

# MSU IN BLOOM

## MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



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# FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

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BY KRISTIN GETTER, DIRECTOR OF THE MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS

## **Fabulous Fall**

What a great autumn season this has been for the Gardens. We finally started having in-person events again! Our Curious Gardener series was a hit - and completely sold out. Our Houseplant and Succulent Plant Sale was an in-person event and a very busy event as well. Thank you to all who attended. Proceeds from these classes and plant sales directly support our operating expenses.

We also hired a new staff member. We welcome Brian Gayheart who will be managing the plant material and maintenance of our C.E. Lewis Landscape Arboretum. He joined us in mid-October. The funding for this position came from a generous donor who established two endowments in her estate plan to allow for funding of this position. Learn more about Brian later in this newsletter. Interested in including the MSU Horticulture Gardens in your estate planning? Contact me at [getterk@msu.edu](mailto:getterk@msu.edu).

## **Fun Festivities**

We are also hosting a Holiday Make & Take on December 2nd which will be a hands on workshop where we make a living ornament and holiday wreath. See the information later in this letter on more details and how to register. We will also be having our Poinsettia Sale again this year. We began growing these plants in early August and they are coloring up nicely (pictured below, about 50% of color already). The sale will be an "order online, pick up in person" event. More details follow in this newsletter.



# WILBIR HAS LEFT THE NEST

BY DAN BULKOWSKI, GREENHOUSE AND GARDEN MANAGER

The time has come, once again this fall, for Wilbir to fly south for the winter. Actually, he roosts in pieces about 50 yards to the North of his parking lot perch. He remains near the parking lot for visitors to enjoy as long as possible (and tailgaters to climb; yes someone always does). But when the freezing frost hit last week, it was time. So it begins by plucking out the begonias. Left in too long they become mush (technical term meaning slimy). Then a request is sent out to a Physical Plant crew to come along with equipment to lift Wilbir out. The head/neck portion is placed on a pallet. The body is set on a “carriage” that, with student help, can be easily pushed up near the building. There he remains through the winter. In early spring, then the whole process begins of removing the old media and wrapping him in his new burlap skin for another season.



Garden student, Cole plucking Wilbir.



Wilbir flying away



Wilbir's winter resting place

## MSU Horticulture Gardens POINSETTIA SALE

DECEMBER 6-21, 2021

ONLINE ONLY

[SHOPMSUGARDENS.COM](https://shopmsugardens.com)

GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS!

- MSU GROWN POINSETTIAS
- HOUSEPLANTS
- SUCCULENTS
- GARDEN T-SHIRTS AND MERCHANDISE

# VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

Can you believe it? Another season is done, another year is coming to an end. And while we still are getting 'back to normal' in these pandemic years, one thing has stayed constant – the devotion and dedication from our volunteers to making our gardens the best they can be. And you should be PROUD. The number of compliments we have received, the thanks we have gotten, and the appreciation for a beautiful space during tough times has been strong. I have heard a number of employees and visitors mention that we are doing meaningful work, and that we are changing people's lives. The garden is a space in which we seek beauty, relaxation, and understanding. Yet working in it provides so much more. Sometimes we wonder why you still show up every week amidst the potentially back-breaking work, but deep down, we know why. We all believe in the power of plants, and the power of working with the earth – the therapeutic properties, and the feeling of accomplishment after a hard day's work. A special shout-out to the volunteers that continue to help with the various tasks in the Children's Garden, and to those who get excited about doing bigger jobs (and even suggest them sometimes – I'm looking at you, Leonard!). And to all of you who have stayed with us as we navigate through different times, thank you for all that you do! We truly cannot do it without you! Apparently, our whole crew has been having so much fun working with all of you this year that we took very minimal photos! If you have any to share that you took while volunteering with us, feel free to email them to me ([troybeth@msu.edu](mailto:troybeth@msu.edu)) so we can have them for our records!

