

MSU IN BLOOM

MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



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UPCOMING EVENTS & SAVE THE DATES

Celery-brate Plants! (MSU Science Festival)	April 18 th , 12-4PM
Members Only Spring Plant Sale	May 15 th 5-7PM
Spring Plant Sale	May 16 th 8am-2PM
Michigan Garden Plant Tour	July 27-August 7
2026 VIP Fall Houseplant & Succulent Sale	November 5 th 4-7 PM
Eleventh Annual Fall Houseplant & Succulent Sale	November, 6 th 8am-4PM

REFLECTING ON WINTER



Winter invites us to pause and reflect, as the days become shorter and the nights stretch longer. While the garden rests beneath a gentle layer of snow, our team is busy planning, preparing, and eagerly anticipating the fresh year ahead!



Finding Beauty and Celebration in Every Season

Even with the chilly temperatures and snow covered gardens, we found countless reasons to celebrate and appreciate the season. The winter months were filled with joy and cheer as we closed out 2025 and welcomed 2026.

There were so many beautiful things this winter season, including the annual poinsettia tree created by our incredible staff. We also held our Poinsettia sale, which was a success! We hosted beloved annual events, including our VIP Wine & Chocolate evening, featuring delightful Fabiano's Gourmet Chocolates, and held our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner catered by An Affair to Remember Catering.



Our 2025 poinsettia tree showstopper



A Winter Morning Sunrise outside of the conservatory





THINK SPRING

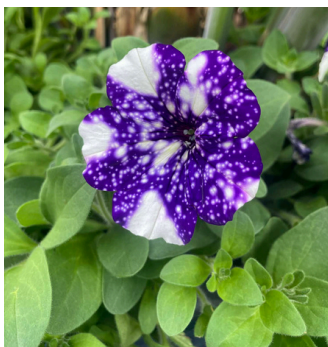


Welcoming Spring & Fresh Changes



Winter may be quiet outdoors, but behind the scenes our team is buzzing. We organize seeds, plan garden spaces, gather new plants during "dump day", and join volunteers for potting parties and crafting our volunteer head house display. We gear up for our spring plant sale, refresh our venue packages and amenities, and prepare for the release of hundreds of butterflies in the 4-H children's classroom.

With so much happening, the energy is high as we get ready for a bright new season at the gardens!

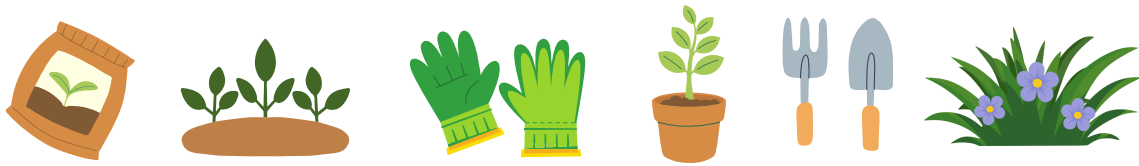


2025 VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you to our volunteers!



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS



To our incredible volunteers, thank you for the countless hours you put in to help our gardens thrive in 2025.

We're fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers sharing their time, energy, knowledge, and joy. We truly could not do all of this without you and look forward to all of the fun we are going to have in 2026.

The gardens don't bloom on their own.

We're not only a destination, but also a community thanks to you!





2025 Volunteer Highlights

Docent Hours: 965.25

Labor Hours: 1321.25

Total Hours: 2286.5



Our volunteers rock!





2025 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR DONNA ZISCHKE

Why does Donna love volunteering at the gardens and what makes them special to her?

“ For me, volunteering in the MSU horticultural gardens is a fun and rewarding experience. Working together with fellow volunteers and garden managers, it provides a great opportunity for friendship, learning and making a positive impact on the community. I’m proud of the contributions volunteers make to the Gardens and Arboretum that make it a beautiful, peaceful and natural space for faculty, staff, students and visitors to campus”. - Donna Zischke

Eager to Garden with new friends?

Come volunteer with us!

The MSU Horticulture Gardens has 14 acres of beautiful garden space, located on the campus of MSU.

Our dedicated and passionate staff cherish the opportunity to work alongside our volunteers. Volunteers play a vital role in maintaining the beauty of our gardens for the community to Enjoy.

