

MSU IN BLOOM

MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



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UPCOMING EVENTS

2021 Virtual Spring Plant Sale

Garden Member Sale

April 26-May 6

Public Sale

April 28-May 6

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY KRISTIN GETTER, DIRECTOR OF THE MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS

A Slow Time

It was a quiet December and January for the Gardens' staff. Two of our staff were furloughed and no holiday events were hosted. But we are back to full staff now and looking forward to spring and being in the Gardens in a few short months.

When walking the Gardens in early January on a gloomy cold day, I was reminded of how the Gardens are still a magical place even though mostly dormant. The reminder came from children, who had built a snowman in the 4-H Children's Gardens (pictured right). What a lovely surprise that stopped and made me laugh and really look at the winter beauty.



Upcoming Events

It is hard to believe it has been almost a year since we had to cancel our 2020 Spring Program which was to be a 70s-themed Make & Take. Unfortunately, we will not host a 2021 Spring Program either. But we are looking forward to hosting our 2021 Spring Plant Sale which will be in an 'order online, curbside pickup' format. See page 7 in this newsletter for more details.

Our summer programming, like Garden Day, is still uncertain at this time. As we learn more of MSU's decisions to allow such events, we will keep you posted.

Projects

Even with COVID-19 limiting our ability to hold in-person community programming, there is never a shortage of activities going on in the Gardens. We have been increasing our social media presence, especially for our YouTube Channel. Our goal is to provide the community with interesting MSU Horticulture Gardens and gardening snippets.

The main (brick) walkway in the Judith A Delapa Perennial Gardens has been fully repaired. Concrete curbs were completed in late fall 2020 that go along the edge of the walkway to prevent the outer bricks from 'rolling' into the grass (which had created a tripping hazard). Dan has more information and pictures on page 10 in this newsletter.

Since we were not able to have in-person Gardens' tours last year (and likely will not be able to this year), we have purchased new software that allows visitors to do their own self-guided tour on their internet-connected mobile device. We hope to have that software 'live' by May 1st. Look for more information about this project in the April newsletter.

2020 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

BY KRISTIN GETTER, DIRECTOR OF THE MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS

We had a very limited number of volunteers in our Gardens this summer due to COVID-19. And we are especially appreciative of them as we were not allowed to have many student employees. So, we relied more on volunteer help! While we could not celebrate their hard work this past December at our usual Volunteer Dinner, know that you are each appreciated!

With that said, we must choose a 'Volunteer of the Year' each year – to showcase one particular hard-working helper. This year, that person is Richard Byelich (pictured right). Richard is a retired builder from DeWitt. He used his carpentry skills to build the Gardens tables and shelving in our new Welcome Booth and also installed all new cabinets and counters in our staff offices (pictures below), saving us a bundle of money for installation costs, but also giving us that personal, custom-built look.



Many thanks to Richard and all of our 2020 volunteers. We look forward to seeing you again this summer.



New cabinets and countertops in our staff offices.



New custom built shelving and countertops for our Welcome Booth.

POINSETTIA PREDICAMENT

BY DAN BULKOWSKI, GREENHOUSE & GARDEN MANAGER

Unbeknownst to many of the holiday plant buying public, a greenhouse poinsettia crop is started in late July. That is when we receive the small, barely rooted cuttings from a wholesale production greenhouse. And to order those, decisions must be made in early March. Well we all know what happened in mid-March. COVID! SHUTDOWN! Poinsettias don't get covid, so they arrived in late July very happy and content. But, no one had any idea what was to happen with fall classes and/or our holiday events and sales in December. So we potted up only enough of the poinsettia plugs to fill one greenhouse. Usually, we will fill close to three greenhouses. The poinsettias grew, and were happy and content. Then in September the realization was made that we would not be having any of our holiday events where we give away poinsettias to garden members and volunteers. What to do with the happy and content poinsettias? They were starting to look like one of the best crops we ever grew. And no one to give to, or means to sell them easily. That's about when, out of the blue, we were contacted by someone from MSU Surplus and Recycling. And he wrote in an email "it might be an interesting idea to combine forces to create a special holiday shopping experience for folks." Hurrah, the points might have homes. And that's what happened. They had the mechanism in place for online shopping, took orders, picked the poinsettias from us, and the public picked up curbside from there. So instead of composting an entire greenhouse of poinsettias, we sold (and gave away to different groups on campus) almost all of them.



