

MSU IN BLOOM

MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



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GARDEN HAPPENINGS

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING & EVENT COORDINATOR

The horticulturists are busily planting and maintaining the gardens. We are also planning our Garden Day after a two-year hiatus thanks to the pandemic. We have lots of exciting speakers and workshops lined up! See more information at hrt.msu.edu/garden-day.

A promotional poster for Garden Day 2022. The background is a lush garden scene with pink dahlias, green foliage, and blue evergreens. Overlaid on the image is a white rectangular box containing the text "Garden Day 2022 Reimagined" in a mix of serif and script fonts. To the left of the box, the words "Register Now!" are written in a large, flowing script. Below the main text, the Michigan State University logo and "Horticulture Gardens" are visible. At the bottom of the poster, the website "shopmsugardens.com" is written in a large, black, sans-serif font.

Register Now!

Garden Day
2022
Reimagined

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Horticulture Gardens

shopmsugardens.com

Do you have a garden-related craft passion? If so, we'd love to have you as a Garden Day Vendor! For more information, email hgardens@msu.edu

Garden Day
Houseplant & Succulent Sale

September 17
November 5

REGISTRATION
NOW
OPEN

Garden Day

Reimagined

Edible Gardening

Urban Foraging

Houseplant Propagation

Vendor Marketplace

Mixed Container Perennials

Explore the World of Plants

Herbal Spa

Backyard Design

Saturday, September 17, 2022

hrt.msu.edu/garden-day

OUTDOOR SUCCULENT TRIAL

FIVE-YEAR RECAP

DAEDRE MCGRATH, TRIAL GARDEN MANAGER

Our highly popular outdoor succulent trial program came to an end in 2021. Since its beginning in 2017, we evaluated approximately 462 different varieties of houseplant-type succulents and drought-tolerant foliage plants, across 60 different genera, for their outdoor performance. The goal of this program was to identify non-hardy succulents that have potential to be used in the same way as traditional annual bedding plants. I wanted to answer the question, “Instead of planting a marigold or a geranium, can I plant a jade plant or a snake plant?” And the answer in many cases was YES!

Our evaluation criteria for the succulent trial was slightly different than for our normal annual flower trials. For both trials, we were interested in things like:

- 1) **Vigor**, or how fast the plant grows and how substantial it is in the landscape
- 2) **Wow-factor**, or how eye-catching or unique.

In addition to these criteria, for the succulents, we also were interested in:

- 3) **Resistance to sunburn**, as these are plants that are typically grown indoors
- 4) **Adaptability to our Michigan climate**, including fluctuating temperatures and rainfall amounts.



Overall, we were pleasantly surprised at how well the succulents performed outdoors, but here are some of the most common issues we noticed:

1) Slow growth- I need a succulent that can “hold its own” when planted with other annuals. It cannot get swallowed up by its neighbors.

2) Permanent scarring from sunburn- the leafy nature of typical bedding plants allow them to “grow-out” of or cover up damage from sunburn (or chilling injury) that occurs soon after planting. Succulents, on the other hand, while they do grow and get bigger, the scarring tends to remain visible for much longer (and sometimes never gets covered up).

3) Rot from too much rain- most succulents are adapted to arid climates, so wet weather (especially prolonged periods of wet weather) can cause some varieties to rot and die.

4) Pests and diseases- succulents have their own set of common pests and diseases that sometimes, but not always, overlap with traditional bedding plants. In particular, succulents can be susceptible to aphids, mealybug, and powdery mildew. We even identified a very usual nematode that only affects *Aloe*, causing cankerous growth in the growing points. Luckily, this nematode seemed to remain isolated to a single variety, *Aloe dorotheae* ‘Sunset’.



Oscularia deltoides



Echeveria 'Topsy Turvy'



Graptoveria 'Fred Ives'

Many of the varieties that performed well in our containerized trial, were later used in garden displays in the ground. For example, the bottom left photo shows a carpet-bedding style garden with *Aloe vera* and *Senecio mandraliscae* comprising the "M" and *Sedum mexicanum* 'Lemon Coral' as the background plant.

