friends newsletter • fall 2011

Inside: Grant on a Mission • Bonsai Blue Chips • Plant Sale Round-Up • and more
Grants on a Mission

A federal grant of nearly $127,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences enables an assessment of our at-risk natural communities. The project is part of an ongoing stewardship planning process and involves staff members and a collaboration with the U-M Herbarium. See p. 2 for the full story.

Another grant of just over $74,000 comes from the Sustain Our Great Lakes grant program administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The grant will help us with several projects: removing exotic invasive plants, reintroducing fire on 200 acres of diverse habitat, completing an assessment of our eastern massasauga rattlesnake population, and creating educational materials about the rattler.

A grant from the James A. and Faith Knight Foundation makes possible a web-based game for children. The Wetland Adventure Game and Back-pack Discovery Walk, in collaboration with education specialists here and at the Ann Arbor Public Schools, encourage thousands of local and regional public-school students who take outdoor field trips to engage in online activities back home that complement and enrich their field experiences. The grant also allows us to create educational materials and to buy magnifying lenses, ID cards, and more that kids can check out from the front desk.

Run for the Arb

Thousands of runner, walkers, and joggers can’t be wrong: the Arb is a great place to exercise. Join us Sun., Oct. 2, for our first “Run for the Arb,” a 5K/1K family-friendly trails walk-run through the Arb. All proceeds benefit Matthaei-Nichols, and each participant receives a nifty T-shirt. Visit our website, mbgna.umich.edu, for information.

Music in the Arb

Don’t miss the final Music in the Arb 2011 concert Sept. 18. Featuring Mon Monarch, a group that blends roots music, country, bluegrass, and Southern gospel. And thanks to you, members, the concert is free!
Collaborate, Succeed

Training up with other U-M units strengthens the project’s success, notes Grese. “We researched collaborative opportunities and developed a unique partnership with the University of Michigan Herbarium,” he says. “We recognized that working with the Herbarium would be a good fit, especially given that the university is encouraging creative partnerships wherever it can.”

In addition to Plakke, U-M Herbarium botanist Beverly S. Walters will assist in the project along with U-M grad student and School of Natural Resources and Environment student Mary Hejna. During the first season Walters and Hejna will create a comprehensive geospatial baseline inventory and description of the four properties.

A detailed documentation and cataloging of the natural communities follows, using global positioning system (GPS) technology and the Michigan Natural Features Inventory classifications.

Finally, the areas will be quantitatively ranked for conservation and restoration, a stewardship model along with faculty and expert consultants will be established, and consistent monitoring protocols put into place. Ultimately the results will be released to the public and to professionals in the field.

The grant, and the ensuing cataloging and assessment, will be a model for many other U-M properties, says Grese, who explains that “there are bits and pieces out there, but no full accounting or catalog of resources.”

Given our role in curation, Grese believes, creating that model and taking that step is a leadership role in natural land stewardship. ♦

A Garden to Celebrate Our Great Lakes Heritage

The IMLS grant is one piece of an organization-wide conservation picture. It’s also a natural tie-in with the Great Lakes Gardens at Matthaei—a place to showcase and protect the diversity of ecosystems and plants of the Great Lakes region and of Michigan. The Garden will spur visitors to appreciate and expand their knowledge of native grasses under a sky of prairie wildflowers, native orchids, and the interaction of native species and the interaction of ecosystems.

We offer gifting and naming opportunities for the Great Lakes Garden and its components. The University of Michigan and Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum have joined forces to match 30% of every gift with funds for the endowment. To permanently protect the garden and care for its collections, each gift will be split between construction (75%) and an endowment earmarked for perpetual care (25%). A gift of $100,000, for example, will result in $75,000 for construction, $25,000 for the endowment, and a matching $30,000 for the endowment from the University and from us.

A naming opportunity is a great way to honor a friend, relative, or loved one who has meant a lot to you. For more information on naming opportunities or on making a gift, contact Development Director Gayle Stainer at gayle@umich.edu or 734.647.7847.
Fall 2011 Community/Adult Programs and Classes—U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum

All programs and classes unless noted otherwise are free and take place at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Fee-based programs are noted with a $ and venues outside of Matthaei are marked with a † symbol.

September
Sat. & Sun., Sept. 10-11, 10 am-4:30 pm
Annual Plant Sales - Michigan Cactus Society & Southeast Michigan Bromeliad Society
Free admission.

Sun., Sept. 10, 1 pm
The Wonderful World of Bromeliads
A PowerPoint introduction to the amazing bromeliad (pineapple) family features its diversity of form and color, its survival strategies, and its importance to the ecology of its habitat.

