

MSU IN BLOOM

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



Getting to Know You

Interview with the 2016 Volunteer of the Year

Volunteer Kick-Off

Save-the-date!

Winter Reading for Spring Seeding

Unusual Seed Catalogs

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MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS

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Cover Photo by:
Amelia Jane
MSU Herbarium Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Butterfly Docent Training	Feb 23
Dormant Pruning Class	Feb 28
Volunteer Kick-Off	March 28
Spring Program	April 29



Visit

[HTTP://WWW.HRT.MSU.EDU/OUR-GARDENS/](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our-gardens/)



BUTTERFLY DOCENT TRAINING

FEBRUARY 23, 2017
10AM TO NOON

By Jessica Wright
Education Coordinator

Do you like butterflies, gardening, and working with children? Then we have a great opportunity for you at the 4H Children's Garden. In just a few short months butterflies will be back and flying in the Indoor 4H Children's Garden. Each year we host over 4000 students for our Butterflies in the Garden program, which runs March 15th -April 30th. Students come for an hour-long experience to learn about the butterfly life cycle and anatomy, and then they will see butterflies in flight in the Indoor 4-Children's Garden.

The butterfly docent training is for new and veteran volunteers to come and learn about butterflies and the program. The training will be held at the gardens in room B102 from 10-noon on February 23rd. **Please RSVP for the training to garden4h@msu.edu by February 20th.** If you are unable to make the training but would like to help out with the butterfly programs please contact me and we can set up another time to discuss the program.

VOLUNTEER KICK-OFF!



Save-The-Date of March 28th

By Bethany Troy, Perennial Garden Manager

Mark your calendars – It's that time of year again to schedule our volunteer kick-off! We will be meeting on Tuesday, March 28th (time to be determined) for an overview of the upcoming season, as well as reminders of specific duties, opportunities, and events.

Are you interested in volunteering with us? Come to the kick-off and see what we are all about! Volunteers help in numerous areas of our gardens, including our visitor's booth, in the butterfly house, at our plant sale, and of course, outside during the growing season. Outdoor volunteering may include working in the annual garden, perennial garden, children's garden, Master Gardener Idea Bed, VIP Garden, and arboretum. Other opportunities on campus include Beal Botanic Gardens and the Turf Grass Research Center.

From leading tours to weeding garden beds, our volunteers work hard, have fun, and make excellent snacks! We are always recruiting more volunteers, so please bring a family member or friend to the kick-off who may be interested in learning more about our opportunities at the gardens.

For information on volunteering at the gardens, contact Bethany Troy, troybeth@msu.edu





The Curious Gardener Spring 2017 Workshops

Dormant Pruning

Tuesday February 28th 3:00-5:00PM

Are you finding yourself twiddling your green thumbs this winter? Come experience the art and benefits of dormant pruning; a wonderful excuse to get yourself outside to shape up your garden! We will review the tools used, discuss techniques and vocabulary, and train the eye to best perform your pruning tasks. Dress appropriately to go outdoors and practice some pruning in the gardens! Presented by Bethany Troy, Perennial Garden Manager. \$15 for Members/\$20 for Non-Members, parking not included.

Build a Native Bee Hotel

Wednesday April 5th, 3:00-5:00PM

Over 80% of wild plants require insects for pollination, as well as close to 100 major food and fiber crops. As colony collapse disorder continues to kill American honeybees, native bees are becoming increasingly important as pollinators. Because most native bees are solitary, they do not swarm, and rarely sting. You can attract native bees to your garden by creating nesting sites for them called bee hotels. Join us for this hands-on workshop where you will learn about native bees, then build and customize your very own native bee hotel. Presented by Daedre McGrath, Trial Garden Manager. \$30 for Members/\$35 for Non-Members, parking not included.

Exotic Flavors: Capture the World in Your Garden!

Tuesday May 23rd, 6:00-8:00PM

Learn to grow plants in your garden that will lend exotic flavors in your kitchen. Yes, even in Michigan, we can grow lemongrass, coriander, ginger, and of course several types of basil and mint. Based on experiences gained while traveling the world, Art and Marlene Cameron will cover plant selection, describe tricks for plant propagation and culture, and present cooking techniques for a range of plants used in cuisines from around the world: Thailand to Vietnam, and India to South America. Each attendee will plant a container of flavorful herbs to grow at home. \$20 for Members/ \$25 Non-Members, parking not included.