Volunteers assist us with a variety of tasks, including:

Garden maintenance

Organizing events

Conducting plant sales

Engage with visitors at our welcome booth

Join our volunteer team today and make a difference!

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Horticulture
Gardens

2026 MEMBERSHIPS NOW BLOOMING

Our Gardens grow thanks to endowments, generous gifts, and our own events like our plant sales, programs, commemorative bricks, and venue rentals. A simple way to support the MSU Horticulture Gardens is through a yearly membership, which also gives you entry to hundreds of gardens in the American Horticulture Reciprocal program.

Become a member at the family level or higher and get other perks, such as a Special invitation (for two) to our Annual VIP Wine and Chocolate Donor Reception.



Learn more at https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/garden_memberships.



For other ways to give, visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/Donate-to-the-Gardens/.



HORTICULTURE GARDENS • MSU

2026 MEMBERSHIP

Memberships now blooming!

Individual Membership Includes:

- VIP early bird spring plant sale
- 10% discount on all plant sale purchases
- Free admission to AHS Reciprocal Gardens
- Discounts on all MSU Horticulture Gardens Programs



AHS Garden Network Spotlight



Wonder Gardens, Bonita Springs, FL

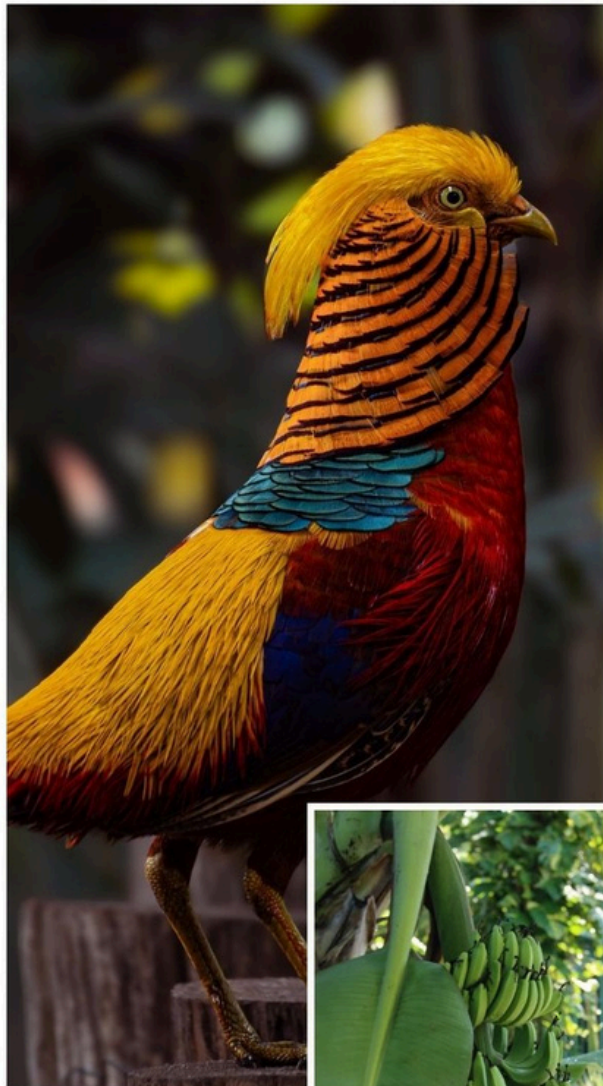
The Wonder Gardens is a charming historic sanctuary that fosters conservation and resilience by offering transformative experiences that evoke wonder in the natural world. This unique destination cares for rescued and non-releasable animals, all set within stunning botanical gardens. Established as a privately owned facility in 1936, this now non-profit zoological park is a distinctive gem in Southwest Florida, ideal for visitors of all ages!



Immersive, Engaging, Educational Experiences!



The Wonder Gardens is home to a diverse family of rescued, rehabilitated and non-releasable animals. From Florida Alligators and Flamingos to beautiful macaws, pythons, turtles, tortoises and even Chinese Golden Pheasants – add that to the vibrant botanical collection and they have something to interest every member of your family!



