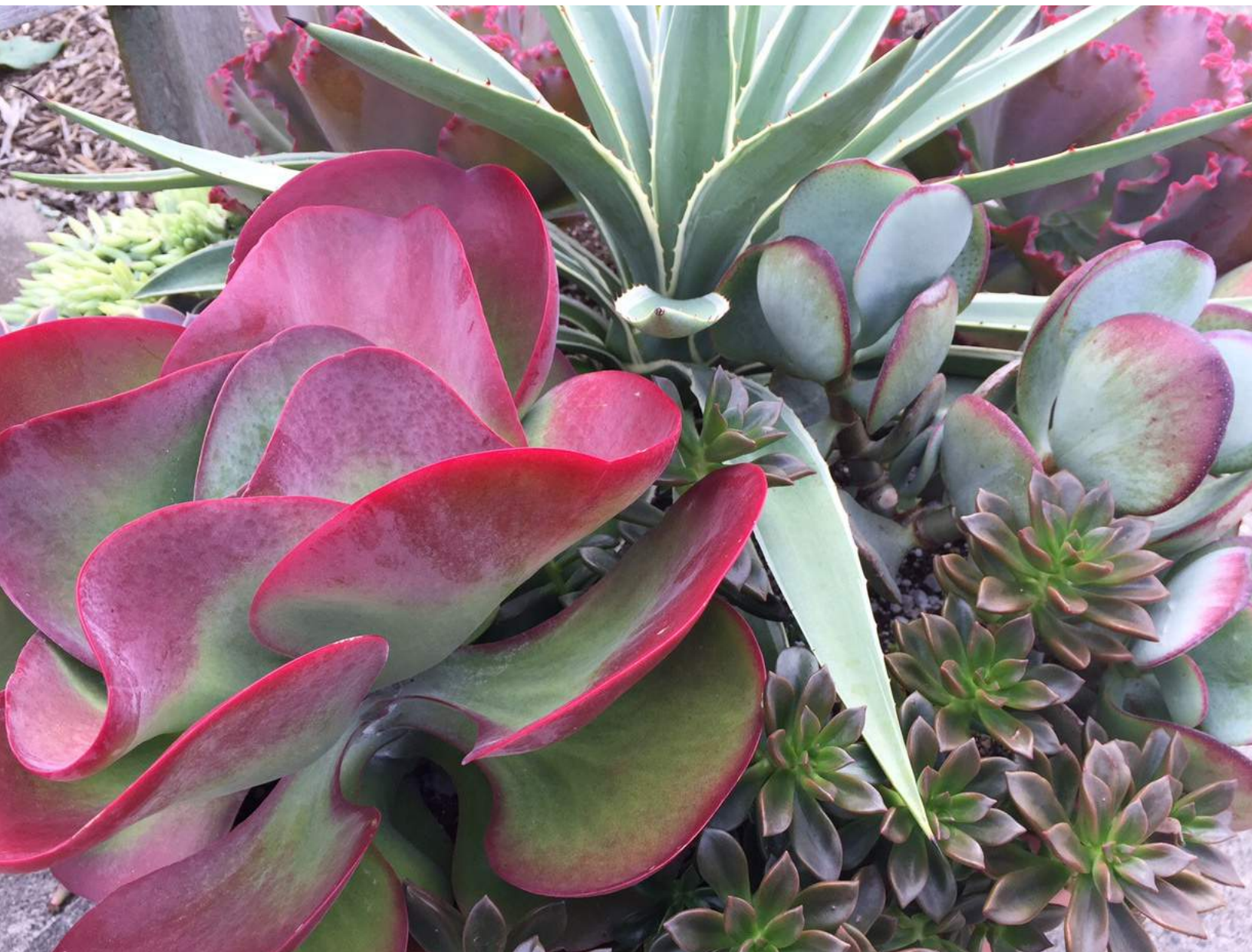


# MSU IN BLOOM

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



### **Houseplant & Succulent Sale**

Inside Scoop

### **Summer Construction**

Down and Dirty at the Gardens

### **Tillandsias**

Unusual Epiphytes for your Plant Collection

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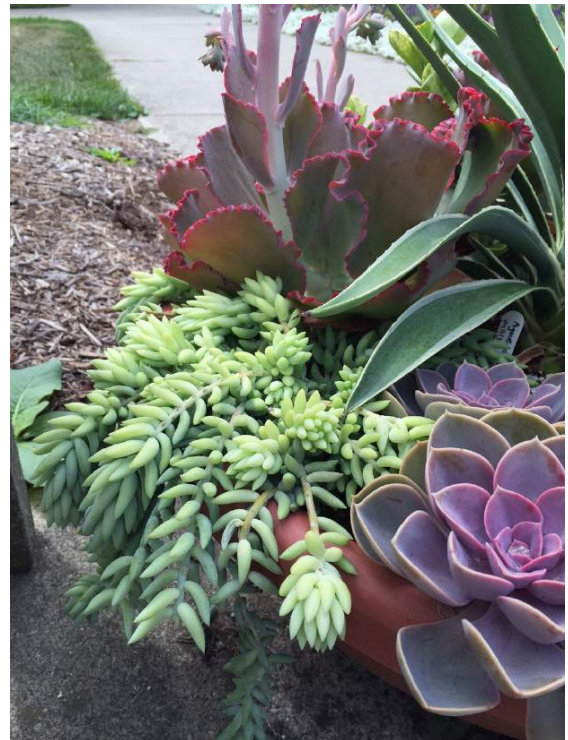
# MSU IN BLOOM

## MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

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<b>Curious Gardener- Growing and Cooking with Garlic</b>	<b>Oct 11</b>
<b>Houseplant and Succulent Sale</b>	<b>Nov 1&amp;2</b>
<b>Curious Gardener- Autumn Succulent Centerpiece</b>	<b>Nov 14</b>
<b>Curious Gardener- Lighted Winter Porch Pot</b>	<b>Dec 6</b>

Visit

[HTTP://WWW.HRT.MSU.EDU/OUR-GARDENS/](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our-gardens/)

# HOUSEPLANT & SUCCULENT SALE



**WHAT: PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER FEATURING SUCCULENTS, AIRPLANTS, AND OTHER HOUSEPLANTS**

**WHEN: NOVEMBER 1ST & 2ND, 9AM-4PM DAILY**



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



**Additional information available on our website, including:**

- Cacti and succulent inventory
- Houseplant inventory
- Parking information
- Photos to whet your appetite!

[http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our\\_gardens/houseplant\\_and\\_succulent\\_sale](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/houseplant_and_succulent_sale)

# The Curious Gardener

## **Growing and Cooking with Garlic**

**Wednesday October 11, 3-5pm**

Ward off the vampires this October by attending our garlic-filled Curious Gardener Workshop! In Michigan, October is the best time to plant garlic for harvesting the following summer. Daedre McGrath, Annual Garden Manager, will cover planting, growing, harvesting, and storing garlic from your garden. We will also discuss garlic's many culinary uses, tips for easy peeling and chopping, and share some garlic-centric recipes. For our bolder attendees, we will even have a garlic tasting available. Each attendee will receive several varieties of garlic to grow at home...and breath mints will be provided!