Register Online: <http://hrt.msu.edu/cg-register>

**Location: B109 Plant and Soil Sciences Building
1066 Bogue St., East Lansing, MI 48824**



The MSU Horticulture Gardens presents

Spring Program 2017

Creativity in Bloom

Saturday, April 29 / 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Featuring Janet Macunovich, Art Cameron & Daedre McGrath

Information & Register: www.hrt.msu.edu/springprogram



SPRING PROGRAM

CREATIVITY IN BLOOM

Saturday, April 29, 2017

8:00AM - 4:00PM

By Jennifer Sweet
Program Coordinator

As the dreary days of winter continue, who doesn't love a reminder that Spring is on its way? Register today for Spring Program 2017, Creativity in Bloom, and get ready to give your garden the "wow" factor! Janet Macunovich, Art Cameron, and Daedre McGrath will captivate attendees with exciting and practical ways to get creative, adding color and flair to your Garden. You'll leave feeling energized and ready to make your creativity bloom! Additionally, all attendees will get to create and take a combination planter of spring annuals.

\$70 for 2017 garden members, \$80 non-member

Registration includes four keynote presentations, coffee, lunch, parking, and materials

Additional details and Registration:

www.hrt.msu.edu/springprogram

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

BY BETHANY TROY
PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

At our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner last December, we awarded a brick to be installed in the gardens to honor our 2016 Volunteer of the Year, Jerry Scarborough. Get to know him through our Q&A session!



What interested you in volunteering with us?

I was already a garden member. I went to my first Garden Day in 2013. That's when I learned there was a volunteer crew. So, I signed up the following March.

Do you have a horticulture background? I'm a retired computer programmer. I got into gardening as something to do at home that didn't involve sitting in front of a screen. But, I spent my summers growing up on my grandparent's farm. That's agriculture, not horticulture. But, I enjoyed being outside, and working with growing things.

What other hobbies do you enjoy? I run three dimensional tabletop simulations of American Civil War battles. I am an amateur historian - mostly American Civil War era. I build scale model sailing ships in the winter. And I read a lot. Both fiction and non-fiction.

What is your favorite area of the garden? That's a tough question. I really enjoy being in all parts of the garden. One of the best things about the way the volunteer crew is organized is that we can pick and choose a different part of the garden each week. We can do annuals one week, perennials the next, and trek to the arboretum the next. But, if I had to pick one spot, it would have to be around the fountain in the annual garden. That's where I usually take my lunch on Garden Day.

Describe some of the tasks you perform while volunteering with us. Well, I guess it starts with weeding, weeding, and a little more weeding. But, we also have planted around the entrance in the spring and planted bulbs in the fall. And, our saddest task is pulling up the still lovely annuals in the fall.

I have also pruned some of the ornamental trees, mostly just to remove suckers. And then there's all the work that goes on to prepare and conduct the plant sale. For gardeners, none of this is really work. It's just a good way to spend some time.

What do you enjoy the most about volunteering with us? It's really nice to hang out with a bunch of other people who like to garden, and like to talk about gardening. The volunteer crew is a very sociable group of people. It's also nice just to look around the gardens. They're lovely. And, there's a real sense of satisfaction that I am helping to keep them looking good. But, I have also learned a lot by being around the professional staff. They are very knowledgeable, and always willing to answer questions. And, they're really nice people. All of that has really improved my gardening skills. I guess that's my compensation for the volunteer labor.

Do you have a favorite memory while volunteering? Yes, a couple. And they both involve weeding in the Children's' Garden in the summer, watching the excitement of the kids. It's a terrific spot for young children. And, again, there's a certain sense of satisfaction in knowing that the volunteer crew is helping to provide that environment.

What is your favorite plant? Well, that sort of changes every year. And, that drives my wife crazy. I'm always looking to replace something I lost, or find a new spot for my new, just discovered, favorite. I'm just a fickle gardener. The plants that I've had the longest are three hydrangeas – two mopheads, and a lacecap.

