Heirloom Bulbs

Scott Kunst, proprietor of Old House Gardens

Heirloom bulbs are anything but dusty, as more and more gardeners are discovering with delight. Most are gorgeous, many are unusual, they often out-perform modern varieties, and all can bring to your garden a rich, living connection with the past.

Even if you don’t give a fig about history, there’s a good chance you’ll find bulbs from the past that you’ll love. Here are seven good reasons to give them a fresh look.

Heirlooms are tough and easy. That’s why they’re still with us decades or even centuries after their peers have vanished. Most are vigorous, disease-resistant and grow happily with little care.

Heirlooms are unusual and distinct. Heirlooms often survive because they offer special qualities that newer varieties have not yet matched. There are crocus that are virtually black, for example, and wild glads that have proven hardy in our Ann Arbor garden for over a decade now. Heirlooms can help transform your garden from ordinary to unique.

Heirlooms are often rich in fragrance. Fragrance is hard to breed for and often disappears in newer flowers. Heirloom bulbs, however, can be deliciously fragrant. (For spring planting, don’t miss ‘Mexican Single’ tuberoses which smell so good the Aztecs dedicated them to their goddess of art, beauty and love!)

Heirlooms are much like wildflowers. If you appreciate the informal charm of wildflowers, don’t forget that the oldest heirloom bulbs are wildflowers – no longer wild-collected, of course – and the earliest selections that ancient gardeners made from those primeval gems.

Heirlooms are genetically diverse and unique. A diverse gene pool offers us our best hope for developing tough, beautiful plants to meet the needs of an unpredictable future. Wouldn’t it be great, for example, to have a race of hyacinths that multiply as eagerly as daylilies? The genes for that quality exist in at least one antique variety that I’ve collected from an old garden here in Ann Arbor where it jam-packed a bed a foot wide and thirty feet long and was scattered throughout the yard almost like a weed. Heirlooms offer us an amazing genetic inheritance that we can’t afford to squander.

Heirlooms are endangered and in need of your help! It’s not just in the rainforest that we’re losing valuable plants to extinction. Every year, scores of unique garden plants slip through.
our fingers, forever. In the 1800s, for example, when dahlias ranked right up there with roses in popularity, some 10,000 cultivars were introduced. Today only six survive. Though we may not be able to save giant pandas in our own backyards, we can all help with endangered garden plants. Just grow them!

**Best of all . . . heirlooms root us.**

Just as old photos on the wall help us feel more deeply the bonds we share with friends and family, heirloom bulbs remind us that we all belong to a huge, transcendent garden club that includes everyone from the Empress Josephine to your dahlia-loving grandfather. I don’t know of anything else that can add to your garden more pleasure or emotional power.

So are you ready to try a couple of heirlooms? I hope you’ll join us to enrich your garden, touch the past, and help save an irreplaceable inheritance!

**Scott Kunst is the owner of Ann Arbor’s Old House Gardens, 536 Third St, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 (www.oldhousegardens.com).** For the first time this year, he’ll be offering dahlias, glads, canna and tuberoses at MBGNA’s Spring Plant Sale in May. Come watch Scott do heirloom bulb demonstrations on Saturday. A tentative schedule is on page 16, but check the website for updates (www.mbgna.umich.edu).

**Clockwise from top right:** Dahlia ‘Kaiser Wilhelm,’ Crocus ‘Negro Boy’, Gladiolus byzantinus, and Mexican single tuberose.

**New this year! Gardening Demonstrations!**

**27th Annual Spring Plant Sale**

*Friday, May 4, 3:00 – 7:00 pm (Members Only)*

*Saturday, May 5, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm*

*Sunday, May 6, Noon – 4:30 pm (please note new opening time)*

*Friday is Members’ Only. Memberships are available at the door all three days; members receive a 10% discount on purchases.*
When David Michener’s computer developed hardware problems, no one expected that it would lead to the discovery of the earliest efforts at establishing botanical gardens at the University of Michigan. Dr. Michener, Assistant Curator of Matthaei, asked me if I would try to organize the MBG photograph collection. Filed with the photographs, I discovered a document from the Bentley Historical Library which summarized the history of the botanical gardens at the University. The first paragraph stated that “it was not until 1897 that the gardens were established...on central campus.”

Asking staff members, I discovered that 1907 is the date acknowledged for the establishment of the Botanical Gardens at what is now the Nichols Arboretum. However, I had previously found a slide labeled “Library and Botanical Garden – University of Michigan” copyrighted 1904, that supported the idea of garden plots existing on campus before 1907. So, what were those gardens?

The original law in 1817 creating a University of Michigan called for the establishment of various “useful library and scientific institutions,” a botanical garden being specifically mentioned. After the move to Ann Arbor in 1837, Asa Gray became the first professor hired at the University and drew up a plan in which the east half of campus was to be a Botanical Garden. This was never implemented, and over the years several Botany professors pleaded with the Regents to both establish gardens for teaching and research, and greenhouses to provide students with live plants to study all year. Greenhouse space was ultimately rented from Cousins and Hall on S. University, and research space from various local farmers.

