

MSU IN BLOOM

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



Spring Plant Sale 2017

Top Picks from the
Garden Staff

Cilantro

2017 Herb of the
Year

Shopping for Perennials

Selecting the best
plants for your garden

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MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Plant Sale	May 19/20
Exotic Flavors Workshop	May 23
Garden Day	August 5



PLANT SALE 2017!
To Benefit the MSU Horticulture Gardens

Great deals on hanging baskets, perennials, annuals, grasses, herbs, vegetable seedlings, shrubs, and more!

Fri. May 19th: 4–7 p.m. (*2017 MSU Garden Members only)
Sat. May 20th: 7 a.m.–2 p.m. (Public Sale)
Plant & Soil Sciences Bldg., MSU

www.hrt.msu.edu/our-gardens
Email: hgardens@msu.edu
Phone: 517-353-0328
BYOC: Bring Your Own Cart!



Visit

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

THE PLANT SALE IS COMING!

By Art Cameron
Garden Director

There is no doubt, that our annual Plant Sale is a great opportunity for you to purchase an incredible variety of annuals, perennials, vines and shrubs at decent prices! This is all made possible by our dedicated garden staff! They are the ones that lead student employees and volunteers to make this plant sale happen. Of course, each staff member brings their own focus and expertise to expand the list of plants we sell. Dan Bulkowski selects a wonderful range of common and rare vegetables and herbs to grow each year. I always look closely to see what he has to offer! Daedre has grown yet another plethora of “annuals” this year with some that stretch the boundaries but are guaranteed fun-to-grow. Bethany has a huge assortment of beautiful perennials just waiting for a home in your garden. I’m sure at least a couple will end up in my garden.

All this is remarkable when you consider that staff members must also make sure our outdoor displays are well cared for. Bethany spends any number of hours tending the herbaceous perennial gardens which start waking up in March, while Daedre tracks and

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grows hundreds of different annuals (in addition to those for the plant sale) that will be transplanted into our trial beds this summer! Dan is always busy with seasonal activities and problem solving!

Our volunteers also step up big-time to help us grow and sell this wide array of plant material. We really couldn't begin to accomplish this enormous task without their help. And they do it with a smile! One group calls themselves the "Veggie Girls" and they help with growing, organizing, signage, set-up and sales of our vast collection of vegetables! They are indeed a fun and productive group!



