Matthaei Botanical gardens
and Nichols arboretum

Spring-Summer 2010 newsletter
30th Annual Spring Plant Sale & Fundraiser
Fri., May 7 (3–7 pm, members’ presale)
Sat., May 8, 9 am–4 pm
Sun., May 9, 10 am–4 pm

How do you make a great plant sale even better? The answer: weave it throughout the gardens to give our members and visitors the benefit of the full Matthaei experience. We want everyone to see our member and donor dollars at work! This year, our Mother’s Day-weekend plant sale will be located between the Gaffield Children’s Garden and the Gateway Garden, inside the auditorium, and by the conservatory parking lot and entrance.

Expect out-of-the-ordinary perennial and woody plants, beautiful hanging baskets and container plantings (perfect for mom), an expanded selection of gift-shop items, plus the usual friendly, expert service from Master Gardeners, staff, and volunteers. Look for more information on our website and in your mailbox soon, including a handy wayfinding guide.

Bring your carts or wagons to the sale! It will make shopping hands-free (mostly) and easier for everyone.

Our sponsors: Angel Food Catering, Grizzly Peak Brewing Co., and Michigan Radio

Peony Festival
This May and June, be sure to visit the historic Peony Garden, the largest collection of antique and heirloom peonies in North America. On June 6 we’ll be hosting the Peony Festival Friends Party (see “Calling All Members!” on this page). Additionally, we’re offering several guided walks of the Peony Garden in June, as well as two “Painting in the Peony Garden” workshops (see the education pull-out section in this newsletter).

Last year, the garden became the founding garden in the Peony Consortium through the North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC), and is undergoing a multi-year renovation project that will transform it into an internationally recognized reference collection. Ultimately, the Peony Garden will serve not only as a conservation model for other historic cultivar collections but as a destination for peony lovers everywhere.

Music in the Arb
This summer and fall we’ll be hosting music concerts in the amphitheater at the Arb. Expect an eclectic mix of music in a stunning natural setting. Stay tuned for more information on our website (mbgna.umich.edu), in your mailbox, and in our e-newsletter soon.

Shakespeare’s Big 10
June 3–6, 10–13, 17–20, & 24–27
Shows start at 6:30 pm

This year marks the tenth season of the wildly popular Shakespeare in the Arb. The featured play is A Midsummer Night’s Dream, directed by Kate Mendeloff. In honor of a decade of Shakespeare in the Arb, we’re adding an extra four performances, so you’ll be able to enjoy Shakespeare the entire month of June. On a side note, this season’s performances begin and end in the Peony Garden.

Birds of a Feather
The flamingos have landed—at Matthaei! During the summer outdoor garden display, which opens June 19, we’re installing dozens of the classic American lawn ornaments, many of them creatively decorated and painted in a sky’s-the-limit homage to the American symbol of camp humor. Over the past months, Ann Arbor Public School students, community members, and U-M Art & Design students have been busy at work decorating the classic flamingo lawn ornament for the display.

Calling All Members!
Enjoy the many benefits of membership at these upcoming events:
May 7 (member presale), 8, & 9:
30th Annual Spring Plant Sale & Fundraiser
Member night, first choice of plants & 10% discount
*Additional benefits at higher membership levels

June 6: Peony Festival Friends Party
Members-only invitation

10th Annual Shakespeare in the Arb
Early ticket sales & discounted member tickets
*Additional benefits at higher membership levels

Save the Date
National Public Gardens Day
Fri., May 7

Woman’s Farm & Garden Association
Annual Ann Arbor Garden Walk
Sat., June 12, 10 am–4 pm (includes Gaffield Children’s Garden)

Outdoor Summer Exhibit & Display Opening
(Matthaei Botanical Gardens)
June 19

Transitions
Welcome David Betz, our new visitor services manager. David comes to us from several years of working with volunteers in the nonprofit sector. Previous to that he spent many years in the retail industry as a multi-unit manager for a national specialty retailer. David can often be found working up front at Matthaei, so please stop and say hello!
Sprouting blooms that seem to defy gravity, the Nichols Arboretum peonies return year after year, heralding the summer in sunrise colors. When the peonies finally open, visitors throng the Arb for a glimpse of the garden—the largest collection of heirloom peonies in North America.