\$20 for members/\$25 for Non-Members, parking not included

## **Autumn Succulent Centerpiece**

**Tuesday November 14<sup>th</sup>, 6-8 pm**

Come get crafty with us and create an autumn succulent centerpiece with Anne Boone, Head Horticulturist and expert florist at the MSU Radiology Gardens. These surprisingly festive arrangements will be the center of attention as they dazzle your guests during your Thanksgiving feast. Each participant will create a gourd adorned with a wide range of succulents, from echeverias to sedums.

\$35 for members/\$40 for Non-Members, parking not included

## **Get Lit! Lighted Winter Porch Pot**

**Wednesday December 6, 3-5 pm**

As the days get shorter and the holidays approach nothing warms an entry like beautiful greens and warm twinkle lights. The MSU Horticulture garden staff will help you to create a unique container using evergreens, twigs and lights. Each participant will take home one pot (lights and pot included), and will leave equipped with ideas to take your pot from Christmas to Valentines Day and beyond. Attendees may create a second container for an additional \$20.

\$45 for members/\$50 for Non-Members, parking not included



For detailed class descriptions and registration information, visit us online at:

[http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our\\_gardens/curious\\_gardener](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/curious_gardener)



**Opuntia microdasys**



**Seed-grown Cacti**



**Mammillaria elongata**

# INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE HOUSEPLANT AND SUCCULENT SALE

BY DAEDRE MCGRATH  
TRIAL GARDEN MANAGER

We are very excited to offer a huge range of unique and unusual plants this year at our Second Annual Houseplant and Succulent Sale on November 1st and 2nd! It has been a labor of love growing these plants. Some, like our seed-grown cacti, have been in the works for over a year! We can't wait for you to pick out your favorites to take home and enjoy for years to come.

