

Sunny Fields Botanical Park

SUMMER/AUTUMN EDITION

SEPTEMBER 2013

P.O.BOX 414, Emmett, MI 48022

Call: (810) 387-2765 or (313) 886-9343

President's Message

Dear members and friends,

For the last two years it has been my privilege to volunteer my time and ideas for the good of Sunny Fields. We have made great strides in our mission and have a long list of accomplishments. This year's Lilac Festival was by far the best our organization has put on as well as seen-the lilac and crabapples blooming in unison was absolutely SPECTACULAR to put it mildly. Attendance at the festival hovered above a thousand visitors over the weekend! Each year our loyal members support the park monetarily and in doing so further our mission to promote tranquil recreation, horticultural education, environmental education, and practice balanced wildlife stewardship. The down side to the growth of the Lilac Festival and attendance at our Winter Park Day, is that visits to the park have dramatically dropped during the rest of the open season. We are still in dire need of volunteers and people who can step in and give new ideas and draw greater attention to our park. The Board of Directors and myself seem to have exhausted every idea to get our mission accomplished and cannot maintain our dual role as decision makers and lone volunteers. We need new leaders to join the Board and we need local people with an interest and time to volunteer with planting, mowing, weeding, promoting...etc. **We need you**...so please call, write, get involved-we need to know you are there and ready to help us. Thank you.

LILAC FESTIVAL 2013

This year Sunny Fields Botanical Park was host to one of the most attended as well as one of the best years of bloom that most of us have ever seen. As you walked around the park you could find everything from the late season daffodils, tulips, crabapples to the star of the festival-LILACS! The large collection of crabapples gave the impression of multi-colored clouds drifting along above our heads with a "fog" of lilacs all around us. There was not a shortage of awestruck visitor-our volunteers found several guests attempting to put the floral display into words-it just could not be done! Donations and sales of lilacs were very beneficial to our fundraising goals. Daddy's Dogs offered concessions for sale and our guest readily enjoyed them upon our picnic tables under our tent that was rented to us at a discount price from Barnard Rentals in Capac. Children had a great time making bird feeders out of pine cones by slathering peanut butter around the cones and then rolling them in bird seed. Craft vendors displayed their wares for shoppers. A few special thanks are in order-Dr. Rene Smit for providing funds for the festival programs and renting golf carts. Bernadette and Myron Dalecki for giving tours upon their personal golf carts all day Sunday. Our festival volunteers were great and promoted our park with their smiles and to the Board of Directors for staying the course, planning and giving their time once again.

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Plus much, much more!



2013 Lilac Festival ...volunteers, lilacs and classic cars

Executive Director's Notes

Submitted by Bill Horman

Tulips

Years ago, while I worked with seven other tulip planters, one fellow accidentally lost his new dentures. They were uncomfortable, and therefore he left them in his shirt pocket. It was a huge flower bed and we had just finished planting several hundred bulbs and the soil had been raked smooth to finish the job. When the toothless worker noticed his dentures were gone, he flung himself onto the tulip bed and used his hands to frantically dig in search of the new choppers. The rest of our crew joined him when he explained his odd behavior. We unearthed all the freshly planted tulips to no avail, and then replanted the bulbs. Three years later, while rototilling that bed, his dentures were found, but he had long ago left Detroit and without a forwarding address. We cleaned his dental inserts and they were given a place of honor in the Belle Isle (Detroit) greenhouse where we worked, and are referred to as the teeth with the tulips (or two lips).

Daffodils

Often, the description of some vigorous daffodil varieties, are referred to as great 'naturalizers'. That last word describes plants that spread generally by wind driven seed. Daffodils (as is typical of hybrid narcissus) do not spread by seed, but instead form bulblets (babies), which grow to bloom size, from the sides of the mother bulb. This spreading (reproduction) is officially known as "perennializing". This is why it is suggested to plant "daffs" far enough apart, 10-14", if you wish to allow spreading. When large clumps decline in flower production, lift the clump from it's place and gently separate the bulbs and replant them or share extras with friends.

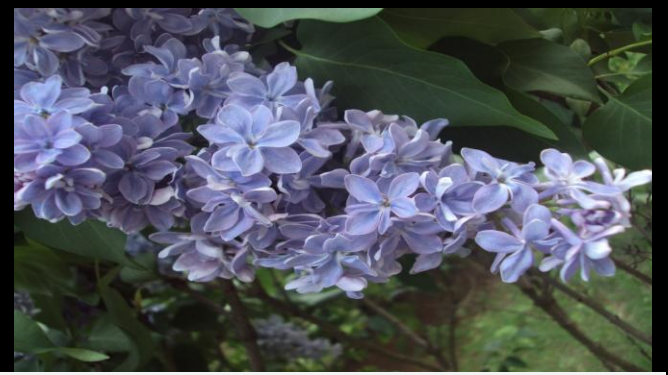
New Life Form Discovered

A first sighting at Sunny Fields: On August 31st Bill Horman saw his first chipmunk after working on the property since 1962! So far the species has not been troublesome, but rather is one more kind of fascinating wildlife in the Sunny Fields menagerie.

Oranges...at Sunny Fields?

The fruit of Osage Orange, as seen at Sunny Fields in autumn, is near grapefruit size, tubercle on the exterior, green, hard, full of seeds and folklore says it can repel spiders, making it welcome inside ones home. The orange colored wood was used by the Osage Indians in the making of their hunting bows: The wood flexes well. The fruit is not edible, however rabbits and other varieties of wildlife may nibble on it.