This celebrated garden began with a gift of peonies in 1922 from peony lover and donor Dr. William E. Upjohn. American Peony Society members provided additional peonies, and the garden opened to the public in 1927. Today, the Peony Garden contains just over 670 peonies, representing more than 270 cultivars from the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

A Garden for Future Generations
Outwardly the garden appears quite healthy; the peonies return and bloom reliably every year. Yet Arb and Gardens’ staff members, peony experts, and others recognized that without a careful conservation model and good practice, the garden was under threat from die-off, disease, and old age.

To address these concerns, the Peony Garden Initiative (PGI) began in 2008. The initiative's goal is to preserve these historic plants and to create an internationally recognized reference that will serve as both a conservation model for other historic cultivar collections and a destination for peony lovers.

The PGI’s key facets include verifying the cultivars present in the Peony Garden and identifying unknowns, as well as backing up the collection off-site to ensure survival of plant material in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. We also hope to reintroduce some of these rare cultivars back into the trade. Eventually, the Peony Garden will become the premiere online and on-site resource for information about peony culture and history.

In June 2009, MBGNA became the founding member of a peony consortium through the North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC). Our current status is provisional until a disease issue is under control. Once that happens, we hope to expand the peony consortium to include other gardens across the continent working to conserve and display peonies.

To assist with the PGI, the Arb and Gardens created the Peony Advisory Council, which is comprised of international peony experts and enthusiasts. With the Council’s help over the last year we’ve identified several previously unknown cultivars and learned a great deal about peony culture and disease.

The China Connection
Both the herbaceous and the tree peony are native to parts of Asia, including China, and figure prominently in that country’s culture and art.

A small collection of tree peonies is located on Laurel Ridge, the hillside adjacent to the Peony Garden. We hope to expand this collection to include a wide range of historically and culturally significant Chinese tree peonies. This will provide context and continuity between the ridge planting and the Peony Garden proper, and demonstrate the differences in Eastern and Western peony cultivation, form, and style while bringing the cultures together through this beautiful flower.

We look forward to furthering our connections with China through the Peony Garden and the new Confucius Center on campus. And with the help of Chinese peony experts, we hope to create close ties to China and acquire in-depth information about peonies and their role in Chinese culture.

Generous gifts from Philip and Kathy Power, the Porter Family Foundation, anonymous donors, and a grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust made the Peony Garden Initiative—whose goal is to preserve these historic plants and to create an internationally recognized reference—possible for the next two years. Completing the renovation of the garden will take several more years, in part because the window for identifying peonies is a short few weeks during the spring bloom, and acquiring replacement plants will take some serious detective work. Thus the garden will need ongoing stewardship and additional support to keep the renovation moving forward. Another key part of our initiative will be the enhancement of our tree peony collection with their clear ties to China, along with general physical improvements to the Peony Garden, especially to enhance accessibility.

With $117,000 dollars already raised, we are two thirds of the way toward the needed income for phase one restoration. If you are able to help us with any part of that last $53,000, are intrigued by the next phase, or want to help secure the future of the garden by directing current or future gifts into an endowment, please call Development Director Gayle Steiner (734.647.7847). We’ll talk about the ways your gift could benefit the garden—and ways in which we may be able to recognize you.
Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers (A2B2)

**Tuesdays, Matthaei Botanical Gardens:**
- May 11, 7–9 pm;
- June 15, 6:30–8:30 pm;
- July 20, 6:30–8:30 pm;
- Aug. 17, 6:30–8:30 pm

A monthly meeting for anyone interested in learning about managing, being aware of, and observing bees, with a continuation of equipment assembly. Each meeting will be centered around a predetermined topic, and the May–August meetings will involve outside activities. Free; drop-in.

Companion Planting for an Eclectic Yet Productive Vegetable Garden

**Tues., May 4, 7–9 pm, Matthaei Botanical Gardens**

Most vegetable gardens are well-spaced and orderly in the spring but overrun with weeds by late summer. Since the sunny, well-watered bare ground of a garden inevitably germinates new plants, plan now to fill these spaces with cultivars that are both productive and less competitive with our favorite vegetables. Join Sylvia Taylor, Ph.D., as she explains managing perennial and annual vegetables in the same plot, rotation of different vegetable arrays through the growing season, and doubling up edibles to out-compete the weeds. Fee: $5; no discounts. #10-AE-27

Composting for Better Gardens

**Wed., June 23, 7–9 pm, Matthaei Botanical Gardens**

How can banana peels, coffee grounds, and yard waste improve your garden year after year? Mark Baerwolf, farmer/gardener at Zingerman’s Roadhouse Cornman Farms, will share his experiences with building a composting system and the benefits it can make to your soil. You’ll learn some tricks and different techniques in this informative class to get your compost piles really cooking while minimizing noxious odors, and why you need to use compost in your garden. Fee: $5; no discounts. #10-AE-28

