

## What's Coming Up:

Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila answer your growing concerns  
Issue #143, May 4, 2011

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### Forced out into the garden!

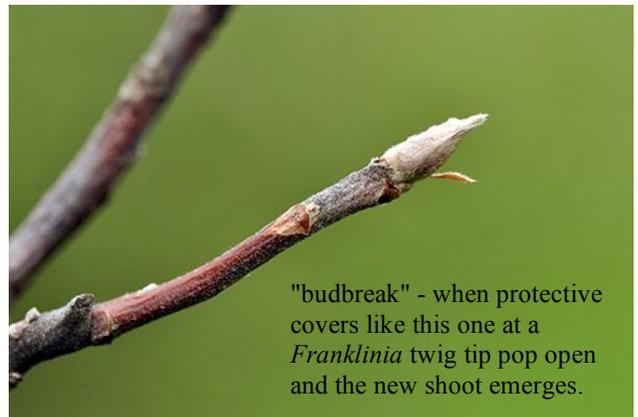
You guys haven't done a picture issue in a while... - D.K. -

Funny you should bring that up!

Does this sound familiar to you? During a late spring, or one with cold rain on every free day you have, the family gets tired of hearing you whine at the window. Eventually, they push you out the door.

Just happened here. Although Janet will tell you she wasn't whining but sitting here, happily working on explaining when to give up on a tree or shrub that was new last year and hasn't leafed out yet. (Answer: Watch established plants of its kind in the area. Give up or don't expect much if it doesn't break bud or push out from dormant buds by about three weeks after its kin.)

It's break time! We, this oakleaf hydrangea (*H. quercifolia*) and others (pages 7 - 14) help you enjoy the beauty of the season.



"budbreak" - when protective covers like this one at a *Franklinia* twig tip pop open and the new shoot emerges.

Steven showed up with some photos of *Franklinia* ( the recalcitrant leafer, pictured at right; see its bud on page 1). Suddenly he announced, "You have to get up and go outside."

Right: Some species do leaf out later than others. *Franklinia* tree is one (right, in flower in August). Its twig on page 1 was still resting, buds intact, on the same day Steven took all the bud-break shots on pages 7 - 14.



To Janet's reply, "Soon as I finish this page..." he said, "Nope, you are going out. Too much out there you're missing." Then, he usurped the computer!

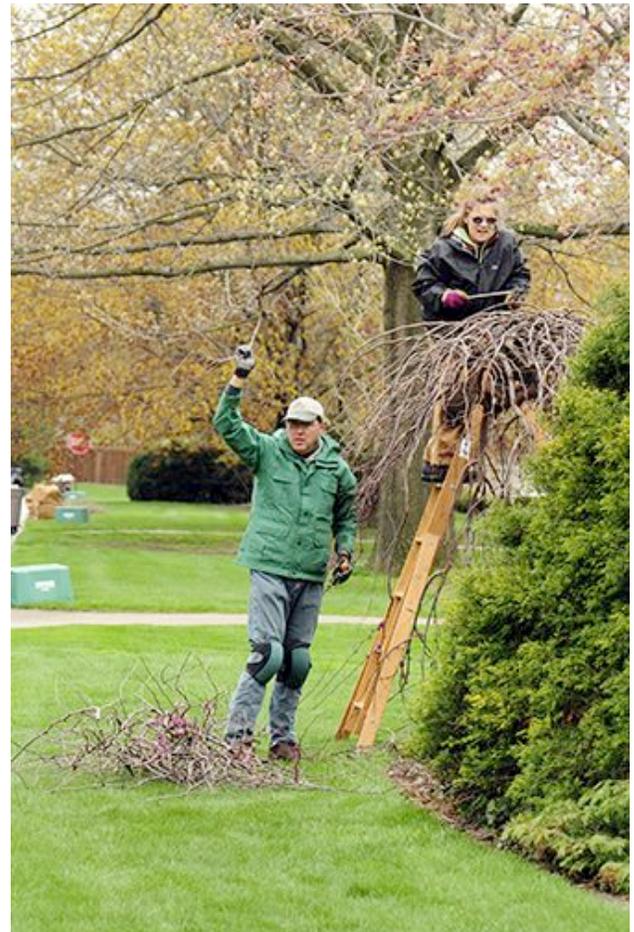
Janet, at first: "Well that was rude!"

