

## HOME AND GARDEN CALENDAR

**Metropolitan Rose Society**  
The Metropolitan Rose Society will meet 7:15 p.m. Friday, June 6, at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center, 3500 Maris, east of Crooks and north of 13 Mile. George Hartley will speak on How to Win the Award of Queen of the Rose Show. Admission is free. The public may attend. Call (248) 689-9529 for information.

**Troy Garden Club**  
Sasha Kodel, a naturalist at Seven Ponds Nature Center, will give a slide presentation on the monarch butterfly as well as other Michigan butterflies for the Troy Garden Club. The presentation will take place noon to 3 p.m. Wednesday, June 11, at Big Beaver United Methodist Church, 3753 John R, just south of Waffles in Troy. Kodel will talk about how to attract these winged jewels to our Michigan gardens. Refreshments will be served at noon. Visitors are welcome; guest donation \$3. Reservations aren't required. For more information, call Barb at (248) 952-5938.

**Native shrubs**  
Naturescaping with Native Shrubs, a site tour of recently planted native

shrubs with emphasis on plant selection and characteristics, will take place 9-11 a.m. Saturday, June 7, at Riverside Park in Beverly Hills on Riverside Drive, just east of Evergreen, between 13 and 14 Miles. The event is free. Register with the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority, (248) 288-5150.

**Nature walk**  
Families are invited to the Rouge River Nature Walk and Ecosystem Diversity Demonstration, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 7, in Southfield. The event will be at Valley Wood Trail South, on the southeast corner of Civic Center Drive and Telegraph. It will be conducted by award-winning science teacher Renee Moore. Register with the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority, (248) 288-5150.

**Home decor**  
Huberman Fabrics, 905 S. Main in Royal Oak, presents home decor classes for a range of sewing experience levels. The schedule includes Simple Curtain (fee is \$60), Thursdays, June 5-19. Registration and payment are required in advance. Space is limited. For information, call (248) 541-0010 or visit [www.hubermanfabrics.com](http://www.hubermanfabrics.com).

**School of Gardening**  
The Michigan School of Gardening offers a variety of classes. Register early. Seating is limited. Some classes have pre-requisites. For more information, call (248) 4-GARDEN or visit [www.michiganschoolofgardening.com](http://www.michiganschoolofgardening.com). The schedule includes these classes, which meet at Golden Walsh Nursery, 559 Orchard Lake Road in Pontiac, south of Square Lake Road and east of Telegraph: Container Gardening (fee is \$40), Saturday, June 7, and Difficult Sites: Harsh Exposures (\$40), Wednesday, June 11.

**Matthaei Botanical Gardens**  
Classes in the adult education program at the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens include the five-session Wetland Delineation (fee is \$800, \$785 for members), beginning Monday, June 9. Call (734) 999-7061 for information.

If you have an item for the calendar, please submit it at least two weeks in advance of the date it should be published. Send to Ken Abramczyk, At Home editor, Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009 or e-mail [kabramczyk@hometownlife.com](mailto:kabramczyk@hometownlife.com).

## Front load washers: Are they better?

A reader recently asked me whether manufacturers will soon make only front load washing machines and drop the top load models. He also asked whether the front loaders are more efficient than the top load washers. He wondered what makers or models he should look at purchasing, as he would be replacing his older machine soon.

**Appliance Doctor**  
Joe Gagnon

There are times when I wish I could be like my cousin in northern Canada. I can go fishing in a boat with him and the only thing he says in five hours is "Yep." Well, I say "Yep" to all of the above and as soon as I say more, I'm in trouble. So here goes.

The front loaders were created under a mandate issued by the U.S. Department of Energy in order to conserve water in this country. At the same time, these front loaders will use less energy to wash and spin clothes fairly dry. They will wash the same size loads or larger than top loaders and use less detergent.

In just a few years all washers will be front loaders and do things you wouldn't believe. You will have so many options on washing your clothes, you may have to enroll in an

evening computer class to learn how to use it.

During this past year I have met many people who are quite happy with their new front loader. In essence, we had better be happy with them because that's all we are going to get.

The rest of this column is devoted to the many service technicians across this country who feel as I do.

Front load washers are not new. They were out 40 years ago. They also are a real pain to repair.

That pain came out of the consumers' pocketbook whenever we had to fix one. The extra labor to fix one is tied in with the extra price that homeowners are going to spend for a new washer.

These prices are outrageous and dealers are smiling along with the manufacturers. This mandate imposed on us rather quickly was decided by people who had a self-serving purpose for their good deeds, but I don't agree with their methods and neither do my peers.

I believe there are other ways to save on water consumption in this country without creating a bigger expense for consumers. Take a look at all the sprinkler systems you see working during a rain and other things more obvious. I wonder how many front loaders produced and sold during the past few years have needed service. I think the number is rather high, which makes me doubt the quality and long life of

these expensive machines. The normal lifespan of a washer has dropped a lot in recent years and will these set an even lower trend of machine longevity.

I am not anxious to have consumers tell me their tale of woe 10 years from now. A washer is a washer. Why do we have to make it more complex than that? We yearn for the old ways and sometimes come back to them.

This could very well be the case in the years ahead. We will have to wait and see.

Which brand do I prefer? There are some I like and others I wouldn't give you two cents for. A better answer is to educate you on how to be a smart shopper. Ask the repair companies who fix these front load washers because they are the men and women who have to face the consumer.

They know what quality is and isn't and who makes the best product. They know who changes the most for parts and which machine is easier to repair.

The front load washer is liked by many but not by this individual. I am not always correct in my assumptions and for the sake of every American, this time I hope I'm wrong. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon is host of Ask The Handyman on Infinity Radio AM 1270 8 a.m.-noon Saturdays and Sundays. You can hear his tips on WKJ 950 on weekdays. You can call him on his show at (248) 356-1270.

## CLARIFICATION

An article on new garden plants that ran in the Thursday, May 22, edition of the At Home section should have identified one of three

new varieties of dogwood trees available at Steinkopf Nursery, 20815 Farmington Road, in Farmington Hills as *Conrus Florida* "Cherokee Brave," and

not *Conrus Florida*. The article also should have identified the Acer (Maple) "Shantung" tree, also available at Steinkopf.

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