Recycling with Mushrooms

**Sat., July 31, 1:30–3:30 pm, Matthaei Botanical Gardens**

Mushrooms are the premier recyclers on the planet. They’re essential in recycling waste and in the efficient return of nutrients to the ecosystem. In this workshop participants will learn how to recycle items such as corncobs, peanut shells, and unwanted phone books by using them as materials on which to grow delicious, healthy mushrooms. All students will receive their own mushroom-growing kit at the end of class. Workshop led by local mushroom grower Shane Mulholland. Fee: MBGNA members and U-M students $40; nonmembers $50. #10-AE-29

**Regular Adult and Community Ed Offerings**

**Wednesday AM Hiker – Spring**

9 am to noon

**Five Wednesdays: April 21 & 28, May 5, 12, & 19**

Join the knowledgeable and entertaining Ellen Elliott Weatherbee on weekly hikes. Inquisitive plant seekers hike to remote habitats of woods and wetlands. Edible plants and mushrooms, as well as the interesting plants and intriguing habitats of little-known and out-of-the-way places, are emphasized in our usual academic, but playful, atmosphere. Potluck lunch the last day. This class fills early.

Fee: $144 members & U-M students; $180 nonmembers. #10-AE-26

**Yoga Tuesday**

Our popular yoga noontime class has moved to Tuesdays. Same great class; different day!

**2 six week sessions noon–1 pm**

**Spring: Tues., May 4, 11, 18, 25; June 1 & 8 #10-AE-20**

**Summer: Tues., June 22, 29; July 6, 13, 20 & 27 #10-AE-21**

Vinyasa Yoga is a class for students with an understanding of yoga fundamentals who enjoy a flowing sequence of sun salutations and postures coordinated with music. These moderately paced classes emphasize the integration of breath and movement to increase strength and flexibility. Held in the auditorium of Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Use the west entrance and bring a yoga mat and bath-sized towel. Instructor: Janine Bennett. Fee: MBGNA members and U-M students: $48; nonmembers: $60.

**Walking to Wildflowers**

Join staff horticulturist Connie Crancer in this series of hikes at the Botanical Gardens, seeking out and following seasonal blooms and fruits found along our trails and natural areas. Fee: Free but registration is required. Space is limited.

**Wed., May 5, 4:30–6:00pm #AE-10-18**

**Wed., May 19, 4:30–6:00pm #AE-10-19**

**Wed., June 9, 4:30–6:00pm #AE-10-22**

**Wed., June 30, 4:30–6:00pm #AE-10-23**

**Wed., August 18, 4:30–6:00pm #AE-10-24**

**Wed., September 15, 4:30–6:00pm #AE-10-25**
Lunch & Learn: The Peony Experience (guided walks)

Wednesdays, June 9, 16 & 23, 11:30 am–12:15 pm
Thursdays, noon–12:45 pm, June 10, 17 & 24
Fridays, 12:30–1:15 pm, June 11, 18 & 25

Join our horticultural specialist Carmen Tracey in the Arboretum Peony Garden each week during peak bloom to learn more about this amazing garden, the largest collection of antique and heirloom peonies in North America. The first week's topic will be “Famous Ladies” in the garden, the second is “Find Fragrance” and the third will be “Oldies but Goodies.” Guided walks are free.

In the event of inclement weather the walk will be canceled. Meet at the patio at the Reader Center by the Washington Heights entrance to the Arb. Note: Parking near the Arb is limited on weekdays. Parking is available in the hospital parking structure or at street meters on Observatory.
The Great Paper Caper
Wed. July 21, 6–7:30 pm #10-YE-18A
Sat. July 24, 10 am–noon #10-YE-18B
In this class you’ll create handmade paper using natural materials and recycled paper. Gather flowers and fibers from a variety of plants and learn how to turn them into your very own beautiful handmade paper that you can use for art projects, greeting cards, and more. $5 fee.

Salad Days
Wed. August 11, 6–7:30 pm #10-YE-19A
Sat. August 14, 10 am–noon #10-YE-19B
Peppers, tomatoes, zucchini, corn, onions—all the colors of the rainbow and flavors of the kitchen can be found in the Gaffield Grower’s Garden. While you’re here, learn how to make a leafy salad, count the gourds in the gourd tunnel, and see how high the corn has grown. Kids will harvest a sampling of fruits and vegetables to take home for dinner! $5 fee.

