

AUGUST 2009

The GREENLEAF



HOURS: MON - SAT 8:00 A.M. TO 5:30 P.M.
SUN 10:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.

NEWSLETTER

(972) 890-9820

FAX (972) 377-2022

info@shadesofgreeninc.com

www.shadesofgreeninc.com

Sprinklers Schminklers

By Michelle Bradley

Living on the prairie in Blue Ridge, aka Pike, has its many advantages: endless room for gardening being the first and foremost. If you know me, and some of you do too well (enthusiasm, people, is the spice of life!) you know I can easily get carried away. Needless to say my garden is evidence of this. It just keeps growing. Alas, there is no irrigation. This being the case, my choices of plant material are limited, but not as limited as you might think. However, I have no Texas sage, no yuccas, and no cacti. In fact, my garden is quite cottage-like: just like I like it.



We'll just get right down to the nitty gritty. Here are some of the best plants that perform for me on mostly rainwater:

For the sun, perennials with great color: roses, lantana, hardy hibiscus, dwarf crape myrtles, rockrose, catmint, any salvia-every salvia, Texas betony, black-foot daisy, agastache, zexmenia, sundrops and purple homestead verbena. Plenty of ornamental grasses are also scattered throughout. Favorites in my garden: Dallas blues switch grass (AWESOME!), adagio maiden grass, variegated maiden grass and zebra grass.

The best trees: Mexican plum, desert willow, shantung maple, crape myrtle, redbud, Chinese pistache, burr oak, (yes I have them all) and I love my LACEY OAK! The only annual I plant in the beds in the summer: periwinkles.

For part shade: St. John's wort, variegated pittosporum, black and blue salvia, zexmenia, columbine, daylilies, and rainlilies. I'll try pigeon berry soon, featured in last month's newsletter, under my American elm because nothing grows well there! My golden moneywort limps along...it needs more water and the elm always wins. He's a big bully.



When it reaches the upper 90s and 100s for a week without rain (too many lately!) I haul out a hose and set a manual sprinkler on the touchy plants such as tall garden phlox, obedient plant,

black eyed susan, and the St. Augustine lawn.

As always, a rainwater-only garden benefits greatly from a nice 2" layer of mulch, but when it takes 16 yards of mulch it doesn't always happen in a timely manner! Plenty of Gardenville 7-2-2 and molasses and the results are obvious.

Continued on page 2...

Timely Hints

By Rob Wier

PLANT ...

- * Container grown plants, such as various Annuals, Perennials, Shrubs, and Trees. Remember to hand-water daily for the first 7-10 days to get them established.
- * Sow Bluebonnet seeds and other wildflowers late in the month. Many sprout then and will bloom next spring.
- * Replace dead or worn-out looking plants in your containers. Just pull out the old one and pop in a fresh vibrant one to enhance containers till you do a fall makeover.

PRUNE ...

- * Trim spent blossoms, flower stalks, and ugly foliage on perennials to encourage another round of fall growth and blooms.
- * Pick-prune to maintain shape on shrubs and shrub-roses, such as 'Knockout' Roses.

Note: I like to cut my tomatoes back about ½ their size to stimulate new growth for the fall crop. Helps to fertilize and water well also. You already have a good root system to support lots of new growth.

FERTILIZE ... Use **Osmocote**, **Colorscapes**, and even **Superthrive** on container plants to keep them happy and blooming in the heat. Use **Palm Food** on palms to give them a boost during the warm weather.

PESTS ...

- * Use **BT (bacillus thurengensis)** on bagworms

and webworms if you have them.

- * Scale is a nuisance and **All Seasons Oil** is still one of the best we've found to control it, and it's earth-friendly also!
- * **Serenade** is a great organic control for a broad range of fungal problems and we feel it is one of the safest products out there.

WATER ... Be 'Water Wise'. Summer's heat is here so be watchful. Check your landscape often and water if it is dry and needs it. **Use a moisture meter** and probe around if you're uncertain. The investment in this \$10.00 gadget could save you hundreds of dollars. (That's a better return than a C.D.)

OTHER ...