What are you looking forward to this season in terms of gardening at home or volunteering with us? As a home gardener, I'm looking forward to the plant sale. Over the past few years, that has been the source of each year's new favorite plant. As a volunteer, I'm just looking forward to being out in the gardens, and helping to keep them beautiful.

2016 Volunteer of the Year Jerry Scarborough



THE SNOWED-IN GARDENER

BY DAEDRE MCGRATH
TRIAL GARDEN MANAGER

One of the most common questions we get as horticulturists is, "What do you do during the winter?" People are often surprised that we work all 12 months of the year, considering the seasonal nature of our jobs. So here's a peek, from my perspective, into our goings-on from late fall to early spring.

Most years, we are still working outside in November doing things like planting thousands of spring-blooming bulbs, cutting back grasses and other perennials, and keeping up on weeding. This November, after the smash success of our houseplant and succulent sale, we began propagating some of the slowest-growing cacti and succulent varieties in preparation for our next houseplant and succulent sale (coming fall 2017).

December is actually one of our busiest months of the year for garden events. Over a three-week timespan, we decorate the conservatory and over a dozen Christmas trees, and host our Holiday Open House, Wine and Chocolate Reception, Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Holiday Curious Gardener Workshop, and numerous departmental functions. During this time frame we also run our holiday market, selling hundreds of poinsettias, as well as wreaths and other holiday items.

During January, we finally have time to start planning the upcoming garden season. This involves planning and scheduling our Curious Gardener Workshop series, summer events in the 4-H Children's Garden, and planning our Garden Day workshops.

Photos: holiday displays (top), seed sorting (middle), picking plant combinations (bottom), shopping seed catalogs (next page)





A large part of my job is designing all the display beds in the annual gardens, which involves picking plant combinations, sourcing the plant material, and requesting donations. I will also sort through my seed inventory from the previous year and decide what I can reuse.

One of my biggest challenges is keeping detailed records of everything I need to grow that year. I grow 4 categories of plants: 1) those for our plant trial program, 2) those for the display beds I've designed, 3) those for our plant sale in May, and 4) those for our VIP Garden, which has a different theme each year. Between these 4 categories, I will grow over 600 varieties and close to 40,000 individual plants! Keeping track of the location of every tray as it passes from the propagation house, to the greenhouse, and then to its final destination (either our garden, or yours), takes some serious spreadsheet time.

During late-January and February, I will already be starting to sow some of the slower growing and/or cold-tolerant plants such as geranium, pentas, begonia, gerbera daisy, pansy, and most perennials. By February/March, I will start receiving young plants, called plugs, which will be transplanted into flats or pots and finished in the greenhouses. By March, winter is mostly over and we're into full-blown production mode getting ready for the gardening season.

As you can see, our gardening year wouldn't be possible without the planning and preparation that goes on during the winter. We tend to think of the winter as our "quiet" or "slow months" because we're not scurrying around outdoors, but we keep equally busy doing indoor projects that just aren't possible during the summer months.