## 2022 MEMBERSHIP

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING & EVENT COORDINATOR

2021 has come and gone. It's time for 2022 Membership renewal. We are now accepting 2022 Membership applications! We are offering many garden programs in 2022, watch our website for more information ([https://www.hrt.msu.edu/our\\_gardens](https://www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens)). Our Spring Plant Sale will be held in May 2022, where members will receive 10% off plant sale purchases. You can renew or join online here: [www.hrt.msu.edu/join](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/join). If you need a brochure mailed to you, please contact me at [hgardens@msu.edu](mailto:hgardens@msu.edu) or 517-353-0443.



### MEMBERSHIP Levels & Benefits

	INDIVIDUAL MEMBER \$40	FAMILY MEMBERSHIP \$70	CONTRIBUTOR \$120	PATRON \$1,000
Tax Deduction*	●	●	●	●
Free admission to AHS Reciprocal Gardens	●	●	●	●
VIP early-bird Spring Plant Sale invitation	●	●	●	●
10% discount on all plant sale purchases for members	●	●	●	●
Discounts on MSU Horticulture Garden programs	●	●	●	●
1-year subscription to BHG Magazine	●	●	●	●
20% off your first order at White Flower Farms	●	●	●	●
VIP Wine & Chocolate reception invitation for two	--	●	●	●
Five free 2-hour visitor permits for parking**	--	--	●	--
Unlimited parking during the garden season <small>(sorry, this excludes MSU employees and students)</small>	--	--	--	●
One free program admission	--	--	--	●
Honorary brick in the Garden walkway (a \$250 value)	--	--	--	●

Memberships are per calendar year  
January 1 through December 31

# WELCOME BRIAN!

BY BRIAN GAYHEART, ARBORETUM MANAGER

You may have noticed a new face around the gardens, and if you haven't, you can meet him right here! Brian Gayheart is our new Arboretum Manager. Finally, our seven acres of landscaped space has a manager of its own.

**What is your plant 'background'? How did you become interested in plants, and what brought you here today?**

After graduating from the Horticulture program here at MSU in 2015, I worked at a large production nursery where the perennial department alone grew millions of plants a year. I worked there for a couple years and experienced how a large-scale nursery operated.

In 2017 I started my career at Cottage Gardens, a local Nursery and Garden Center. I was there over 4 years as the Nursery manager and really enjoyed my position. I learned a tremendous amount by working with trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, annuals, and even houseplants. My main responsibility was purchasing all the plants we sold, planted, and grew. So, I really had to comb through each genus we offered and re-evaluate what varieties we would carry. I learned a lot about the differences between the cultivars and which ones were best suited for our Landscape climate. We also had gardens that I oversaw and worked with a team of people to expand and maintain. I learned so much during my time there and I'm grateful for every second of it.



I have always been interested in plants, but I never realized that they were something I was this passionate about. I love nature and have an appreciation for the living beauty all around us, so I naturally gravitated towards plants. I'm also an eager learner, so topics like plant biology and scientific names were very intriguing to me in school. I guess, the combination of an admiration for plants and a love of learning is what got me "into" plants.

Since discovering it as a student, The Arboretum has always been one of my favorite gardens on campus. That connection was a big factor in my decision. I decided to come here not only because this is the first time the Arboretum has had its own manager, but also because it's a

great opportunity to work with an amazing space. Honestly, it's an honor to be able to care for it. I'm also an avid gardener and love to exercise my horticultural talents. So, it just felt "right" when I thought about exercising them here in the Arboretum, especially when it could be of such benefit.

### **What excites you about working in the arboretum?**

Discovering and learning more about the existing collection and the potential to add a whole lot more. The Arboretum is very diverse so, in order to maintain the collections, I will have to learn how to properly care for numerous types of plants. Also, with several styles of gardens all sharing the space, it's an exciting blend of management techniques to master. I really look forward to learning and practicing these pruning techniques.

Overall, I'm excited because I can utilize my passion and talents on a space that is meant to inspire, educate, and motivate people about plants. From planting to pruning and everything in between, I'll do my best to make sure the Arboretum stays a beautiful space for our community for years to come.

