

# MSU IN BLOOM

## MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



### IN THIS ISSUE

GARDEN HAPPENINGS  
CHOCOLATE SCIENCE, HISTORY & FUN FACTS  
AUTUMN SPLendor | SUPPORT THE GARDENS  
NEW VARIETIES FOR THE 2022 HOUSEPLANT SALE

# GARDEN HAPPENINGS

## Curious Gardener Series



### Chocolate-Making

Explore the wonderful world of chocolate with Dixie Sandborn, 4H MSU Extension Specialist.

We will be discovering chocolates' interesting history, diving into the science of chocolate, and of course, tasting chocolate.

Chocolate refreshments, recipes, and fun will all be provided!

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

2:00pm-4:00pm

Cost: \$25 for Members

\$30 for non-Members

Parking not included

Maximum Enrollment: 30



### Handmade Soap-Making

Keep your skin hydrated and soft this winter! Join us in creating handmade soap with add-ins from our gardens.

The workshop includes all materials and each participant will take home two bars of handmade soap.

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

2:00pm-4:00pm

Cost: \$40 members

\$45 non-members

Parking not included

Maximum Enrollment: 24

**Register for Curious  
Gardener at  
[shopmsugardens.com](http://shopmsugardens.com)**



Seventh Annual

# HOUSEPLANT & SUCCULENT SALE

**WHAT: PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER FEATURING SUCCULENTS, CACTI, AND FOLIAGE PLANTS**

**WHEN: NOVEMBER 4TH, 2022, 8AM-4PM**

**WHERE: MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS  
1066 BOGUE STREET  
PLANT & SOIL SCIENCES BLDG  
EAST LANSING, MI, 48824**

**MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Horticulture  
Gardens

Garden members will enjoy early shopping and a 10% discount on all plant purchases!

Not a Garden Member yet? Join now!

OR

Consider an early-bird shopping pass that will allow 1 person entry into the sale on Thursday, November 3.

Get your early-bird shopping pass for \$20 here.

---

Curious Gardener-Chocolate-Making  
Houseplant & Succulent Sale  
Curious Gardener-Handmade Soap-Making

October 26  
November 4  
November 16



# CHOCOLATE SCIENCE, HISTORY, AND FUN FACTS

BY DIXIE SANDBORN, 4-H HORTICULTURE SPECIALIST



When you think of chocolate, do you ever wonder where it comes from or how it's made? Dixie Sandborn, MSU Extension tells us more!

Chocolate beans are the seeds of the cacao tree. Cacao (pronounced ka-KOW) trees grow in the rainforest and the pods grow directly on the trunks of the cacao tree. Nearly all cacao trees grow within 20 degrees of the equator and 75 percent of them grow within 8 degrees on either side of it. Cacao originated in Mesoamerica in the Aztec, Olmec, and Mayan territories. The Mayans and Aztecs were the first to plant cacao, and have proper claims to being the first cocoa (pronounced KO-ko) farmers, but today most cacao is grown in West Africa. Ghana currently grows the highest quality cocoa beans.

A cacao tree can live for over 200 years but only produces quality cocoa beans for about 25 years. Each year a tree will produce approximately 40 pods. Inside the cacao pods are seeds called cocoa beans. These seeds are the magical ingredient in chocolate.



Cacao trees have blossoms and pods all year long, the white and pink flowers are pollinated by a gnat, who then carries the pollen from one flower to another. It takes about four months for the pod to grow to the size of a small melon and another month to ripen into a yellow to dark orange pod. Each pod contains approximately 40 cocoa beans and is surrounded by a white pulp.

These beans were so valuable to the Aztecs and Mayans that they used them for money, special gifts, and offerings to the gods. Taxes of the times could be paid with cocoa beans.

Some fun facts about the value of cocoa beans:

- 200 beans = a male turkey
- 100 beans = a female turkey or a rabbit
- 30 beans = a small rabbit
- 3 beans = turkey egg or an avocado
- 1 bean = tamale

Money really did grow on trees!

To read more science, history, and fun facts about chocolate, visit the [full series](#). Join us for Chocolate 101 on Wednesday, October 26. [Register here!](#)



# AUTUMN SPLENDOR



WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
BRIAN GAYHEART, ARBORETUM MANAGER

If you live in Michigan, it is most likely you appreciate the diverse seasons that come along with living in our temperate northern environment. I especially love Fall! I'm not alone in my admiration- people from all over the country come to the mitten state to enjoy the fall show with crimson reds, moody purples, shocking oranges, and bright yellows. Lucky for us, we have a beautiful campus to immerse ourselves in the marvel of the season and the plants as they transition into dormancy.





Even closer to home is our very own Arboretum. The diversity of plants here creates a dynamic fall landscape. The trees, the shrubs, and even the herbaceous plants blend together to create a myriad of colors and textures.







My favorite fall performers are the trees. Their size puts them on a scale of their own and magnifies their beauty. Branches filled with dazzling displays of colorful foliage burst into the spotlight. Being among the woody giants during this time is truly awe-inspiring.







A few of my other favorite places to admire during the Fall season are Lake Lansing Park North, Burchfield Park, and Woldumar Nature Center. Every year I look forward to and treasure the sights, smells, and overall feel of Autumn and its splendor.





