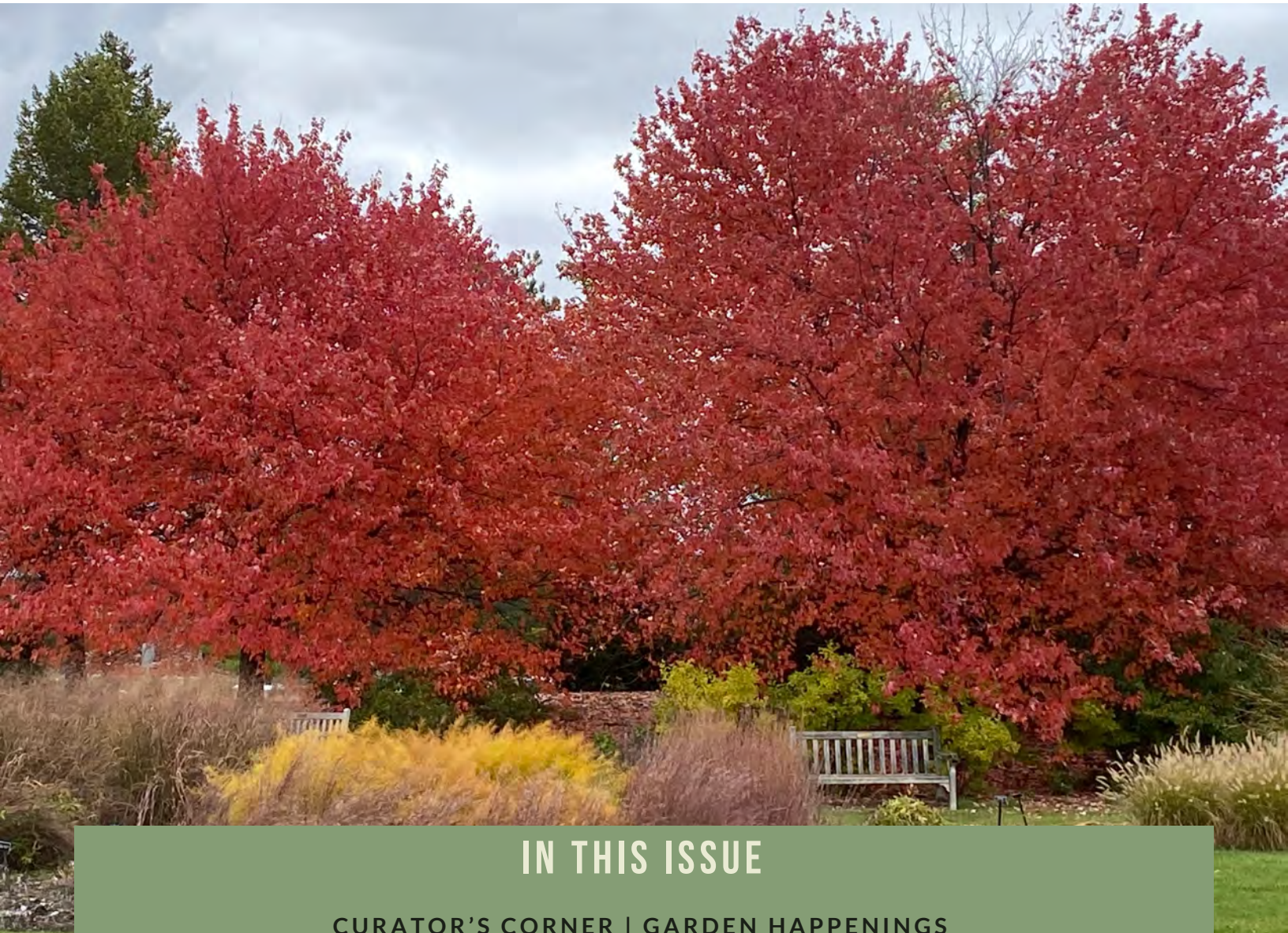


# MSU IN BLOOM

## MSU HORTICULTURE GARDEN NEWS



### IN THIS ISSUE

CURATOR'S CORNER | GARDEN HAPPENINGS  
HOUSEPLANT & SUCCULENT SALE  
NEW GARDENS & TEACHING GREENHOUSE MANAGER  
SOUTH GARDEN FALL UPDATE | RECIPROCAL GARDEN SPOTLIGHT  
CHILDREN'S GARDEN SUMMER RECAP | MEMBERSHIP

# CURATOR'S CORNER

---

BY MASON MCNAIR, GARDEN CURATOR

## **Cultivating Change: A Curator's First Year in the Horticulture Gardens**

As I reflect on my first year as curator of the Horticulture Gardens, I'm struck by the energy, collaboration, and vision that have shaped our journey. This year has been one of growth—both literal and organizational—as we've welcomed new team members, launched strategic planning efforts, and deepened our commitment to education, accessibility, and innovation.