In 1896, Dr. Julius Schlotterbeck (College of Pharmacy) saw a number of medicinal gardens while traveling through Europe. He determined that as “no department at the University had ever begun with a flourish,” he would start with a small garden on campus. Enlisting the cooperation of Volney Spalding (Botany), they wrote to other institutions asking for plants and seeds, and also planned to collect specimens from the woods surrounding Ann Arbor. Continued on p. 16

Matthaei Botanical Gardens
Centennial Fair
Saturday, July 28, 2007
Noon – 4 pm
Celebrating the people, plants and purpose that have made the Gardens grow!

Free activities for all ages!
- Costumed guides throughout the grounds to describe and explain our special collections
- Tours of the Michigan Solar House, the new Sue Reichert Discovery Trail, and more
- Hands-on art project for the Gaffield Children’s Garden
- Environmental sustainability and stewardship information and demonstrations – what each of us can do to benefit the planet
- Storytelling and face painting, refreshments, and fun for everyone!

Reception at the Gateway Garden at noon
Director’s Message

**The Gafffield Children’s Garden**

*Bob Grese*

Ever since becoming director, I’ve heard of the long-held desire to create a children’s garden at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. It wasn’t until last spring, however, that a seminal gift from Tom and Jeanette Gaffield allowed us to take the first serious steps in creating what will be known as the Gafffield Children’s Garden. Since that time, landscape architecture master’s student Mary Walton and MBGNA staff member and landscape architect Sarah Weiss have been refining the ideas for the Gafffield Children’s Garden. The garden will be created at the south end of our new display gardens, east of the Conservatory. The first stage will begin this summer.

This accessible garden will provide unique, environmentally-focused learning and exploratory play experiences for children. The idea for providing hands-on learning for children has a long history at both the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum. In his comments to the Regents, in 1906, Frederick Newcombe argued for local school children as well as students at the University to have a place within walking distance “where practically all the lessons taught by vegetation growth could be learned.”

O.C. Simonds, designer of the original Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, frequently wrote about the need for children to have access to nature. He wrote of children needing places to “sit quietly and enjoy nature” or to “romp about and play on the grass.” He sought to preserve places where children “could become acquainted with the shapes of all the leaves and their habits of growth; with the perfume of the linden and lilac, with the songs of the thrushes and catbirds, with the motions of the chipmunk, and, in short, all the charms of the country.” Our garden is being designed to be such a place. Our intention is that the garden will encourage children to develop a greater appreciation of nature and a more profound understanding of its importance.

One of the central features planned for the garden will be an accessible treehouse to give children the sense of being up in the tree canopy. A preliminary design created by Forever Young Treehouses of Burlington, Vermont (www.treehouses.org) contains a leaf-shaped roof for the rustic treehouse, with a long ramp leading up through the trees. Along with the Sam Graham Trees Trail and the Sue Reichert Discovery Trail, the Gafffield Children’s Garden will help to make Matthaei Botanical Gardens a rich destination for children and their families.

Over the next months, we’ll be continuing our campaign to raise the remaining funds to make the garden and treehouse become a reality. The Ann Arbor Branch of the Woman’s National Farm and Garden Association has generously pledged the proceeds from this June’s annual Garden Walk towards the cost of the Gafffield Children’s Garden (see article, page 19). Speaking of fundraising, we are delighted to welcome Ericka Bigelow as our new Director of Development for Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum. Ericka comes to us from the development office of the Denver Botanic Gardens. She also worked in development with the Colorado Symphony Association and the Greater Houston Area Red Cross.

We are delighted to have Ericka on board and hope you’ll have a chance to meet her in the months to come!

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**Development Matters**

**A Generous Gift for our Children**

*Ericka Bigelow*

Tom and Jeanette Gaffield have given a gift to our children – a gift that will last generations – a gift for a Children’s Garden.

“It is our desire to excite children about our environment. To provide them with the opportunity to appreciate not only the beauty of a garden, but also provide a space where they can learn about how it can be preserved for future generations,” said Jeanette and Tom Gaffield.

Tom Gaffield, a docent at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens, and Jeanette Gaffield, a former Gardens Ambassador, have had a vision for a children’s garden for years. After touring gardens across the US and some international gardens, they were always drawn to the Children’s Garden. In 2006, they made their dream a reality and made a donation for a Children’s Garden. In May 2006, a summer intern and SNRE student designed an interactive garden for children that will provide children physical and emotional connections to the environment, imparting to them a greater appreciation of nature and a more profound understanding of its importance.

Tom and Jeanette Gaffield are a great example of community members who are making a lasting impression on our children. We, at the Gardens and Arb, are forever grateful. And so are our children.”

**Right: Director of Development, Ericka Bigelow**
The Woodland Garden

Helen V. Smith
(Reprinted from Friends of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens Newsletter, Vol. 6 No. 4 Apr. 1979)

The charming wildflower garden in the grove of trees north of the gate to the meadow not only provides the visitor with a close-up view of many of our common wildflowers, but also provides a sanctuary for several of Michigan’s rare or threatened species. Twin leaf, so abundant in the Horner Woods, but officially recognized as rare in Michigan, does well in the garden. Toadshade, Virginia bluebells, Jacob’s ladder, and goldenseal are listed as threatened in Michigan, and goldenseal is threatened throughout its range as well. All are growing well in the garden, and one is almost a weed! Not on the official list but also rare are the beautiful double bloodroot and the bright yellow wood poppy. Visitors are welcome and will find that the labels give the common name, scientific name, and the family. The best time to visit the garden is about mid-April to mid-June although there will be some species in bloom in the summer. Weekly visits are advised if one wants to keep up with what is going on. Although less than a decade ago this spot was part of the impenetrable prickly ash thicket the origin of this garden goes back many years. Sometime in the 1950’s the Michigan State Federation of Women’s Clubs decided to have a wildflower memorial garden in which stones and plaques would honor the memory of deceased members. The director of the University Arboretum agreed to provide space and maintain such a garden if the sum of $2500 was provided. A 2-3 acre site with a small stream was selected and H. O. Whittmore designed a beautiful garden with a winding path, pergola, attractive bridges, flowering trees, and large areas for masses of wildflowers. Only a portion of the money was provided so work on the garden was delayed.

