot managers who expect to be able to cut and drag over frozen ground face harder pulls and create more ruts. Farmers who cut stubble, spread manure, shift equipment, and tend irrigation lines face a dilemma: forgo essential work or do it and ruin the soil, leaving it compacted to the point where it will grow poorly for years. In conversations overheard last weekend in the surprisingly lively corn-belt towns of Palestine and Robinson, Illinois, there was much comment on this fall-out from a warm winter.

## Whirling world

Everything turns on the weather, and everything affects something else. We can fill out some of the balance sheet when the pluses and minuses are visible. Meanwhile, me might have no clue or can guess but not measure weather's impact on bacteria, fungi, seeds and much more that's pivotal in an ecological system. That is our world, and yours: the garden, an ecological system so complex we can each spend a lifetime to learn even the thin layer we can see. Isn't it fun!?

Right: Chipmunks always look a bit guilty when they realize we're looking at them!

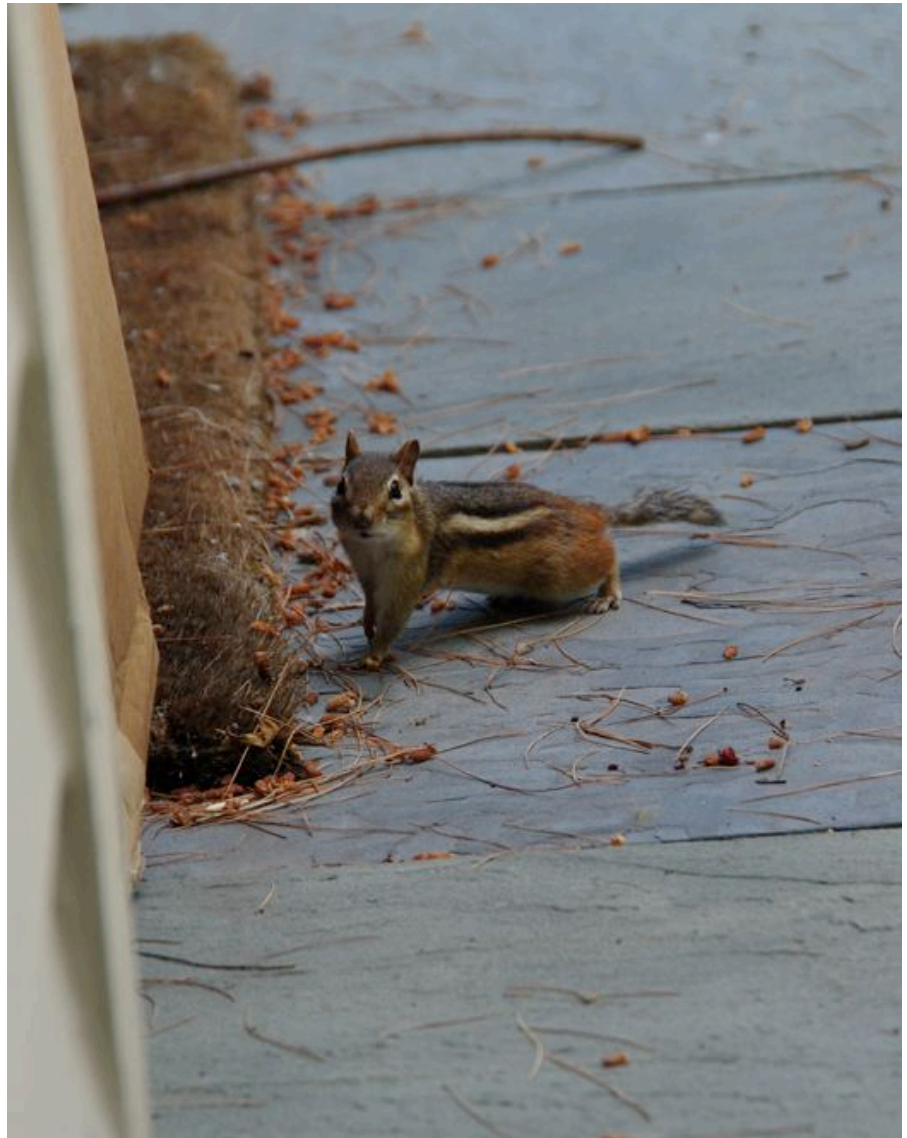
B.C. reports spending "...a couple hours on the nature trails between UM-Dearborn and the Henry Ford Estate... It was gorgeous. The usual birds. Rabbit, deer, squirrel, mouse and muskrat tracks. ...I had chipmunks under the bird feeder this morning. The first chipmunks I've ever seen in Michigan in January."