## **Garden Team Updates: Strengthening Our Roots**

We've expanded and restructured our team to better serve the diverse needs of our gardens and visitors:

- Dan Bulkowski retired from our Gardens & Teaching Greenhouse Manager after more than 25 years with us. Thank you for everything you did to make us what we are today!
- Steven Peterson joined us as our new Gardens & Teaching Greenhouse Manager, bringing fresh energy to our facilities and operations.
- Tes Smith stepped into the role of South Gardens Manager, overseeing the 4H Children's Garden, Delapa Perennial Garden, and Rose Garden with care and creativity.
- Jessica Wright continues to shine as our Education Coordinator and now also serves as our primary administrator, streamlining operations and outreach.
- We're currently hiring a new Events and Marketing Manager to succeed Amy McCausey, who will retire in December 2025 after years of dedicated service.

## **Strategic Planning: Unifying Our Vision**

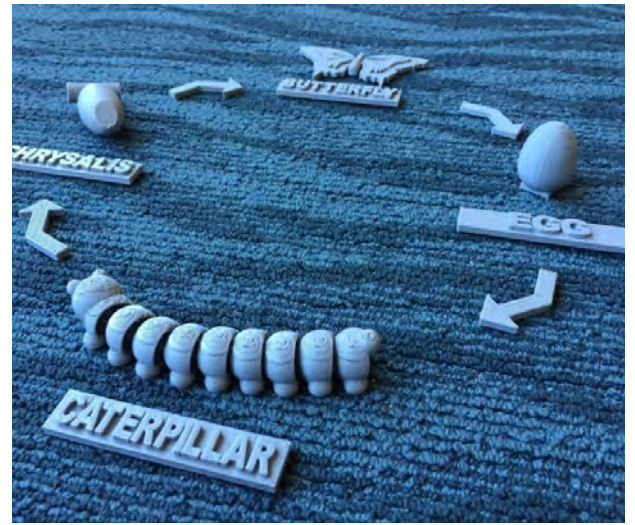
For the first time since 2008, we're developing a new strategic plan to guide the future of the Horticulture Gardens. This includes revisiting our mission, vision, goals, and branding—with input from a wide range of stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, donors, teachers, field trip participants, visitors, and industry partners.

One of the most visible shifts will be our effort to unify our identity as the Horticulture Gardens. Each space will retain its name and unique character, like the Lewis Landscape Arboretum, 4H Children's Garden, Delapa Perennial Garden, and Carter Annual & Trial Garden, but will be unified under a shared mission and vision.

Our guiding principle is simple: respect and build on the past while embracing the future of horticulture and education. We proudly remain gateless, free to all, and deeply committed to honoring the legacy of those who've shaped the gardens over the years.

## Partnerships & Innovation: Planting Seeds for the Future

This year, we've rekindled and grown industry partnerships with organizations like Walters Gardens, SunGro Horticulture, Hunter Irrigation, and more. These collaborations are helping us expand our educational offerings and infrastructure. We've had numerous research projects across MSU Plant Science departments use the gardens to facilitate their research on photosynthesis, plant-insect interactions, plant disease, milkweed breeding, tomato genetics, and more!



3D Printed Butterfly Life Cycle

We've also begun integrating new teaching tools into our programming:

3D printed butterfly lifecycle models, developed with Polymaker Education, are bringing science to life for young learners.

We're planning to build multiple FarmBots by year's end to support hands-on learning in automation and sustainable agriculture.



FarmBot

New curriculum exploring the science of chocolate is in development, featuring a CocoaPress Chocolate 3D Printer—a delicious way to connect biology, chemistry, and engineering.

This year has been incredibly enlightening for me, and I've truly enjoyed meeting everyone who has stopped by. As we move forward, we invite our community to continue to grow with us, share your insights, and help shape the next chapter of the Horticulture Gardens. Here's to a future rooted in collaboration and curiosity.



3D Printed Chocolate

# GARDEN HAPPENINGS

---

## PLANT SALE

Our Tenth Annual Houseplant & Succulent Sale is right around the corner. MSU Horticulture Gardens are mostly self-funded. Consider supporting these beautiful gardens to keep them running for many years to come.

Don't miss out on the Houseplant & Succulent Sale!