Sun., Sept. 11, 1 pm
Growing Bromeliads in Michigan
A talk by Paul Wingert on choosing bromeliads that fit your needs: for winter color or bloom, and those that make a stunning accent in the summer garden. Also, discussion of potting, fertilizing, watering, propagation, and more.

Sun., Sept. 11, 2 pm
New Vision Orchids – Odontoglossums
Presented by the Ann Arbor Orchid Society.

Mon., Sept. 12, 7 pm
Preserving Your Herbal Harvest
Presented by the Herb Study Group.

Wed., Sept. 14, 5–7:30 pm
↓ Shanghai Prairie Tour with Aurora Erskine
Presented by Wild Ones Ann Arbor Chapter. Tour this special community of plants located on the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital campus. Meet in the picnic area parking lot opposite staff parking area D at the 3-way stop on McCubrey. Visit stjohnsmara.org or call 734.741.5131 for guided tours and guided tours at the Arboretum.

Wed., Sept. 14, 7:30 pm
Fall Hive Management Strategies I
Presented by the Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers (A2B2).
A review and discussion of practical methods to protect the hive, determine its health and survivability, determine honey quantity for winter survival, and more.

Sun., Sept. 18, 10 am–4:30 pm
Great Lakes Judging (Orchids)
New Awards & 21 Species Identification Task Force Requirements.

Mon., Sept. 19, 7:45 pm
The Life of Fungi - Ecosystems, Interactions, by Dr. Timothy James.
Presented by the Michigan Botanical Club.

Tues., Sept. 20, 7:30 pm
Let’s Take the Family to... The Galapagos Islands!
Presented by Sierra Club Huron Valley Group.
The one-family family of Dr. Mitch... recaps their budget-wise travel approach and adventures in the Galapagos Islands and beyond.

Wed., Sept. 21, 7:30 pm
Chile: Birding at the End of the World
Presented by the Washtenaw County Audubon Society.
Join Rodolfo Palma for a visit to the southernmost part of Chile, one of the Netherlands most renowned nature areas.

Sat., Sept. 24, 1–5 pm, Nichols Arboretum
‡ Festival of Kites
A one-day kite festival features student competitions, international-quality kites, kite shops, Asian kite masters demonstrating craftsmanship and flying techniques, and more. Cross-campus competition will include teams units to display and fly kites. Sponsored by Center for Chinese Studies, U-M of International Institutes and Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum.

Wed., Sept. 28, 7 pm
Fall Hive Management Strategies I
Presented by the Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers (A2B2).
Reviewing the health of the hive in preparation for winter.

October
Mon., Oct. 3, 7 pm
Herbs Used in Indian Cooking
Presented by the Herb Study Group.
Plus, a sampling of Indian food.

Sun., Oct. 9, 1–4 pm
Cactus Dish-Garden Workshop
Presented by the Michigan Cactus Society.
Note: $5.00 per person materials fee.

Sun., Oct. 9, 1 pm
The Slippers of Venus, by Alex Chalis
Presented by the Ann Arbor Orchid Society.

Tues., Oct. 11, 7 pm
Fall Hive Management Strategies II
A review and discussion of practical methods to protect the hive, determine its health and survivability, determine honey quantity for winter survival, and more.

Wed., Oct. 12, 6–45 pm
Understanding the White-Tailed Deer: The Good, the Bad & the Biology
Presented by Wild Ones Ann Arbor Chapter. Randy Baker, award-winning naturalist and owner of Naturalist Endeavors, examines the history and wildlife of the Oostvaardersplassen, one of the Netherlands most renowned nature areas.

Sat., Oct. 15, 10–4:30 pm
Great Lakes Judging (Orchids)
New Awards (Ron Payeur) Hybridizing with Phragmipedium seedling (Rob Hallgren)

Tues., Oct. 18, 7:30 pm
The Controversial Coyote
Presented by Sierra Club Huron Valley.
All invited to hear Michigan licensed wildlife rehabilitator Holly Hadac dispel myths and provide research-based facts about the amazingly adaptable coyote. Learn where they came from, their pack behaviors, their interactions with people and pets, and more.

Wed., Oct. 19, 6:30 pm
Herbal Craft Sharing of Ideas & Recipes
A joint presentation of the Herb Study Group members.

Mon., Nov. 7, 7 pm
Herbal Craft Sharing of Ideas & Recipes
A joint presentation of the Herb Study Group members.

Mon., Nov. 8, 7 pm
Presentation—American Rhododendron Society, Michigan Chapter
Presented by the American Rhododendron Society, Ann Arbor Chapter.
All invited to a class on growing rhododendrons from seeds and propagation from cuttings. Catted dinner for all attendees and lecture to follow. Free.