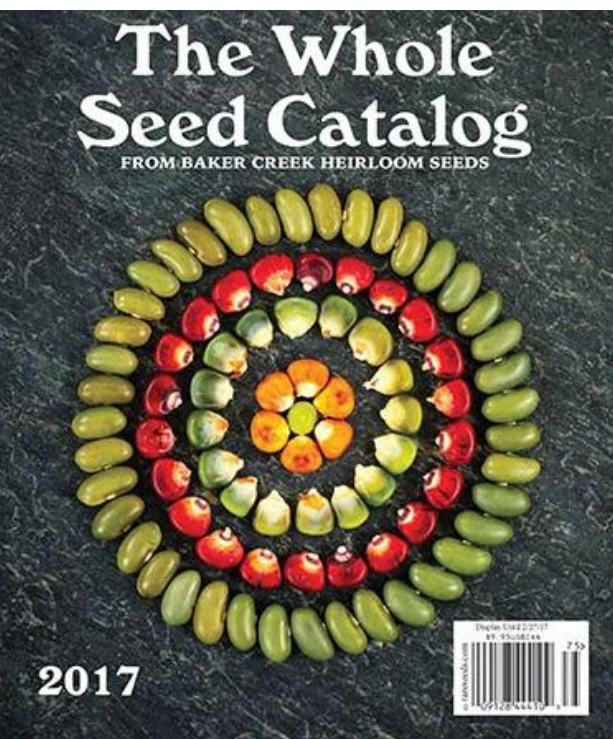


WINTER READING FOR SPRING SEEDING

BY DANIEL BULKOWSKI
GARDENS AND GREENHOUSE MANAGER

Late December and early January are magical times of the year. That's when my mailbox (both at work and at home) starts filling with seed catalogs. I know, I know, many of you are saying, "But you have the internet." I sure do, but I like getting mail too, especially catalogs. Ever since the days of the thick Sears Christmas catalog, but I digress. Most of my ordering is done online, but who doesn't like paper cuts, cheap inked fingers, and falling asleep with a catalog on your lap (tough to do with a computer). So I'm going to share a few of the more interesting seed companies.

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (rareseeds.com) was one of the first companies that I purchased from that sells almost exclusively heirloom varieties of vegetables and flowers. They state that they have 1,850 varieties from over 100 countries (although the bulk of the seed comes from United States growers). This is a well-done catalog, many quality photographs and descriptions of each variety. It's suitable for displaying on your coffee table. My most recent seed order included a red Brussels sprouts, dwarf Moringa, Cocona, and collard greens (the next kale). I also ordered Jumbo Pink Banana Squash. It grows up to 36" long and is delicious (my brother-in-law loves it, he had three helpings at Christmas dinner). The only major drawback about Baker Creek is that they are definitely not the least expensive seed company out there, but it's worth it for the unique varieties.



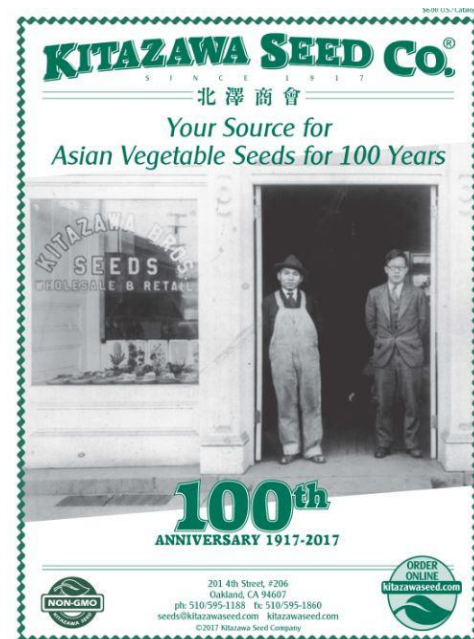
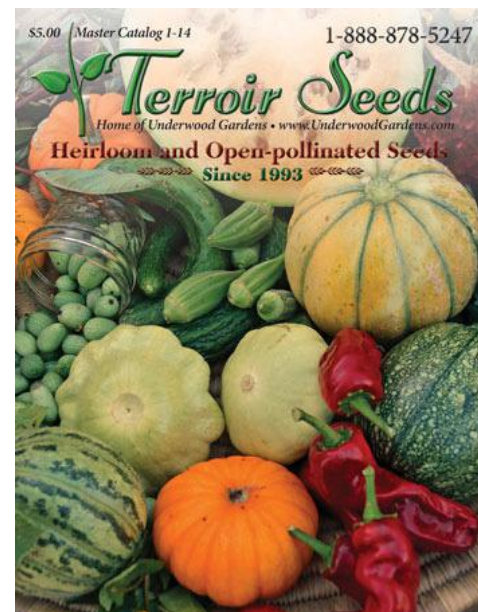
Terroir Seeds (underwoodgardens.com) comes in at a close second to longevity of my ordering history. They used to be Underwood Gardens, also Grandma's Garden, before being sold and moving to Arizona. They have many heirlooms and other unique varieties. I started purchasing and growing Cucamelon (or mouse melon, or Mexican Sour Gherkin) from Terrior years before it became fashionable. This company is also my source for Achocha (or Peruvian Cucumber, or Caigua), which produces an edible fleshy pointed pod on a vine that can cover a fence in a hurry.

Kitazawa Seed Company (kitazawaseed.com) is an heirloom seed company that specializes in Asian vegetables. They also carry some more familiar garden varieties. Kitazawa also sells themed seed collections called Chef Specialty Garden Collections. I've grown sesame, sweet peppers, and many types of greens from Kitazawa.