A chipmunk now would be a first for us. We've never seen one in winter. Great Uncle Axel told us about one that tunneled up through deep snow to beg at the back window at his house in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. But then, he often had snow into May...

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## Keep on clicking!

There's more discussion of what to expect from this winter, at our Forum:

<http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?/topic/70-warm-winters-effects-will-be/>  
<http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?/topic/10-you-ever-seen-weather-like-this/>



## Glads happy to be warmer than usual

I was at your talk in Dexter in January and wrote a summary for [annarbor.com](http://annarbor.com) ([http://annarbor.com/tag/garden\\_tips/](http://annarbor.com/tag/garden_tips/)) to share a few tips that stood out in your talk.

One of the tips was about burying cannas and dahlias 18" to keep them over winter-- this is such an awesome tip because I have nice soil in my veggie bed doing NOTHING over winter, when it could be storing these semi-hardy tubers/bulbs!

I know you said elephant ears would have to go down deeper to at least 24", but what about glads? Could they be OK at 18"? - Monica Milla -

Thanks for letting people know about us, Monica!

This winter, if this warmth continues, cannas may make it through to spring without any protection at all in our portion of "zone 5."\* Gladiolas are not quite so tough (most *Gladiolus* species are zone 9) yet we've seen them pull through a few special winters in special places, too.

### \*Zoning out about warming up?

Regarding the new USDA zone maps, and what difference it might make if our garden's zone rating changes:

Let's talk about that **at the Forum**, okay?

<http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?topic/72-what-about-those-new-hardiness-zones-huh/>



Could the glads make it through a normal zone 5 winter (down to -20°F) if buried 18" deep? Probably. However, we've only ever put *Gladiolus* bulbs into deeper pits -- we had a pit dug for other things and so stashed all our special things there. We haven't tried them in shallower storage. However, we think they would survive with 18" of Mother Earth as insulation.

There's more about burying tender perennial roots as a winter storage method at [www.GardenAtoZ.com](http://www.GardenAtoZ.com), in

What's Up Ensemble Weekly Editions #7 and #160:

<http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/ensemble-weekly-editions/early-fall/what%27s-up-7-overwinter.-mandevilla.-names.-sweden/>  
<http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/ensemble-weekly-editions/early-fall/what%27s-up-160-dangerous-trees.-divide-daffs.-walnuts/>

Left: Zone 5 hardy gladiola *Gladiolus byzantinus*, just 15" tall.

### Hardy glads: Hardly like their big cousins

Most of the 180 species of *Gladiolus*, including all of those used to develop the very popular cut flower hybrids, are native to frost free parts of Africa (especially South Africa), Arabia and Madagascar. That's zone 9 and 10. A few that come from Europe and the Mediterranean can tolerate some cold if the drainage is very good.

Hardy gladiolas species:

Zone 6: *G. byzantinus* (a.k.a. *G. communis ssp. byzantinus*)\*, *G. illyricus*, *G. imbricatus*, *G. italicus*.

Zone 7: *G. tristis*, *G. atrovioleaceus*

Zone 8: *G. papilio*, *G. cruentus*, *G. x colvillei*, *G. saundersii*

\**Gladiolus byzantinus* have been resident in our well-drained zone 5 gardens for 20 years. They're interesting but not the show-stoppers their big hybrid cousins are. In addition, *G. byzantinus* multiply like grass and have to be thinned every year or they're too crowded to bloom well.

## Cabin fever meets zone-up zaniness, creates mobile maple

I have a question. I need to transplant my 3' tall Japanese Maple within the next two weeks. Do you have any recommendations for a successful transplant. – J.C. –

The dormant season is a good time to move pretty much any kind of tree, yours included. Some winters, ice prevents the move, or makes it very tough to do the initial trenching. This year, you may find no ice at all, or be able to crack the soil surface in a trice.