In the early 1960’s I became a member of the conservation committee of the Federation and discovered that one of my responsibilities was the Wildflower Memorial Garden. W. L. Chambers, then director of the Arboretum, was willing to go ahead with the plans if the remainder of the funds was forthcoming. At the next state convention of the Federation, plans were made for the Garden to be in its present location and to have it be a wildflower garden, not a memorial garden.

Work on clearing the prickly ash started almost at once; the soil was prepared and allowed to rest over the winter and the following spring the garden was laid out by E. E. Steiner, then director of the Gardens, was planted. Most of the plants came from local gardens but some were purchased. Additions have been made each year. Some species have flourished, others have vanished. Over 40 species are now well established. Weeds have done too well also, and at times, the garden has been overrun. With the aid of Friends Bernice Blackmer, Fay Edsall, Evelyn Smith, and Wendell Drouyor, it is hoped weeds will be eliminated this summer so the flowers can grow better. Seedlings of several additional species are being cared for by gardener Carole Turner so there will be flowers to replace the weeds! Additional species are needed, if you have some to offer contact Bill Collins. At long last the garden planned for so many years ago is a reality and a place of beauty in the spring.

Above: The Helen V. Smith Woodland Wildflower Garden at the Gardens.
**Families at the Gardens**

MBGNA is creating a richer experience for families with young children at the botanical gardens site. Last year, we introduced picnic tables, terrace seating and seating within the Conservatory. In August 2007, we’ll inaugurate the Sue Reichert Discovery Trail, a learning trail that features a living willow structure, spotting scopes and animal footprints. Construction has begun on the Gaffield Children’s Garden, which will be finished by the end of the season, and we’ll also be installing a discovery station within the Conservatory. In 2008, we will build an accessible treehouse within the children’s garden. Families, check out our family membership, which will enable you to enjoy these installations all year at no charge.

**Conservatory**

Don’t forget that our Conservatory will be closed from July 1 through mid-September while the roof is being replaced. There will still be plenty to do at the gardens during the summer months. Join us for our MBG Centennial Celebration party on July 28 and for the Sue Reichert Discovery Trail inauguration in August. Some of the new display gardens will also be open for your enjoyment, including a sitting garden, a mall of native trees, and MiSo House.

**Interns**

This summer for the second year, 25 students will join us as interns. These students are energetic, intelligent and competent. They’ll be working on a range of projects, from strategic planning for membership, program and interpretive development, and new gardens at the Arboretum.

**Summer Instruction**

In May and June, we’ll actually offer an undergraduate field instruction class at the Arb and Gardens, taught by our curator and adjunct professor David Michener. Our hope is that this class is the start of a spring field instruction institute that will eventually feature as many as eleven interdisciplinary classes for lower division students, offering U-M students an opportunity for field study without leaving Ann Arbor.

**Arboretum’s Reader Center**

We are engaged in strategic planning to make the Reader Center a hands-on education site. We’ve transferred our entire gift shop operation to the gardens to make space in the Reader Center lobby for educational installations. If you have ideas about what you’d like to see at the Reader Center, please contact Patricia Ferrer Beals (pferrer@umich.edu), our interpretation coordinator.

Beginning with this issue we are reprinting some articles from past newsletters in honor of our Centennial. We hope that you will enjoy them.

We welcome Jenny Senko on board as our newsletter designer. Jenny was one of our student interns last summer. She has continued working for us and has been creating many of our print ads and post cards plus the Centennial Calendar. We hope that you will like the little changes that she has brought to this issue.
Curator’s Corner

Centennial Shrub Collection – and beyond

David C. Michener

“We want a SHRUBBERY!”

With this mocking command, the dreaded Knights Who Say Ni dismiss King Arthur’s men to their high mission on pain of death – with parting edicts of “One that looks nice” and “Not too expensive.” Had Monty Python met O. C. Simonds, who knows what nonsense shrubbery banter would have been immortalized in movie lore?

Alnus, Amelanchier, Aronia, Cornus, Cotonaster, Corylus, Cydonia - the roll call of shrub genera on early plans of the Nichols Arboretum is impressive for its depth and sophistication. The earliest plans also make it clear that the plant collections that sweep down the valley from the Geddes Road Entrance were of special concern. Here, where the main entrance is dramatized with its ceremonial gates, unfolds a signature overview of the Huron River valley. In Simonds’s day, the distant hills were clad with woodlots and fields, U-M’s North Campus now strides across the middle distance. But how to treat this slope by Geddes Road? Simonds’s and subsequent plans make clear that the views were to be preserved while large masses of shrubs would create a series of spaces to be explored. A few large trees would help define areas and frame the views but the shrub masses and views would be complementary elements in the naturalistic design.