Friday, November 7, 8am-4pm  
1066 Bogue St, East Lansing 48824



## RECIPROCAL GARDEN SPOTLIGHT, SEE PG 9

Houseplant & Succulent Sale  
Poinsettia Sale (online sales only)  
Poinsettia Pick Up

## WEDDING SEASON

As the wedding season draws to an end, we are looking toward the 2026 season. If you know someone hosting a wedding, a baby shower, bridal shower, birthday celebration or memorial service please reach out to our Venue Manager at [gardens@msu.edu](mailto:gardens@msu.edu).



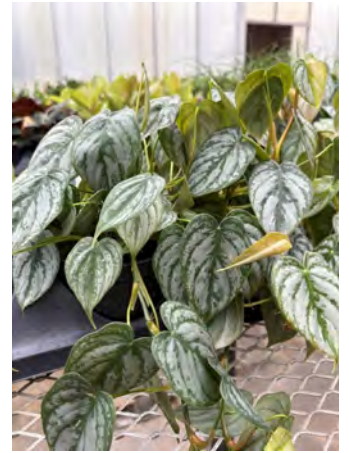
November 7  
November 11 - December 13  
December 2-13

# 10TH ANNUAL HOUSEPLANT SALE

BY ABBY MAKOWSKI, TRIAL GARDEN MANAGER

Our Tenth Annual Houseplant and Succulent Sale is coming up and we've been busy growing some amazing plants for you all. There are so many great options to choose from but here are a few of our staff favorites:

*Philodendron brandtianum* also known as the Silver Leaf Philodendron. If you are looking for fantastic foliage this plant is for you. This plant likes to vine, you can grow it as a hanging plant or give it the support of a trellis and it will happily climb as high as you let it.



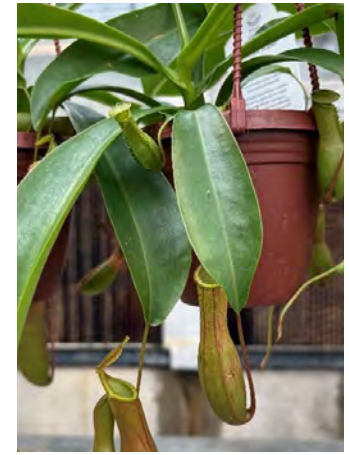
*Philodendron brandtianum*

*Lithops species*, commonly known as Living Stones are a perennial favorite of ours. These little cuties are a genus of succulents native to South Africa. They are used to long periods of drought in their natural habitat and as a houseplant you are more likely to kill them by caring too much.



*Lithops spp.*

*Nepenthes species*, the Tropical Pitcher Plants are another one we love. These carnivorous plants are a fun addition to any houseplant collection. Pitcher Plants require distilled or RO water, and do not need to be fertilized because they get all their required nutrients from capturing insects in their pitchers and dissolving them.



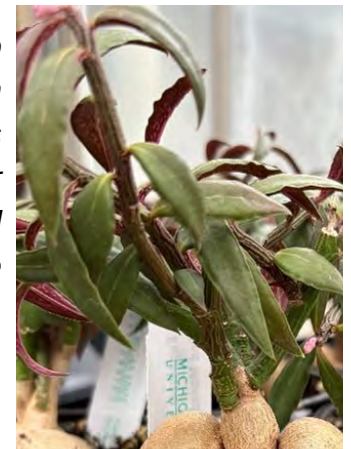
*Nepenthes spp.*

*Sansevieria trifasciata* are an old standby for houseplant experts and amateurs alike. Known by many as Snake Plants or Mother-In-Law's Tongue, these plants are known to be hard to kill. They require little maintenance and come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. With so much variety there is a Snake Plant for everyone!



*Sansevieria trifasciata*

*Euphorbia neorubella* is another plant that is new to our collection and houseplant sale. The swollen stem of this plant is known as a caudex. Caudiciform plants are commonly found in desert regions and use their large trunks to store water. Known as Red Monadenium, this succulent likes high light and free draining soil.



*Euphorbia neorubella*

# INTRODUCING STEVEN PETERSON

---

BY STEVEN PETERSON, GARDENS & TEACHING GREENHOUSE MANAGER

Hello, everyone, my name is Steven Peterson. I replaced Dan Bulkowski as the manager of the Horticulture Gardens and Teaching Greenhouses. Dan spent many years working for this great institution, and I know everyone will miss him dearly. I am very excited for this amazing opportunity to lead such a great team of horticulturists and to work beside the best faculty in the world.