Janet, 4-1/2 minutes later: "But... I guess you're right. Thanks for the push."

Steven: "Good, now stay out there."

Below: Janet used the time to team up with conifer collector and leaf color king Dennis Groh for some pruning. One of their targets was the maze of branches in a weeping redbud. Their operating strategy: "Let's get the dead wood out. And cut out the everything coming from limbs being squeezed out in the central tangle. Then we'll see what we have to work with."

They were really pleased. The redbud, well, it may have wished Janet had stayed indoors, but now it has room to grow now and growing is what redbuds love best.



Now, you go out, too. Look at all the wonderful stuff out there. If you've looked -- really looked -- when you come back in you can probably name what's in the photos in the photo puzzle beginning on page 7.

## What about all the usual detail of what to do, the Q&A?

We'll get back to that format in issue #144. This week, we give you the information in the form of relatively bare outline, all that was last on Janet's screen before she went out to play.

## Our outline for each issue...

...develops over a year's time. As we talk with you by email or in person, we identify trends, select some questions as "A good topic for the first week of May," then cross reference that upcoming issue and those questions in our files. Each week we assemble a newsletter by recalling the noted items. In addition, we've lately been including bits from the timeliest current emails -- our Tip Cuttings -- as an approximation of what will be available at our website if you skim the current forum topics. (See a forum clip at the bottom of page 16.)

We don't have the site up yet (your help still very much appreciated; see page 17) so if you'd like more detail about any of these topics, email us. We can't give you answers instantaneously, as we plan by having or files up and searchable on our website, but we're still answering just about everything that comes in, sooner or later. Just don't look at the time stamp on our emails, or tsk over our typos, as we do sometimes burn the midnight oil when wakefulness takes us, and do type while traversing bumpy roads. (Don't worry. We both discuss the email if we're answering on the road but the typing's done by whichever of us is not driving.)

### Hard to find hardier mum

Want hardier mums, for zone 4. Should pinch or will it delay bloom too late? - N.C. -

- 1) Mums bred more for bloom now than hardiness. Fact of life!
- 2) Choose from University of Minnesota's hardiness program introductions such as 'Autumn Fire' and 'Minnqueen' ([www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/dg7068.html](http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/dg7068.html)),
  - a) Ask for them at your garden center (lucky gardeners in:  
Stoughton, WI [www.theflowerfactorynursery.com](http://www.theflowerfactorynursery.com)  
Minneapolis [www.tangletowngardens.com](http://www.tangletowngardens.com)  
Ontario, various locations  
[www.ritchiefed.com/ContactUs/Contact\\_Us.php](http://www.ritchiefed.com/ContactUs/Contact_Us.php)
  - b) Or order on-line (Busse Gardens in Minnesota  
[www.bussegardens.com](http://www.bussegardens.com))
- 3) Even the hardier varieties more likely to winter over if planted in spring so can establish during root growing phase (only happens in spring). If want to pinch for shorter plants, pinch in June, that's not too late.

### Tree planting should not be a deep subject

Spruces fading, dying, did autopsy, they were simply planted too deep or buried! - G.M. -

- 1) Might be #1 reason new trees fail.
- 2) Check and plant with flare above ground even if have to remove soil from top of root ball .
- 3) Even if not new planted, can check, clear soil away, see improvement or know to replace.
- 4) Check issue #136 for what the flare is, why it's so important and shouldn't be buried.
- 5) For tree planting how-to check our magazine\* *Trees* in "Planting to Insure Great Growth."  
\*(To order, see pages 18 - 19.)

Looking for back issues? See page 12.

## Naturally wet bed? Natural wetland natives

Bed is very wet, even under water, considering cattails. Other suggestions? - P.F. -

- 1) Raised beds, drain tile.
- 2) Use wetland plant lists. Find by searching internet or index with key words "wetland", "native" and place (your State/Province name). Choose "emergent" or "marginal" plants meaning stems emerge from under water, or plant grows at margin of water.