Wed., Oct. 26, 7 pm
Our Bonsai, Then and Now— A Photographic Review
Presented by the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society.
A presentation depicting bonsai from its beginnings until now. Members will also present images illustrating the development of raw material into bonsai.

Sun., Oct. 27, 7:30 pm, Stamps Auditorium, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor
A List of plants “tied up”
Dr. Douglas Tallamy of the University of Delaware talks about his book Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens, which argues that by trading wild spaces for uncontrolled expansion and replacing native species with alien species, we’ve threatened the survival of wildlife. Dr. Tallamy passionately argues that it isn’t too late to save ecological communities, and that we all have a significant role in the process.

Sponsored by: U-M Program in the Environment; U-M School of Natural Resources and Environment; U-M Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum; and the Audubon Society Michigan Ann Arbor Chapter; and the Audubon Society Washtenaw Chapter.

November
Mon., Nov. 7, 6 pm
Review and Critique of Matthaei Botanical Gardens’ Bonsai Collection
Presented by the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society. Review followed by a potluck dinner.

Mon., Nov. 7, 7 pm
Herbal Craft Sharing of Ideas & Recipes
A joint presentation of the Herb Study Group members.

Wed., Nov. 9, 6:45 pm
Annual Potluck, Show and Tell, Deep Rock Philatelic Society
Presented by Wild Ones Ann Arbor Chapter.
Bring a dish to pass and slides to share in celebration of another year of restoring beauty and diversity to our corner of the earth.

Tues., Nov. 15, 7:30 pm
Burning Rivers of the Great Lakes
Presented by Sierra Club, Huron Valley Group.
Dr. John Hartig, author of Burning Rivers: Revival of Four Urban-Industrial Rivers that Caught Fire, chronicles the indiscriminate use and abuse of some of our great freshwater resources, describes the stewardship efforts used to control pollution, and presents evidence of dramatic improvements in these aquatic ecosystems.

Wed., Nov. 16, 7:30 pm
Reclaiming Land for Wildlife in the Netherlands
Presented by the Washtenaw County Audubon Society.
Join Jaco Gelderloos for a program on the history and wildlife of the Oostvaardersplassen, one of the Netherlands most renowned nature areas.

Sat., Nov. 19, 10 am–5 pm
Great Lakes Judging (Orchids)
Business Meeting

Sat., Nov. 22, 2 pm
The Earth Stars, by Lynne Echlin
Presented by the Southeast Michigan Bromeliad Society.
A survey of the beautiful Earth Stars (Cyananthus)—small, colorful, low-light plants that are ideally suited to windowill gardening and flourish in a terarium—along with culture tips to ensure success.

Sun., Nov. 20, 2 pm
“Growing Orchids The Enlightened Way: Gardening Under Fluorescent Lights,” by Ernie Gemeinhardt
Presented by the Ann Arbor Orchid Society.

December
Sat., Dec. 3, 10 am–noon
Introduction to the Art of Pressed Flower Cards
Presented by Mattich Nichols.
Instructor Beth Gilford demonstrates how to create greeting cards with pressed flowers.
Participants take home at least four cards created in class. Pre-registration required; class fills early.
Materials fee: $8.00 11-6E-09.

Sat., Dec. 10, 10 am–noon
Green’s Workshop
Presented by the Ann Arbor Garden Club.
Materials for a wreath will be provided, or bring a container to create a greens arrangement instead. Space limited; reserve early. Potluck to follow. For reservations call Nancy Hart: 734.664.0749.
Materials fee: $15.00 (due at registration).

Tues., Dec. 13, 7 pm
Alternative/Biodynamic Beekeeping
A look at the different shapes and construction of alternative hives along with the plants and associated with them, with a discussion about the difference between organic and biodynamic beekeeping.

Sat., Dec. 17
↓ Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count
Presented by the Washtenaw County Audubon Society.
All invited. Previous birding experience helpful but not necessary; participants will be paired with an experienced birder if needed. See washtenawaudubon.org for details and times or call 734.973.9422.
Sat., Dec. 17, 10 am–5 pm
Great Lakes Judging (Orchids)
New Awards (Richard Bennett); Miniature Orchids (Dennis Settefleck)

Tues., Dec. 20, 7:30 pm
Great Adventures Around the Globe
Presented by Sierra Club Huron Valley Group.
Share your travels! Send a PowerPoint presentation or 10–15 digital photos to Ed Steinman (esteinman@umich.edu). For mounted slides bring 10–15. A digital projector will be available.