We have over 125 types of cacti and succulents and over 65 varieties of houseplants available. Our selection this year is so vast that you may find it overwhelming! So I want to take a moment to highlight my top-picks in each of our three major categories: Cacti, Succulents, and Tropical Houseplants.

## CACTUS: TOP PRICKS

Cacti are pretty tough plants. They are difficult to kill, as long as you don't over-water them. They are slow growing, making them more adaptable to indoor conditions than some other succulents. And they are so darn cute, you almost want to hug them...almost! Here are three of my favorites:

**Opuntia microdasys:** The Bunny Ears Cactus or Polka Dot Cactus is one of the most adorable cacti around. The small, flattened paddles covered in white fuzzy dots can form a small clump over time. Just remember to resist the urge to cuddle with this cactus as the tiny (continued on next page)

white spines detach easily and can embed in your skin.

**Seed-grown Cacti:** We have several varieties of cacti, including Ferocactus, Echinopsis, Mammillaria, and Rebutia, all grown from seed. These charming little specimens are one to two years old. They would be perfect in a tiny pot on your windowsill, but many can grow to be quite large over time.

**Mammillaria elongata:** The Golden Star Cactus or Lady Fingers Cactus is a clump-forming variety with long cylindrical stems that bend over and cascade as the elongate. This is a fairly tame variety in that you can handle it fairly easily without getting stuck by spines. This plant would look great in a hanging basket or in a tall planter where its cascading nature can really show off.

## SUCCS FOR YOU:

Succulents require similar care as cacti (don't over-water them), but are a little more finger friendly. There is amazing diversity in this group of plants, but they all store water in fleshy stems and leaves. Here are three stand-outs from our plant sale offerings:

**Crassula falcata:** This succulent has to be one of our most unique varieties this year. The blueish-gray leaves fan out from the center like propellers of an airplane, lending it the common name Propeller Plant. It can grow from a 2 foot tall shrub over time and will form clusters of red-orange flowers on an elevated flower stalk.

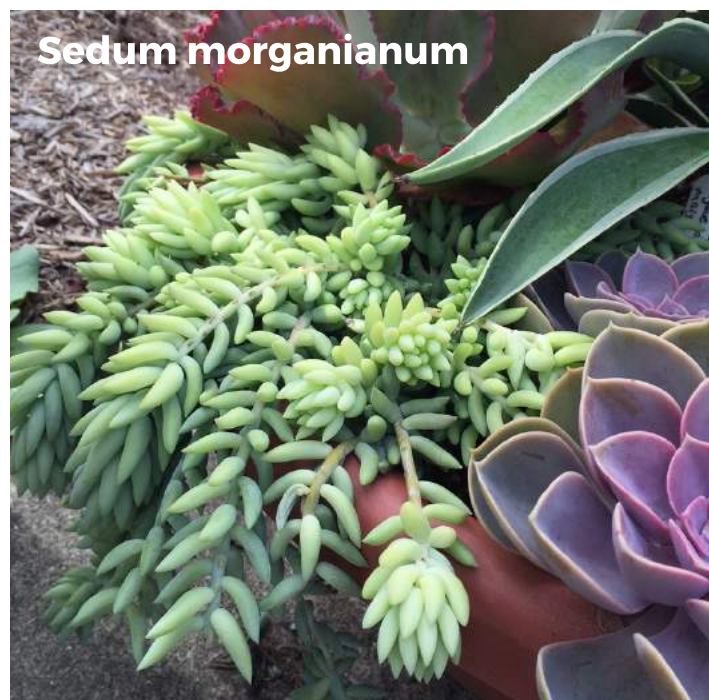
**Agave applanata 'Cream Spike':** 'Cream Spike' is a compact, blue and cream variegated variety that will grow to only 4 inches tall and about 6 inches wide. Agave do surprisingly well indoors, partially because they grow fairly slowly, but they can also be moved outdoors during the summer. Agave will flower once every 12-25 years, after which the main crown will die and offsets will take its place. (continued on next page)



**Crassula falcata**



**Agave applanata  
'Cream Spike'**



**Sedum morganianum**



**Hypoestes phyllostachya**

**Sedum morganianum:** The Burro's Tail plant is an easy to grow blue-green succulent with fleshy pointed leaves. Over time, the stems will grow over the edge of its pot and cascade down the sides (up to 2 feet long), making it great in hanging baskets. We also have the 'Burrito" form of Sedum morganianum, which has rounded, jellybean-like leaves.