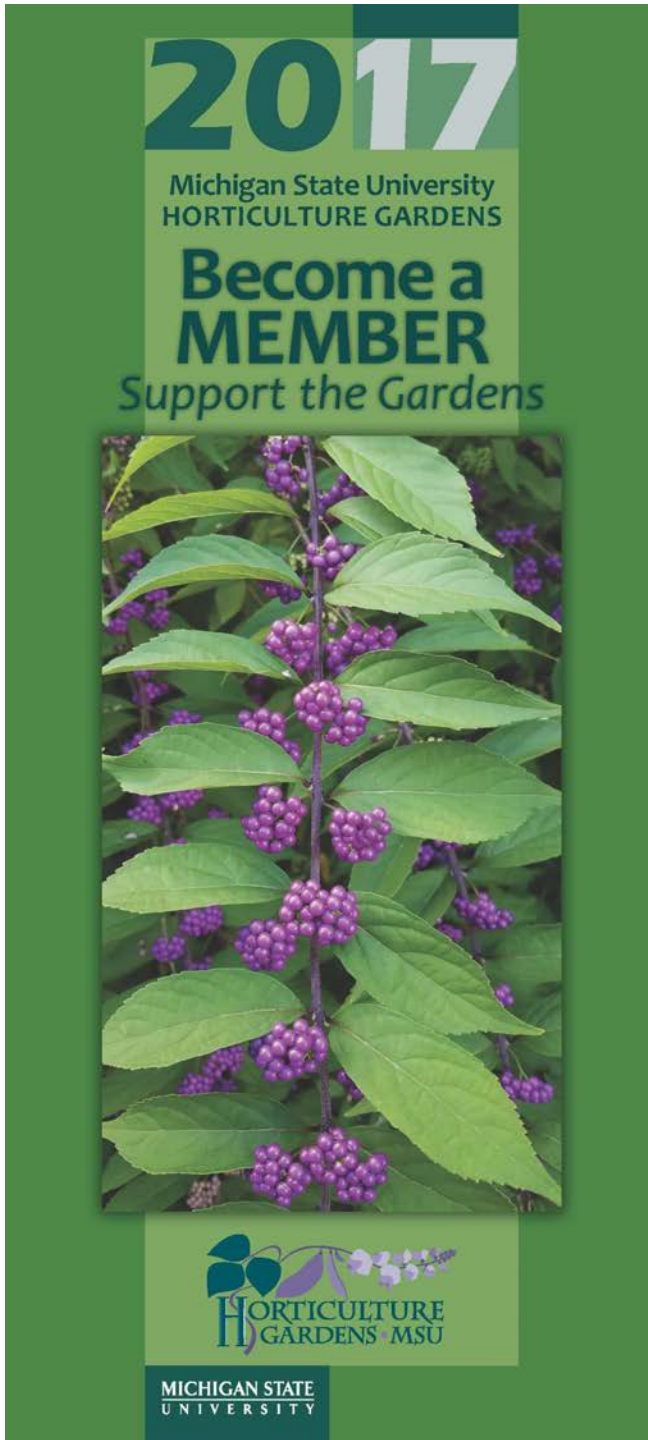
Why do we all do it? I think it is fair to say that all our staff and volunteers really want to make you happy! We can't help it, we love plants and we think you do too! We are also motivated since the Spring Plant Sale is one of our primary fund-raising activities. As I hope you know, the MSU Horticulture Gardens are largely self-financed. Proceeds from the plant sale are necessary to cover part of our salaries and ongoing activities! The good news is that when you purchase a plant from our Plant Sale, you enhance your garden and support the MSU Horticulture Gardens and the commitment we have to educate and inspire the Mid-Michigan community! A perfect win-win situation, we think.

Thanks to everyone who makes this plant sale such a success each year! And for you gardeners, come on out and do some plant shopping! We do hope to see you there!

MEMBERS-ONLY VIP PLANT SALE

GET EARLY ENTRY AND A DISCOUNT AT OUR PLANT SALE WITH A 2017 HORTICULTURE GARDENS MEMBERSHIP!

By Jennifer Sweet
Program Coordinator



Thinking of attending our Plant Sale this month? Purchase a 2017 Horticulture Garden membership to receive some exciting perks!

In addition to many other benefits, a membership will allow you to shop the evening before our public Plant Sale. Our Members-Only VIP Plant Sale will take place on Friday, May 19 from 4-7pm. You'll have first pick of our incredible selection and you might even be able to snag some limited-quantity items! In addition, you will also receive 10% off your purchases. This is a fantastic way to support our Gardens, while getting everything you need for yours!

Members-Only VIP Plant Sale

Friday, May 19

4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Plant and Soil Sciences Headhouse (first floor)

Free parking in our Garden lot off Bogue St.

B.Y.O.C. (Bring your own cart- we have a limited supply and they go quickly!)

Become a Member Today:

http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/garden_memberships

SHAMELESS PLUG FOR OUR PLANT SALE

BY DANIEL BULKOWSKI
GARDENS AND GREENHOUSE MANAGER

I'm often asked about my favorite plant. Annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs, algae, etc. This article is to answer what might be my favorite vegetables. While an impossible task to just select a few, that is what I did. I hope no vegetable is hurt by any omission. So, in no particular order:

The first one to share is Ground Cherry (*Physalis pruinosa*), also known as Husk Cherry. It's closely related to tomatillos, and is in the nightshade family (peppers, tomatoes). It's a smallish plant, less than 24" tall. About midsummer, push back the leaves to reveal the fruit laying on the ground. That's how you know they're ripe: it's on the ground and the husk covering the fruit is brown and papery. Remove the husk to eat the ½" golden-yellow delight. What does it taste like? Like a ground cherry of course! They are very sweet, with pineapple overtones. Supposedly it makes good pies, preserves, and sauces. Mine never make it to the kitchen. It's part of my breakfast I eat on my morning walk through the gardens.

