

# MSU IN BLOOM

## MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



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# FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY KRISTIN GETTER, DIRECTOR OF THE MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS

## Even More Normalcy This Summer

In our last newsletter, I reported how we were finally getting back to some normalcy in the Gardens. We've made more progress since then. For instance, we converted our volunteer workdays back to the way they were before the pandemic. Instead of only being allowed 4 volunteers at a time on a daily basis, we are now back to our volunteer Tuesday mornings with no limits on how many volunteers we can have. Of course, we still keep everyone spaced out in the Gardens as much as possible. Our Gardens' wedding rentals have all been successful this summer too (compared to last summer where they were all canceled). We were also able to open our Visitor Booth this summer too (pictured right) in late July, just in time for our [Michigan Garden Plant Tour \(MGPT\)](#).



Visitor Booth

## The Michigan Garden Plant Tour

The MGPT is a coordinated open house of leading young plant producers and our Trial Gardens. The Tour educates professional growers and industry professionals about plant selections and their garden performance. We had many breeders visit us during the Tour to see how their varieties were performing in our Trials. We evaluate their varieties every other week and give performance reports to the breeders throughout the summer. A few of my favorite varieties this summer are below.

Begonia 'Costa Del Sol' from DummenOrange's Iconia series (pictured right). Of the five evaluation dates we've had so far, this one was a favorite for me on four of those dates. This variety has large blooms, is very tolerant of heat stress, and has a tight, compact habit. This particular flower color really pops against the foliage and often the flowers look fake because they are so perfect – with no blemishes evident anywhere.



Begonia 'Costa Del Sol' from  
DummenOrange's Iconia series

Bracteantha 'Gold' from Suntory's Granvia series (pictured right). This cultivar has HUGE flowers that just stay and stay. Even the fading flowers have a beautiful orange sunset look to them. The flowers really looked perfect until late August where we finally had to start deadheading the spent ones.

Petunia 'Bubblegum' from Proven Winners' Supertunia Vista series (pictured bottom right). This petunia has been in our trials for many years and is always a favorite because it is so vigorous with tons of flowers. Even in late August when a lot of our other petunias are fading out, this one is still very vigorous with so many flowers you hardly notice the foliage.

### Challenges

Despite this good news, there are always challenges with a public garden. You can expect the weather to be a problem at some point in nearly every year. This year it seems we've had to send our student labor home early due to excessive heat many more times than in previous years. And the severe storms that came through on August 24th felled four of our arborvitae (pictured below left) that are west of the Trial Gardens, in between the staff parking lot and the Trials. That same storm also damaged the fence that holds the VIP bee hotel (pictured below right).



Bracteantha 'Gold' from Suntory's Granvia series



Petunia 'Bubblegum' from Proven Winners' Supertunia Vista series





I also mentioned in our April newsletter that one of our sculptures was experiencing its own challenge of extensive degradation (pictured far left). The Liberty Hyde Bailey sculpture was successfully restored (pictured near left) this summer by a Michigan artist. Our CrowdPower campaign raised 30% of the funds for this project. Thank you to those who donated!

### Looking Forward

As we venture into even more normalcy, we are planning on public events again this fall. We will offer our Curious Gardener series again, as well as a Holiday Make and Take. And our Sixth Annual Houseplant and Succulent Sale is also scheduled for Friday, November 5, 2021. Read more about these events in the rest of this newsletter.



Mama deer and her three babies enjoying a stroll through the gardens. And their friend rabbit hanging out with them.

# NEW COMMEMORATIVE BRICK LOCATIONS

BY AMY MCCAUSEY, WEDDING, EVENT & PROGRAM COORDINATOR

As many of you know, the Horticulture Gardens are mostly self-funded. We frequently offer classes and workshops, we offer wedding and event rentals, and who doesn't know about our Plant Sales? But did you know about our Commemorative Brick program?

Our Commemorative Brick program offers an opportunity for you to remember a loved one, celebrate a special day, or show your love for a family member or friend, all while supporting the Gardens.

As the seasons change, so must the landscape of the Gardens. We have removed the raised beds along the center of the Franks Nursery and Crafts Rose Garden and replaced them with new locations for Commemorative Bricks.



We now offer four bricks locations to choose from. The Perennial Garden, the Anniversary Plaza, the Liberty Hyde Bailey Plaza, and the Rose Garden.

For more information on our Commemorative Brick program or to order your brick, visit:

[http://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our\\_gardens/donor\\_opportunities\\_bricks\\_and\\_benches/](http://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/donor_opportunities_bricks_and_benches/)



Above: Rose Garden during construction

Right: Rose Garden following construction

Below: (left) Perennial Garden Pathway; (middle) Anniversary Plaza; (right) Liberty Hyde Bailey Plaza



# HOSTA GARDEN APPRECIATION

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

I must admit, when I first started my job here (and for the majority of my life), I never really thought much about hostas. They seemed so typical, as I could find them in almost every yard that had some sort of landscape. Things changed within a couple of years after being exposed to the hosta garden here at the Horticulture Gardens, although I was a little stubborn at first to change my view.