## This year, the perfect tomato: No blossom end rot

Thinking about tomatoes, want to avoid black bottom (blossom end rot) this year.

- M.A. -

- 1) It is a calcium deficiency but entirely linked to **water**
- 2) Don't plant them early. In cold soil, almost assured
- 3) No varieties known resistant but some reported more prone (those with elongated, pear- or oval shape fruit)
- 4) Water daily not every 2, 3 or 4 days
- 5) Don't cultivate too close, disturb roots and disturb water up-take
- 6) Mulch to moderate soil moisture; 8" clean straw A-OK
- 7) Don't fertilize heavily; use organic non-salt fertilizer

[http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato\\_BlossRt.htm](http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato_BlossRt.htm)

[www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/BP/BP-13.html](http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/BP/BP-13.html)

[www.wvu.edu/~agexten/hortcult/homegard/tomatoes.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/hortcult/homegard/tomatoes.htm)

## Thin phlox beats mildew

Thin or divide tall phlox and other mildew prone plants *now*? - B.B. -

Yes. Better air. Leave just a few stems per plant, for huge flowers, strong stems, less mildew.

Below: If you don't divide phlox annually, thin it: Leave the clump in place (we lifted it here to have a clearer background for photos) and cut off most of the stems, leaving just five or six sturdy shoots per clump. Air will circulate better between the stems, reducing the risk of unsightly mildew infections.



Right: When you dig and divide tall phlox (*Phlox paniculata* and hybrids), replant just a few-eye division. Do it in spring for less show-wrecking mildew this summer, plus bigger flowers on sturdier stems.



## Granny's gorgeous flowers didn't stop critters

Are flowers among vegetables a pest deterrent? - B.H. -

- 1) Sorry. Mostly fallacy. Rabbits and slugs eat marigolds and others.
- 2) Marigolds do keep root-and tuber affecting nematodes at bay so good near root crops.
- 3) Orange color flowers may confuse egg-laying aphids attracted to orange. Flowers can be "trap crop." Plant flowers, let aphids lay, destroy plants.
- 4) Aster family plants attract pollinators. Heavier pollination nets redder, sweeter watermelon, bigger cukes, etc.

## Oak leaves not rotted yet - no sweat!

I leave them but they're still there! - D.W. -  
Oak leaves decompose when warm weather fungi go to work. Wait!

Some seedlings, such as trillium and columbine (below, left), need that bit of protection that leaf litter provides. Leave your leaves, watch those wildflowers colonize an area.

## Duking it out with a weed

Admiring those columbine seedlings, we see....  
Argh! *Houttuynia* - chameleon plant. (Right, at the !! and below, right.) You frackety frack weed, you're back again! We dug you!

We hear from people that this resurgence of a persistent weed brings them to their knees. They say, "I tried everything to get rid of this (insert weed name here)! I give up!" We say: "Buck up, gardener. To give up now would be like the hero in a Western soundly pounding the bad guy, then running away in fear when the villain tries to get up one last time. Go after it. It's down for the count, hit it once more. Don't let it crawl off and recover!" It's what we did to the *Houttuynia*.



Above, left: Check the pieces we extracted. Tiny shoots led us to hidden reserves. Don't they look ready to slither right out of the 'barrow and start again? No chance, hombre! We expected you to try again, we watched for you, we loosened the soil and yinked up that surviving root at your first try. Hah. Take *that!*"

## On our knees, looking for cush!

Where can I find padded knee pants? - A.C. -

Important topic. Sad news! First, Janet's favorite padded knee pants were discontinued (Denman company) and now Steven's choice (Skillers.com) is no more since the company closed up shop.