The second part of my breakfast is Mexican Sour Gherkin, or Cucamelon, or Mouse Melon (*Melothria scabra*). All these names refer to the small cucumber-like fruit that has a tart crunch (kind of like a watermelon rind, but better). They look like miniature watermelons that Barbie and GI Joe (Ken's out) would take on a picnic. These are on fast growing vines, where again the leaves hide most of the fruit. They need to be pointed in the direction of a trellis. Besides eating fresh, they can be put in salads or quick-pickled.

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The third and last part of my summer time breakfast are cherry tomatoes. Sorry Daedre, grad students weren't the only ones eating your trials. A couple of ones that I like are Ladybug and Gold Rush Currant.

Some other favorite veggies are:

- Carmen Pepper, a very sweet non-bell type of pepper. It's great for eating straight off the plant or frying. Especially good on the grill.
- Jumbo Pink Banana Squash, mentioned this one in another article. My brother-in-law loved this one, me too.
- Cucuzzi gourd, though eaten like a summer squash when 12" or less. It's a fast growing vine that covers a fence in a hurry, and the fruits can get up to 3' long.
- Celeriac, or Celery Root, is a type of celery where the lower portion of the stem becomes rounded. It is harvested when it's about 4" to 5" round. It's quite ugly looking and needs a lot of peeling. But the inside can be steamed, roasted, mashed, or eaten raw. Delicious.
- Kohlrabi, in the cabbage family, is another favorite where the enlarged stem is eaten. It looks like some sort of alien vegetable, with leaves emerging from the enlarged stem. Again, it can be eaten raw or cooked. Again, delicious.

So, if you happen to come to our plant sale coming up, you might find a few of the above favorites in the vegetable section in the conservatory. Sorry, no algae.





CILANTRO

2017 HERB OF THE YEAR

BY JESSICA WRIGHT
EDUCATION COORDINATOR

When the topic of cilantro comes up most people are on one side of the fence or the other, but no matter what side of the fence you are on, this herb has a lot to offer. Did you know that this pungent herb is actually two herbs in one? Cilantro is the leaf stage of the plant is what we commonly see in salsas and soups; coriander the fruiting/seed stage of the plant is a mild spice that is used to accentuate many dishes from tacos to ribs.

This multitasker is a great annual to add to your herb garden. It has few pests, often reseeds (but doesn't take over), and is a wonderful nectar source for native pollinators. If you are looking for some new varieties to try this year we will have a few at our plant sale including some slow-to-bolt varieties 'Santo' and 'Calypso'.

If you err on the side of not liking cilantro there have been a few recent studies that may explain why. Certain people think cilantro taste like soap, while others enjoy the flavor. Researchers have identified a gene that detects the aldehyde component of cilantro as a soapy smell. Now the aptly named "cilantrophobes" have research to back up their dislike for this unique herb and the rest of us can just go ahead and enjoy the 2017 herb of the year.

Click this link
for a yummy
and unique recipe
from Food.com:

Cream of Cilantro
Soup





ADVENTUROUS ANNUALS

BY DAEDRE MCGRATH
TRIAL GARDEN MANAGER

With over 175 varieties of annuals to choose from at this year's plant sale, you might feel a little overwhelmed! Whether you have a vision in mind or are simply impulse buying, you're sure to find some unique and unusual treasures. Here are a few of my top selections from this year's offerings (photos from top to bottom).



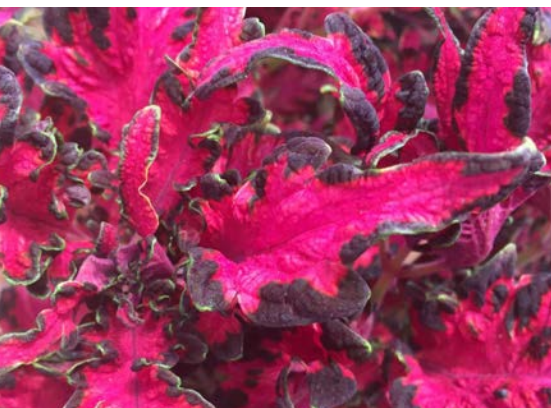
Hyacinth Bean (*Lablab purpurea*)

Height: 10-20' Spread: 3-6' Exposure: full sun to partial shade
This annual vine is great for covering walls, trellises, or fences. Dark purple stems and bean pods, magenta flowers. This is the iconic plant of the MSU Horticulture Gardens!