Heirloom apples: "Snow" and Cox Orange Pippin" are two old-time apple varieties in fruit now at the park.



Here is a Fenicchia lilac named 'Frederick Douglass'

Featured Plant

Common Lilac

Latin Name: *Syringa vulgaris*

With the Lilac Festival fresh in our minds what better plant to feature than the common lilac? The common lilac is a native of Eastern Europe that has traveled throughout the world. *Syringa vulgaris* is the aristocrat of the lilac world with over a thousand different cultivars/varieties it has been refined for color, fragrance, size and is still being selected for tolerance to extreme climates. When you think of the smell of lilacs then you are thinking of common lilac. Plants range from dwarves at two foot of height to the original plants that easily top fifteen feet. The bark is typically gray on young plants and gradually transitions to brown and fibrous on older trunks. Most cultivars of common lilac will produce 'suckers' if conditions are right. To learn more about lilacs simply visit Sunny Fields, join the International Lilac Society or read several books that are loaded with information. The common lilac has caught the eye of famous hybridizers such as Lemoine, Kolesnikov, Havemeyer, Fiala, Fenicchia, Peterson, Alexander, Klager and so many more. AKA French Lilac and farmhouse lilac.



Can you find our native toad hunting by these tulips?

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ANNUAL MEETING

LOCATION: SUNNY FIELDS BOTANICAL PARK
SEPTEMBER 27TH AT 6:00PM
Members are invited to attend.

SUNNY FIELDS CLOSES FOR THE 2013 SEASON

LOCATION: SUNNY FIELDS BOTANICAL PARK
OCTOBER 31ST, 2013
Visitors are encouraged to get in one last stroll before the park closes for the winter season. Let our volunteers know what day you will visit so that we can get the welcome mat out for you!

Tentative Dates/Events

WINTER PARK DAY

LOCATION: SUNNY FIELDS BOTANICAL PARK
JANUARY

SUNNY FIELDS OPENS FOR THE 2014 SEASON

LOCATION: SUNNY FIELDS BOTANICAL PARK
APRIL 1ST, 2014

DAFFODIL DAYS

LOCATION: SUNNY FIELDS BOTANICAL PARK
APRIL AND MAY

ST. CLAIR COUNTY EARTH FAIR

LOCATION: GOODELLS COUNTY PARK AND FAIRGROUNDS
LATE APRIL

8TH ANNUAL LILAC FESTIVAL

LOCATION: SUNNY FIELDS BOTANICAL PARK
TYPICALLY THE 3RD WEEKEND IN MAY.



This year's Queen of the Lilacs is 'Margaret Fenicchia'

2013 Queen of the Lilacs

The winner of this year's Queen of the Lilacs was the cultivar 'Margaret Fenicchia'...as chosen by attendees of our Lilac Festival. 'Margaret Fenicchia' was hybridized and introduced by a well known plantsman of the Rochester Parks System by the name of Richard Fenicchia. This lilac is so beautiful and such a great grower that he named it after his wife. This cultivar has large thyruses as well as large single florets of purple fading into violet. Rochester, New York, is home to America's premier collection of lilacs. This plant can be found in the southeast field by the daylily beds of Sunny Fields.

Sunny Fields Annual Meeting

On Friday, September 27th at 6:00pm, Sunny Fields will host its Annual Meeting. If you are a member and receive this newsletter...then you are invited to attend. This meeting is a celebration of the end of the park season where the finances, goals, accomplishments and changes are conveyed to our supporters. As a non-profit this meeting is a requirement. We would like to see you all there and hear your ideas and suggestions for the future or things that we can improve right now. The park is open for members to explore and enjoy. Dinner and refreshments will be served at 6:30pm for attendees. If you plan on attending, please call the Sunny Fields park office at (810) 387-2765 to let us know how many guests will be attending. See you there!



2012 Queen of the Lilacs was 'Beth' a double white.

PARK UPDATES AND NEEDS

SUMMER/FALL WORK

During the off season there are plans being made for improving color in various areas of the park as well as ways to improve the trails. Trees that are dead, such as ash killed by the emerald ash borer, are cut down and smaller branches chipped for mulch. Due to the predation of valuable plants by whitetail deer, we are forced to cage many specimens. This is time consuming work, but necessary to protect the collection-Volunteers are needed to assist with this important job. Work on the old nursery continues as we gear towards the April 1st opening of the park season.

GOLF CART DONATED!

Sunny Fields has received a donated golf cart. The tires need replacing and the hope is to find parts that can convert the back to seating with an option to flip the seat into a utility box. Any ideas?

TRAIL UPGRADES

One culvert was added during the spring and another member has said they would donate a couple culverts. One goal of the park is to create all-weather trails and the addition of culverts is the first step. **We need your help to fund this project**, call (810) 387-2765.

Visit the park online at: www.visitsunnyfields.org

Fall Color Forecast

This year's splendor of fall foliage is expected to be among the best in years due to more rain during this year's growing season. Already, because of the cool nights and reduced daylight, bright orange and yellow are brightening the landscape at Sunny Fields; the expected peak of best fall color in the park is usually about October 5th-25th, subject to the amounts of rain and wind. "*Who has seen the wind? Neither I nor you, but when the tree is moving, the wind is passing thru.*"
--Anonymous (Who apparently wrote lots of poems!)



The bi colored lilac 'Sensation' is always popular!

Sunny Fields Botanical Park
P.O. Box 414
Emmett, MI 48022

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Hope to See You at the Park!