This year we'll move **our alternate-wear** to the front line:

Duluth Trading Company (we both order men's size; no big deal since Janet prefers suspenders to belt)

Men's DTPro work pants with built in knee pads

[www.duluthtrading.com/store/product/mens-dtpro-work-pants-85322.aspx?ev3=recommended\\_products](http://www.duluthtrading.com/store/product/mens-dtpro-work-pants-85322.aspx?ev3=recommended_products)

Also, **we'll try these:**

511 Tactical Co., Women's EMS pants

[www.511tactical.com/All-Products/Pants/Womens-Pants/Womens-EMS-Pant.html](http://www.511tactical.com/All-Products/Pants/Womens-Pants/Womens-EMS-Pant.html)

Blackhawk co. slip-in tactical knee pad

[www.blackhawk.com/catalog/Knee-Elbow-Pads.9.htm](http://www.blackhawk.com/catalog/Knee-Elbow-Pads.9.htm)

Padded knee women's bib overalls (Thanks, J.S.):

[www.dailygrommet.com/products/380-Rosies-Workwear-Work-Overalls-for-Women](http://www.dailygrommet.com/products/380-Rosies-Workwear-Work-Overalls-for-Women)

Carhartt (Janet wears men's size). These require SoftKnees pads\*

Men's Double-Front Drill Work Dungaree (painter's pants with pockets for SoftKnees pads)

[www.carhartt.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10101&storeId=10051&productId=151261&langId=-1](http://www.carhartt.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10101&storeId=10051&productId=151261&langId=-1)

Men's Double-Front Work Dungaree

[www.carhartt.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10101&storeId=10051&productId=32068&langId=-1](http://www.carhartt.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10101&storeId=10051&productId=32068&langId=-1)

Men's Washed Drill Work Bib Overall/Double Knee

[www.carhartt.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10101&storeId=10051&productId=32175&langId=-1](http://www.carhartt.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10101&storeId=10051&productId=32175&langId=-1)

\*Soft Knees: pads (What's Coming Up #2) and kits to retrofit regular pants (issue #30). We use two pads per pocket as we're accustomed to more cushion. [www.safeworker.com/softknees.html](http://www.safeworker.com/softknees.html)

## Lopping off a lavender

Truly, you can cut lavender hard? I'd heard they can be cut only to lowest leaf. - C.S. -

1) If it's healthy the wood has gray, nubbin buds all the way to the base and can be cut off above any bud.

2) If the wood's decrepit, pin one of those branches down and cover it with soil this year. Let it root, and its side branches will beef up to become main canes. Then next year start cutting those branches hard each spring to keep them rejuvenated.

## Clematis confusion

Not sure how to cut which clematis? - C -

If you want to cut it, just do it. Most will still bloom.

- See What's Coming Up #86 for the separate rules for each of the three types.
- See issue #91 for photos of the most popular type pruned and then grown back.

## Shade and too much cutting catches up with daffodils

R.S.: Daffs that didn't bloom well last year -- dug them, bulbs all small, realized they just gradually lost ground, smaller every year, maybe increasing shade contributed.

F.A.: Tried for four years cutting or not cutting off still-green daff leaves. Definitely fewer flowers the year after a cut.

Thanks, R.S. and F.A. for keeping track and letting us know. We've seen daffs decline in shade, too. Haven't noticed them fall off in bloom from leaves being cut back before they die back but may be seeing it this year after we cut them back last year just a few days after they bloomed... We'll be more careful about telling people "just cut 'em!" We'll say, "If the leaves bug you, wait a few weeks after bloom, then cut 'em.'

## A pretty puzzle

1



Can you identify these beauties?