Castor Bean (*Ricinus communis*)

Height: 6-10' Spread: 3-4' Exposure: full sun
A rapidly growing exotic and prehistoric looking plant. Valued as an ornamental plant for its huge, palmately lobed leaves and round, spiny, reddish-brown seed capsules. Please note that all parts of this plant are POISONOUS if ingested.

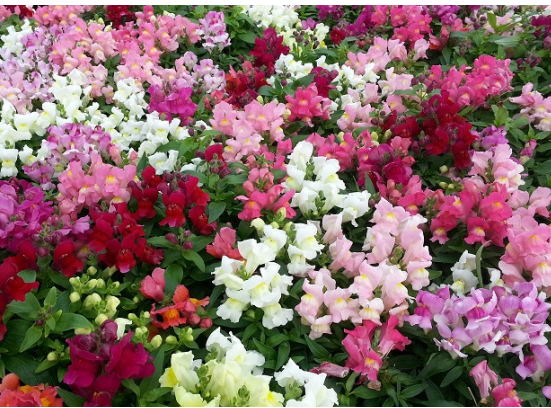


Zinnia 'Raspberry Lemonade Mix' (*Zinnia marylandica*)

Height: 12-18" Spread: 12-18" Exposure: full sun
This gorgeous color mix of zinnias have large flowers on disease-tolerant and heat-loving plants.

Coleus 'Under the Sea' series (*Solenostemon hybrida*)

Height: 12-18" Spread: 12-18" Exposure: full sun or shade
The Under the Sea series is a fun, bright, exciting collection of coleus varieties. These will add a great pop of color and texture anywhere in your garden as they are sun and shade tolerant.



Snapdragon 'Snapshot Mix' (*Antirrhinum majus*)

Height: 6-12" Spread: 10-12" Exposure: full sun
This cute, diminutive snapdragon is great as a bedding plant, or in containers. Bushy plants grow lots of flowers in a nice mix of spring colors.

SHOPPING FOR PERENNIALS

BY BETHANY TROY
PERENNIAL GARDEN MANAGER



Aralia cordata
'Sun King'



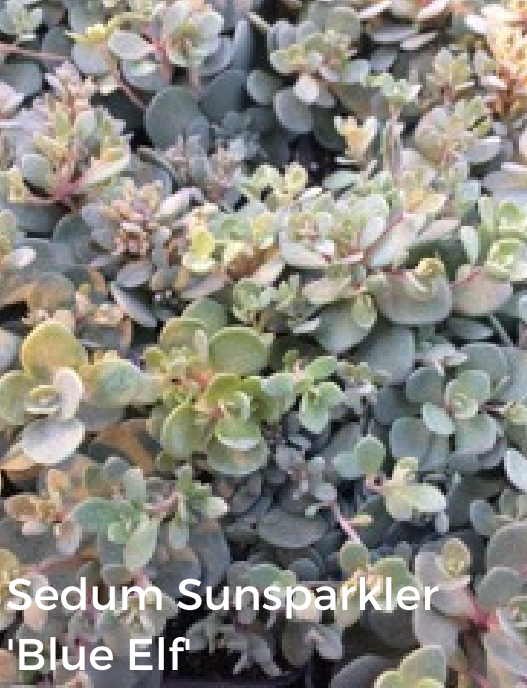
Pulmonaria 'Majeste'



Heuchera 'Melting Fire'

When shopping for plants, our eyes naturally go to anything blooming, eye-catching flowers stop us in our tracks, and can help you determine if the color scheme will go well in your garden. However, I encourage you to look a little deeper into your plant material, particularly with perennials. What makes a perennial have a good set of flowers? Well, it needs healthy foliage and healthy roots! Look for full, healthy foliage with minimal damage. If you have the opportunity to look at the roots without hurting the plant, slip the plant out of the pot and inspect the root system to see that it is developed and not rotting. Plus, purchasing a plant not in flower gives you something to look forward to once it blooms in the garden. Perennials typically bloom for limited periods of time, sometimes leaving aesthetically pleasing seed pods or other marks of interest. Once these have gone, it's time to really appreciate the plant for what it is without the showy flowers. For this reason, be sure to keep textures, shapes, and colors in mind with regards to foliage.