By the latter half of the 20th century only fractions of the original shrub plantings remained. The popularity of large ornamental shrubs went into long-term decline with the unprecedented move to the ever-expanding suburbs after the Second World War. Around such homes large shrubs would be out of scale; furthermore our culture was fixated on everything new (rather than wild type species), especially cultivars flaunting colors formerly unimagined. The once extensive lilac collection with over 150 classic forms that was a highlight of every May was removed (a fate the peony garden escaped). Even worse, the neglected plantings of buckthorn, honeysuckle and privet – originally welcomed as little-known ornamentals, became corruptors of native ecosystems as they revealed themselves to be invasive exotic pests.

In April, 2000, Stacie Printon (MLA) presented her plan for the revitalized shrub collections near the “South Entrance at Geddes Road.” Ms. Printon, under the guidance of Director Bob Grese, reconceived the entire old shrub collection area into 21 thematic beds focused on historic (exotic) and native (wild) collections framed in a reforested zone. Her concepts became the core of our in-development Centennial Shrub Collection.

The Centennial Shrub Collection celebrates the rich array of historic and native shrubs grown at the site prior to the Second World War. Our new focus – the demonstration of shrubs appropriate to ecologically sound horticulture for our area and that are attractive to native wildlife – gives a relevance that will long outlast any trends in design taste. Rather than attempt to reconstruct beds for which there is inadequate detail, the Collection re-presents the entire area as a functional and aesthetic unit rooted by Simonds’s design history. This past year we engaged Lydia Herrig (MIS ’06) as part of her museum studies work to assist with the interpretive sign explaining the history and contemporary purpose of the Centennial Shrub Collection, while individual plant labels were funded in part by the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust.

Come and enjoy the renewed Centennial Shrub Collection throughout the year – and see how we build on the exciting framework already established!

Above: Lilac shrubbery in the Centennial Shrub Collection at the Arb.

Member benefit updates

Effective July 1, 2007, Family Membership and above will receive a 10% discount on all facility rentals at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. This is great for the bride and groom planning a wedding in the Gateway Garden or for a family planning a birthday party in the Auditorium. You pick the place and your membership gives you the discount.

For information about membership, please call 734-647-8522.
Chi Walking for Health

Wednesdays, May 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 5:30 - 6:45 pm
Discover the healing power of walking. Optimal health is more than the absence of disease. It is a dynamic vibrant state of balance of the body, heart and mind. Come learn a synthesis of ancient techniques of concentration and breathing implemented while walking to directly synchronize the mind and body. These techniques are designed to create conditions conducive for emotional, physical and spiritual healing. Each walk begins with yoga and Qigong warm-up movements that invite you to cultivate awareness of the body and its needs. By walking in nature, we invoke the energy of the earth, the sun and the universe for mental clarity, calmness, physical vitality and well-being. Develop a satisfying relationship with nature and a sense of unity.

Instructor: Mai Datta, PhD, professor at Wayne State University, who has been an avid practitioner of spirituality, yoga, qigong and meditation for the past twenty years.

Fee: $40 Members and U-M students ($50 Non-members)
#07-AE-34

Gardening Demonstrations at the Plant Sale

Saturday, May 5, and Sunday, May 6
Times TBD (check the website mbgna.umich.edu for details)
Native Plant Gardening, Ground Covers, Rain Barrels, Heirloom Bulbs and more!
Free, no registration required.

Arb Rambles: Leaves Unfurled

Saturday, May 5, 9:30 - 11 am
Leaves are just getting started. Explore the Arboretum from a naturalist’s perspective.
Instructor: Robert Ayotte
Fee: Free but registration is required.
#07-AE-28

Wildflower Walks

Spring ephemerals are a joy. Take a walk with us to see these beauties at each location.
Fee: $5 per walk

In the Arb
Saturday, May 12, 9 – 11 am
Instructor: Robert Ayotte
#07-AE-29

At the Gardens
Saturday, May 19, 1 – 2:30 pm
Instructor: Connie Crancer
#07-AE-42S

Garden Cousins

Sunday, May 20, 1 – 4 pm
Many of our best-loved garden plants have cousins in our own local flora. We will start in an Ann Arbor garden exploring the diversity of plant families and genera from around the world. Then we will head to a nearby forest and prairie to find related species growing in our backyard natural areas. Emphasis will be on characteristics of plant families that are commonly found in Michigan’s native flora.
Directions to the study sites will be sent prior to class.
Instructor: Bev Walters, Michigan Natural Features Inventory botanist who enjoys growing unusual plants.
Fee: $24 Members and U-M students ($30 Non-members)
#07-AE-38

How Global Warming Will Affect Our Natural Areas

Saturday, June 2, 10 am – 2:30 pm
What are some of the potential effects of global warming on Michigan’s natural areas? This workshop will feature two hours of lecture, followed by a hike to consider the issues in the field. Bring a brown bag lunch.
Instructors: U-M faculty researching global warming
Sponsored by Stewardship Network
Register at www.stewardshipnetwork.org/huronarbor/globalwarmingaffects
Fee: $10 for members of Stewardship Network or Friends of MBGNA ($15 Non-members)

Green Living Workshop: The Power of the Sun

Saturday, June 2, 10 am to noon
Every 20 minutes, enough solar energy strikes the face of the United States to power the entire country for a year! Believe it or not, our sky is full of free and clean energy that is much more consumable than you may think! This Green Living Workshop is a great introduction to the fundamentals of solar energy through demonstration of both small and large-scaled solar solutions. Demonstrations will include a fully functional, mid-sized photovoltaic system, the installation of a solar powered roof vent, and more.
Instructor: T.J. Smith, MBGNA staff and David Strenski, who helped design and install the photovoltaic system at the Yipsilanti Food Cooperative
Fee: $18 Members and U-M students ($20 Non-members)
#07-AE-39

Yoga at the Gardens

Vinyasa-style Hatha Yoga for those who enjoy a flowing sequence of sun salutations and postures coordinated with music. Class will be at a moderate pace with instruction in postures. Open to all levels. Class will be held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens Auditorium. Please enter from the west entrance near the large parking lot. Bring a yoga mat and towel.