2



3







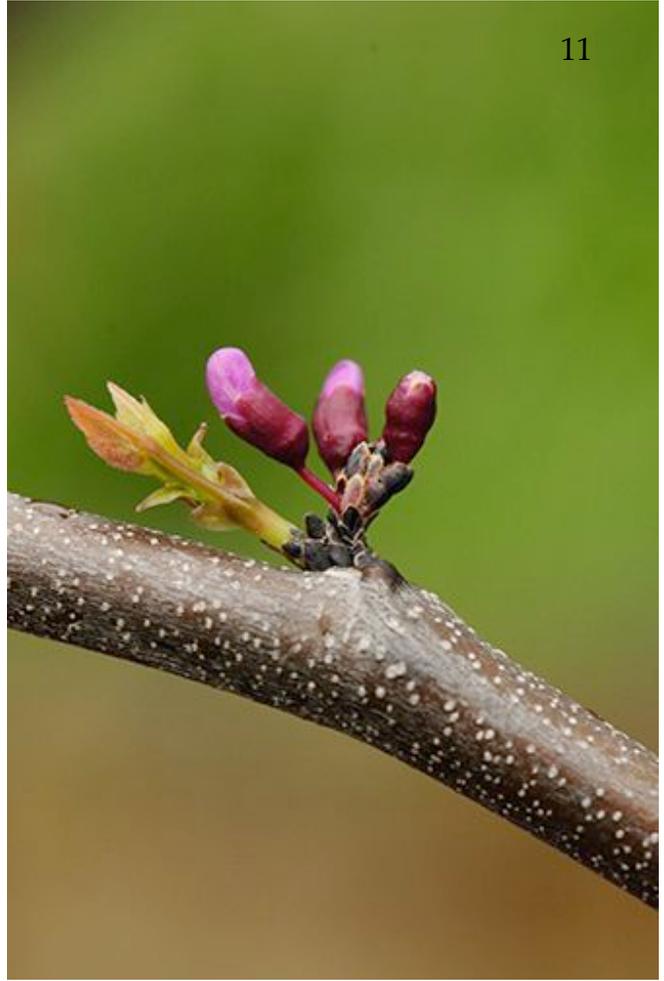
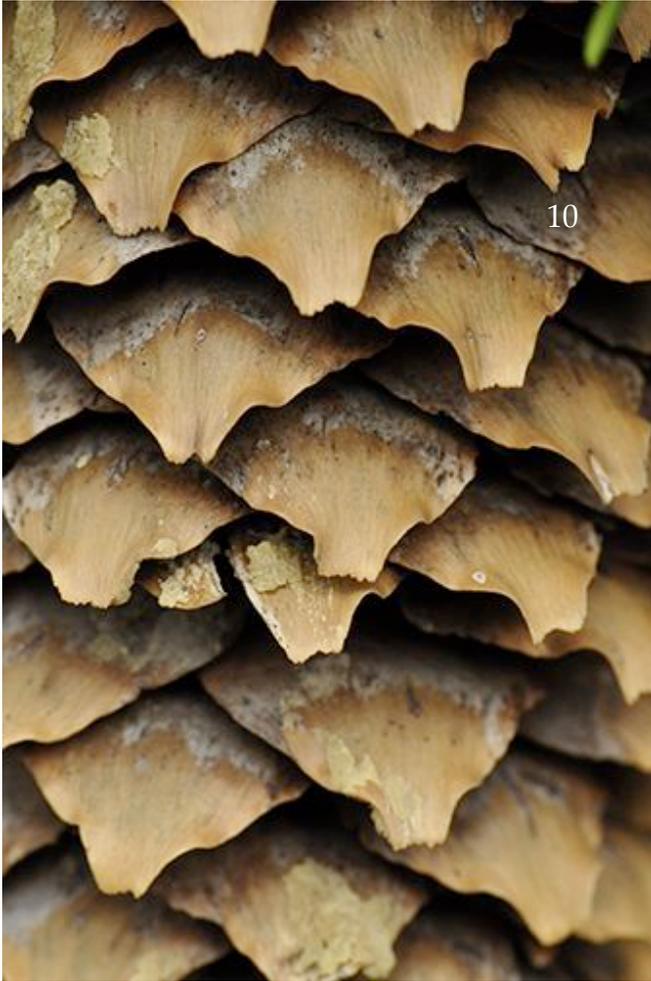
## About budbreak

When the long, red bud covers of #7 pop, like a mussel opening its shell, both flower and leafy shoot emerge. #9's flowers broke bud some time ago and have become red-frilled developing seed pods. Now in spring the leafy shoot breaks bud separately.

The brown, v-tipped bud covers of #8 are tiny but mighty. (Three are visible at the base of the green knob.) They kept the precious shoot safe all winter.

