

MSU IN BLOOM

MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



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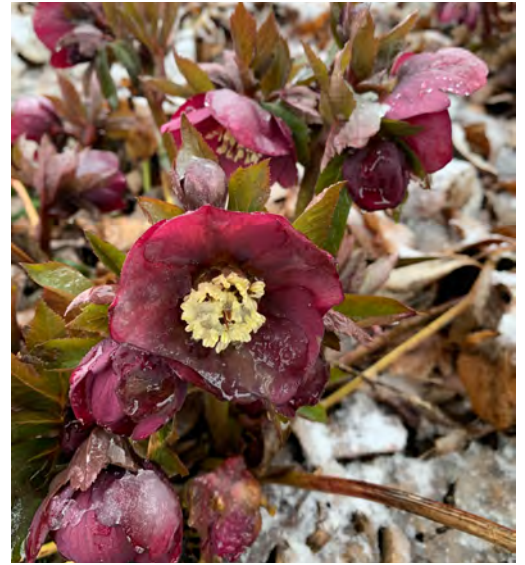
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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY KRISTIN GETTER, DIRECTOR OF THE MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS

Spring is Here!

You know it is officially spring when the Lenten Roses are blooming in our Gardens (see the ice coated *Helleborus* 'Red Racer' pictured right). And spring is especially sweet this year as we are having all our events in-person this year! We've already hosted four in-person Curious Gardener Spring workshops this year and they have been a great success. Our Spring Plant Sale will be entirely in-person as well (see page 3 for more details).



Moving On

But sadly, I will not be here to see the glorious summer season. I'm retiring on May 31, 2022 to take care of an elderly family member. My husband's mother can no longer live on her own and she is now living with us in a cramped 3-bedroom house. We started building a larger, multi-generational home last year (anticipating her care needs), and we are just about ready to move into that home where we will all have more space. That home is over an hour away from campus, so to be closer to the rest of our family. My husband works remotely, so he can live anywhere.

Rest assured, the Gardens are in good hands. Our team of horticulturists and event staff are very experienced, and all are excellent employees and very dedicated to the Gardens. My successor hasn't been named yet, but I assume in the months to come an interim Garden Director will be named until the Horticulture Department completes a search for my permanent replacement.

Norm Lownds, the Children's Garden Curator, is also retiring. His last day is June 30, 2022. The Department of Horticulture has an active search for his replacement beginning soon. We anticipate having his replacement in place by January 1, 2023 at the very latest.

I wish you all the very best!

With much gratitude,
Kristin Getter

GARDEN HAPPENINGS

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING & EVENT COORDINATOR

The horticulturists are eagerly awaiting the planting season and are busy sowing seeds, potting up seedlings, and watching them all grow in the greenhouse.

A green rectangular poster with a background of various colorful flowers (pink, orange, purple) and green foliage. The text is centered and uses a mix of bold sans-serif and elegant script fonts. The main title is in large, bold, white sans-serif font. The dates and times are in bold, white sans-serif font. The location is in bold, white sans-serif font. The list of plants is in a purple script font. The website is in bold, purple sans-serif font. The Michigan State University logo is in white sans-serif font. The Horticulture Gardens logo is in white sans-serif font.

MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS
2022 Plant Sale
FRIDAY, MAY 13 4-7PM (*2022 GARDEN MEMBERS ONLY)
SATURDAY, MAY 14 7-2PM (PUBLIC SALE)
1066 BOGUE STREET EAST LANSING, MI 48824
*Great deals on hanging
baskets, perennials, annuals,
grasses, herbs, vegetable
seedlings, shrubs, and more!*
**FOR MORE INFO VISIT:
HRT.MSU.EDU/GARDENS**
*2022 MSU Garden Members receive 10%
off Plant Sale purchases. This postcard does
not entitle you to a garden membership.
MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Horticulture
Gardens

We'd like to thank everyone who attended our Curious Gardener programs this spring! They have been a huge success and we look forward to offering more in the fall!