Session 5: #07-AE-31
Mondays: noon to 1 pm; June 4, 11, 18, 25, July 2 and 9
Fee: $48 Members and U-M students (Non-members: $60)

Session 6: #07-AE-32
Mondays: noon to 1 pm July 16, 23, 30, August 6, 13 and 20
Fee: $48 Members and U-M students (Non-members: $60)
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<td>9 - 11 am Arb Wildflower Walk</td>
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**Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum**

**Outdoor gardens and trails**
open every day 8 am to dusk, free admission

**Matthaei Botanical Gardens Conservatory**
Mon. closed
Tues. 10 am to 4:30
Wed. 10 am to 8 pm
Thurs - Sun. 10 am to 4:30
More information at www.mbgna.umich.edu

**The Reader Center at Nichols Arboretum**
Mon. - Fri. 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
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<td>Meetings</td>
<td>7 pm Wild Ones – Car pool to mystery site. Check <a href="http://www.for-wild.org/chapters/annarbor/">www.for-wild.org/chapters/annarbor/</a> for more info</td>
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**Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum**

**Outdoor gardens and trails**

Open every day 8 am to dusk, free admission

**Matthaei Botanical Gardens Conservatory**

Closed while new roof is installed.

More information at www.mbgna.umich.edu

**The Reader Center at Nichols Arboretum**

Mon. - Fri. 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
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Yoga Drop-in sessions
offered Wednesdays June 6, 13, 20, 27, July 11, 18, 25, August 1, 8, 15 and 22
Fee: $10 per session.
No registration required.

Landscape Ecosystems Field Classes
Has it been awhile since you studied natural science or ecology? Join us for a field class that will examine vegetation, soils and climate of our local ecosystems. Learn the components and dynamics that make up an ecosystem. Sign up for one, two or three classes.
Instructor Robert Ayotte
Fee: $24 per class Members and U-M students ($30 per class Non-members)

Arboretum – Glacial Landscapes
Saturday, June 16, 9am – noon
#07-AE-35

MBG – Riparian Landscapes
Saturday, July 14, 9am – noon
#07-AE-36

MBG – Upland Woods Landscapes
Saturday, August 11, 9am - noon
#07-AE-37

The Real Bois Blanc Island
Thursday, June 21, after 4 pm through Sunday June 24 at 9 am
Bois Blanc Island, located south of Mackinac Island in the Upper Peninsula (but not across the Mackinac Bridge), has become a favorite botanical and hiking site of instructor Ellen Weatherbee. This is the perfect time to investigate the early summer flora, including butterworts, dwarf lake iris, Indian plantain, Lake Huron tansy, orchids, shrubby cinquefoil and sundews. The beech-maple woods perched over crushed limestone provides a truly impressive display of wildflowers; the coniferous woods shade ferns and other boreal plants; beaches have thrust off their winter weight and are covered with an impressive array of native plants. Plants that were used for food and medicine by the Native Americans are still present and easily found. Base for the trip is private property with ample place to put up a tent (easy to rent in Ann Arbor or use your own); some tenting sites are right by the car and others a five-minute walk down a path. There is a small building for cooking and to use as a meeting place. Location is on the wild north shore of the island, close to the boundary of state land. Over 60% of the island is in public domain, so there are endless places to hike, including an impressive site owned by The Nature Conservancy. Bois Blanc is one of the few large Michigan islands that has retained a true wilderness feeling. Share food, ferry fee and car rides, if you wish. Trip information sent after registration (including how to make mandatory reservation if you are ferrying your vehicle (about $55 per car and $15 per person). The drive to Cheboygan (ferry site) is 260 miles.
Instructor: Ellen Elliot Weatherbee, M.A., former head of U-M MBGNA Adult Education Program, wetland and protected plants consultant
Fee: $250 Members and U-M students ($300 Non-members)
#07-AE-33 For this course there is a minimum enrollment of 10. Be sure to sign up with a friend (or two)!

Plein Air Painting: Capturing the Light & Life in Plein Air Paintings
Wednesdays, July 11, 18, 25, Aug 1 and 15, 9:30 am – 2 pm
Paint on location in the medium of your choice at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Students will learn to see and develop simplified forms and masses, colors and values of the landscape. Thumbnail sketches, and aerial perspective will be covered. In case of inclement weather, we will work in the Conservatory or from your photos. Bring your preferred medium and portable chair to the first class. Don’t forget your hat!