**TROPIC LIKE IT'S HOT:**

Tropical houseplants are incredibly diverse in color, form, and texture. They vary widely in water use, light requirements, and ease of care, making them slightly more challenging than cacti and succulents, but they are well worth it! Once you find that "happy place" in your home for a houseplant, it can reward you with years of enjoyment. Here are a few of our most unique tropical houseplants available at the sale:



**Pachystachys lutea**

**Hypoestes phyllostachya:** The Polka Dot Plant is a great shade-loving foliage plant both indoors and outdoors. While it does form small purple flowers, the real draw is its green leaves spotted with shades of white, pink, rose, or red. It may require some pruning to keep it tidy indoors, but will add a pop of color to any houseplant collection.

**Pachystachys lutea:** The Golden Shrimp Plant is an unusual shrub-like flowering plant native to Peru. It can be grown as an annual Michigan, then brought indoors as a houseplant in winter. Tubular white flowers emerge out of overlapping yellow bracts. Although it blooms year round in its native habitat, it may only bloom in summer as a houseplant.



**Begonia rex 'Autumn Embers'**

**Begonia rex 'Autumn Embers':** I've been collecting rex and rhizomatous begonias for a few years now. Begonia 'Autumn Embers' is one of the most carefree rex begonias I've come across. It doesn't appear to ever go dormant, it just continues to produce big healthy leaves in gorgeous shades of red and orange all year round.

# OUT OF THIN AIR-PLANTS

A GUIDE TO THE  
WONDERFUL WORLD OF  
TILLANDSIAS

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By Bethany Troy  
Perennial Garden Manager

Tillandsias, commonly known as air plants, have been captivating plant nerds for many years with their unique shapes and dazzling colors. Their easy-care nature also makes them the perfect house companion for both budding plant enthusiasts and experts, who may wonder why they need another plant in their ever growing collection. Trust me, you do!

## WHAT ARE TILLANDSIAS?

Like orchids, most tillandsias are epiphytes - meaning they grow on the

surfaces of other plants and obtain moisture and nutrients from the air, rainfall, and moist accumulated debris around them. Tillandsias are a member of the bromeliad family, Bromeliaceae, and account for over 650 of approximately 2500 species of bromeliads. They are native to the forests, mountains, and deserts of Central and South America, the southern US, and the West Indies.

## HOW DO I CARE FOR MY TILLANDSIAS?

Because tillandsias are epiphytes, they do not need soil to survive. In fact, putting your tillandsias in soil can potentially kill them. Because of this, you can get very creative in displaying your air plants in your home. You can glue the base of a plant to a frame, place them inside an open terrarium, or even hang them in various places. Provide bright, indirect light for your air plants. Some direct light is tolerable, but keep the amount of direct light under 2-3 hours per day. In general, keep your air plants in warm conditions, optimally between 50-90 degrees. (continued on next page)







### WHAT ABOUT WATERING?

A common issue with caring for tillandsias is establishing a healthy watering schedule. Just because our air plant friends are epiphytic, does not mean that they can go long periods of time without water. Rinse your air plants under running water or soak them for 20-30 minutes once per week. You can also give them an additional misting one to two times per week. Plants in drier, sunnier areas may need more water. If your plant is in bloom, a gentle rinse is recommended to uphold flowers.

### MAINTENANCE?

It is common for the lower leaves of tillandsias to dry out, especially when they are adjusting to a new home. Gently pull these leaves right off the plant. Any damaged leaves, or leaves with dried tips, can be trimmed at an angle. To encourage blooming and reproduction, it is suggested to fertilize with a bromeliad or orchid mix once per month.

### WHEN WILL THEY BLOOM?

Your tillandsias may live for several years before they bloom. While they bloom only once in their lifetime, the bloom can last from several days to multiple months, depending on the species and care. While blooming, the plant develops pups – small offshoots that will grow into their own and eventually bloom again. Once they are about 1/3 of the size of the parent plant, you can twist and pull the pups off or allow them to continue to grow in a clump together.

### I'M IN LOVE! WHERE CAN I BUY THESE?

You're in luck! We have over 10 species available at our upcoming Houseplant and Succulent Sale on November 1st and 2nd. Look for *juncifolia*, *capitata* 'Peach', *bulbosa*, *kolbii*, *bracycaulos*, and more! We hope to see you there.