Renata Reibitz, our past perennial garden manager, must have done something right when designing the layout of our hosta collection because every year I am more and more charmed by these hardy, tough, reliable perennials that come in a number of textures and sizes. The hosta garden has really been shining lately too – it is maturing and growing into its space, and they are eager to be noticed. Plus, what a great space to work in. I can take credit for maintaining the space, Renata had the vision of designing and installing what you see now.



When you visit the hosta garden, you can get a feel for how each one of our 160 varieties fares in our Michigan climate. There are spots that provide more sunlight and deeper shade, so you can take comparative notes on how certain varieties grow in these conditions. A few of my personal favorite varieties are pictured, including 'Raspberry Sorbet', a simple, small, yet stunning little hosta that I am always attracted to every year.



'Raspberry Sorbet'

I love prepping the garden in the spring when the foliage is emerging from the soil, watching their blooms shoot up at different times throughout the summer, seeing bumblebees fall asleep on top of the flower towers, and appreciating the



Left: 'Praying Hands'  
Right: 'Minuteman'



mayapple that came with some hostas that were donated by the late and great Jerry Nester. I feel joy when seeing reactions from our garden guests when they discover the hosta garden for the first time – they are amazed and full of wonder, and they get a kick out of all the names.

And in the fall, which is coming up shortly, the ivy backdrop shines a brilliant red, setting the perfect stage for the color change as our hostas prepare to go dormant for the winter. When visiting the gardens, make sure you head north of our orientation plaza and see this garden for yourself before moving on to our stunning annual gardens. Take the time to appreciate a hosta today! For a full list of our Hosta inventory visit [https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our\\_gardens/Visit/Judith-Delapa-Perennial-Garden/hosta\\_bed\\_inventory](https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/Visit/Judith-Delapa-Perennial-Garden/hosta_bed_inventory)

## WELCOME CENTER / VISITOR'S BOOTH

BY BETHANY TROY, PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER

We had a short season this year with the booth, and it came with a big impact. Our volunteers have greeted a number of smiling faces in the garden, eager to ask questions, purchase bouquets, and get some gardens merchandise! Our students have loved getting experience with floral arrangements and seeing the excitement on our visitor's faces when they see that we have t-shirts and mugs for sale. This also provides us the opportunity to share our vision, answer more complex questions in person, and provide the friendly atmosphere that we hope all our visitors feel when entering the gardens. All our sales go to supporting the gardens at the booth. The booth runs from June through the end of August. If you missed our booth this year, make sure you visit next year as we will have even more garden goods available for purchase!



# The Curious Gardener

## **Autumnal Equinox Harvest Broom-Making**

**Thursday, September 23, 3-5PM**

The fall equinox brings with it a time of reflection as we balance an equal time of day and night and slowly transition to our months of darkness. A perfect time to honor the harvest, we will spend our workshop together collecting plant material from the garden and creating beautiful brooms to decorate our homes with. Learn about the folklore behind this broom-making tradition, harvest from our own beautiful gardens, and spend an afternoon outside celebrating at the exact time of the equinox. \$20 for members \$15 for non-members, parking not included.

## **Pressed Florals Workshop**

**Thursday October 7, 3-5pm**

Learn how to preserve the beauty of your garden for many years to come with pressed flowers. In this workshop we will learn how to press flowers, what flowers work best and how to use the flowers once they are pressed. Each participant will take home a flower press and create unique crafts using pressed flowers. \$25 for members \$30 for non-members, parking not included.

## **Houseplant Propagation Tips and Techniques**

**Wednesday November 19, 3-5 pm**

Whether you're a new houseplant hobbyist or a long-term addict, this workshop is for you! Would you like to multiply your favorite houseplants to share with friends (or hoard for yourself)? Join our Trial Garden Manager and houseplant expert, Daedre McGrath, and learn many of the best methods for propagating all types of houseplants, including cacti, succulents, foliage plants, and orchids. We will discuss and demonstrate harvesting and sowing seeds, collecting leaf and stem cuttings, using rooting hormones, ideal growing/ rooting conditions, common mistakes and pitfalls, and insider tips and tricks. Every attendee will make and take a full propagation tray of unrooted cuttings (complete with soil and humidity dome) and leave with the know-how to propagate them at home. \$20 for members \$25 for non-members, parking not included.

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Horticulture  
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For detailed class descriptions  
and registration information visit  
us online at

[shopmsugardens.com](http://shopmsugardens.com)