Artist Statement: Each line, mass of values, patterns or shapes are deliberately placed to move the viewer’s eye through the landscape to the back of the picture plane – where often there is more intense light, mystery and often another focal point drawn in for the viewer to experience and feel.
Janet Kohler, BFA, Center for Creative Studies; MFA, Eastern Michigan University
Fee: $120 Members* and U-M students ($150 Non-Members)
*Classes are offered in collaboration with the Ann Arbor Art Center. Members of each organization are eligible for the member discount!
#07-AE-40

Introduction to Aquatic Plants
Monday evening – Thursday evening, August 20-23
This residential course will be a hands-on, feet-wet survey of the habitats and lifestyles among higher plants (not algae) of lakes, streams and marshes in northern Michigan. We’ll look at pondweeds, bladdersworts, water-milfoils, duckweeds and their associates, as well as a few emergent marsh plants like cat-tails, bur-reeds, bulrushes and their companions. To have handy access to a lab with pans, low-power microscopes, reference collection and other facilities, this class will meet at the University of Michigan Biological Station, east of Pellston, where simple lodging and excellent meals are included.
Instructor: Edward G. Voss, Ph.D.; Curator Emeritus, Herbarium; Author Michigan Flora
Fee: $400 Members and U-M Students, ($480 Non-members) Includes lodging, meals, lab and instructor fees.
#07-AE-41 For this course there is a minimum enrollment of 10. Be sure to sign up with a friend (or two)!
Here’s How to Register:

Phone: 734-647-7600
Tuesday, Thursday – Sunday: 10 am – 4:30 pm
Wednesday: 10 am – 8 pm
Mondays: Closed

Fax: 734-998-6205. Send completed registration form with credit card information.

Mail: MBGNA – University of Michigan
1800 N. Dixboro Rd.
Ann Arbor MI 48105

On-line: www.mbgna.umich.edu

In Person: Stop by the Information Desk at Matthaei Botanical Gardens during the hours listed above.

Make checks payable to “MBGNA.”

Class spaces will be reserved when registration form and payment are received and processed.

Note: Adult Education classes are open to those at least 16 years of age. Classes meet as designated at Matthaei Botanical Gardens or Nichols Arboretum. Classes may meet off-site (call for location and directions if you miss a class). Field trips may be physically challenging – call the Gardens if you have questions about the difficulty of any class or trip. Classes are popular and fill quickly – early registration 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 membership, and $20 for University students.

Refunds:
To be eligible for a refund:
Adult Education: Withdrawal notification must be received seven days prior to first class and two weeks prior to a trip. Refunds are subject to processing fees of $15 per class and $35 per trip (no refunds for single date classes or lectures).

We are sorry but refunds are not available for any class with a fee of $5 or less.
Profile Dennis Purcell

Aunita Erskine

Dennis Purcell has always had a fondness for Jack-in-the Pulpit. So when he noticed a group of green dragons, a flood plain relative of the familiar Jack, was in peril of being mowed over at Burchfield Park in Ingham County, he alerted the land managers. They agreed to mow around the plants and the green dragons were saved. Although he did not know it at the time, Dennis was on his way to becoming a steward of nature.

Dennis’ love for nature started while taking care of his land near Mason, Michigan. He enjoyed taking walks around the partially-farmed eighty acres, observing fox, wildflowers and blue herons. After his move to Ann Arbor a few years ago, he began gardening at home with his wife, Judy Parsons, and both became Master Gardeners in the spring of 2006. The required volunteer work drew Dennis into restoration activities like pulling garlic mustard and cutting buckthorn for both the City of Ann Arbor and U-M MBGNA.

Fifty-nine year old Dennis is now a volunteer steward at Nichols Arboretum. When he comes home from a work session at the Arb, Judy says, “He’s dirty, grubby, and tired but has the biggest smile on his face you’ve ever seen.” His adopted area is the steep hillside swath beneath the main overlook of the Geddes entrance. Historically this area was degraded by sledding and erosion, but recent efforts have been made by staff to plant native vegetation and control human traffic. The first step in the stewardship process was to make a plant list of the area. Then a plan was formulated was to remove invasives, most notably black locusts. He’ll continue to observe the area in all seasons to monitor the progress of the changes and control other invasive plants. Dennis has assisted staff in laying a drain beneath Nichols Drive to control water run-off. This winter Dennis, who by trade has worked in the electrical engineering and industrial maintenance fields, is also helping repair and modify equipment used in restoration activities.

Dennis describes the many rewards of environmental volunteer stewardship. He admits he’s a sponge for learning all he can about the plants and how to take care of them. He’s also discovering the beauty and diversity of native plants. Although he admittedly uses a variety of plants in his home garden, he says, “Just because you can buy a plant in a store does not mean that all the plants in nature are weeds. If you can appreciate that a native Michigan plant has its own beauty then the whole picture changes.” He hopes that the natural beauty he is trying to restore and maintain at the Arb will inspire people to use native plants in their own landscapes. His biggest reward, and also his biggest surprise, is the number of young people who are taking part in the restoration workdays at both the Gardens and Arb. Perhaps they’ve caught on to the same happiness he feels when the final result of his labor is the enjoyment of the visitor and the health of the overall environment.

You Can Help, Too!

What better way to be involved with supporting the things you care about such as trees, trails and natural areas than joining our team of volunteers, stewards and staff who help manage and restore these sites. Individuals or community groups are invited to attend one of our workdays. (2nd Saturday at Arb, 4th Saturday at Gardens, see calendar for dates)

We provide the fun, tools, training and snacks.