I want to take this opportunity to tell everyone a little bit about me. I graduated from high school in 1994 and immediately enlisted in the military, where I served 25 years in the U.S. Army with 17 of those years in Special Forces. I had many great experiences and gained a ton of leadership experience that will prove invaluable in this position. I started my horticulture career after retirement as a student in a truly amazing Landscape Gardening program at Sandhills Community College in Southern Pines, NC. I quickly discovered the vast knowledge required in horticulture and decided to transfer to Michigan State University, where I recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in Horticulture Science. Like everyone else who graduates from college, I definitely won't have all the answers, but I have an amazing team that can accomplish anything we put our minds to. I am married to my wonderful wife, Sarah, and have two truly outstanding young



adult kids: Matthew, who attends college at Taylor University, and Brooke, a junior at Williamston High School. Of course, I mention my puppy, Nala.

Our 14 acres of gardens is a massive undertaking with so many separate gardens, themes, water features, and ideas. I already see how important our entire team is, and by team, I mean our staff here at the gardens, our volunteers, student interns, department faculty, donors, and industry professionals, and of course, the Infrastructure, Planning, and Facilities (IPF) Trades professionals. We could not do what we do without all of you.

I am grateful for the opportunity and look forward to connecting with everyone throughout this journey.

Go Green!





Bed Planted: April 17 2025  
Photo taken: Aug. 20 2025



Bed Planted: Sept. 23 2025  
Photo taken: Oct. 1 2025

# THE SOUTH GARDEN - FALL UPDATE

Leaves are starting to fall here in the gardens! Over the last month students, volunteers, and the South Garden Manager have been working hard to keep the Perennial and Michigan 4-H Children's gardens looking spry! As we move into fall here is how a few of our display beds have changed 😊

## PERENNIAL GARDEN

During the last week of September volunteers & managers tackled weeding the sprucing up this large native bed in the perennial garden.



After



Before

Recently our amazing volunteers worked on planting mums, pansies, and heuchera in the Children's garden entrance. Over the summer this bed consisted of Canna lilies, Coleus, SunPatiens, and dusty miller.



Yellow Mums have taken over the Pot of Gold!



# WELLFIELD BOTANIC GARDENS

Your local homegrown, World-Class Garden.



Wellfield Botanic Gardens, located in Elkhart, Indiana, is 36 acres with over 20 themed gardens. Some themed gardens include an English Cottage Garden, Event Garden, Island Garden, and Children's Garden.

**Mission:** To cultivate art, education, and ecology to nurture a more vibrant and sustainable world.

**History:** In 2005, Wellfield Botanic Gardens was established by the Elkhart Rotary as part of its centennial project. Wellfield supplies the city of Elkhart with 70% of its drinking water to this day.

Wellfield is always changing, as gardens do, and has something to offer visitors in every season. If you love early spring blooms, take a walk through our Woodland Conservation Garden in April and May to catch many spring ephemerals carpeting the ground. Summer brings a bounty of blooms with the perennials in our Water Celebration Garden and English Cottage Garden. The many different species and varieties in our rose collection put on a show throughout the summer months. Autumn provides many blooms like goldenrod, asters, and autumn crocus, as well as the rich hues of foliage change. Winter can be a beautiful time to visit our Japanese-themed Island Garden. The carefully pruned forms of our Niwaki pines truly stand out amidst the muted tones and stillness of the season.

Wellfield's major events, such as Groovin' in the Gardens, Taste of the Gardens, and the Winter Wonderland Holiday Lights, are made for all ages all year long. Wellfield also hosts monthly horticulture classes, quarterly trivia, and many art classes throughout all seasons.

As a member of the American Horticulture Society, Wellfield honors reciprocal memberships all over the country. Wellfield members travel all over the country to access this special benefit as well!



# 4-H CHILDREN'S GARDEN PROGRAM RECAP

THIS YEAR, THE 4-H CHILDREN'S GARDEN HOSTED OVER 10,000 STUDENTS FROM MORE THAN 200 SCHOOLS. DURING THEIR VISIT, STUDENTS EXPLORED THE GARDEN, LEARNED ABOUT PLANT LIFE CYCLES, AND EVEN TASTED HONEY. ADDITIONALLY, OVER 500 STUDENTS FROM THE MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VISITED THE GARDEN AS PART OF THEIR TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES. THEY ENJOYED FIELD TRIPS EXPLORING BOTH THE OUTDOOR GARDEN AND THE BUTTERFLIES.