The only winter-specific advice we have is to keep some extra muscle on call. If there's much ice in the ground it makes the root ball heavier, and the top layer of soil may be impossible to peel away. Removing soil is a tactic we depend on to reduce the weight yet dig wide enough to take more of the roots.

Issue #154, pages 16-18 has photos from the last time we moved a Japanese maple.

<http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/ensemble-weekly-editions/summer/what%27s-up-154-maple-cuttings.-wildflowers.-fertilizer/>  
(Boy, do we love being able to simply link you right back to related articles!)

This next five bits of advice apply all year:

- 1) Start digging outside the drip line to identify how far out the roots have spread -- how big a circle of roots it is. Try to take them all.
- 2) Never use the tree's trunk as a lever to tip or handle to carry the tree. The soil weighs more than the trunk is "designed" to bear. If you do push on the trunk to shift that weight it can break connections between roots and soil, between trunk and roots, and/or bruise and scrape the cambium where you grip. Instead, move a root ball by tipping the ball itself. Slide a tarp under it, then skid the whole package to its new home. Given a few friends willing to come out and play, it's also easy to lift such a package. Everyone can get an easy handhold on the tarp.
- 3) Replant a tree at the same level it was growing.
- 4) Put a fluffy mulch over the entire root system and keep that area snow covered, or moist if there's no frost in the ground.

**What's Coming Up:**  
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Issue #154, August 17, 2011

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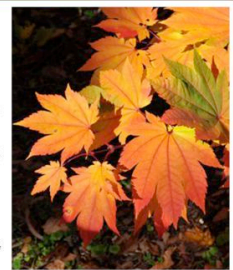
Right: There are many worthy Japanese maple species. This fullmoon maple, *Acer japonicum* 'Takinagawa' is a cousin of the more commonly grown *Acer palmatum*. See page 3.

### Clip and sow now for more Japanese maples

I would like to know how to propagate Japanese maples. Also, would they grow in Florida if grown in the semi-shade? – D.S. –

Take a cutting (see *Making new trees...* on page 6) to make a clone or close copy of a particular tree. You can do that right now, while 6 to 8 weeks of growing season remain -- enough to coax the pieces to produce roots. Afterward, let the rooted cuttings experience the mild, increasing cold of fall, then put them in a protected place to be cold but not frozen over winter.

Softwood cuttings (right, *Floratilis* softwood cuttings being prepped for sticking) made in June or July probably root best but July-early August semi-hardwood cuttings can also "take."



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- 5) Set up a wind barrier if there's any chance the tree will be in brisk wind. A Japanese maple shouldn't be in such a place but we know sometimes they are. Sometimes, too, they're loaded into an open vehicle for their move, by a gardener who hasn't realized the drying and abrasive effects of a 35 mph wind. Even leafless twigs and buds can dry and die.

Continue wind protection through spring. Lots of water is required by rapidly growing leaves, but it's nothing compared to how much moves up from the soil and through the leaves if wind continually disperses the protective film of water vapor that should cloak the foliage.

### Aiming for Answers: We miss a key point on night-lighting roses

There are no sure bets in dealing with living things, but every situation we face helps us learn more possibilities -- especially when we share with each other what we've observed. So we're always glad to hear whether you used our suggestions, what experience showed and what happened next.

This Hit or Miss began by email -- now it's on our Forum\*:

I have a rather large Knock-Out Rose Garden... ...3 years old this summer. I am considering putting miniature white lights on them or on the tree above the bushes and perhaps a spotlight on them. ...lighting them in the late spring/summer nights and am wondering if they might harm the rose bushes. I believe they would be beautiful at night... -M.J. -

To which we replied, in part:

Hard to say. If you have them on all year and turn them on regularly during the growing season there may be implications because the plants' night is interrupted -- we have to look further to see if roses are dependent on daylength.

In addition, the presence of the wires might impede maintenance by dissuading someone from clipping the plants back aggressively after bloom, weeding thoroughly, etc. and that could certainly have an impact...