Here's a quick list of varieties that performed particularly well in the trial (although there were many more):

- *Aloe vera*
- *Echeveria* 'Purple Pearl'
- *Echeveria* 'Topsy Turvy'
- *Echeveria* 'Violet Queen'
- *Graptopoveria* 'Fred Ives'
- *Kalanchoe marnieriana*
- *Oscularia deltoidea*
- *Sansevieria* (basically all species and cultivars we trialed)
- *Sedum japonicum* 'Tokyo Sun'
- *Sedum mexicanum* 'Lemon Coral'
- *Senecio vitalis* 'Serpents'
- *Tradescantia* 'Pink Panther'



***Sedum* 'Lemon Coral' mixed with
*Portulaca***



Carpet-bedding style garden



***Senecio vitalis* 'Serpents'**

VISITORS BOOTH IS OPEN!

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER



Have you happened to come by the gardens to get a closer look at our Visitor's Booth? Run on weekdays by volunteers, our booth is there for our friends of the gardens to ask questions, get a cold drink of water, and to see our array of fine merchandise for sale! All proceeds support the gardens, and we have so many fun gifts and souvenirs. Currently, we have a nice selection of perennials, some annuals, terrariums, t-shirts, magnets, pins, and mugs. And keep visiting – we tend to get creative here, so stop by and see what other fun crafts and gifts we create for you to enjoy! The booth is open Monday through Friday, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM, and runs from the first week of June through the last week of August. Come by and see us!



PERENNIAL GARDEN SHENANIGANS!

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

What's been going on in the perennial garden this year, you ask? Well – it's been an interesting venture, to say the least! We can definitely see that the past couple pandemic years have caused us to have quite a bit to catch up on. I have a great crew who is helping me daily to edge, weed, mulch, plant, and water! We are currently edging and mulching our little hearts away. In between our maintenance duties, we are improving areas, after we remove weeds, with perennials that were leftover from our plant sale. Occasionally we stop to smell the yucca flowers – yes, we did that just this morning! – and to admire other plants that catch our eye.



We also are extremely lucky, and we happened to get a donation for a waterfall for our pond! This is huge for us, as our pond has been difficult to maintain due to the stasis of the water and the ever-growing algae population. Now, with movement and filtration, we are on our way to building up the good bacteria in our pond and providing our fish and frogs with a lovely, clear place to stay. This does take time – adding the waterfall feature basically makes us 'start fresh', and just like resetting an old fish tank, we need patience and daily maintenance to get us there. Be sure to check out the pond area for our new addition – and please don't climb the waterfall!





*Live simple,
love well,
and take time to smell the
flowers along the way.
-Mark Twain*



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS BENEFITS

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING & EVENT COORDINATOR

Do you love the Gardens or know someone who does? Why not become a member? Or give a membership as a gift! Membership has many benefits!

- Early access to our Plant Sales
- Discounts on your Plant Sale purchases
- Discounts on our garden programming
- 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 would like a brochure mailed to you, please contact hgardens@msu.edu or, 517-353-0443, or download one [here](#).



SUPPORT THE GARDENS

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING & EVENT COORDINATOR



Did you know that you can commemorate a loved one or special event in the Gardens? Consider purchasing a brick in memory of a special memory or event. The Gardens offers commemorative bricks in two sizes that can be engraved and permanently installed in one of several locations. Remember a loved one or special event each and every time you visit the Gardens. Find more information [here](#). If you would like a brick brochure mailed to you, please contact hgardens@msu.edu or, 517-353-0443. Purchases can be made [here](#).

MICHIGAN BIG TREE HUNT

BY JESSICA WRIGHT, EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Looking for a fun activity to do with the family or friends this summer? Well, look no further than the Michigan Big Tree Hunt. ReLeaf Michigan created the Michigan Big Tree Hunt in 1993 to celebrate our state's beauty and create a fun way to gather information about Michigan's biggest trees. This program, which is sponsored by the Department of Forestry and the Michigan DNR, uses the public to identify Michigan's biggest trees. The public can submit trees to the ReLeaf Michigan website (www.releafmichigan.org) and you can see if a tree in your community is one of Michigan's biggest trees. The website hosts a list of current state champions. If you would like to see some of Michigan's biggest trees, you can use the list and go on your own big tree hunt in your own community. Michigan State actually has quite a few big trees right here on campus, including one in the 4-H Children's Garden. The big tree in the 4-H Children's Garden is a Dawn Redwood and ranks in the top ten for that species in the state. The Department of Forestry is actually photographing these big trees with some pretty cool technology. The photos here are of the Dawn Redwood in the 4-H Children's Garden were taken with both leaves on and leaves off. If you're in the garden this summer, make sure to stop by the 4-H Children's Garden and take a look at our big tree and maybe check out some others on campus too!