Spring Plant Sale
Garden Day (registration opens June 3)
Houseplant & Succulent Sale

May 14
September 17
November 5

REGISTRATION
OPENS
JUNE 3

Garden Day

Reimagined

Edible Gardening

Urban Foraging

Houseplant Proagation

Vendor Marketplace

Mixed Container Perennials

Explore the World of Plants

Herbal Spa

Explore the Gardens

Saturday, September 17, 2022

Registration Opens June 3

WHAT'S DAN EATING?

BY DAN BULKOWSKI, GREENHOUSE MANAGER



Kitchen is closed.
Deer tracks passing through.

This was going to be an article about plants and things that might be found outside at this time to eat. I'm fairly notorious when walking in the woods and on paths, to reach down and start to nibble on a weed or plant growing there. My friends think that will be the end of me someday. Or, they want to be at my house when the zombie apocalypse comes, knowing that we won't go hungry. Maybe. But, this spring so far, we'd be hungry. The cold temps, and the rain/snow, has delayed the start of spring growth. There is nothing in the beds around here except for deer tracks. So, we'll try to do this for the next newsletter in June. And if nothing is growing outside then, we all will be in trouble.

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS BENEFITS

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING & EVENT COORDINATOR

Do you love plants? Do you love to shop? Then don't miss out on early access to the MSU Horticulture Gardens Plant Sale! Become an MSU Horticulture Gardens member and join the Plant Sale VIP Club! Not only will you be invited to access the sale a day earlier than the public, but you will also receive 10% off all of your plant purchases! Membership has many benefits! You will also receive early access to our Houseplant & Succulent Sale, a discount on our garden programs, free admission to 200+ American Horticulture Society reciprocal gardens across the country, and more! You can renew or join online here: www.hrt.msu.edu/join. If you need a brochure mailed to you, please contact hgardens@msu.edu, or 517-353-0443, or download one [here](#).



The Horticulture Gardens Plant Sale will take place on Saturday, May 14, 7am-2pm at the Plant & Soil Sciences Bldg., 1066 Bogue St, East Lansing

THE DAWNING OF THE AGE OF ASCLEPIAS

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

If you are a plant person, then at some point in your life, you have heard of the genus *Asclepias*. Their popularity in the past decade has soared in at-home gardens across the country, all in the name of the mighty Monarch butterfly. Our beautiful state of Michigan is home to eleven native species of milkweed, with a few being endangered or only found in a select few counties. In the United States, there are 73 native species, with about 30 species utilized by Monarchs as host plants.



Asclepias 'Milkmaid' - from growjoy.com

My fondness for *Asclepias* began when I started exploring the outlying parks and recreational areas around Ypsilanti, Michigan. I was immediately attracted to their spent and dried seedheads in late winter leftover from the previous year. Eventually, I was able to see the

beautiful umbels of blush-pink flowers on *Asclepias syriaca*, or common milkweed, which I identified with my trusty field guide back when I was learning plants (the hard way – no apps or phones with photos to compare to!). I was unaware of the impact plants were having on my life at the time – how fun it is to reminisce on the early days of discovery and exploration!

A lot of us know of the common 'butterfly weed', or *Asclepias tuberosa*, and common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*. However, there are plenty of varieties and cultivars you can grow in your yard while still paying homage to our winged friends. In Michigan, Monarchs utilize the following species the most (in order of abundance and preference): *A. syriaca*, *A. incarnata*, *A. tuberosa*, *A. verticillata*, and *A. exaltata*.

This year, I will be selling the most varieties of *Asclepias* at our plant sale than I have ever offered, and they were all grown from seed right here at the gardens! You can purchase the following at our sale:

- *Asclepias tuberosa*, or butterfly weed - Striking orange flowers growing up to 2 feet tall. We sell out of this plant every single year at the sale – so be sure to get some before they are gone! It prefers drier soil, and once it has been planted, be sure to leave it! Their long taproots hate to be disturbed, and I have had very limited success in transplanting this plant.