As it turns out, we totally missed an important, practical point. Thanks for this, Sue Grubba!

We've been installing landscaping Nightlighting for over 20 years and have learned a few things that may help you. We've had several installations utilizing 'Knock Out' Roses and have found that it is best not to put string lights on

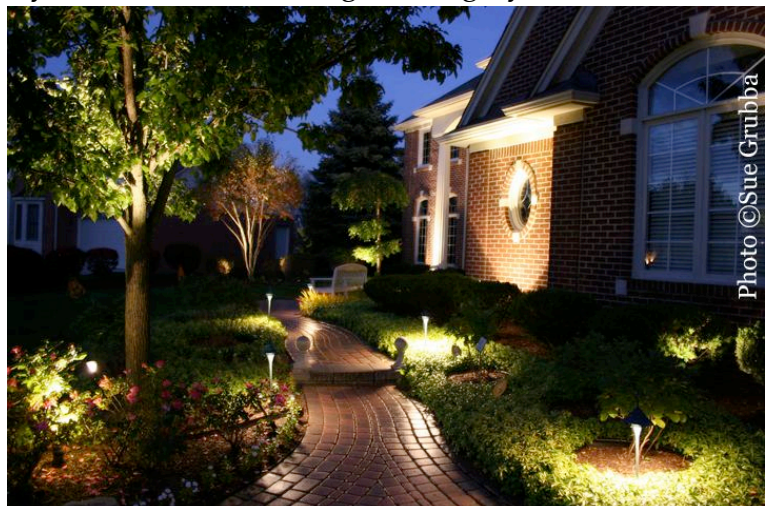


Photo ©Sue Grubba



them. 'Knock Outs' grow very fast and their foliage quickly covers the lights...  
(Sue is a Forum Moderator, instructor and a garden designer who specializes in lighting.)

\*At the Forum, this and many other discussions are ongoing. You can jump in or see the rest of this story, at:  
<http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?topic/68-lights-impact-on-plants/>

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

So much goes on in email exchanges between newsletter -- and on our website Forum! We wish we could include it all. Here are excerpts, and links to each full-grown exchange:

### Choose a greenhouse

Would like to add a greenhouse to my garden, where would be the best place to start looking for info? - T.J. -

Oh, oh. Last month when this question came in we promised T.J. we'd develop a checklist but we're coming up short. More input from individual greenhouse gardeners needed! If you own a greenhouse or conservatory we would love to know:

Did you begin by reading catalogs, or architecture guides, or what? What features and accessories are you most glad you have, and which have been disappointing or not worth the cost?

If you can help T.J. it will add to a comprehensive article we'd post in the *What's Coming Up* library at [www.GardenAtoZ.com](http://www.GardenAtoZ.com). Please jump over to

<http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?topic/73-deciding-which-greenhouse-to-buy/>



### Everyone can read it, but become a Member to post!

**Our Forum is free.** Anyone can read at any level, use our search function to locate tips about plants or techniques, look for friends among our Member list, etc.

**To post a question** or add to a discussion, you must become a Member. It's also free.

- 1) Click "Create Account" in the upper right corner of the screen,
- 2) Assign yourself a User name and a password, and
- 3) Enter your email address.

Our computer will then send you an email to verify you're you

- 4) Click on that email. Now you're in. Now you can:

- Ask questions
- Add photos or tips to discussions, and
- Chat
- Be automatically notified of news in any topic where you select "Follow this Forum."

### Your email address is safe with us:

As with our newsletter mailing list, we do not gather email addresses to Spam you, nor do we sell or share addresses. We require addresses of Forum Members simply to keep our website free of ugly and disruptive Spam. (Having required an email address, we can later ban the person who posts disruptive ads and messages.)





## One hungry robin and a bird feeder's born?

...all these weird things that are happening... fly on my front porch this afternoon. ...And then there's the robin who has been munching on the berries of my holly bush for the last few weeks. ...I thought they left this State for the winter.... - J.K. -

Ahoy, readers, we need some help here. After a lesson about what insects do in winter, J.K. left that topic and seems to be on a mission to help this robin, starting with what might be an expensive a grocery list. Talk about becoming attached.