DESIGNING OUR ANNUAL GARDEN DISPLAYS

BY DAEDRE MCGRATH, TRIAL GARDEN MANAGER

Wintertime is when I plan out my garden designs for the following season. Each winter I start making a list of new-to-me plants I want to try in my displays. Then I see if those plants inspire a color palette for the year. This year I wanted to try some blue plants I haven't gotten to grow very often, including *Evolvulus*, *Isotoma*, and *Felicia*. As a result, my 2021 color palette is going to be blue-heavy with the addition of orange and yellow. I have wanted to do this color palette for a while now, but it does pose its challenges. Blue is hard to come by in the world of annuals. In addition, there are a handful of genera that fill the orange and yellow portion of my palette that I can no longer grow in our garden due to disease issues. For example, I can no longer depend on zinnias of any kind, and *vinca* and *Gomphrena globosa* are both a gamble.

After picking my color palette, I produce a list of annuals in each color, as well as a list of accent plants that are green, chartreuse, silver, or black (as these plants will complement any color palette). It's also important to keep track of the projected height of each variety, so I know in what order, from front to back, I can layer the plants in my beds. I create a list of the plant dimensions in a spreadsheet (Figure 1) and create a photo collage in PowerPoint (Figure 2). I like my PowerPoint-method because I can easily add blank slides to the slideshow and experiment by copying and pasting the images together in different combinations. I have approximately 20 display beds to fill each year, depending on how much space is needed for our trial program. Each bed is a different shape and some have specific plant requirements such as drought tolerance, flood tolerance, or high-traffic tolerance (I have been known to plant spiky Agaves in a bed that often gets trampled by wedding guests).

1	Genus	Variety	Color	Notes	Height	Source
23	<i>Evolvulus</i>	Blue My Mind	Blue		4-6"	PW
24	<i>Gomphrena</i>	Qis Orange	orange	I feel like the	24-26"	PanAm
25	<i>Helichrysum</i>	Icicles	Silver		8-16"	PW
26	<i>Isotoma</i>	Beth's Blue	Blue		12-14"	PW
27	<i>Kalanchoe</i>	marnieriana	Blue			Stock
28	<i>Kalanchoe</i>	orgyalis	Brown			Stock
29	Kale	Tuscan	Blue			Stock
30	Kale	Curly Green	Blue			
31	Kale	Scarlet	Purple			stock
32	Lantana	Gem Ruby	orange			Danziger
33	Lantana	Gem Gold	Yellow			Danziger
34	Lantana	Luscious Marmalade	orange		20-30"	PW
35	Lantana	Luscious Goldengate	Yellow		20-30"	PW
36	<i>Leonotis</i>		orange		4-6'	stock
37	<i>Lotus</i>	Amazon Sunset	green w/ scarlet flowers		6-8"	PW
38	Marigold	Disco Yellow	Yellow		10-12"	Benary
39	Marigold	Disco Orange	orange		10-12"	Benary
40	Marigold	Durango Gold	Yellow		12-14"	PanAm
41	Millet, Ornamental	Jade Princess	Chartreuse		24-30"	PanAm
42	<i>Nicotiana</i>	Perfume Lime	Chartreuse	Or Lime, but c16-18"		Germany or stock?
43	<i>Opuntia</i>	spineless	Green			Stock
44	<i>Parsley</i>	Dwarf Curled	Green			Germany or stock?
45	Pepper, Ornamental	Sedona Sunset	Yellow		9-12"	PanAm
46	<i>Portulaca</i>	Mojave Tangerine	orange		4-8"	PW
47	<i>Salvia</i>	Evolution Violet	Blue		18"	Benary
48	<i>Salvia</i>	Rockin' Blue Suede Shoes	Blue		30-40"	PW
49	<i>Salvia</i>	Rockin' Blue Suede Shoes	Blue		30-40"	PW