Super Scented Summer
Wed., August 25, 6–7:30 pm
Join us in the Gaffield Children’s Garden and the Herb Knot Garden and put together deliciously fragrant bouquets to take home and dry—lavender, lemon balm, verbena, and more. Plus, discover how plants use scent to attract pollinators and repel predators. $5 fee. #10-YE-20

Critter Quest
Sat., August 28, 10 am–noon
Late summer offers insects, flowers, and other curious creatures by the thousands at Matthaei. Join us for our August treasure hunt and discover towering flowers, butterflies on the wing, hungry caterpillars, fish darting in the shallows of Fleming Creek, orchestras of crickets in the grass, and much more just waiting to be found. $5 fee. #10-YE-21

Pickles and Pizza Gardens: Back-to-School Harvest Party
Sat., Sept. 18, 10 am–noon
Celebrate the bounty of nature in the Gaffield Children’s Garden during our back-to-school harvest party, where you’ll learn how to make pizza sauce from our tomatoes, refrigerator pickles scented with fresh dill, and more! $5 fee. #10-YE-22

Here’s How to Register for Classes (see registration form below):

Phone: 734.647.7600. (Business hours:
Tues & Thurs.–Sun., 10 am–4:30 pm; Wed.,
10 am–8 pm.)
Fax: 734.998.6205. Send completed registration
form with credit card information.
Mail: MBGNA - University of Michigan
1800 N. Dixboro Road
Ann Arbor MI 48105
Online: www.mbgna.umich.edu

In Person: Stop by the front desk at Matthaei
during Conservatory hours: Tues & Thurs.–Sun.,
10 am–4:30 pm; Wed., 10 am–8 pm.

Make checks payable to “MBGNA.”

Note: Adult education classes are open to those
at least 16 years of age. Classes meet as designated
at Matthaei Botanical Gardens or Nichols Arbo-
retum. Classes may meet off-site (call for location
and directions if you miss a class). Field trips
may be physically challenging—call if you have
questions about the difficulty of any class or trip.
Classes are popular and fill quickly—early regis-
tration is suggested.

Are You a Member?
To become a member of Matthaei Botanical
Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, send a separate
check made out to “MBGNA.” Fees are $55 for
a family membership, $45 for a single member-
ship, and $20 for University students. (See
form below.)

Refunds: Refunds given if MBGNA cancels
class. Sorry, no refunds for classes with fees of
$5 and less; no refunds for no-shows. For more
information, visit the registration page on our
website: lsa.umich.edu/mbg/learn/registration.asp

Name: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________
email: ___________________________ Parent’s name (if student is under 18): ___________________________
Address: ___________________________ City: ______________ State: ______________ Zip: ______________
☐ Member of Friends of MBGNA (Member Exp. Date ______________)
☐ Non-member
☐ U-M student: (Student ID Number ______________ ) Is this your first class? ☐ Y ☐ N

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List additional classes on a separate sheet and include with original form.

Total

Payment: ☐ Check made payable to: MBGNA
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover
☐ American Express

Card # ___________________________ Exp. Date __________
Cardholder Signature ___________________________
Get Involved—Volunteer!

We welcome volunteers to get involved in every season at MBGNA. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 734.647.8528 (tgriffit@umich.edu) to request a volunteer application and to learn more about current opportunities. New volunteer orientations are offered monthly, with additional trainings required for some assignments.

*Please note: preregistration is required for all orientations

30th Annual Spring Plant Sale & Fundraiser

Set Up Days: Mon.–Fri., May 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Plant Sale Days: Fri.–Sun., May 7, 8, & 9

Celebrate spring’s return and lend a hand at our biggest fundraiser of the year! This annual event provides a great opportunity to share your passion for gardening, support the mission and work of MBGNA, mix and mingle with other garden lovers—and pick up some great plants for yourself.

It takes hundreds of volunteers to help this event run smoothly before, during, and after the sale, so there’s an opportunity for everyone. Please visit our website for a full list of volunteer jobs, shifts, orientation schedule and event information.

Preregistration and attendance at a Spring Plant Sale Volunteer Orientation is required. Volunteer interest forms and job descriptions are available online, at the Gardens & Arb, and via mail upon request.

