

Visit the wild bunch at UM

They're going wild in southeast Michigan. They started blooming in April, and some of them won't stop until September.

The wildflowers along Michigan's streams and highways, in the meadows and woodlands and wetlands, and especially in the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens' Helen V. Smith Woodland Wildflower Garden in Ann Arbor, are presenting the soft white of Rue Anemone and delicate greens and purple-browns of the Jack-in-the-Pulpits heralding the summer white of Culver's Root and the vibrant blue of Great Blue Lobelia at season's end in August and September.

"The Gardens is a wonderful place to learn to identify woodland wildflowers," said Liz Elling, visitor programs coordinator at the Gardens. "There's a great diversity of labeled plants in a relatively small area."

"Visit it early and often to watch the plants develop through the growing season. See the whole life span, from shoot to bud, flower, and finally fruit or seed."

The Helen V. Smith Woodland Wildflower Garden is a showcase of more than 100 species of wildflowers, woody plants and ferns that grow wild in the southern Great Lakes region.

It includes native species and European and Asian exotics with Appalachian species that are hardy and have naturalized in the southern Michigan woods.

Adjacent to the garden are "spontaneous" areas of native plants that have established themselves and are typical

under an oak forest canopy.

A native plant is one that has been found in the area since before European settlement. An exotic refers to plants that have been introduced since settlement times, usually those that have escaped from cultivation.

Some of the favorite "natives" in the garden are Mayapple, Michigan Lily, Touch-Me-Not and Great Blue Lobelia.

Among the Appalachian gems in the garden are Black Snakeroot, Jacob's Ladder, Trillium and Virginia Bluebells.

Representative ferns of Michigan include the Christmas, Cinnamon, Maidenhair, Royal, Ostrich and Sensitive ferns.

Among the woody plants are the Flowering Raspberry, Yellowwood and Witch-hazel.

For more information about native plants, Elling suggests contacting the Wildflower Study Group at Matthaei (call (313) 998-7061), the Natural Areas Heritage Program in Lansing (call (517) 373-1263) or the Michigan Chapter of The Wild Ones (call (313) 763-0645).

She also recommends Smith's "Michigan Wildflowers," "Michigan Flora" Vols. I-III by Ed Voss and Houk's "Eastern Wildflowers."

Matthaei Botanical Gardens also offers many relevant adult education classes throughout the year. For more information about the classes, special events and sales, contact the Gardens at (313) 998-7061.

Figley from page D4

Interesting textured patio stones are placed for easy access into the beds; one in the shape of a shoe print.

Edward drilled holes into a large lava rock that now holds impatiens and sedums. Along the back wall of the home, a climbing hydrangea and a honeysuckle add height.

Each individual plant such as hosta and lavender takes center stage where it can be enjoyed for its particular beauty. Sharron keeps them contained by pinching, which also makes them grow more fully.

Another interesting structure caught my eye. A beautiful trellis has been installed into a center bed in the back yard. It is about six feet tall and is made of cement reinforcing rod.

This is another of Edward's creations. He told Sharron, after seeing wrought-iron trellises in a magazine, that he could make her something - which turned out to be a Mother's Day present.

The design contains unusual curlicues (he used a garden hose as a pattern for this embellishment) and has been painted black to resemble iron. Sharron has planted climbing white roses to grow on it and anticipates suc-

cessful results.

A sprinkler system is installed and used when necessary. The very healthy plants are treated with Miracle-Gro every three weeks; Muracil is used on the impatiens if they need it.

The lawn is dense with grass and, as with the gardens, are cared for by the Reskas. They use an off-brand fertilizer (generally one low in nitrogen such as 12-12-12) on the lawn beginning the end of May and apply it three times during the growing season. They find this fertilizer at Chap's Pet Store, Five Mile and Merriman in Livonia.

It's always fun and a great learning experience to visit with gardeners who enjoy what they do and have something to share. If you have a garden, or know of a garden to feature in this column, please contact me through my voice mail number. I pick up my calls Thursdays.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

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