The whole story so far, with lots of room for your advice to this nascent bird feeder, at

<http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?topic/74-robins-all-winter/>

## Hollies fail to mingle, berry disappointing

... I have had both male and

female bushes together for a number of years. ...I have watched them carefully ...the two types do not flower at the same time. They have never fruited because of this... Is it a nutritional or cultural issue? - M.K. -

It's true - if they don't bloom together, the lady hollies will be fruitless. A helpful and diverse group has already started to develop answers, here. Come see. Maybe you'll solve the mystery. Follow this link <http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?topic/44-winterberry-hollies-no-berries/>



Left: Even in winter, hornbeams make a screen since they hold their leaves. But what counts is: Do *you* like hornbeams? Should they be on your town's suggested hedge list?

## Zoners need help with list of screening plants

...township is updating their zoning ordinance... plant material for screening undesirable views. ...look over our present list, and recommend which plants should be removed... suggest replacements? - M.E. -

We've made our first reply to M.E. Now we need more input, about what you like or don't like in hedges.

The question is up on the Forum.\* Can you help us by adding:

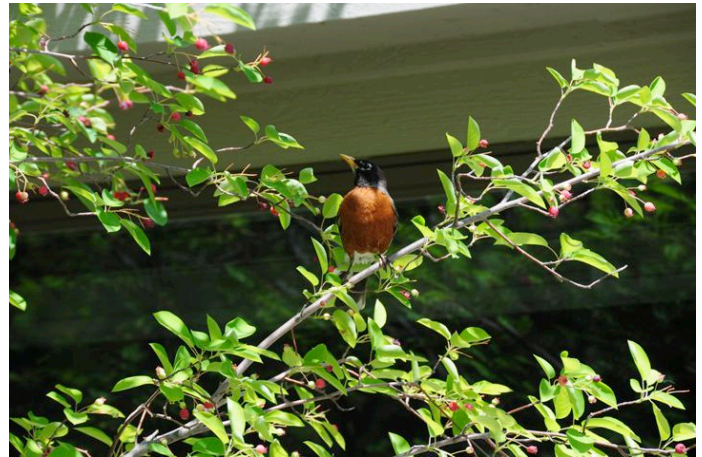
The shrubs and trees you prefer for blocking unwanted views. Plants you do not like for that use, with a word about why.

We'll summarize the topic in an article that we'll feature in this news one day. First, we want to narrow the criteria that can be applied in making such a list so they reflect broad, common interests. Between us we can make a practical list that can advance important efforts such as reducing pollen counts and encouraging beneficial native species, both animal and vegetable.

\*Jump to the discussion at <http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?/topic/69-better-list-of-shrubs-for-screening/>

### Which serviceberry for sweetest fruit

... Anyone have experience in choosing an *Amelanchier* for its fruit rather than ornamental qualities? (There are) many varieties. Some are *A. canadensis* and others are *A. alnifolia*. Can anyone shed any light on which are preferable for fruit and the shrub-like habit I am looking for?  
- K.B. -



Right: A robin perches on a serviceberry branch, deciding which berry to pluck next. To have this great fruit for your pies and preserves, you'll need to beat him to the fruit!

Read or join in this conversation at <http://forum.gardenatoz.com/index.php?/topic/43-edible-landscape/>

There, we've kicked around some ideas and heard from the owner of one of the Midwest's premier nurseries for native fruit and nut plants, Ken Asmus. He's suggested a focus on serviceberry varieties 'Success', 'Regent' and 'Kurath' plus given us more to think about that will take the guesswork out of making this kind of planting. Years of trial and error can be avoided!

## This week in our garden

### Grow with us! This week:

**We feel a rumble beneath our feet!** Other people may joke about Groundhog Day but we're not in that group. We've been digging for years to learn more about why this northwestern European tradition planted itself on this particular day, testing our theory that it harks to ancient ritual and recognition of renewed activity in the animal world.