2026 SPRING PLANT SALE

Friday, May 15th

5PM-7PM Garden Members Only

Saturday, May 16th

8AM-2PM Public Sale

MSU Horticulture Gardens *2026 Plant Sale*

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 5PM-7PM (GARDEN MEMBERS ONLY)

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 8AM-2PM (PUBLIC SALE)

*Great deals on hanging baskets, perennials, annuals,
grasses, vegetable seedlings, shrubs and more!*

hrt.msu.edu/springsale

Bring this postcard for a free sticker!



Grow your Garden & Support ours!

The Annual Spring Plant Sale has been a Garden tradition for the past 25+ years and we normally see 2000 plant lovers from around the area.

We will have over 500 varieties of vibrant garden favorites including hardy perennials, stunning annuals, pollinator-friendly blooms, grasses, vegetable seedlings, shrubs, hanging baskets and more!

Whether you are refreshing your landscape, making a new garden bed, or looking for something beautiful to take home, you'll find inspiration while strolling through our offerings.

Our knowledgeable and passionate staff, along with our dedicated volunteers will be available to answer questions, share gardening tips, and share their favorites. This community event is not only a chance to cultivate your garden, but also to connect with fellow nature enthusiasts and support a valuable cause.

The best part about our sale is that every purchase supports our gardens! When you shop our sale, you help our gardens grow!

Members enjoy early shopping access and 10% off at our members only sale on Friday, May 15th, from 5pm-7pm.

We can't wait to welcome you to our sale and kick off the gardening season together!



EXCITING FINDS AT THE SPRING PLANT SALE



Herbs and Vegetables:

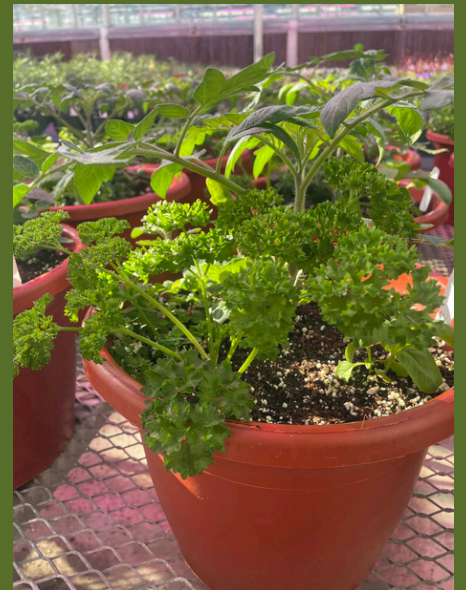
- Italian combo bowl filled with juicy tomatoes and a delightful mix of herbs.
- Lemony herb bowl featuring golden lemon thyme, lemon basil, and sage.
- A fantastic variety of herbs, including basil, thyme, oregano, fennel, chives, and many others.

Annuals:

- A vibrant selection of Black-eyed Susan Vine available in various colors.
- A diverse assortment of Kong Coleus, ideal for shaded gardens.
- Tropical thrillers for containers showcasing an array of colors with Canna, Bananas, and Elephant Ear plants.

Perennials:

- Shade-friendly selections featuring a range of ferns, Epimedium, and Polemonium.
- Sun-loving varieties like perennial Hibiscus, Baptisia, Geum, and Sedum.
- An assortment of ground cover options, including Creeping Phlox, Ajuga, Creeping Thyme, and Delosperma.





FAMILY PROGRAMS

SPRING & SUMMER 2026

SUMMER FUN SERIES

Butterfly Day

April 25 from 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Join us in celebrating another exciting season of “Butterflies in the Garden.” Come and explore the secret life of butterflies in the Indoor 4-H Children’s Garden. We will discover the amazing butterfly life cycle, create butterfly gardens to take home and much more. **\$5 per child.**

Garden Geocache Event

June 6 from 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Cache veterans and new enthusiasts are welcome at this geocaching adventure. Bring your picnic lunch and enjoy a day of caching in the gardens. We will be finding new caches, trading travel bugs, exploring the gardens and much more. **FREE.**

Pirate and Pixie Garden Party

June 18 from 10 a.m.–noon

Argh me mateys. Join us for a morning of swashbuckling fun! We will be going on a treasure hunt, making pixie dust, and much more! **\$5 per child.***