Be sure to check out our plant sale, as we have a number of vines, plants perfect for shade, lots of hardy succulents, and new varieties that are sure to get your heart throbbing!



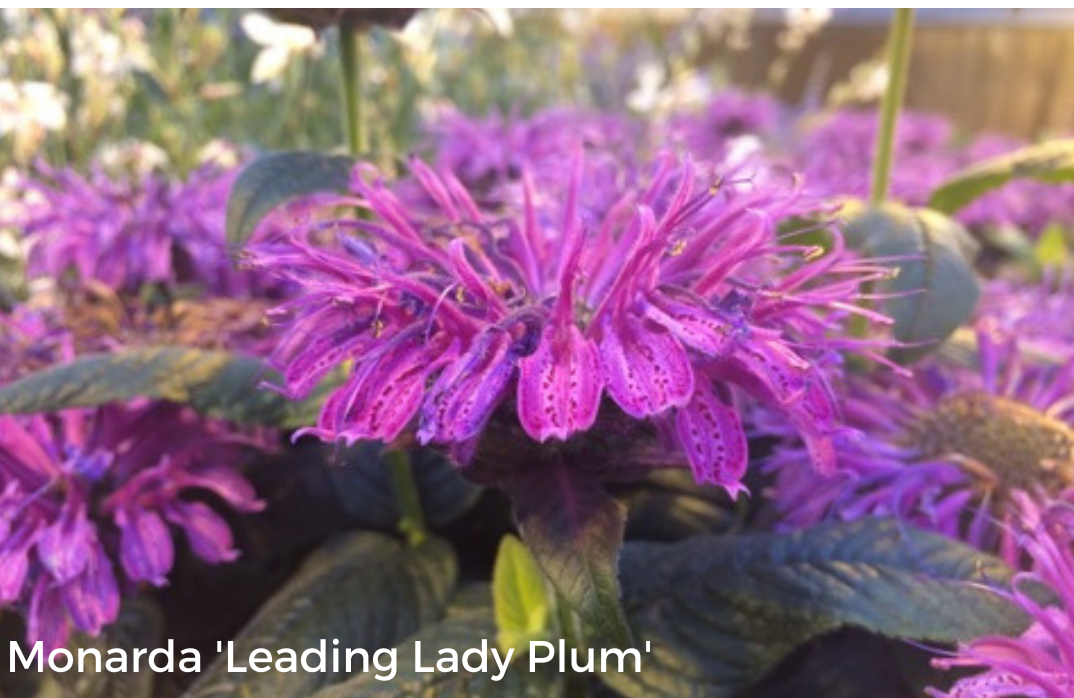
Sedum Sunsparkler
'Blue Elf'



Must Have Perennials

MSU Horticulture Gardens Plant Sale 2017

Dicentra 'Gold Heart'



Monarda 'Leading Lady Plum'



Baptisia 'Brownie
Points'



Leucanthemum
'Banana Cream'



Lonicera 'Scentsation'



CURIOUS GARDENER

EXOTIC FLAVORS: CAPTURE THE WORLD IN YOUR GARDEN

Don't forget to sign up for our third and final Curious Gardener workshop for spring 2017!

Tuesday May 23rd, 6:00-8:00PM

Learn to grow plants in your garden that will lend exotic flavors in your kitchen. Yes, even in Michigan, we can grow lemongrass, coriander, ginger, and of course several types of basil and mint. Based on experiences gained while traveling the world, Art and Marlene Cameron will cover plant selection, describe tricks for plant propagation and culture, and present cooking techniques for a range of plants used in cuisines from around the world: Thailand to Vietnam, and India to South American.

Each attendee will go home with a container of flavorful herbs to grow at home!

Register online at:

http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/curious_gardener



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