Figure 1: Daedre's planning spreadsheet

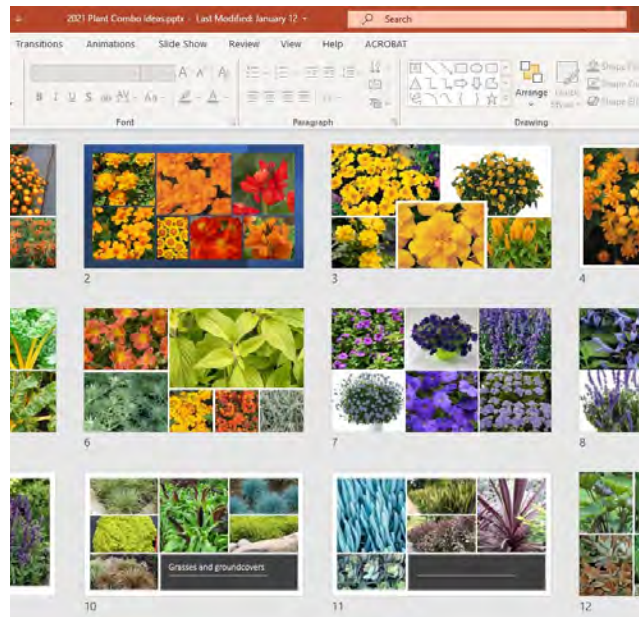


Figure 2: Daedre's photo collage

Once I select the combination I want for a particular bed, I draw out the bed design on a printable template, also made in PowerPoint (Figure 3, a bed design from 2020). I will reference this hand-drawn plan at planting time, although adjustments often have to be made (due to poor germination, crop failure, etc.). It is exciting watching my designs come to fruition. The designs I create in January (Figure 3) get planted in early-June (Figure 4) and then mature into something spectacular later in the season (Figure 5).

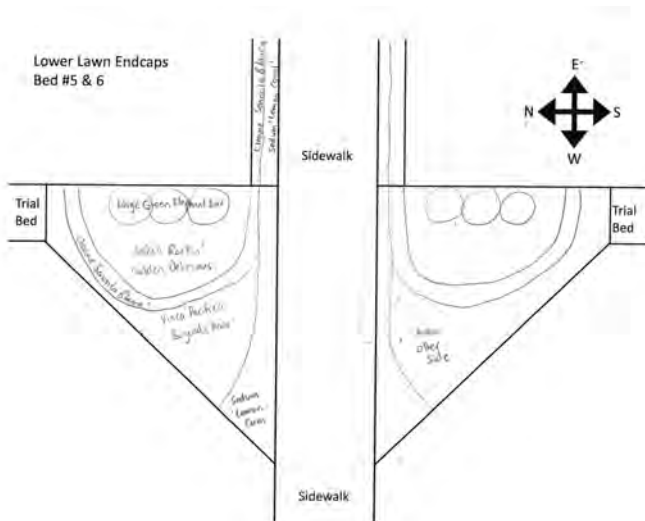


Figure 3: PowerPoint bed design



Figure 4: Planted design



Figure 5: Mature design

MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS

Spring Plant Sale

Members Sale April 26-27

Public Sale April 28-May 6

What can you expect?

Order Online

Curbside Pickup

Diverse Selection

Grown by MSU Experts

Top Quality

Great Value

Stay tuned for more
information about the
2021 Spring Plant Sale

WEDDING & EVENT RENTALS

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING, EVENT & PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Love our Gardens? Know someone who is getting married and loves gardening? Know someone who is having a baby or a birthday? Why not spread the word about our enchanting and gorgeous spaces for weddings and events in the Gardens?

Returning in 2021....we are now booking the Clarence E. Lewis Landscape Arboretum for weddings and special events. The Arboretum has not been utilized for weddings and events for about 6 years. It is a versatile space with many options for ceremonies, receptions, cocktail hours, and other celebrations. We are excited to offer this space again for weddings, showers, birthday parties, reunions, and for corporate events.

New for 2021..... The South Garden is now being offered for receptions in addition to ceremonies in the statuesque Anniversary Plaza. Included in the South Garden is the Rose Garden and Perennial Garden.

The North Garden is undeniably a favorite for our brides! The North Garden includes the magnificent Conservatory, Conservatory Plaza and Lower Lawn.