We also welcome individuals who have a level of expertise and knowledge to help monitor and oversee volunteers in one of our project areas. You will help develop and implement the management plan under staff guidance.

Please contact Barbara Major, Volunteer Coordinator, for more information about our Stewardship Program, to confirm your attendance at a workday, or for other volunteer opportunities at bamajor@umich.edu or 734-647-8528.

You can also join our email list-serve for reminders and updates.

Write to ecoworkdays-request@listserv.itd.umich.edu, include SUBSCRIBE in the subject box.
2007 MBGNA Bulb Sale

Our bulb sale gives members a great chance to buy top quality spring-flowering bulbs at reduced prices. Non-members are welcome to order bulbs as well, only at a higher price - so encourage your friends to join our Friends and save! Proceeds benefit programs at Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum.

The bulb catalog is available on our website: www.mbgna.umich.edu. Order forms can be printed and mailed or faxed to the Botanical Gardens by June 15. In addition, we will have paper copies available at the Gardens and the Arboretum, or, we will be happy to fax or mail a copy to you – just call the number below.

You can view a picture of each bulb variety on our website - simply click on the blue highlighted name.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please call Adrienne at (734) 647-2618 or e-mail her at amobrien@umich.edu.

Seeds are Planted, Continued from p. 3

As a result, in April of 1897 they began planting the area between the Library, which was on the southeast side of the Diag at that time, and Physical and Chemistry Laboratories. This first garden was roughly triangular in shape, divided into two main sections for the monocotyledons and dicotyledons (plants with 1 or 2 seed leaves, respectively), and these sections further divided according to plant families. The first plants were donated by the USDA and Michigan Agricultural College, now MSU. By its third year, some 60 different plant families were represented.

As Dr. Schlotterbeck hoped, once the garden was planted, the Regents supported it by supplying a gardener form the Grounds Department and by approving funds to purchase additional plants. Because the site proved difficult to maintain and was too small for more than the display of medicinal plants, they also agreed to search for a more appropriate location where research plots and greenhouses could be established.

Felch Park and the “cat-hole” (the area from the Kellogg Foundation to University Stores) were high on the list in 1902 but that plan didn’t work out. Finally in October of 1906, the regents accepted the deeds of two parcels, one from Dr. Walter H. and Mrs. Connor Nichols, and the other from the City of Ann Arbor. The other two parcels traditionally included as part of the beginning of the Nichols Arboretum, were actually accepted by the Regents the following October.

In February of 1907, the Regents appointed George Burns, who was both professor of Botany and Ann Arbor City Parks Commissioner to the post of Director of the University Botanical Garden and Arboretum.

It is from this date when the Regents officially sanctioned them, the age of Botanical Gardens at the University of Michigan is measured. However, because a computer broke down, we have rediscovered the earliest “seeds” of botanical gardens at the University of Michigan.

Demonstrations at the Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, May 5, 9 am – 5 pm
10 – 10:20 am, Rain Barrels – TJ Smith
11 – 11:20 am Ground Covers – David Michener
12 – 12:20 pm, Worm Composting – Cultivating CoMMunity
1 – 1:20 pm, Children’s Gardening – volunteers; while your kids hike the trails with one of our staff
2 – 2:20 am, Heirloom bulbs – Scott Kunst
3 – 3:20 pm, Floral Design – Ann Arbor Garden Club
4 – 4:20 pm, Prairie Plant gardening – Bob Grese

Sunday, May 6, noon – 5 pm
12:30 – 12:50 pm, Worm Composting
1:15 – 1:40 pm, Rain Barrels – TJ Smith
2:00 – 2:20 pm, Native Plant Gardening – Greg Vaclavek
2:45 – 3:05 pm, Children’s Walk
3:15 – 3:45 pm, Floral Design – Ann Arbor Garden Club

These are tentative time as of press. Please check the website for changes, www.mbgna.umich.edu
On the Trails in the Gardens

April Pickrel

This time, instead of using just your eyes to find our two Get Lost! spots, you’ll need your ears, too. The soft sound of footsteps on turf starts off our journey, past trees both felled and fallen. All of a sudden, the sharp, hollow sound of footsteps on wood meets the barest trickling of water in the creek. A pause at our first stop brings rest, the perfect view of spring wildflowers and tiny fish flitting about just below the surface, and the call of birds in their springtime singing frenzy. Following the trail again past water almost still, other times sounding swift, we pass four giant tree stumps at creek side, laid low by creatures much smaller than us. Finally our second stop, with water rushing over the weir and that distinctive sound of soles meeting wood. With trail reconstruction complete, trekkers on foot or wheels are welcome along the Sam Graham Trees Trail (stroller and wheelchair tested and approved). Find our new viewing decks and take in some fresh air.

Can you Get Lost?

Below: Which stop is this?
Photo: Joel Perkovich

Shakespeare in the Arb

This year Kate Mendeloff and her fine troupe of actors will present Shakespeare’s comedy The Tempest. At press time, they were still contemplating how to stage the shipwreck in the river. Join us June 7-10, 14-17, and 21-24 to see how they do it.

All shows begin at 6:30 pm. The box office opens at 5 pm daily for MBGNA members and at 5:30 pm for General Admission, with no advance ticket sales (due to the possibility of weather related cancellations). Tickets are $10 for U-M students with ID and members of the Friends of MBGNA, $15 for General Admission. Bring your own light chair or blanket to sit on, and wear good walking shoes. (You’ll be traveling throughout the Arb to follow the performers.) For more information, see our website – mbgna.umich.edu. If you will need mobility assistance during the performance, please call 734-647-7600 to make arrangements.