- *Asclepias tuberosa* 'Gay Butterflies' mix, - Comes in shades of red, orange, and yellow. Make sure to get multiple to create a colorful display in your garden!
- *Asclepias tuberosa* 'Hello Yellow' - The cutest and most endearing yellow flowers you've ever seen. We are limited in numbers, so be sure to become a member to get first pick at our Friday sale!
- *Asclepias incarnata* 'Swamp Milkweed' – Possibly my favorite variety as of now (this could always change as I learn more!). Also known as swamp milkweed, as it needs more water than the *tuberosa* varieties. Great for around ponds or in marginally wet areas. This plant is just so sophisticated – and make sure you stop to smell the flowers! I have this in my yard, and the monarchs love to visit for the nectar and to lay eggs.
- *Asclepias incarnata* 'Milkmaid' - A white flowering variety of swamp milkweed. Adds pops of white to the garden. Regardless of almost any color scheme that already exists, it can provide some excellent contrast and eye-popping color. I encourage you to try if you don't have many white flowering plants already!
- *Asclepias syriaca* 'Common Milkweed' – Monarchs love this variety the most! This can naturalize a bit in the garden, so be sure to plant this in an area where you don't mind it spreading gradually over time. Perfect for areas that you don't want to mow while also supporting our Monarch friends.



Asclepias tuberosa 'Gay Butterflies Mixture' -
from whiteflowerfarm.com



Asclepias syriaca - xerces.org

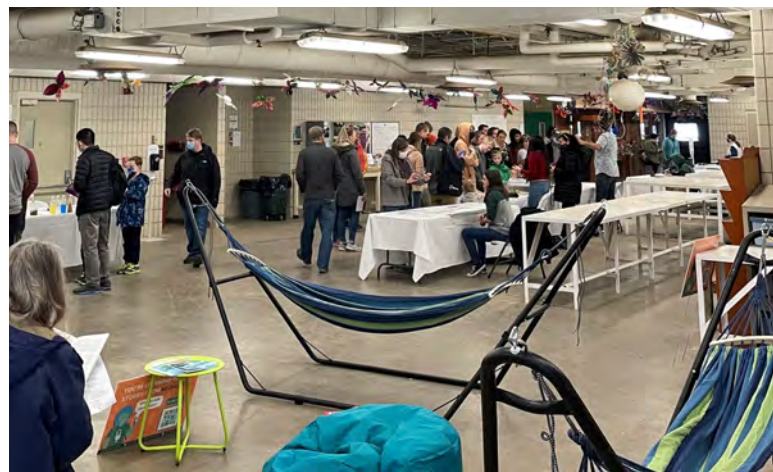
We hope you get the chance to try a few different varieties of *Asclepias* in your garden this year! If you have questions on any of the varieties or want to learn more, you can reach out to us or find some interesting information online!

PLANNING AN EVENT?

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING & EVENT COORDINATOR

Are you planning an event, class reunion, departmental party, or retirement party? Maybe a celebration of life, a fundraiser for an organization, or just wanting to have a celebration with friends? Contact Amy McCausey to host your event in the Gardens! ph. 517-353-0443 or gardens@msu.edu

Below are some picture of recent non-wedding events we have had in the Gardens.



STAFF FAVORITES

IN THE SPRING PLANT SALE

DAEDRE:

I think Vinca is an underappreciated annual flower. They are serious workhorses in the garden! Once established, Vinca is both heat- and drought-tolerant. They provide color all season long and have few pest or disease issues. Vinca 'Tattoo' is an eye-catching new series that has been on the market for a couple years now. Each flower has inky black coloring in the center, which feathers out through the petals. This year, we will have many varieties of Vinca available at the Spring Plant Sale, including four members of the Tattoo series (photo 1, clockwise from top left): Black Cherry, Papaya, Raspberry, and American Pie Mix which features Tattoo Blueberry along with red and white varieties from the Pacifica XP series.