- * Maintain mulch in planting beds to conserve moisture and moderate soil temperatures.
- * Now is a good time to do planning for fall plantings. Fall has the best weather and nursery stock so get those ideas on paper now.
- * During August heat we all appreciate shade. Make note where to plant that tree to provide shade to your patio or home. Mark the spot so when you plant in the fall the tree will shade next summer. Remember the sun will have moved by fall, so make note now of the best location.
- * Check on your newly planted trees during summer's heat. Download our *Summer Survival Tips for Trees* under the section *Plant Care* from our website: www.shadesofgreeninc.com

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I frequently plant new items from Brice and they get thoroughly neglected after the initial watering in. Some make it. Some don't. A few of the best plants that I've trialed and hope to add more are: creeping germander, peter's purple bee balm, wooly stemodia, blue star amsonia, and first love dianthus. There are new plants to try all the time and fortunately there's always room for a new bed. ☺

August 2009

Uncommon PLANT O' THE MONTH

By Brice Creelman

Forestiera angustifolia 'Pendula'

Weeping Forestiera

You got to know only hard-core gardeners will be reading a Shades of Green newsletter in August. Here's an unusual plant for you to add to your 'botanical back-yard' garden. The original *Forestiera* came from Dr. David Creech at Stephen F. Austin University in 1991. It was a puny 1 gallon that I thought was a Weeping Yaupon. Creech never met a plant he didn't like, and by the time he was done with you, you had a truckload of unusual botanical wonders from all over the world. This one plant made its way to the Heard Museum, and we started propagating it (by cuttings), for the Heard sale each year. I kept some back in 2004 and planted them in 15 gallon pots to see how they did. Well, they did great. Now, they are ready for the real world.



Forestiera will grow 5-6' tall and 6-7' wide. Full sun will keep the plant dense and truly weeping. You can try a little shade, but I've only seen them in a sunny spot. Watch for unusual small green to black flowers in February or early March prior to the leaves coming out. Deciduous. Native to Texas. Nice, smooth gray bark, interesting in all 5-6 seasons in Texas. Original shrub planted at the Heard Museum still doing very well. Can't say there is another one in this area. Be the first on your block to have one and fool your 'know-it-all' friends. No insect or disease issues. Easy to grow and fun too - weeping and fun. Plant any time! This weekend would be perfect.

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*August's Fragrance
Of the Month!*



Our Best Summer Blooming Trees in North Texas

By Bill Fritts

Crepe myrtles are probably our very best summer blooming trees. Crepes range in size from 3-35 feet tall. All crepe myrtles are deciduous and need full sun to bloom well. These trees are not native, but come from India and China where the soil is alkali clay. They are very well adapted here in North Texas.

Natchez is a large, 30 foot white crepe. It does not get powdery mildew. It begins blooming in late May to early June. It is the longest bloom of all the crepes, about 110 days, and has great fall color.

Tuscarora is a 20 foot pink, very upright crepe and it starts to bloom later than Natchez. It begins mid June to early July, with about 80 days of bloom time.



Another great summer blooming tree is *desert willow*. It is 20-25 feet tall and 20+ feet wide. It blooms in shades of light pink to purple. "Bubba" is a beautiful purple flowering tree and is very wispy or airy. It is a great accent, not a shade tree. It is deciduous, very drought tolerant, and needs full sun. It's another great blooming summer tree for North Texas.

Tonto is a bush form about 14 feet tall and 8-10 feet wide. It flowers dark pink almost to raspberry. Bloom is late June, maybe even mid July.

Catawba is another purple bush form crepe that is 10-12 feet tall or 6-8 feet wide. It also is a late bloomer, late June to early July.

Crepe myrtles are drought tolerant once established, but will bloom better if watered deeply once a week during a drought. Water deeply with a garden hose or a soaker hose, because sprinklers only water the surface, not the depth that a tree needs.

People ask, "Can I plant a crepe myrtle in the heat of a Texas summer?" Yes, definitely. Just keep them well watered. Crepes are one of our easiest transplants.

Vitex is a medium deciduous tree at about 20-30 feet tall and 15-20 feet wide. It blooms a beautiful gray-blue in June. Then it rests, stores up energy and blooms again. Second bloom is not as showy as the first, but it's worth it. Vitex is very drought tolerant and will do well in non-irrigated areas. It will need irrigation to get started, but after it is established, it will be fine with whatever Mother Nature gives it. Plant it in full sun. "Shoal Creek" is my favorite variety being gray-blue. I have also seen vitex in white and pink.