# FALL IN LOVE WITH THE MSU HORTICULTURE GARDENS!

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By Jennifer Sweet, Program Coordinator

If you have visited us before, you know that no matter your age, the MSU Horticulture Gardens has something to make you smile! We asked many of our visitors to share one or two reasons why they love the MSU Horticulture Gardens. We received wonderful responses, many of which are listed below. Even if you visit often, you might find something new to love this fall!

- I love the lantana trees! I look for them every year to see where they have been placed in the Gardens.
- The 20' poinsettia tree for the holidays is beautiful. I enjoy that the pattern is different each year.
- The rose garden in June is stunning!
- All the wonderful things I have made at Curious Gardener workshops. I also learned how to sharpen my gardening tools.
- My membership and how it enables me to visit gardens nation-wide for free.
- The new restrooms in the Children's Garden are a great addition.
- I grew up going to the Horticulture Gardens on campus and now take my own children. The many activities and summer camps offered for children are wonderful.
- The Japanese Garden within the Arboretum. It is so peaceful and serene.
- The plant sales. I love the spring sale and always purchase my poinsettias there in December. They last for months and look amazing. I am excited for the fall sale.
- The Gardens are bursting with color and creativity at every turn- amazing! (continued on next page)



- The Holiday Open House. It is a free event and I take my kids every year. They love seeing Santa and the model trains around the Christmas tree.
- Volunteering and working with the staff, students, and other volunteers in the Gardens. There is so much to learn from all of them and their enthusiasm is always contagious!
- The bee hotel. It is so neat to see these pollinators at work.
- The variety of plants and programs is awesome. There's something for everyone of all ages.
- We have a brick in the walkway that honors beloved family members who have passed. It is very special when we get to visit.
- Garden Day is my favorite program. I always enjoy the speakers and shopping in the marketplace. I also collect the t-shirts and love the bright colors!
- I never knew the arboretum was so large and had so many individual gardens. I could spend all day there exploring!
- The Children's Garden is fantastic! What a wonderful place to make memories with my family. We also love the indoor butterfly house in March and April.
- The new hosta garden has so many varieties!
- My husband and I got married in the MSU Horticulture Gardens. It was one of the best days of my life and the perfect place for our ceremony and reception!
- Wilbur the peacock! I always look for this iconic bird to go up in the parking lot. It is neat to watch the flowers fill in over the season.
- For inspiration and stress relief! To get ideas for plant combinations. To see plants healthy and beautiful.



# SUMMER CONSTRUCTION FUN

BY DAN BULKOWSKI  
GARDENS AND GREENHOUSE MANAGER



New granite inlay around Ball Fountain

Hardly any summer season passes by without some sort of construction or maintenance issue in, or around, the gardens. This past summer was no exception. Early in the spring, the base of the spinning ball fountain was re-caulked. As the ball was being placed back onto the base, the sling carrying the ball slipped off the fork lift. That 1500lb solid stone fell in a blink of an eye and smashed the granite inlay below it. Upside of that incident was that all of the previously cracked pieces were also replaced at no charge by MSU Physical Plant.



Excavation  
north of CIPS  
building

The next photo shows an area in the Annual Gardens that was excavated to repair a water leak in the basement of the Center for Integrated Plant Systems building. It was a 17' deep hole, extending from the building to almost the sidewalk. Physical Plant dropped off a huge yellow excavator late on a Friday before a very large Saturday wedding. This was in full view of our wedding reception tent. After a few nice phone calls, it was moved. I heard several comments from Physical Plant people that this wasn't gardens "property" and they would do the minimum to restore the area. Whoa Nelly! Hold on...after a few more nice conversations, the area is now restored and sporting a lovely green lawn.



Excavation of berm  
to fix leaking pipe

(continued on next page)

On top of the berm (between the back door of our head house and the perennial garden) a stream started to trickle one day. From a previous article, you know I'm not too fond of water features in the garden. So in came the physical plant crew to dig another big hole to make the repairs to a cracked irrigation supply pipe. We lost a few trees and shrubs so they could access the area. Upside of this one is that Bethany has a new area to plant. She's excited.

Quiz time. What's missing in the photo to the right?...It's the arborvitae hedge that used to separate the rose garden from the south garden area. When the rose garden was started, the adjacent south garden area was actually a gravel parking lot. Hence the reason for the hedges. Well, the wrong variety of arborvitae was selected and they overwhelmed the rose beds. Out they had to come. At first, we discussed replanting the hedge. But after removal, we have liked the open vista it created. And Daedre has new areas for container trials. Also, the roses are a lot happier and are growing a lot straighter without the shading of the stinky ol' arborvitae.