Digger Day

June 23 from 10 a.m.–noon

Come to the garden and explore the world of diggers. Front-end loaders, dump trucks and back hoes – all of these tools help with projects both big and small in our communities. MSU Infrastructure Planning and Facilities will bring some of MSU’s biggest and best equipment to the garden for us to explore. We will also have activities and crafts. Come ready to dig and get dirty at this event! **\$5 per child.***

Water Day

July 16 from 10 a.m.–noon

Come cool off from the summer heat and have fun in the garden with water. We will play water games, do water art and explore all things fun about water. Come ready to get wet! **\$5 per child.***

Bug Day

July 23 from 10 a.m.–noon

We cannot get enough of these amazing six-legged friends! Join us for what has become an annual tribute to insects in the gardens. We will be collecting bugs, observing bugs and even making bugs! Our friends from the MSU Bug House will be back this year with their amazing collections of insects from all over the world! **\$5 per child.***

Bubble Day

July 30 from 10 a.m.–noon

Come celebrate the end of summer vacation at the garden with bubbles! As we explore the wonderful world of bubbles we will make bubble art, build bubble wands and much more. Don’t forget to invite your friends and family to come to this bubblicious bash! **\$5 per child.***

Be sure to register early!

*Event cost does not include parking.

CURIOUSITY CAMPS

Garden Writers Workshop July 7-9 from 10 a.m.-noon

Young writers will learn about the wonderful world of writing in the garden. Using the garden as their inspiration, campers will connect writing to nature by creating poems, stories, plays and much more. Ages 7 and up. (Limited to 20 participants). **Registration required. \$50 for all three days.***

Camp Monet

August 4-6 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Young artists will love spending three days in the gardens creating marvelous projects. Campers will use inspiration from the garden to make projects that involve sketching, painting, sculpting, dying, weaving and much more! Lunch will not be provided, so please bring a lunch each day. We will eat together in the garden. Ages 7 and up. (Limited to 20 participants). **Registration required. \$85 for all three days.***

Scan to Register!



Stories for Sprouts & Seedlings from 10-11 a.m.

This program is designed especially for young children, ages 0-4, to experience the wonders of gardening and fun through stories and hands-on projects. **FREE.***

June 10 — *How I Became a Pirate*

by David Shannon

June 24 — *The Tiny Seed* by S. K Mundon

July 8 — *Drop: An Adventure through the Water Cycle* by Emily Kate Moon

July 22 — *Jumper* by Jessica Lanan

August 19 — *We Walk Through the Forest*
by Lisa Ferland

*Event cost does not include parking.

SPLENDID STORIES

Stories in the Garden

June 17 from 10-11:30 a.m.

July 15 from 7-8:30 p.m.

August 5 from 10-11:30 a.m.

Teens will be reading stories to younger children - a magical time of fun and learning. Explore the gardens and stop to listen to stories as you go. Great for kids from 0 to 100!

Stories in the Garden is a partnership between the East Lansing Public Library and the Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens. Interested teen readers should email Storm at shawthorn@elpl.org."

IMPORTANT PARKING NOTE

Visitors during the week needing to park on campus will have a parking fee in addition to any registration cost to attend the event. You must park in a space designated as a "Pay by Plate" parking space. Signage has been installed in these areas. Parking spaces not marked as "Pay by Plate" may be reserved for faculty/staff permit parking. Parking in a space not designated as "Pay by Plate" parking may result in a parking violation. Immediately after parking, enter your license plate number and payment into the lot's SPOTON pay station or via the MSU SPOTON app. Pay stations accept cash payment or credit cards. They do not give change back nor are refunds issued for time paid for, but not used.

2026 FALL HOUSEPLANT & SUCCULENT SALE

Eleventh Annual

HOUSEPLANT & SUCCULENT SALE

NOVEMBER 6th,
2026 8AM-4PM

Grow your collection and help support the gardens!

Join us for our annual fall plant sale fundraiser, featuring succulents, cacti, and lush foliage plants.

Become a member to shop our early bird sale!



MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS
1066 BOGUE STREET
PLANT & SOIL SCIENCES BLDG
EAST LANSING, MI, 48824



MICHIGAN STATE
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Horticulture
Gardens

Support the gardens and grow your plant collection!

Join us for our Eleventh Annual Houseplant & Succulent Sale!

As the gardens begin to die down, it's the perfect time to bring home a new houseplant or a cute succulent to brighten and cozy up your space.