### **Are there any big projects you are interested in working on in particular?**

To start, I look forward to pruning the existing plants to showcase their unique ornamental features. I like that the pruning depends on the characteristic to be highlighted or what area of the gardens the plant resides. The same tree could be pruned two or three different ways depending on what area it belongs to in the Arboretum. For example, a tree in The Japanese Garden is pruned differently than the same tree in the English Garden.

I'm also excited to plant newer tree varieties in the Arboretum to showcase the incredible abundance of newer cultivars available to today's gardener. One goal of mine is to increase the number of trees with more unique forms. I would love to add some unique weeping trees, dwarf globe conifers, and some columnar/fastigiata cultivars, just to name a few. My hope would be that when visitors see these trees, they realize they are potential options in their own yards and gardens. There is a lot more variety out there than many people realize, so sharing these amazing plants with people will be very enjoyable for me.

### **What is your favorite plant?**

I am such a plant lover; I have never been able to single it down to just ONE plant. I do have my favorites in each group though (trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, annuals, etc.). For example, Sugar maples are one of my favorite trees, Baptisia one of my favorite perennials, hydrangeas one of my favorite groups of shrubs, and begonias one of my favorite groups of annuals. While I will always have my favorites, lately I have been fascinated with narrow-growing cultivars of trees and shrubs. That's all I'll say for now and I'll be sharing more about this in future newsletters.





# 6TH ANNUAL HOUSEPLANT & SUCCULENT SALE

## A SMASH SUCCESS!

We were thrilled to be able to host our 6th Annual Houseplant and Succulent Sale in-person this year. While the online-version of our sale in 2020 was a great learning experience, nothing sells plants better than letting the customers fall in love with them in person! We met so many customers who arrived with a specific shopping list (and budget), but threw it out the window after being blown away by our selection. Here is a quick recap of our 2021 sale:



### **333 VARIETIES OF HOUSEPLANTS**

From the basics to the exotic, we had something for everyone. Nearly everything in our sale was grown in-house.



### **133 VARIETIES OF FOLIAGE PLANTS**

Foliage plants are the most popular type of houseplant currently, so we added almost 60 varieties of foliage plants this year that we had never sold before!



### **43 VARIETIES OF CACTI**

Many of our cacti were grown from seed and are several years old!



### **157 VARIETIES OF SUCCULENTS**

Our sale started 6 years ago, primarily as a succulent sale. This is still our most populated category due to the wild diversity of succulents.



### **OVER 100 NEW VARIETIES THIS YEAR**

We're always expanding our collection with new varieties, as well as trying to stay "on-trend" with the world of houseplants.



### **NEW COLLECTIBLE HOUSEPLANT T-SHIRT**

Our 2021 shirt was a fan favorite. They will be available for purchase during our online holiday sale coming soon. They make great gifts for any plant lover in your life!

# MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS

## Holiday Make and Take

Thursday, December 2, 2021 2-5 PM

Join us for an afternoon of holiday fun!  
Plant & Soil Science Building-MSU Campus  
1066 Bogue Street, East Lansing, MI 48824

Each participant will attend  
3 workshops and take home  
items from each.

**\$69 per person**

**2021 Garden Members receive  
10% discount**

For detailed descriptions  
and to register visit:  
[shopmsugardens.com](http://shopmsugardens.com)

**2:00 Registration**

**2:15- Holiday Tea**

Learn about inexpensive holiday  
tablescape ideas, along with an  
afternoon tea.

**3:30-5 Workshops**

Living Ornament  
Holiday Wreath

Join the MSU Horticulture Garden Staff as well celebrate the holiday season with tea, crafts and fun. In accordance with university health directives, all individuals are required to wear masks indoors in all Michigan State campus buildings. With this policy in place, face coverings must be worn by everyone in attendance at this event, unless actively eating or drinking.

Living Ornament



Register at

[shopmsugardens.com](http://shopmsugardens.com)

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