#9 had no bud covers to break. It spent winter as a "naked bud" -- the shoot's lowest two leaves were folded tight around the upper part of the shoot, here still compressed in a tight point. Yet it kept its shoot just as safe from cold and drought.







14



15



16

17



18



19



### Need a back issue?

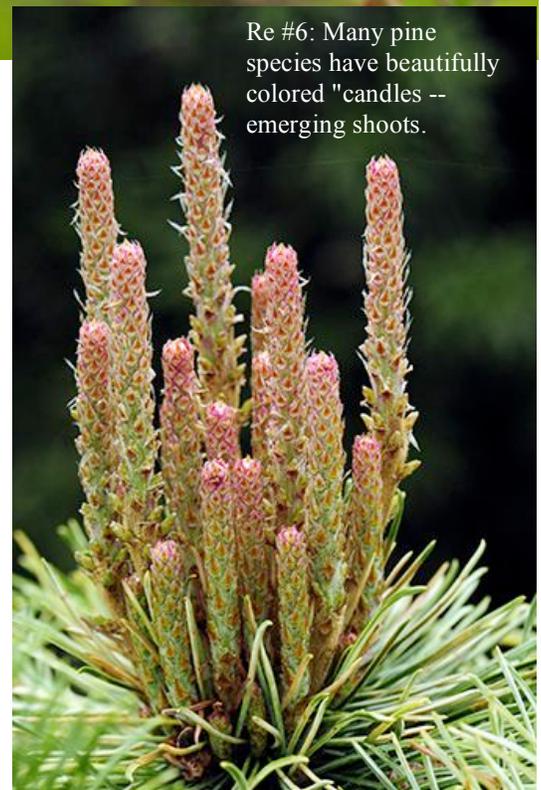
Maybe we mention it, or you're directed to it when you use the index we send to all readers each winter. If you've lost one, or weren't on board 'back when', you can:

- 1) Send us an email. We can often re-send an issue or two. (Our response time varies; be patient with us.)  
Or,
- 2) Ask a friend who also reads *What's Coming Up* to relay a copy. Or,
- 3) Order our CDs. (Pages 18 - 19) Or,
- 4) Donate to help us get our website up where all back issues will be available at a click. \$20 is great but even \$1 helps! Send checks payable to Janet Macunovich to 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328.

## Shoot, that looks so familiar!

See how you did - names for those photos:

- 1: Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parvifolia*), emerging leaf with folded down leaflets.
- 2: Flower and emerging leaves of dwarf, red leaf "patio peach tree" (*Prunus persica* 'Bonfire')
- 3: Fresh new leaf, purple leaf form of katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*). Thought it was a purple-leaf redbud? Well, that botanical name means "redbud-leaved tree of Japan")
- 4: Emerging foliage, 'Miss Kim' lilac
- 5: Shoot and twig of weeping larch (*Larix decidua*)
- 6: Detail of emerging pine shoot.
- 7: Emerging flower cluster and leafy shoot of red-leaf Japanese maple.



- 8: Ginkgo bud beginning growth.
- 9: Spring witchhazel (*Hamamelis mollis* hybrid) as it resumes vegetative growth.

10: Spruce cone. This spruce (a dwarf called 'Push') holds this older cone even as it forms the red-violet flowering structures that will be the new cones.

11: As this redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) blooms, its vegetative shoot begins to expand.

12: Flowers of primrose (*Primula polyantha*)

13: Fernleaf peony (*Paeonia tenuifolia*)



14: Tree peony (*Paeonia suffruticosa*)

15: Old fashioned bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*)



16: Small cup bi-color daffodil

Right: So many daffodils, so little time -- from exquisite miniatures to enormous trumpet types. Don't miss your chance to admire them.

17: Red horsechestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*)

18: Flower, emerging leafy shoot of serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*)

19: Lupin leaf (*Lupinus polyphyllus*)



**Green thumbs up** to being able to share the wonder of emerging foliage. Most springs, when you see beauty in budbreak, it's a fleeting thing. Only in a slow, cold spring can we go out and admire the lilac leaves unfolding *days after* we heard about it from a friend.