# ANAPHALIS ON MY MIND

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER



I'm always surprised by plants that catch my attention each year. You'd think by this time I would have gained appreciation and insight on almost all the plants we have in our collection – but with over 350 varieties of perennials and counting, sometimes a few of them can be overlooked. One of those, for me, personally,

are *Anaphalis margaritacea*, or pearly everlasting. Our former director, Dr. Art Cameron, introduced this plant to me as a student in his nearly native bed (who knew one day I would be managing the very space I was taught?). I never truly appreciated it – it was short, and a little overlooked, and while the American Lady butterfly really appreciates its existence, I just didn't. The plant didn't 'do' anything for me.

Last year, in the fall light, I had an existential moment while gazing over the large stand of this plant near the food toxicology building. Its silvery foliage mixed with white straw-like flowers makes it a stunning addition to the garden. I sat for a moment and was hypnotized by its presence, taking in its beauty as I reflected on the year. I remembered that this plant only has one time where it doesn't look favorable – it happens to be when the caterpillars of the American Lady butterfly are feeding on its foliage, as it hosts this native species. Otherwise, this plant continues to bring joy to the garden throughout the seasons. As you ponder about what to add to your garden next spring (don't lie – you can add more!), consider this sweet and gentle plant that also helps boost our local ecosystem.





## Support the Gardens

Do you love the Gardens or know someone who does? Why not become a member? Or give a membership as a gift! Membership has many benefits!

- Early access to our Plant Sales
- Discounts on your Plant Sale purchases and programs
- Free admission to 200+ American Horticulture Society reciprocal gardens across the country
- And more!

## Membership has Benefits

You can renew or join online here: [www.hrt.msu.edu/join](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/join). If you would like a brochure mailed to you, please contact [hgardens@msu.edu](mailto:hgardens@msu.edu) or, 517-353-0443, or download one [here](#). 2023 Memberships will be available beginning December 1, 2022.

Did you know that you can commemorate a loved one or special event in the Gardens? Consider purchasing a brick in memory of a special memory or event. The Gardens offers commemorative bricks in two sizes that can be engraved and permanently installed in one of several locations. Remember a loved one or special event each and every time you visit the Gardens. Find more information [here](#). If you would like a brick brochure mailed to you, please contact [hgardens@msu.edu](mailto:hgardens@msu.edu) or, 517-353-0443. Purchases can be made [here](#).

## Commemorative Bricks



## Volunteer

Do you love plants? Do you love to garden? The MSU Horticulture Gardens staff relies on a dedicated group of volunteers who help us accomplish many tasks each year. No experience is necessary - though you may find new ways to use your skills to help!

- Weekly volunteer days
- Daily welcome booth
- Annual volunteer field trip
- Annual volunteer appreciation dinner

To learn more, visit

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our\\_gardens/Volunteers](https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/Volunteers)  
or contact Bethany Troy at [troybeth@msu.edu](mailto:troybeth@msu.edu)





# New Varieties in the 2022 Houseplant & Succulent Sale

By Daedre McGrath, Trial Garden Manager

Our Seventh Annual Houseplant and Succulent Sale is almost here! We have over 250 varieties of houseplants and over 4,500 plants total available during this important fundraiser for the gardens. In addition, there are at least 32 new varieties that we have never sold before, listed below. Let's take a look at a few highlights.

## ***Ananas comosus* 'White Jade'**

You may or may not have luck getting this miniature white-fleshed pineapple to bear fruit, but the spiky bromeliad-like foliage is reason enough to add this to your collection. If your plant does produce fruit, you'll be treated to a low acid, super sweet treat.

## ***Dionaea muscipula***

Looking through a plant catalog, I did not recognize the Latin name of this unusual plant, but once I realized what it was, I knew we had to order some! While 95% of our houseplants and succulents are propagated in-house (grown from cuttings harvested from our stock plant collection), every year we try to buy in a few special things to supplement the sale. This year we will have Venus fly traps and sundew! We are currently holding the Venus fly traps in our high humidity propagation greenhouse and they are thriving! I have personally hand-fed some of the fly traps and they all seem to be in working order.





### ***Drosera spathulata***

Received in the same order as our Venus fly traps, these sundew are another adorable addition to your carnivorous plant collection. Don't have a carnivorous plant collection? Now is your chance to start one! We have three in total on offer, including a very limited supply of pitcher plants. These sundew cuties feature glandular trichomes (leaf hairs) covered in sticky liquid for trapping insects.



### ***Murdannia loriformis***

We are always on the lookout for specimens to add to our stock plant collection. When I saw this plant at Telly's Greenhouse in Troy, MI, I immediately knew we needed to buy one. This is a completely new houseplant to me, which is rare. I think it looks similar to a bromeliad/cryptanthus, but with slightly more tender foliage. We were able to harvest over 20 cuttings from the "mother plant" and we are ready to share the love with you!



### ***Peperomia caperata* 'Raisinet'**

Peperomia is an incredibly diverse genus. Some are extremely drought-tolerant succulents, others have flashy patterned foliage, and some, like the diminutive Peperomia 'Raisinet', have both texture and rich color to offer. Peperomia caperata are an under-appreciated houseplant that is great for small spaces, as it never gets too large.