The View From my Front Porch

By Leeann Knippa



There is something to be said about sitting on your front porch, catching up with neighbors or watching your kids play that is both relaxing and comforting. When we built our house ten years ago, my husband and I both wanted a “big” front porch. I guess you could say our home has been a “work in progress”. We live out in the country on three wooded acres.

I have been employed with Shades of Green as their bookkeeper for nineteen years, and I can honestly say, I have never had a green thumb. They have not only become my second family but each and every one of them has made me not only appreciate gardening but also made me “love” beautiful gardens. It has taken some time, but I have finally convinced my husband that even though we “live in the country,” as he likes to say, we can still have a beautiful landscape. Slowly but surely, we have added flagstone walks, a sprinkler system, a deck and have created a beautiful outdoor living space. (plants compliments of Shades of Green of course). They have not only provided me with great advice but also with



quality plants and lots of design ideas.

My latest project has been my front porch. This of course is not only the first impression people see of your home, it also serves as a decorative entryway. I wanted it to have not only a warm and homey feeling but it is the welcoming “hug” to family and friends. I was pondering on what I should do to make my front door the focal point, so I asked Tammy (one of our sales staff) to give me some suggestions. She suggested I get two large pots and place them on each side of my door. We have a good selection of pots so it was difficult to decide which ones to choose, but after much contemplation, I finally selected two of the large rustic ceramic pots.

Shades of Green offers a planting service as well, so I decided to make use of it and requested Tammy to pick out some great plants for me and plant them up. She selected a cone shaped burford holly, ferns, caladiums and seasonal color so that I can just change out the color with each season. They turned out beautiful and have been very easy to maintain. Since adding them, all of my neighbors have stopped by and asked where I got them and how awesome they look. Our porch has been the site of our family portrait (dogs included), the site of our daughters “first kiss” and many tall tales. We have made a lot of memories on our porch and am sure there will be many more to come...however I have to wonder... what will be my next project?



A Passion for Plants

By Rob Wier

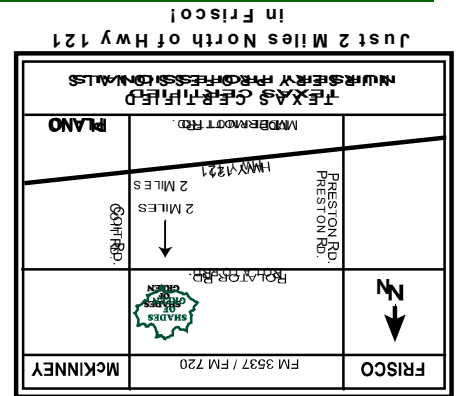
It was already ninety eight degrees at 11 a.m. as I stepped into the field of Chinese pistache at the farm. It didn't take long before my arms were glistening with sweat as I pruned and tied up these young trees. While the heat was stifling, I was content to be out there working among those trees. I'd rather be tending to plants than sitting in a comfortable office tending to papers.

I smiled as I thought of the Shades of Green staff. (You think a lot while tending to the trees, sometimes I admit I even talk to them!) We all have that gardening passion for plants. We each have our own plants we favor and are fond of. We've learned how to grow them by asking a lot of questions, reading information, and mainly from other gardeners. As gardeners we are quick to take note on what not to do and share our mistakes.

I'm proud to say I've learned something about plants from most of the staff here. One thing is common: we do want to match "the right plant to the right place." We care about the plants as much as your satisfaction with them. If the plants are going to be happy then we know you'll be happy, and we love to see your smiling face in here!

As a side note we, the staff, produce and provide content for this newsletter to share our gardening experience. We are ordinary everyday gardeners, not professional writers. We try to limit editing the content to let you get the full flavor of our personalities. For us gardening is fun and we hope to instill that same passion of plants in you. As always, we thank you for your patronage.

Remember To Visit Our Website For Promotions and Events!
www.ShadesOfGreenInc.com



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8801 COIT ROAD
 Frisco, Texas 75035