Fall 2011 Community/Adult Programs and Classes—U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum
Get Involved—Volunteer! Fall 2011

Dig into some great volunteer opportunities at Matthaei-Nichols this fall. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 734.647.8528 for more information. All trainings are held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Rd., unless otherwise noted. Preregistration required for all ongoing assignments and special events.

Ambassador Training - Conservatory
Sat., Oct. 15, 9 am–noon

After the blooms of the display gardens have faded our visitors can find a welcome retreat in the Conservatory. Ambassadors greet and guide visitors to points of interest and informal learning opportunities. The Conservatory training will introduce volunteers to the Visitor Services department and covers the basics about the three climates and the plants found in the Conservatory. Ambassadors commit to two shifts per month and attend ongoing educational sessions regarding special collections exhibits and events. Interview and preregistration is required.

Prescribed Burn Volunteer Training
Thurs., Oct. 13, 1–3 pm

Our Natural Areas Manager Jeff Plakke is all fired up about fall burn season! We are looking for new recruits to join the volunteer burn team so if you enjoy the natural areas at the Arb and Gardens and would like to help maintain them this is a great service learning opportunity. Volunteers are on call for weekday, afternoon burns (1–4 pm) during the spring and fall. The training will provide basic information about the use of prescribed fire as a restoration tool and the basic volunteer duties. A tour of past burn sites and hands-on demonstration will be provided, weather permitting.

Service Opportunities for Groups
Volunteers representing community, corporate, college, and youth groups contribute over 2,000 hours of service every year! Group service projects at Matthaei-Nichols are a great way for members to enjoy fresh air and exercise in a beautiful natural setting and work together toward a common goal. Our staff provides education about the work at hand and explains how volunteer efforts support our mission and programs.

Spring Plant Sale Round-Up
You visited, you saw, you liked! So we concluded following our 2011 Spring Plant Sale season after much positive member and visitor feedback, brisk sales, and generally empty shelves in the aftermath. In fact, we sold out of all 125 peony plants within the first 90 minutes of the peony sale—and nearly all of our hanging baskets the first weekend of the sales.

Changing the sale fundamentals like we did this year—smaller sales, no perennials, integration of the sales into regular retail business—was not an easy decision. But it did teach us a few lessons. We found that despite the transition, you, our members, stuck by us and taught us a few lessons. We found that despite the transition, you, our members, stuck by us and understood why we made the changes we did. We learned that offering plants similar to those we grow in our gardens makes more sense and allows us to offer special arrangements such as the miniature container gardens of succulents or the unique hanging basket combinations you can’t find at a big box store. And the changes helped us manage our staff time better, especially during the growing season, when we need to be concentrating on our gardens and natural areas. Taken together, the new time management, cost reduction, and retail strategies added up to a significant profit this year.

Most important, we learned that thanks to loyal member support we can continue our mission of stewardship and sustainability and offer members, visitors, and volunteers a deeper connection to nature through great programming, educational opportunities, and events.

Blue Chip Bonsai
Special match grows your endowment gift 120%

They say money doesn’t grow on trees, but a special matching-funds program from Matthaei-Nichols and the University comes close. Give a gift to endow the Bonsai and Penjing Garden planned for Matthaei and watch your contribution increase to 120% of the original donation!

Here’s how it works: Because creating a new garden is one thing—and very popular with donors—and setting aside money for keeping the garden healthy is equally important—but doesn’t give donors quite the same thrill—U-M has committed to a 1:1 match of endowment gifts for major projects such as the Bonsai and Penjing Garden. Matthaei-Nichols will add an additional 20% of the endowment amount. For a recent gift of $60,000, $75,000 was directed to Bonsai Garden construction and $15,000 to the bonsai endowment. U-M and Matthaei kicked in another $18,000, bringing the total from $60,000 to $78,000.

More than a third of the construction goal of $455,000 has been raised for space to exhibit our breathtaking collection. We also offer naming opportunities ranging from $1,500 to $220,000. For more information contact Development Director Gayle Steiner (734.677.7847; gayles@umich.edu).

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Protecting Your Gift
Beginning September 1, 2011, all Matthaei-Nichols membership contributions will be sent directly to the bank used by The University of Michigan instead of 1800 N. Dixboro. Why the change? U-M wants all gifts to travel safely, promptly, and directly to the bank, passing through fewer hands. And because your gifts arrive at the bank more quickly, they’ll benefit our gardens and natural areas faster than before. As always, the membership team here will continue to make any changes in information and address any comments or concerns you include with your donation. Please feel free to contact membership manager Andy Sell (734.615.9475; sella@umich.edu) for more information.