**Green thumbs down** to the fungi that take advantage of long, cool, wet springs to infect foliage that is most vulnerable then, before its protective, waxy cuticle matures. A cool spring can lead to a spotty, blotchy, scabby year.

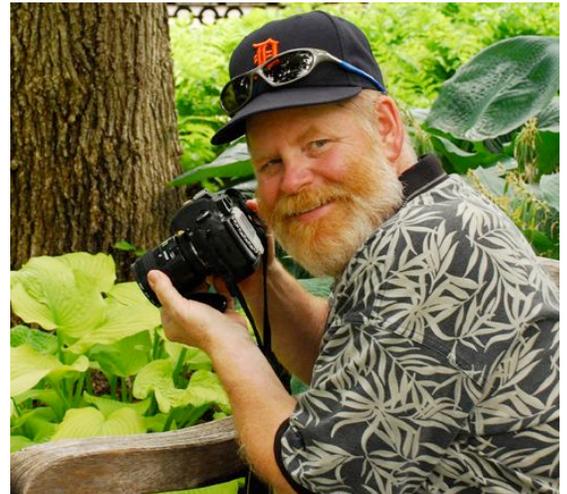
### Who's Janet? Who's Steven?

#### **Janet's a lady who gets a lot of mileage out of a garden.**

That's how Macunovich was once described by a client of her business, Perennial Favorites. "I love what you plant for me, Janet," she explained. "I even think I get to know the plants pretty well but then you come here with your stories about the plants and *why* something is growing a certain way. I love it, it's like you open up windows I didn't know were there." Janet brings the same depth and enthusiasm to books and articles she writes, classes she teaches and practical how-to materials she develops.



**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](mailto:JMaxGarden@aol.com) or call 248-681-7850.

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

**May 11, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.** at Theodore Roosevelt High School, 540 Eureka Road in **Wyandotte, Michigan** the Wyandotte Beautification Commission presents Janet sharing her ideas for ***Best Foot Forward: Ideas for Entrance Gardens***. \$12.00. For more information at [www.wyandotte.net/egov/apps/events/calendar.exe?path=03&search\\_timeframe=30&id=1098](http://www.wyandotte.net/egov/apps/events/calendar.exe?path=03&search_timeframe=30&id=1098)

**May 14, Saturday, 2:00 p.m.**, the Burr Oak Garden Club brings Janet to **Burr Oak, Michigan** (327 N. Third Street) to give pointers on *Easy, Beautiful Landscapes*. \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door, call 269-489-2230 for ticket information.

**May 17, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.** at the Plymouth Library, 223 S. Main Street in **Plymouth, Michigan**, Janet discusses the *Garden of the Future*. Free. 734-453-0750 for information or to reserve a seat.

**May 21, Saturday, 10:00 a.m.** at Four Seasons Garden Center in **Oak Park, Michigan**, 14471 West Eleven Mile Road, between Greenfield Road and Coolidge Road. Janet explains why to use more *Fabulous Foliage* this year. Free. Call 248-543-4400 to reserve a seat.

**Another chance to *Garden by Janet and Steven - bring your gloves and tools!*** This session is free. See page 17 for more about such sessions.

**May 28, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to noon**, again a *Garden by Janet* at the Detroit Zoo, in Huntington Woods, Woodward Avenue at I-696. Your chance to volunteer at the zoo in exchange for hands-on instruction in cutting back after winter, early season weed prevention, and pruning. To join Janet at the zoo, email [mstgarden@yahoo.com](mailto:mstgarden@yahoo.com) with the subject line "I'll garden at the Zoo."

**Time to Tend your pond!** Below: Scott Bates, owner of Grass Roots Nursery, is one of the most knowledgeable water garden experts in the country. More than that, he makes you laugh as he explains "how to." At his nursery in New Boston, Michigan, Scott offers free weekend how-to sessions for pond owners. Check his website, [grassrootsnursery.com](http://grassrootsnursery.com) or call 734-753-9200 for more information.

