MSUIN BLOOM for the Holidays

MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



HOLIDAY MESSAGE | POINSETTIA SALE
VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL | DECK THE HALLS | HOLIDAY GIFTING
NEW FENCE PROJECT | HOUSEPLANT SALE SUCCESS



It was our pleasure to share our love of plants with you over the course of 2022. Our continued goal is to create beauty and learning opportunities for you to enjoy. We are here because of your support and we cannot wait to see what 2023 has in store for our





DECK THE HALLS CONSERVATORY

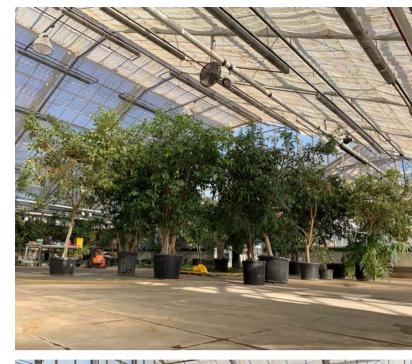
PREPPING OUR EVENT VENUE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Perhaps the first ever real deep clean of the conservatory is currently underway in preparation for our many upcoming holiday events.

If you have ever attended an event in the conservatory, you would have noticed the ficus trees and Boston ferns, which blanket the outer perimeter. Quite a few plants were getting a little ragged and were removed to make space for new growth and a few new specimens.

The conservatory will be sanitized and the plants will be treated to ensure their future productivity. The process started the week before Thanksgiving, and will be all put back together in time for November 28th, when our legendary 16-foot tall poinsettia tree will be installed. Our first holiday event is December 2, which allows time for the poinsettia bracts to turn outwards towards the light, filling in all the gaps.

While we will not be hosting a holiday open house this year, please visit us over the next several weeks to view the poinsettia tree (it's an excellent photo shoot backdrop) and say hello to our staff and students.













Ron Perry, professor emeritus, garden volunteer, and author!

Student employee Adrianna Pipe and volunteers Rita Richardson, Penny Munson, and Tom Bolt help with fall cleanup

GARDEN VOLUNTEERS ARE CRITICAL HELPERS

By Ron Perry

Professor Emeritus, Department of Horticulture & Garden Volunteer

To get me out of the house and out of my wife's hair a few hours each week, I signed up to become a Horticulture Gardens volunteer in 2022. Having served as a faculty member for nearly 40 years, including a nearly seven-year stint as Chair of the Department of Horticulture, I developed an appreciation for the gardens, especially during nice weather when I could go out into the gardens and eat my lunch. In November of 2015, I was invited to give a presentation by the North American Fruit Explorers organization at the Chicago Botanic Gardens on "Rootstocks for High Density Fruit Growing in Michigan". It included my experiences with forming Espalier fruit trees in the presentation. Our commercial fruit growers of today benefit from practices created by estate Espalier gardeners in France in the 15th century. My hosts at CBG gave me a tour of the gardens where I especially appreciated the "island" devoted to a collection of Espalier trained fruit trees. I was astounded to learn that the Chicago Botanic Gardens depends heavily on over 1400 volunteers and a long waiting list of people trying to join. The impressively gated park of 325 acres draws attendance from 9 million people living in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Cameron, about adding a walled Espalier exhibit of pear and apple trees planted in 2016 to our collection. The two trees were added to the 2012 pergola/espalier apple exhibit. We published a guide to benefit the gardens and local gardeners on our Espalier experiences (https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/Donate-to-the-Gardens/espalier-book). Unlike the Chicago Botanic Gardens, MSU Horticultural Gardens are open to the public and accessible to our students and teachers for free. Our staff and department are creative in finding funding opportunities along with donations to generate sufficient money to support the gardens operating budget. Therefore, volunteers are crucial to accomplishing garden tasks with a limited number of staff and student workers.