Gourmet Seed International (gourmetseed.com) carries a large variety of vegetable seeds, including some heirloom varieties. They also represent a couple of Italian seed companies, so don't expect to find growing requirements in English on those seed packets. Gourmet Seed does have very generous seed quantities in most of the packets that I have ordered. If you only need a couple of plants of a variety in your garden, the quantity could be excessive. However, you can either save the seed for coming years, or share with your neighbors. I have found several interesting varieties of vegetables because of the Italian connection. One is Cucuzzi squash, a fast growing vine the produces an edible gourd that can grow up to four feet long. I've eaten it at about one foot long, cooked like you would any type of summer squash. This was recommended to me by one of our volunteers. .

So there are just a few of the companies that I order from. Many other good seed companies exist that you've probably heard of: Johnny's, Seed Savers Exchange, Seeds of Change, and Territorial Seed Co., just to name just a few. This should be enough reading material to give you plenty of gardening dreams. Goodnight.

If you are aware of an obscure seed company that you think I might not know of, please contact me at bulkowsl@msu.edu.



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HORTICULTURE GARDENS

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2017 MEMBERSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE

By Jennifer Sweet
Program Coordinator

If you enjoy traveling, a 2017 MSU Garden membership is a must have. Order today and visit hundreds of gardens for FREE, all throughout the year! See the link below for a list of participating Gardens across the nation, including Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, MI!

Additional benefits include:

- VIP member-only Plant Sale invitation; come early for great buys!
- 10% discount on all Plant Sale purchases!
- Discounts on all MSU Horticulture programs!
- Invitation for two to our Wine & Chocolate Donor Reception!
- Free parking!
- Much more!

Benefits vary based on membership type.

For additional details and to order your membership, please visit:

www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/garden_memberships

For a state-by-state list of gardens where you can use your reciprocal membership, please visit:

<http://ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap/find/statebystate>

DONOR OPPORTUNITIES

Create a lasting tribute to a special person, memory, or occasion by sponsoring a brick or bench in the Gardens. More information at www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/donor_opportunities_bricks_and_benches



Larger donations can help sponsor a new garden, a summer student intern, our teaching programs, an art or cultural event, or support our endowment.



2017 TRIAL GARDEN INTERNSHIP

Jointly sponsored by: Western Michigan Greenhouse Association and Metropolitan & Detroit Flower Growers Association

Internship Description:

The MSU Horticulture Gardens at Michigan State University is seeking a hardworking, innovative student to assist with many tasks at the 2 acre Amien A. and Florence M. Carter Annual Trial Garden. The Trial Garden showcases more than 600 different cultivars of annuals, perennials, and vegetables from breeders from all over the world.

The intern will gain practical, hands-on experience in public gardening. Daedre McGrath, our Trial Garden Manager, will provide high quality learning opportunities for the intern through the evaluation of annuals, perennials, and vegetables. The intern will be educated in the entire trialing process including growing and maintaining plants in the landscape, data collection and summarization, and communication of the results to growers and gardeners. The intern will have opportunities to network with other horticulture professionals during industry events like the MSU Plant Trial Field Day and attend field trips to the Michigan Garden Plant Tour and other locations.

Schedule and Hours:

- Early-May through late-August
- 40 hours per week, Mon-Fri, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Occasional Saturday and Sunday hours
- We may be able to accommodate your summer class schedule (if applicable)



Position Requirements:

Candidate must be available to work May through August. He or she must be enrolled in a college horticulture program or related field with an interest in public gardens. The ideal candidate will be flexible, able to work in a fast-paced environment, and possess good communication skills, interpersonal skills, and a positive attitude!

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Assist with the installation and maintenance of garden areas including planting, weeding, watering, dead-heading, fertilizing, spreading compost and mulch, removing debris, pruning, and edging.
- Working with the trial manager to label and photograph all plants.
- Assist in gathering and summarizing plant data for the trial brochure and website.

Wage: \$12.00/hour

Interested? Please send your resume and a cover letter to Daedre McGrath, dmcgrath@msu.edu

APPLICATIONS DUE BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2017

Our globetrotting Garden Director Art Cameron and his wife Marlene are currently exploring India. Where in the world will they be next?





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WINTER

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