Let our experienced staff assist you or your friends and family in making dreams become reality! Visit our website today to get started www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/plan_a_wedding_or_event!



An Arboretum wedding ceremony



A wedding in Anniversary Plaza



A baby shower in our Conservatory

VOLUNTEER UPDATES & MANY THANKS!

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

This past year, our volunteer program was a bit 'interesting' compared to previous years. Our days of gathering in the morning, sometimes with over 40 volunteers showing up, drinking coffee while sharing our personal gardening stories and travels together, came to a halt. Our communal snack break, one of our favorite moments to look forward to every week, also stopped. While this all seems like a dream that we once had so long ago, it is important to remember and recognize that this did not stop us in our quest to get our hands dirty and show those plants who is boss! Our volunteer's dedication in coming to the gardens to help us despite our questionnaires and minimal social interaction was strong.



Volunteers potting plants while staying safe

With only three volunteers allowed per day in the early morning, our volunteers continued to work hard and cherish these moments. As for most of us, it was the most social interaction we had to look forward to. We even heard stories of some rogue-weeders visiting outside of normal garden hours (don't worry, we won't mention names!). It is clear that the garden doesn't just need us there for maintenance; we also need the garden for our own mental health and clarity. The amount of happy, smiling faces I saw during some of the hardest moments in our lives was inspiring and continues to energize me to the next adventures we seek in 2021.

With our minimal volunteer season and with our restricted hours, we still managed to clock in 537 labor hours this past year. While this number is around 20% of our normal total volunteer hours, we are still so grateful and appreciative of those who came to continue to work despite the challenges, and to those who stayed in touch. Many volunteers even provided hand-made masks for our students and staff to stay safe. Your support and dedication to our gardens is essential in maintaining our beautiful space for the public to enjoy, and we cannot thank you enough.

So what is next? We currently CANNOT have volunteers indoors to help with our online plant sale or to help us with growing. While this news may be heart-breaking, it is also essential to keep you, our staff, and students safe while the pandemic still carries on. The future is looking bright, however, in that we will most likely continue an outdoor volunteer program similar in structure to last year. We will keep you posted on updates as we get closer. One thing is certain: we miss YOU, your knowledge, helping hands, laughter, and SNACKS!



Right: Look closely.....there is a volunteer in there somewhere!

PERENNIAL GARDEN BRICK WALK REDO

BY DAN BULOWSKI, GREENHOUSE & GARDEN MANAGER

After many years of a wobbly walkway, the brick paver walk in the Judith DeLapa Perennial Garden was made safe this fall. (A little construction detail info: The brick pavers are laid onto a concrete base, with a metal edging holding the bricks in place.) After years of use by garden guests, and mowing and snow removal equipment, the edging migrated away from the bricks and the concrete base. The west end was especially bad. I'm very surprised that someone didn't fall off the walkway, the bricks along the edge had become that unstable. After contact with MSU's Infrastructure, Planning, and Facilities, the walkway was officially deemed unsafe. We knew that. So, good news for the gardens, because of the safety issue, the cost of the walk redo would not be our responsibility. On each side of the walkway, a concrete "ribbon" was poured to act as the new brick edging restraint. Then a different contractor came in, lifted the bricks to make some adjustments, and relaid them exactly as they came out. After various delays, the project was completed in late November. Next summer when you're strolling along in the perennial garden, take time to notice the newly relaid and edge fortified brick walk.



The walkway under construction



Long view of the new walkway



Far left: East end of the new walkway



Left: West end of the new walkway

A BRIEF BREAK

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

When we first heard the news of our furlough, I was devastated. The thought of not being able to be in the garden for fall cleanup after a difficult year of trying to keep up with maintenance was momentarily terrifying. Soon after the initial fears wore off, and after speaking with some of our close volunteers, I had the support and encouragement to make the most of my time off in order to come back refreshed and ready for another year.

Well, my car decided to break down at the very beginning of furlough, which led to two months of organizing and cleaning the entire house. My partner, Tim, and I even set up a series of lights so my houseplants can be well taken care of and healthy. I purchased a dehydrator and started experimenting with a number of different dehydrated foods – jerky, various types of fruits like grapes, bananas, and apples. I even dehydrated beans I made in the crockpot, rice, and even our leftover Christmas ham!