Right: On the last forum we administered, Scott posted a mystery story to make us laugh and solve a problem at the same time.

We'll have that forum again on our website, where you can dip into any or all the topics we are discussing or have discussed. Once again it will be moderated by experts who'll keep the information accurate. More on the upcoming website on page 17.



The image is a screenshot of a forum post. At the top, the title reads "Pond Mystery, I caught someone". Below the title, the user name "ScottBates" is visible, along with a timestamp "Jan 11 2008, 08:51 AM". The main body of the post contains text describing a pond problem. Two phrases are circled in orange: "Perhaps a mink had invaded the pond?" and "could cause this type of mortality rate." To the left of the text is a photograph of a man in a blue shirt and jeans crouching by a pond.

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

We go where we're invited -- 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 **meet groups' needs** and expand our horizons by developing new material or "hybrids" from what we already have.

Whether it's a **how-to lesson for a garden club**, a **multi-part class** for a small group, or a **hands-on, on-site workshop**, we're game!

We can also connect you to one or a whole line-up of other experts who know how to explain how-to. So give us a **call or send an email** to make a date, request our list of classes and talks or get a referral. **JMaxGarden@aol.com or 248-681-7850**.

Have **Steven's photos for your walls** -- perhaps this issue's serviceberry buds. He'll select, size, frame, matte, print on cloth or create greeting cards to your order. Prices vary based on the project.

Describe your need and we assemble your sampler for you.

Examples:  
**Matted, framed,**  
11 x 15", \$48

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



JMaxGarden@aol.com 248-681-7850

## About Garden by Janet & Steven dates:

Since gardeners are let-me-see people who learn best with hands-on, from time to time we list *Garden by Janet & Steven* sessions here to afford you that chance to grow. You visit us where we're working to watch or work as you choose. Generally, there is no charge and we're in one of two types of locations:

- 1) At a **garden 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 our work may be of interest to you, we invite you.
- 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. You can check out this program by coming in as our student on a temporary pass. **To join Janet at the Zoo**, email [mstgarden@gmail.com](mailto:mstgarden@gmail.com), subject line "Help at zoo."

Below: Our **Donatell** tale coneflower shows our website development progress and illustrates how much more we need for the website.

When the flower's **all blue**, we're gold!



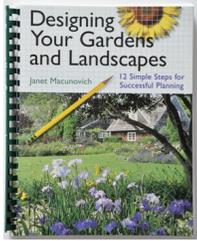
## Janet, Steven, how does that website grow?

It's our dream, an open library of our work where you can find what you need while we keep going forward (no repeats!) with this work we love... perhaps for another 30 years.

It will have a live forum, so everything we discuss with any of you is available for all to see, and join in. We're planning webinars and video... We don't have a launch date yet but it will be this year, thanks to you. You've been adding your dollars to ours, so we've been able to keep design work going while we prepare the library and newsletter archives.

Thank you to those who've given us a boost toward meeting the development and hosting costs. If you can help, too, **send your donation**, check payable to Janet Macunovich, to 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328. \$20 is great, but every dollar is appreciated.

**You asked for our advice "on paper". Here are our books and CDs:**



***Designing Your Gardens and Landscapes***

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.***

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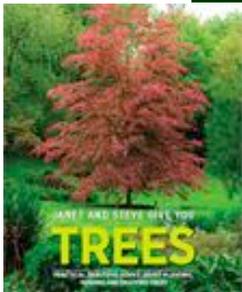
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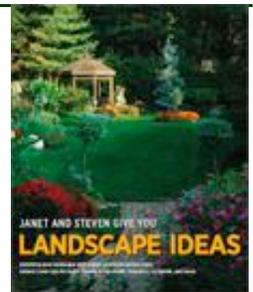
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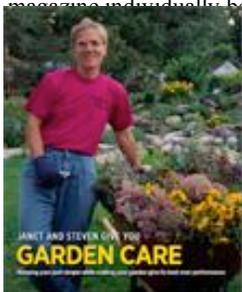
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