Volunteers are a big part of each production. If you’d like to lend a hand in either the box office tent or as an usher (and see the production for free!), please contact Barbara Major at 734-647-8528 or bmajor@umich.edu. Ushers are required to attend an hour-long orientation. All volunteers receive a free t-shirt commemorating the event.

AA Rec & Ed Camp

The Ann Arbor Rec & Ed Department has added a new Youth Cultural Camp Shakespeare in the Arb to its summer programs this year. It is for students in grades 5-8 and will be held June 18-22 in the Arb. Students will participate in intensive sessions with theatre games, vocal exercises, direct work with the text and interaction with the Residential college actors. For more info visit http://activenet4.active.com/aareced.
Ask the Experts

Q: Help! Ann Arbor has just banned fertilizer with phosphorus. How can I fertilize my lawn and garden?

A: This is a growing trend in many communities as phosphorus is a major pollutant of waterways via run-off and is part of a federal mandate to improve water quality. First, most soils have adequate amounts of phosphorus in them. So the majority of homeowners do not have to worry. (Phosphorus is the second number in fertilizer designations, the first is nitrogen and the third is potassium.) If you are concerned that your soil might be deficient, the first step is to have your soil tested. MSU’s Cooperative Extension Service (or your state’s agricultural college for our out-of-state readers) provides this service at very low cost, as do many lawn care businesses. If the soil test shows a deficiency in phosphorus, you are allowed to use it. If adequate amounts of phosphorus are present, then the new fertilizer formulations without phosphorus will be just what the (lawn) doctor ordered. For more information about soil testing, please see http://www.css.msu.edu/SPNL-Sampling.cfm.

Q: There’s been a lot of talk about Heirlooms in this issue. What, exactly, is an heirloom?

A: Heirloom plants are those that have been around for years. A major difference to more modern varieties is that heirlooms breed true. That means that if you save the seed from this year’s plants to plant next year, the resulting plants will be the same. Hybrids, on the other hand, will produce some plants with traits of parents or grandparents that were not expressed in the hybrid. So the second year’s plantings will be quite varied. There are heirloom varieties of bulbs, flowers and vegetables.
2007 Garden Walk

June 9, 2007 10 am – 4 pm

Neighborhood Gardens is the theme of the 2007 Garden Walk hosted by the Ann Arbor Branch of Woman’s National Farm & Garden Association. Six private gardens in two neighborhoods and, in honor of the MBGNA Centennial, the Nichols Arboretum’s historic Peony Garden will be featured. Food will be available for purchase at the Arb if you’d like to plan lunch there.

Garden Walk proceeds will benefit the Habitats Garden in the Gaffield Children’s Garden at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. In this garden, children will be able to explore plants’ textures and smells, build with plants or plant parts, make-believe in a child-scaled grove, and more. We are excited to be part of a collaboration which so clearly expresses our mission and will benefit the community, our children, and our children’s education.

Neighborhood Gardens features home owner designed and implemented gardens. Three are in the historic neighborhood of Pontiac Trail – one garden was on display in 1997, so you will have the opportunity to see how this garden has evolved. The two gardens nearby are also well-established and complement the neighborhood, while reflecting the home owner’s interests.

The second neighborhood is in the Ann Arbor Hills/Geddes area. Three gardens here also reflect the individual tastes of the home-owners. These gardens are outdoor extensions of the homes. One garden has a pool in the back that forms a perfect backdrop for the plantings. Another gardener uses boulders to provide the bones of her garden.

All gardeners love showing their gardens off to appreciative audiences and these are no different! We are thankful to them for opening their gardens to us and our grant recipient, the Gaffield Children’s Garden.

Tickets are $10 and go on sale May 10 at many downtown businesses, as well as at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. For more information call 734-995-8441.
Events  Spring and Summer 2007

At the Gardens unless otherwise noted

Spring Plant Sale
May 4, 3 – 7 pm (Members Only)
May 5, 9 – 5 pm
May 6, noon – 5 pm
Open to the general public. Great plants and eco-friendly items to buy, gardening demonstrations, experts to answer your questions can all be found at our 27th sale. Now in two tents!
Memberships are available at the door throughout the sale.

Curator’s Tour in the Arb
May 19, 10 am – noon
For members at the sponsorship ($100) level and above, the 13th Annual Curator’s Tour will feature the Centennial Shrub Collection.

Shakespeare in the Arb
June 7 – 10, 14 – 17 and 21 – 24
Box office opens to Members at 5 pm; to the public at 5:30 pm. Performances of The Tempest begin at 6:30 pm. Please see page 17 for details.

WNFGA Garden Walk to benefit the Gaffield Children’s Garden
June 9, 10 am – 4 pm
See inside back cover for details

Gardens Centennial Fair
July 28, Noon – 5 pm
Help us celebrate MBGNA’s 100th birthday. Today at the Gardens, September 29 at the Arb.

Herb Fest
August 12, noon – 4 pm

Southeast Michigan Bromeliad Society Show and Sale
August 18 and 19, 10 am – 4 30 pm

Ann Arbor Bonsai Society Show
August 25 and 26, 10 am – 4:30 pm