This area of the Children's Garden (photo bottom right) is in for some changes starting this fall, and will be finished next spring. Most of the trees and plants have been removed. The well-worn and falling apart train-shaped play structure will be replaced with a new train the kids can play on. There will be a new rubber walkway and a giant's house. New plants and beds will put a festive finish on the area. Also, in the children's garden, the cottage is sporting a new look. The roof has been redone with bright new cedar shakes. That job is almost finished, and the cupola on top is being rebuilt by the roofers.

So as you can see, this was a typically busy year in the gardens. And it's not really over yet.



# THE SPECIAL BENEFITS OF PLANTS!

BY ART CAMERON  
GARDEN DIRECTOR

Gardens and gardening can go way beyond the plants themselves! That was the message of Helen Yoest, our 2017 featured Garden Day speaker. In her presentation, Helen expounded on the amorous virtues of our chlorophyllous friends! Combining facts and humor, Helen took us on a journey of “Plants with Benefits”!

In preparation for Helen’s presentations, Daedre McGrath, our Annual Plant Manager, designed and planted a special “Love” Garden, a.k.a. our Aphrodisiac Garden in our VIP (Vegetable and Insect Pollinator) Garden this spring which was in full form by August. We explored the special garden with Helen Yoest during the Garden Day evening reception! It was definitely a highlight

of what was already a special day! Helen told a few special stories and we later adjourned to the Atrium for lovely snacks and more talk about the seemingly limitless benefits of plants.

The “Love Garden” will remain in the VIP Garden until at least the end of the growing season, so there is still a chance for you to see it if you can arrive in the next few weeks! Daedre planted any number of interesting “love” plants from vanilla (for ice cream) to Datura which produces belladonna. The name belladonna is derived from Italian and means “beautiful woman” because an extract from the plant was used in eye-drops by women to dilate the pupils of their eyes to make them appear seductive. By the way, this is not to be tried at home since Datura is a member of the deadly nightshade family, and all parts are considered toxic!

Garden Day was a wonderful success and we look forward to seeing you next year when Tracy DiSabato-Aust will be our special featured speaker! Her book, the Well-Tended Perennial Garden, remains one of the most popular books published by Timber Press.

**Left Photo:** Bethany Troy (left), Daedre McGrath (right), and Helen Yoest (center) in the “Aphrodisiac Garden”.

**Right Photo:** Midge Morrow (left) and Helen Yoest enjoying the Aphrodisiac Garden during the Evening Reception.





# GARDEN STAFF AND STUDENTS ON TOUR!

BY ART CAMERON  
GARDEN DIRECTOR

Several staff members and summer students enjoyed tours of trial gardens located in central and western Michigan in July and August. This is an excellent opportunity for staff and students alike to learn plants and meet with other plant fanatics! We not only learned new plants, but a few more tricks for growing them successfully. We visited C. Raker and Sons in Litchfield, Walter's Gardens in Zeeland, and Mast Young Plants in Grand Rapids. What a treat!

**Top Photo:** Staff and students enjoyed seeing field production of herbaceous perennials at Walter's Gardens in Zeeland Michigan. It is hard to imagine literally hundreds of acres of perennials in bloom until you see them in person! From left to right: MacKenzie Hiatt, Daedre McGrath, Bethany Troy, Art Cameron, Samantha Demerly, Julia Felton, Rob Kreuger.

**Bottom Left Photo:** Colorful perennials in mass in the fields at Walter's Gardens

**Bottom Right Photo:** The Ultimate combination of Achillea and Agastache in the fields of Walter's Gardens





# HIVES AT THE HORTICULTURE GARDENS

BY WALTER PETT  
APICULTURE & POLLINATION  
SPECIALIST  
DEPARTMENT OF ENTOMOLOGY

Five years ago, Art Cameron asked if I would put a couple of honey bee colonies in the Horticulture Gardens. We walked around the gardens and found a suitable spot that was a bit elevated above the walk way and protected by some shrubs. I started 2 colonies that spring.

The bees do quite well at this location and forage on many of the plants in the garden providing pollination services. The location is also great for me when I teach my “Apiculture and Pollination” class offered through the Department of Entomology. One goal of my class is to provide the students with an understanding of how colonies function and give the students some hands-on experience working with bees. When my students complete my class I want them to have the confidence and knowledge to start and manage honey bee colonies. The hives at the Horticulture Gardens allow me to reach those goals.