Whether you are an experienced collector or a new plant parent, we have a plant ready for you to adopt and add to your collection! Our knowledgeable staff and friendly volunteers will be available to assist as you explore and stroll through our sale.

Members of our gardens get to enjoy early shopping perks, being able to join our VIP sale on Thursday, November 5th from 4-7 pm.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Behind The Brick

Every brick has a story

Bob Kenny
Class of 1978
Football #35



Alexandra Kenny & Bob Kenny at Spartan Stadium



Alexandra in 2024

The first year her brick was placed

What inspired you to place a brick in the gardens?

My dad loved Michigan State and he loved gardening at home in North Carolina. Having a spot in East Lansing that serves as a lasting memory felt really nice. He came from a very big family of Spartans, that spans generations. Whenever any of us are in East Lansing for a game, it's a spot to visit, reflect, and remember how much he loved this place. I'm grateful I had the opportunity to give him a permanent space on campus.



Bob Kenny sitting next to Kirk Gibson (#23, former Detroit Tiger)



Bob Kenny When he played at Michigan State



Alexandra Kenny & Family running the Big10 10k in Chicago in 2017



Brick Location
Rose Garden North Circle

What is your favorite part about visiting the gardens?

It's very peaceful, but still feels connected to the campus.

Share your Story

Through our Behind the Brick series, we honor stories in our community. Each brick is a reminder of the lives, legacies, celebrations, and memories amongst our gardens. We're honored to hold these stories in our gardens and be a place of reflection .

If you have purchased a brick and would love to share your story, email us at hgardens@msu.edu

To purchase a brick, check out our website at https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Northland
West Olive, MI
Farms



This month we take a closer look at Northland Farm who generously donated the shrubs for the Rose Garden Renovation!

From its humble beginnings in the 1960s to its emergence as a regional powerhouse, Northland Farms has spent decades perfecting the art of the "Michigan hardy" plant.

Following its incorporation under new ownership in 2002, the company has expanded to manage 250 acres of production in West Michigan and an additional 75 acres in Oklahoma. This strategic dual-state operation allows Northland to utilize the Oklahoma sun for vigorous early-season growth before bringing items back to West Olive to be climatized for the rugged Midwest climate.

The success of Northland Farms lies in its unique geographic advantage. Situated near the Lake Michigan lakeshore, the nursery benefits from a temperate microclimate and natural snow cover that shields delicate plant material from harsh winter extremes. This northern location also allows the team to keep plants dormant longer in the spring, protecting them from early frosts and ensuring they are significantly hardier than those from southern growers.

Today, Northland Farms is a vital link in the Midwest supply chain, employing 100 staff members during peak season to service states like Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. With 85% of their product shipped within 300 miles of West Olive, they provide a diverse catalog—from evergreens and ornamental trees to fruit bushes and perennials—all grown to withstand the local environment.

Thank you Northland Farms for your support of the Gardens. To learn more about this garden partner check out their website www.northlandfarmsllc.com

A BLANK CANVAS



Our gardens and conservatory are the perfect backdrop for any occasion, but are especially magical for saying “I do”.

Each season of the garden offers an inspiring backdrop and a blank canvas for those willing to use their imagination and creativity to create the wedding of their dreams. Our venue offers a raw space and an open layout for endless possibilities. Whether a couple is dreaming of timeless elegance, garden party glam, moody and industrial, bright and whimsical, or something entirely unexpected. There is no “one look” at our venue and every celebration is different.

As my first season with the gardens I am so excited to see our spaces transform from our living laboratory to a dreamy celebration, hearing some heartwarming stories along the way. One of my goals is to capture the magic of our rental clients story at the gardens, transformations of our spaces, painting inspiration for those who dream of celebrating at the gardens. What makes our weddings even more special is knowing the revenue raised goes towards supporting our gardens!

Do you hear the wedding bells this season?

Written by: Victoria Churchill



REJUVINATE THE MSU JAPANESE GARDEN



Photo Credit: James Siatczynski

The Kathleen D.& Milton E. Muelder Japanese Garden at our Arboretum has been a cherished garden for many decades. It's no secret that its beautiful and alluring landscape is a place of reflection, peace, learning, and connection. This sanctuary within our gardens offers visitors a tranquil experience and continues to be a living work of art. Now it's time to preserve the integrity of this garden and renew its beauty so it can continue to be a place of harmony for generations to come.