### What's the news in the Groundhog Times?

**Renewed pee-yoo.** We smell skunk and realize we haven't had that pleasure since late last fall.

**Ramped up roadkill.** Raccoons are out and about by night all year. So why do so many turn up dead along the road, starting now? Skunks and groundhogs (wood chucks), too. They've awakened, or are moving more often and farther, driven by returning hunger and, in the case of the male groundhog, the urge to locate some female company.

**Hungry hawks.** Breeding time begins about now for many of the hawks in the northern U.S. Hunting takes on a remarkable intensity. If you pay heed you'll see two or three times as many, each camped at the edge of a clearing, ready to lunge.



Lunging is just one of a bird of prey's' foraging methods. More at <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/this-week-in-our-gardens/groundhog-rumbles/hungry-bird-out-to-lunge/>  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Entering grime-away time**, when we fill the bathtub with houseplants and rinse January's dust from the leaves. Like washing windows, it removes dirt that blocks light. The sun's increasing hours and strength can penetrate.

This is only a reminder of things said previously in this department. We're loving it that the time has come when we can be entirely true to our no repeat policy. Now we can link you to what we know has gone before, and you can Search our website. Try "winter" "rinse" and "houseplant" or a plant name or symptom. Or browse past issues by season. Bet you'll find What's Coming Up issue 26 in this case.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Playing computer games.** No kidding. Steven's been a devotee for some time but Janet's always shied away -- inept with a joystick and lacking any desire to shoot things. But this week we got into a game that's so perfect for gardeners, so clever and fun, we're enjoying both playing and watching.

And we think it may be an answer for finding common ground, making our gardens part of our conversations with a child or grandchild. Take a look at our illustrated review of Plants Vs. Zombies™. (We are *not* making this up. It's all there on our website, at <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/mentors%27-magic/mentor-saving-zombies/>)



You'll probably notice we filed this zombie review in our *Mentors* file. That's in honor of one of our mentors, Burdette Chapman, always seeking something new\*. Last time we were there we were selecting seeds for something new. Next time we'll show her Plants Vs. Zombies™ and have her help us show you a way to get creative with it!

\*About that: <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/mentors%27-magic/burdette-pursues-new-plants/>



## The 45mph garden: Limbs so thick no room for green

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

We do notice **trees' shapes and branching patterns** now while the leaves are down. Some that P.L. say are stand-outs

are weeping mulberry trees. "...ever since we attacked that mulberry at the zoo, and really that seems the better word for it. Pruned sounds too tame! Now I think as I see them, 'if those people knew how much that tree would grow and how much better it could look even in winter if it was cut, they'd be out with loppers right now!' Sometimes if traffic's slow I fantasize about a mulberry hit -- jumping out, whacking the tree, then hopping back into the car before anyone knows what's happening!"

Right: Isn't this a finer sight to see than the mulberry on page 11? It looked like that just 30 minutes before this picture was taken! We did little more than remove the dead wood from a tree much like the one above it..

### Groundhog Day in the 1913 Detroit Free Press:

... when the snow is not troublesome a great deal of progress can be made early in the month with pruning that was not done in the fall. Grapes, currants, gooseberries and shrubs should receive attention but remember not to prune during hard frosts.



**You tell us our [www.GardenAtoZ.com](http://www.GardenAtoZ.com) is already good.** Thanks!

Yet there's much more we have to do there. **You can help us keep building!**

Issues 19 and 35 of *What's Coming Up* cover mulberry pruning in words, line drawings and before-after photos. It's no boast to say it's pretty dramatic work. If you have a woody, needy mulberry you should check those issues.

You can, if you have our CDs *Asking About Asters* and *Potting Up Perennials*. Those have seven years of our illustrated works, and 99% of those issues are not yet on our website. We will post them eventually, but preceding them in line are hundreds of articles that have been unavailable in any form since their original publication. In all, so far, we have just about 30% of our library up on [www.GardenAtoZ.com](http://www.GardenAtoZ.com).

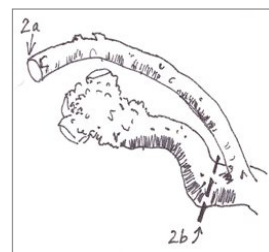
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**Green thumbs up** to **distinguishing live wood from dead** during the dormant season. An essential pruning skill, it may seem unknowable when there are no leaves. Yet once you learn to look for buds, it's a snap. Check if buds are plumped with moisture or wasted, dry things.