After Christmas, we packed Tim's van full of these goodies, along with a number of other supplies, and we hit the road for over a month. With warm running water, a bed, a fridge, and plenty of storage space, we were set to hit the road and be completely self-sufficient. We had a simplistic plan, which included minimal human interaction (barely any at all as we had filled the van with a lot of food), a few points of interest to visit, and the rest was open to any adventures we encountered along the way. We traveled down to Texas, where we visited the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden, the Alamo, and Big Bend National Park. The park was the best stop in Texas, full of history and beautiful scenic views of the Rio Grande. A must-see if you happen to be in this remote area of Texas. We even saw elk, and javelinas!



Bethany & Tim at the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden



The Rio Grande view from Santa Elena Canyon



Bethany with a Donkey



**Cliff Dwellings National Monument in
New Mexico**

After this, we set off for New Mexico, where we visited Cliff Dwellings National Monument. I can't recommend this site enough. Located in a remote area of the Gila National Forest, we encountered very few people along with beautiful scenery, petroglyphs, and a glimpse into the past of humans from thousands of years ago.

Next was Arizona, to visit Tim's family land in the remote Mojave Desert. Our plan was to only spend a few nights here, but we were so comfortable and relaxed we ended up spending seven or eight days here, taking walks through the desert washes, looking at beautiful cacti growing all over the land, and stargazing in the night. It started to rain for the first time in at least nine months, and we packed the van up and moved on.



Sunset in the Mojave Desert

Nevada was our next stop, where we visited Valley of Fire State Park. This place was a dream – beautiful colors in the rocks, an unbelievable landscape, and more petroglyphs than I've seen in my entire life. And it was all very accessible – a lot of short hikes are clearly marked right off the main road, so you can see a lot in even just one day. Just watch out for all the 'Instagram models' – they are rampant in these areas!



**The van at Valley of Fire State Park
in Nevada**

After this, we visited Bryce Canyon. We made it just in time for the sunrise at sunrise point and continued with a hike down through the canyon. This was terrifying for me, as I have vertigo and there was some snow and ice on the trails. Switchbacks through a canyon are no joke! Luckily, Tim encouraged me to keep going and continued to throw words of encouragement back to me as I fought back tears.

We made it through the entire hike with stunning views everywhere. This was our Christmas present to each other, which was perfect as the evergreens, red rocks, and sprinkled areas of snow made it feel like the holidays all over again.



A view from the bottom of Bryce Canyon

After all of this, we made our way back to Michigan, with a stop in Colorado in between. While traveling during this time is very risky, we also felt we prepared well enough and stayed isolated enough that we made it work for us. A disclaimer: traveling during a pandemic poses a number of risks. You must have proper preparation and be mindful of keeping yourself as isolated as possible at all times and be prepared for any emergencies you may encounter.

Now, as I sit at my desk, I find myself as calm as I can ever remember. It has been a long time since I have been provided an opportunity to take a true break. With the spirit of the southwest within me, I will continue to appreciate what I have, and what the future holds. Cheers!

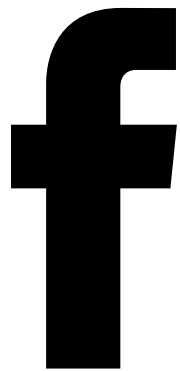
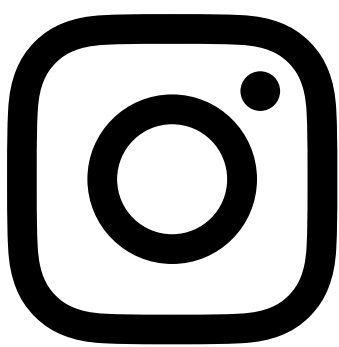
MSU Extension's Cabin Fever Conversations are back!

This FREE series through MSU Extension aims to help connect you to your garden and fellow gardeners, even when we are stuck inside. To learn more, visit their [website](#).

Every Friday
Feb. 5 to April 9, 2021
Starting at 12:30 p.m.
Online via Zoom



**CONNECT WITH US
ON SOCIAL MEDIA**



**PLANNING A WEDDING OR
SPECIAL EVENT?**



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