RESTORATION & RENEWAL FOCUS

We will start by making crucial structural repairs, including the deck and seating, while also enhancing the area with fresh gravel and upgraded borders. Our goal is to completely restore the structure with a new roof and a fresh coat of paint.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

After more than thirty years, the wooden structures of our beloved Japanese Garden are showing signs of wear and need renewal. The gravel has become muddied, the roof is leaking, and the paint is faded. We are reaching out to our community for support to revitalize this cherished part of the MSU Horticulture Gardens. With your help, we can gather the materials needed to restore its splendor. We want to continue sharing the garden's beauty with you, but without your support, this project may take years to complete. If we meet our funding goals of \$25,000, we hope to see the Japanese Garden rejuvenated by the end of 2027.

To learn more about this project, visit:

<https://givingto.msu.edu/causes-to-support/crowdpower/japanese-garden>

THE GARDEN WORKSHOP

A corner focused on sharing sustainability and garden focused inspiration.
From crafts, gardening tips, to recipes!



Pressed Flower Bookmarks

Carry a little piece of spring with you!

What you'll need:

- Fallen flowers or petals from a flower bouquet or gathered from your garden
- recycled cardstock or homemade paper
- Heavy books
- laminating sheets or clear tape

Take your gathered flower petals, greenery, or flower heads and press flowers in book or under a stack of books for 1-2 weeks. Secure them to cardstock with glue or tape or by holding them steady as you secure them in a laminating sleeve or as you wrap the cardstock with clear tape.

Add a hole punch and a ribbon for a whimsical touch.

Spring Gardening Tips for Pollinators



- Many native bees and insects overwinter in leaf litter. Leaving a few natural areas in your garden until temps reach 50 degrees for about a week helps these tiny garden helpers.
- A shallow dish with water and small pebbles or stones is perfect as a water source for pollinators to safely land and drink.
- Avoid using insecticides and herbicides in your yard.
- Create bee hotels or leaving hollow stems or dense shrubs for shelter.
- Plant native species that provide early nectar, such as trout lilies, Virginia bluebells, and wild geraniums.
- For Monarchs, plant early-season milkweed, such as common or butterfly milkweed.





LAVENDER SIMPLE SYRUP

Ingredients

- 1 cup granulated white sugar - Gives this simple syrup its classic sweet flavor.
- 1 cup water
- 2 Tablespoons Edible Lavender Buds - Add a light floral lavender flavor to the syrup. Only use edible, culinary, or organic lavender for cooking.
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract - Infuses the syrup with a hint of vanilla flavor that pairs well with lavender.
- Purple Food Coloring - A dash of purple food coloring can be used to give the beige syrup a light purple hue, but is optional. Beet or blueberry can be added to the syrup to make a beautiful purple hue and add more flavor notes.

How to make:

- ✓ Simple Syrup is made with equal parts water and granulated white sugar. A good place to start is by doing 1 cup water and 1 cup sugar. You may adjust based on your needs or desired consistency.
- ✓ Bring 1 cup of water and 1 cup of sugar to a boil until sugar dissolves. Add in lavender buds, stirring consistently to avoid burning. Lower to a simmer for about ten minutes or until you reach your desired syrup consistency.
- ✓ Pull Syrup away from heat and let cool. Put a mesh strainer over a bowl and strain out lavender and discard. Strain more than once to remove all lavender pieces.
- ✓ Once cooled and strained pour your delicious syrup into a bottle or jar. Store refrigerated for up to 4 weeks. Enjoy your gourmet syrup!

How to use:

Lavender simple syrup is a great way enhance anything with notes of spring. You can use it in coffee, mocktails or cocktails, desserts, The options are endless!

Share with us on social media if you make this syrup this spring!