**Green thumbs down** to the **rabbits that get squirrels in trouble**. Believe it or not, D.G., there appear to be some squirrels that don't bother a guy's new trees. Instead they sit watching, and tittering, as rabbits ruin the new plantings. Yet B.C. took a while to catch on, and cursed the squirrels until catching the rabbits in the act.

Left: Most plant species' live wood has visible buds during winter. Plump moist buds means live wood!

Below: The mulberry from page 11 has built up so many layers of wood, there's no room for foliage, and even much of the wood has died out in that shaded center. You can identify dead wood by the color (arrow, center; compare the gray dead to the warmer tan live limb it crosses) and absence of leaf buds (upper left arrows). Cut at least that much out of your tree.



*...I discovered it was rabbits that girdled that kalopanax... then last year I caught one of the little b\_\_\_\_s chewing at the tupelo in the front yard. This year something has even been gnawing at the white cedars, and of course I now suspect rabbits there, too. - B.C. -*

### 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 grow 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.

**A garden- and nature photographer,** Steven Nikkila likes his job so much that a waterproof camera case hangs right alongside his fishing tackle box and waders. Of this arrangement he says, "I used to think that if I somehow knew a day was going to be my last day on Earth, I would simply take my pole and waders and go fishing, preferably up Schlotz Creek where Dad and Poppa and I fished. Now, I know I'd have to have my camera, too!" His love of the natural landscape shows in some of the plantings he and his wife do for clients of their gardening business. There, he might customize a rocky channel made to lead water away from downspouts to add "eddies" of small stone and an occasional larger rock "where a big trout could lurk." In the rain garden that receives that runoff water he favors plants he's admired along the edges of "his" fishing streams: turtlehead, cardinal flower, Joe Pye and marsh marigold.

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

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

**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

**Sunday, February 5, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.** It's a *tool cleaning and sharpening party* at the **Taylor Conservatory**, 22314 Northline Road, **Taylor, Michigan**. Email taylorconservatory.sbcglobal.net or call 888-383-4108 for more information or to reserve a seat.

Our full list of appearances scheduled in 2012 is at [www.GardenAtoZ.com](http://www.GardenAtoZ.com) in the *About Us* section. <http://www.gardenatoz.com/about-us/invite-us-to-speak/upcoming-schedule/>

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

### How to Garden by Janet and Steven

Do we hear you saying, "Now hold it! Is this newsletter getting shorter?"

You're right. It is. And its counterpart on our website [www.GardenAtoZ.com](http://www.GardenAtoZ.com) is deeper and more heavily illustrated. (As an example, compare what's on these pages about weeping mulberry to what's there in the 45 mph garden. <http://www.gardenatoz.com/what%27s-up!/the-45mph-garden/deadly-dense-mulberry/>) We are moving in stages to the website, double-publishing as we do to help you make the leap. Seeing both, we see the advantages of the website stand out.

We're not leaving. We'll keep emailing you weekly to tell you *What's Coming Up*. Eventually, however, that mail will be a simple list of links to these stories. A clickety ticket to all we've come up with and come across that week.



We have learned to and can do so much more on the website -- add so many more photos, connect far flung sidebars so simply. To do it anything of that magnitude here would make the newsletter far too large in file size, to transmit. To *not* do it at the site, just to make old and new versions match... we just can't do it.

Come to <http://www.GardenAtoZ.com> to keep up with where we're appearing, how to invite us to your town, attending our free hands-on *Garden by* sessions, buying our photos, books and so much more.

Invite us: <http://www.gardenatoz.com/about-us/invite-us-to-speak/>

Join us in *Garden by* sessions: <http://www.gardenatoz.com/about-us/services-we-provide/barn-raising-and-workshops/>

### Time to garden your walls...

You won't believe how many gorgeous photos Steven has in his galleries already. Yet it's only a tiny portion of his total work, and he adds more all the time.

Browse the Photo Gallery:

<http://www.gardenatoz.com/market/browse-the-photo-galleries/>

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