I was inspired by the visit and when I returned to MSU, I approached then gardens director, Art

Over the years, and from a distance, I have seen our group of volunteers who helped the staff with various projects in the gardens. Then, after retiring and joining the group, I developed a new appreciation for their passion, hard-work, and knowledge. There are 15-20 regular volunteers who come each week. I know that the garden staff sincerely appreciate their contributions. The supervising staff who primarily includes Bethany, Brian, Daedre and Dan organize the group and direct their activities. The group works hard within a three-hour work session each week (sometimes two sessions). Work sessions range from planting, hand weeding, mulching, pruning/dead-heading and clearing beds of debris. In the process, the volunteer members learn from our kind and knowledgeable staff. Many volunteers are Master Gardeners who are continuing their horticultural education and gain credits for MG credential for time contributed in their volunteer work. My education in horticulture has been enhanced with learning from the volunteers and staff.

By joining this group, I am proud to say that I have made many new friends. I have commented to our staff many times, how impressed I am of their work ethic and how much gets accomplished each week in the limited time. I am certainly impressed with their overall knowledge in gardening. Having taught horticulture classes (fruit, wine and plant propagation) for nearly 50 years, I can certainly say that our students could learn much from this group of volunteers. I managed to recruit one of my fellow retired faculty members, Eric Hanson, to help each week and he and I have shared our positive impressions of these super garden volunteers. "Sparty-On"!

The most important time in our work sessions is snack time. Each week we take 15 minutes out of the 3 hour session to get recharged and get to know members. Many of the volunteers sign up to bring delectable goodies each week...donuts, cookies, cakes, fruit and veggies. Some of the members are talented bakers and pride themselves in bringing their heavenly goodies each week. Now you know why I come each week.



Student employee Adrianna Pipe and volunteer Rita Richardson removing flowers at the season's end.



Everyone's favorite part of volunteer days: catching up with friends over yummy snacks!



GIVE THE GIFT OF A 2023 GARDEN MEMBERSHIP OR COMMEMORATIVE BRICK

Visit our Membership webpage HERE Visit our Commemorative Brick webpage HERE



GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS (AND GOOD WEDDINGS)

By Daedre McGrath Trial Garden Manager

Did you know that trees have lifespans? Weird, right? This is something we don't talk about often, but trees (and shrubs) do have lifespans. Quite a few of the original trees and shrubs planted in the gardens during the mid-1980's have already reached the end of their functional life. Some of these trees have been candidates for replacement. For example, a few years ago we swapped out the diseased crabapple alley in the annual gardens with maples.

The time has come to replace the Arborvitae hedge separating the annual gardens from the parking lot to the west. The shrubs are aging and sparse. Some died from stress after a sidewalk replacement project. One got hit by a car! Several others were taken out by windstorms. Due to the sparse foliage and gaps, the hedge no longer serves its original purpose.

This area also happens to be our #1 wedding ceremony venue. The hedge has been the backdrop to hundreds of wedding ceremonies (including mine) and serves as a privacy screen, blocking the hustle and bustle of the parking lot from view. We need this visual barrier, yet it is impractical to start from scratch with new shrubs. It would take years for new shrubs to fill in, and would create additional maintenance needs down the road.

In 2023, we hope to install an elegant horizontal slat fence made of maintenance-free composite material (shown in the above photo). This is a pricey project, but needs to be done to maintain the integrity of our wedding venue (a major income generator). We hope this fence will provide a classy and clean backdrop for wedding ceremonies and photography for the next 30 years and beyond.







SEVENTH ANNUAL HOUSEPLANT & SUCCULENT SALE:

A SMASHING SUCCESS!!!

BY DAEDRE MCGRATH
TRIAL GARDEN MANAGER

We are excited to announce that we have now had two record-breaking plant sales in 2023! Furthermore, both of the sales not only broke the previous records, but totally smashed them. It has never been more obvious that plants make people very happy!

Our Seventh Annual Houseplant and Succulent Sale took place on November 4th, 2023 and went extremely well! We had busy crowds all day long and hardly any inventory left at the end of the sale. All told, we raised close to \$44,000 to help pay student wages, and make needed improvements to the gardens and facilities. We sold approximately 86% of our inventory. Help us sell the remaining 14% during our holiday sale by ordering here.

Thank you to everyone who helped with our plant sales this past year. Whether you were inserting price tags, stocking tables, running a cash register, interacting with customers, or shopping yourself, your help was instrumental in making our fundraisers a success. We are overjoyed to be able to share our hard work with our gardening community and send home lots of plant babies to new homes.