Supporting the Gardens

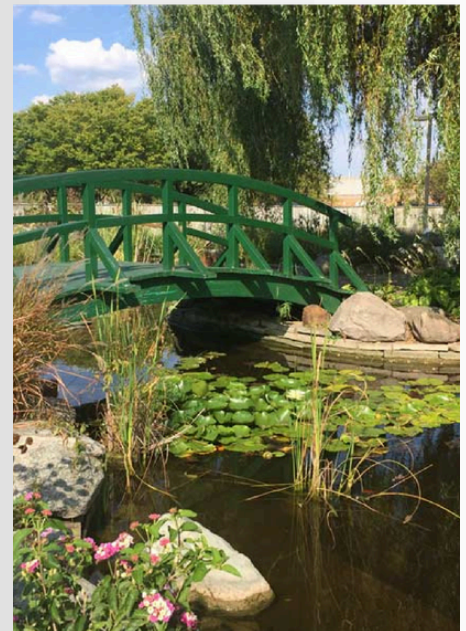
Our CANR Development Partners

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) is committed to excellence in teaching, research and outreach. The CANR External Relations team plays a critical role in advancing this mission by fostering meaningful partnerships with alumni, friends, corporations and foundations in support of meaningful funding opportunities.

In collaboration with leaders across CANR, AgBioResearch and MSU Extension, the CANR External Relations team supports all 12 academic units at the college, securing vital advancing facility projects, student scholarships, research funding, faculty and staff initiatives and student success resources and programs.

Fundraising efforts have supported facility enhancements and long-term programmatic investments at the MSU Horticulture Gardens, as well as other projects within the Department of Horticulture. The External Relations team continues to collaborate closely with unit leaders to identify emerging priorities and create opportunities that elevate the work of faculty, staff and students.

Through strategic outreach and purposeful stewardship, the team ensures that donors remain connected to the college's mission and see the direct impact of their generosity. To learn more about how you can philanthropically support the MSU Horticulture Gardens today or leave a lasting legacy in the future, contact Senior Associate Director of Development [Brittany Lawrence at mill2849@msu.edu](mailto:mill2849@msu.edu).





Hello! I'm Victoria Churchill

Marketing & Event Venue Manager



About me:



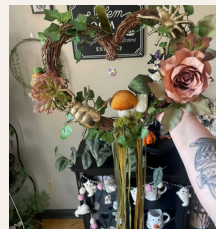
I joined the Horticulture Gardens Team in December of 2025. I have over ten years experience in wedding and event planning. I love creating memorable and magical experiences for all!

I am a very creative person and love making beautiful and whimsical things. In my free time I love to get lost in nature, craft, write, cozy game, attend a concert, bake, dress up for ren-fest, visit a new coffee shop, or go on an adventure in a new city exploring gardens and zoos.

Favorite colors



I love Baking
Nature
inspired Cakes!



Crafting & Painting





More about Victoria

As the new Marketing and Event Venue Manager at the Horticulture Gardens, I am delighted to be a member of the team and to help the gardens continue to flourish through community outreach, garden events, private event rentals, membership, and commemorative bricks. I am looking forward to creating memories that last a lifetime for our visitors and guests. I plan to emphasize and highlight the presence of the gardens for our community.

I have over twelve years of experience in the hospitality industry and have had many wonderful roles in the past including being the Hospitality Manager at Woldumar Nature Center for nearly ten years as well as other event management positions at various local hotels, including being an Event and Catering Manager for Kellogg Hotel, serving the MSU Community at various campus locations.

I became a Certified Wedding Planner in 2014 at Ashworth College and put my passion of wedding planning to use immediately at the nature center developing a sustainable hospitality program. I continued to invest in professional development over the years, such as becoming a CTA (Certified Tourism Ambassador) for the greater Lansing region (I just got my 10 year pin this year!). In 2024 I became a Certified Hospitality Manager, Certified Guest Services Professional, Servsafe Food Safety Manager, and Servsafe Alcohol Certified through the Hospitality Training Institute of Michigan. I am currently in the process of trying to work towards obtaining my CMP (Certified Meeting Professional).

As a nature lover who is inspired by the natural world around us and embracing the beautiful things in life (such as these incredible gardens and a beautiful love story!) I feel right at home in the gardens.

I love being able to connect with guests to help plan and create the wedding or event at their dreams, all while fundraising for the gardens.

I also love being able to be creative and create engaging content for our community to show them the magic and happenings at the gardens.

I am so grateful to be a part of something greater and have so many fun ideas for the future! If you have questions, ideas, or anything you'd like to share feel free to reach out.

Victoria Churchill
Marketing & Event Venue Manager