Nichols Arboretum Collections—Volunteer Orientation

Thurs., May 13, 3–5 pm

Calling all Arb lovers! Join horticulturist Adrienne O’Brien as she introduces new opportunities for volunteers in the collections at the nationally renowned Nichols Arboretum. Everyone knows about the famed Peony Garden, but during this orientation Adrienne will focus on some of the lesser-known jewels of the Arb that nevertheless need tending: the Centennial Shrub Collection, Laurel Ridge Trail, and others. Great opportunity for those who can take public transportation or who live near the Arb.

Gaffield Children’s Garden Ambassador Orientation

Sat., May 22, 9 am–noon

Back by popular demand, this is a new opportunity for volunteers to help make our wildly popular children’s garden a great place to visit. Individuals and families are invited to join us as we create a welcoming atmosphere in this new garden designed especially for young visitors—and the young at heart! Volunteers will learn about basic visitor etiquette and the different elements of this unique, interactive landscape. Minors are welcome to volunteer with adult supervision. Weekday and weekend shifts available.

NEW! Weekend Display Garden Workdays

You asked for it—you got it! We’ll be hosting volunteer workdays in the display gardens at Matthaei on Saturdays from 9 am—noon. If you work traditional weekday hours and have missed out on gardening with us in the past, now’s your chance to get involved. Please contact the volunteer office for the spring/summer weekend schedule!

2010 Shakespeare in the Arb—A Midsummer’s Night’s Dream

June 3–27, Thurs.–Sun. evenings; shows start at 6:30 pm

*Please note: 4 weeks of shows this June

Join us in celebrating the 10th season of this magical Ann Arbor theater tradition. It takes many volunteers to support the behind-thescenes and upfront elements of this beloved LSA Residential College production, whose performances literally move through different areas of the Arb throughout each play. Volunteers assist with everything from ticket sales to ushering the audience from scene to scene, all the while enjoying the play (for free) and the scenic beauty of the Arb, of course. Volunteers also receive a cool Shakespeare t-shirt!

*Preregistration and attendance at an orientation is required for this event. Volunteer forms are available online.
Bill Sikkenga and Sheila Strang met in their freshmen English class in Angell Hall. Each had grown up hearing about the University of Michigan. U-M had lured Sheila's father to Ann Arbor from Windsor, Ontario, to work on the Phoenix Reactor as a skilled tool and die maker. Bill’s father had played Michigan football and earned degrees in LS&A (AB 1932) and in law (LLB 1939).

Such strong U-M connections would have been more than enough to explain their deep affection for the University and their decision to establish a charitable remainder trust (CRT), especially given that all three of their children went on to earn U-M degrees.

But why did they choose to earmark their gift for Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, the Clements Library, and the Michigan League, and why did they decide to do this now?

“These are places where people use their educations to create special, outside-the-classroom opportunities for the public and the University,” Bill explains. The Sikkengas spent many hours in the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, and Bill delights in the unique, important features of the Arb and Gardens, saying, “Did you know that the oldest growth forest in southeast Michigan is in Matthaei right next to the golf course?”

Bill served for seven years on the Matthaei Friends Board, including terms as vice chair and chair. He chaired Matthaei by Moonlight fundraisers (with Sheila’s invaluable behind-the-scenes help, Bill adds) and together they chaired the Arboretum’s Centennial Celebration. Sheila was a founder of the Friends of the Michigan League and chaired the League’s Board of Governors, remembering how the League offered a safe, comfortable student home away from home for girls between classes.

“People deserve to experience these places into the future,” Sheila says, and they wanted to help make that possible. For the Sikkengas, a CRT was the right choice, rather than simply including U-M in their wills.

“We’re getting so much satisfaction from seeing how much this gift means to the Gardens, the League, and the Clements,” Bill says.

Donors Bill and Sheila Sikkenga established a charitable remainder trust for MBGNA and other U-M units

Donor Spotlight:
Bill & Sheila Sikkenga

Our occasional series on giving highlights the many donors, members, and others who help make our work possible

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A charitable remainder trust . . .

. . . provides significant tax, income, and philanthropic benefits. The donor:

§ Receives a tax deduction now
§ Avoids capital gains taxes on any appreciated securities that fund the trust
§ Receives an income stream from the trust for the rest of his or her life

To find out how you can make a difference in a compelling project or in the future of Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, contact Matthaei Development Director Gayle Steiner (734.647.7847; gayles@umich.edu) or the U-M Office of Gift Planning (734.615.2022; toll-free: 866.233.6661; giving@umich.edu).