PHOTO 1

BRIAN:

Buddleia aka Butterfly Bush is a floriferous summer-blooming shrub with colorful and fragrant flowers. Although Buddleia is no new-kid-on-the-block, there have been many new cultivars introduced recently. These newer varieties often have improved upon desired characteristics, and most are more suitably sized for today's smaller gardens. 'Grand Cascade' (photo 2) is a unique variety and one of my favorites! It has huge, light lavender flower panicles that are often longer than a foot and can be 4" thick. If you're unfamiliar with Buddleia, that's enormous! The flower panicles are so long, they cascade downward which gives the plant a unique weeping shape. It grows to be about 5-6 feet tall, 7-8 feet wide, and it is best to give them room to showcase those huge flowers and appreciate the cascading form.

(continued on next page)



PHOTO 2

In addition to great looks, Buddleia is a pollinator magnet and attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds to the garden. This year we have a limited number of 3-gallon Buddleia 'Grand Cascade' in our sale. We are aiming to have more of these, and other stellar shrubs, in our plant sales in years to come. So, if you miss out this time, they will be back!

DAN:

For our upcoming spring plant sale, we will be growing many varieties of vegetables for you to try in your garden. But, I wanted to chat about a few smaller ones that could be grown on your deck, patio, or balcony. Patio Baby Eggplant (photo 3) is a short (up to 24" tall) plant, that produces small 2-3" long, dark purple fruits. You can harvest over 25 fruits per plant, and no staking is necessary. A couple of peppers to mention include Mini Bell Red Pepper (photo 4). It has tiny 1-2" fruits, that start green and mature to red. The fruits are very sweet when mature, and on 2' tall plants. Pot-A-Peno Pepper (photo 5) is a compact, 12-15" tall plant that produces normal-ish size jalapeno fruits. The variety is advertised that it can be planted in hanging baskets, but will do well in containers. The last one to discuss is Patio Snacker Cucumber (photo 6). It will do best in a larger container with a trellis because it will send out smaller vines. Normal size 8" fruits are continually produced if mature fruits are picked as they ripen.



PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4



PHOTO 5



PHOTO 6

BETHANY:

It may be tough for me to decide on what my favorite plant is for our upcoming plant sale. Luckily, I have found a great love for perennial succulents, and there is no shortage of these for the sale this year! Particularly, I have a great variety of sedums for sale, from seed-grown groundcovers to tall, upright, clumping cultivars. I particularly love sedums because of their drought tolerance, their ability to grow well in poor soil, and for their range of colors and textures that add pizzazz to the sunny, dry garden. Of note are Sedum 'Tiramisu' (photo 7), which sports longer, oblong leaves and changes colors throughout the season. It is also known to keep its shape throughout the season. We also received 'Coraljade' (photo 8), which is in the same ROCK 'N GROW collection as 'Tiramisu'. I am particularly excited for this one, as the colors of the buds and flowers together create a mix of green and coral colors that are sure to contrast and bring out other colors in plants nearby. I will definitely be adding these into our perennial beds this year, and you should probably be adding these to yours, too! We have lots of other sedums available at our sale, so be sure to come by and check it out and look for our inventory list when it is available!

**ALL THESE
PLANTS &
MORE
AVAILABLE
MAY 14!**



PHOTO 7

**SUPPORT
THE
GARDENS!**

PHOTO 8

BranchOut

FREE interactive performance exploring
the science of tree communication and
community through dance and music.

May 4th, 2022 at 5:00pm
MSU Horticulture Gardens

Reserve your spot on our Eventbrite: shorturl.at/aeqN8

This project is a collaboration between the units of Theatre, Forestry, Composition, Apparel & Textile Design, Lyman Briggs and the Horticulture Gardens of MSU.
Find out more at: <https://branchout.dobbinsa.msu.domains/>

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