OUR BUTTERFLIES IN THE GARDEN SEASON WAS ANOTHER HUGE SUCCESS! THE INDOOR GARDEN UNDERWENT A LARGE RENOVATION, WHICH INCLUDED NEW FLOORING AND A REDESIGNED SPACE. STUDENTS GOT TO INTERACT WITH OUR NEW AREA, WHICH NOW FEATURES IMPORTANT PLANTS FROM THE RAINFOREST AND A NEW DESERT BIOME.



WE KICKED OFF OUR SUMMER PROGRAMS THIS YEAR WITH A FAIRY AND ELVES GARDEN PARTY. FAIRY WANDS WERE MADE, AND FAIRY GARDENS PLANTED BY ALL WHO ATTENDED. WE ALSO HOSTED DIGGER DAY AND A NEW PROGRAM TO END OUR SUMMER: BEACH DAY. WE CONTINUED OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EAST LANSING PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE "STORIES IN THE GARDEN" PROGRAM. TEENS FROM THE LIBRARY CAME OUT THREE TIMES AND READ STORIES TO GARDEN VISITORS. OUR TWO VERY POPULAR CAMPS WERE BACK THIS SUMMER. GARDEN WRITERS CREATED POEMS, PENNED FAIRY TALES, AND MUCH MORE, ALL WHILE ENJOYING THE GARDEN. CAMP MONET HOSTED 27 ARTISTS THIS YEAR. THE FOCUS OF CAMP THIS YEAR WAS "ART IN NATURE". WE CREATED ART FROM FLOWERS, DID A STUDY OF HONEYBEES, AND PAINTED WITH SOIL.

OUT IN THE GARDEN THIS SUMMER, OUR INTERNS STARTED THE SEASON FIGHTING SOME VERY PERSISTENT GROUNDHOGS, BUT THEY PERSEVERED, AND OUR SUNFLOWERS AND KALE LOOKED GREAT. THE TEAM HAS BEEN WORKING HARD TO PUT IN OUR FALL DISPLAYS, AND THE GARDEN IS STILL HOLDING STRONG EVEN WITH THE LATE-SEASON DROUGHT.



---

# MSU Horticulture Gardens Membership Perks



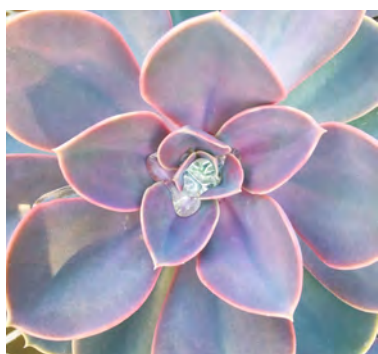
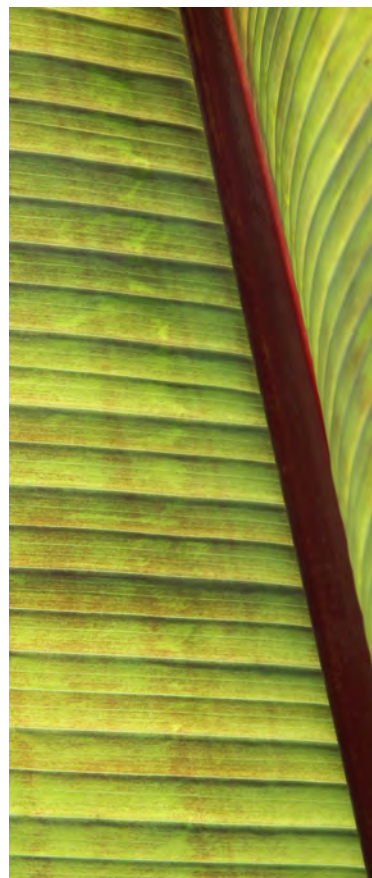
## 10% Off Plant Sales

Members not only get 10% at our spring plant sale but also our fall and poinsettia sales!



## Free admission and exclusive discounts to over 300 gardens

As a garden member you can enjoy exclusive discounts and free admission to gardens throughout the US.



## VIP Early Plant Sale access

Members get to enjoy the best selections and get a first look at both spring and fall sales.



## Discounts on all Hort Gardens Educational Programs

Members will receive discounts on educational programs including Curious Gardener, lectures and more.

## More Perks!

- Family membership and above receive Special invitation (for two) to our Annual VIP Wine and Chocolate Donor Reception
- Contributors enjoy 5 free 2-hour parking permits
- Patrons enjoy free parking during the garden season and a free 4"x8" commemorative brick place in the garden on your behalf

To purchase a 2026 Membership (beginning Nov 10) and learn more visit [www.hrt.msu.edu/join](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/join)

---