



# The American GARDENER<sup>®</sup>

The Magazine of the American Horticultural Society

May / June 2010

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Volume 89, Number 3 · May / June 2010

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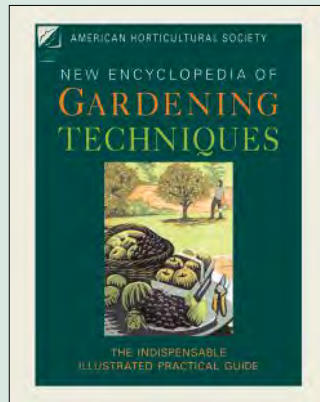
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## NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

SUSIE AND I frequently attend AHS events and programs around the country. Whenever we have the opportunity, we like to talk with members about their interest in horticulture and why they garden. While we get lots of different answers, there are some common themes—people often tell stories of how they look forward to the exercise, satisfaction, and sense of renewal that working with plants and being outdoors offer. We also hear about fresh food, creativity, concern for the environment, and time for personal reflection. Many people also value the chance to spend time and share ideas with like-minded people.

Even though many of the stories relate to how gardening is an important element of people's day-to-day lives, it is remarkable how often we hear how gardening has had a profound—and sometimes life-changing—influence on an individual. These encounters remind us how tremendously rewarding it is to be part of an organization that has such a long and rich tradition of connecting people with plants in so many meaningful ways.

As an organization, we've accomplished a great deal, but there is much yet to do and many more people who have not yet discovered the joys and rewards of gardening. Just as a garden can be started by planting a seed or a plant, an interest in gardening can grow from nurturing a spark of interest or curiosity expressed by a friend or relative. The AHS takes great pride in being a catalyst in this regard, but we need your help to be truly successful. We encourage you to be a gardening advocate—spread the word about the benefits of gardening, invite a friend to a meeting or show, get involved with a community or school garden project, or volunteer at your local public garden. Whatever you do, you'll find it's an empowering experience.

One "hot topic" here at River Farm that we would be remiss to not mention is the prescribed burn of the André Bluemel Meadow that took place in early April. A project that had been in the planning stages for months—and required careful coordination with numerous local agencies—the successful burn represents an important milestone in the evolution of this large-scale demonstration project for sustainable gardening. We invite you to visit us at River Farm this summer and discover the beauty and diversity of the meadow for yourself. The meadow burn received national attention through an article in the environment section of *The Washington Post*. You can see images of the burn and a link to more photos on page 8.

Last but not least, we are pleased to bring you another informative and inspirational issue of *The American Gardener*. On the pages that follow you will learn about an extraordinary collector's garden in Kansas City, discover some buckeyes (*Aesculus* spp.) that stay in scale in smaller gardens, explore ecological approaches to landscape design, be inspired to grow fragrant lavenders, and get ideas for creating year-round interest in your own "nonstop" garden.

Susie Usrey, Chair, AHS Board of Directors  
Tom Underwood, Executive Director

P.S. Be sure to mark your calendars for our 2010 National Children & Youth Garden Symposium July 22–24 in Pasadena, California—it's going to be a blockbuster and we hope to see you there!



### CONTACTS FOR AHS PROGRAMS, MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS & DEPARTMENTS

For general information about your membership, call (800) 777-7931. Send change of address notifications to our membership department at 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308. If your magazine is lost or damaged in the mail, call the number above for a replacement. Requests for membership information and change of address notification can also be e-mailed to [membership@ahs.org](mailto:membership@ahs.org).

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**WEBSITE: [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)** The AHS website is a valuable source of information about the Society's programs and activities, finding out about gardening events in your area, and linking to other useful websites. To access the members-only section of the website, this year's password is **oak**. The username is always **ahs**.

## MEMBERS' FORUM

### INVASIVENESS OF VINCA

I read the article in the November/December 2009 issue about the problems with spread of English ivy, but in my own experience find periwinkle (*Vinca* spp.) is far harder to control. I keep the ivy strictly within boundaries, but, if I turn my back, the vinca is all over everything. I put the vinca in originally because the grass never did anything but look sick in the heavy clay soil in my garden. I enjoy your magazine almost as much as I enjoy working with the various plants.

Rita Hopper  
Aliso Viejo, California

### CORRECTION

The photograph of Pallina gloves on page 50 of the March/April 2010 issue should have been credited to *Garden Gate* magazine.

### SEED EXCHANGE SUCCESS

I am sending along a photograph of our bluestar (*Amsonia* sp.) bed from last fall [shown below]—the plants in it were grown from seeds I received from your seed exchange many years ago. I live in



New York City half of the time and my garden is 200 miles north in rural Washington County—a commute that any obsessed gardener would find quite justified. I love this type of amsonia, and so do the bumblebees when it shows its tiny, perfect, baby-blue flowers. But it is at its best in the fall with the display of gold, rust, and occasionally purple foliage. It has proven itself rugged enough to endure my USDA Zone 4 garden.

I enjoy the seeds I get from the exchange and am looking forward to the results of this year's plantings!

Mary Barnes  
Salem, New York

**PLEASE WRITE US!** Address letters to Editor, *The American Gardener*, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308. Send e-mails to editor@ahs.org (note Letter to Editor in subject line). Letters we print may be edited for length and clarity.

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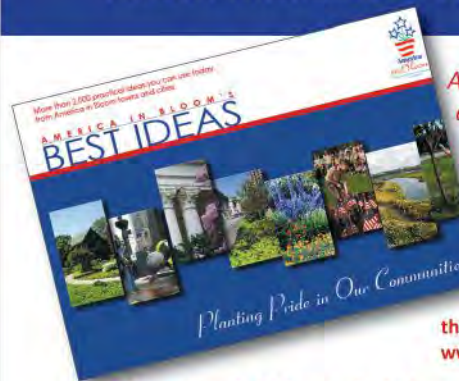
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## News from the AHS

May / June 2010

PROGRAMS • EVENTS • ANNOUNCEMENTS



### PRESCRIBED BURN REJUVENATES RIVER FARM MEADOW

IN EARLY APRIL, Burn Manager **Jim McGlone** and **Bryant Bays** of the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) and **Charles Smith** of Fairfax County Park Authority, along with AHS staff members, conducted the first prescribed burn of the André Bluemel Meadow. Up to this point, the four-acre meadow at the AHS's River Farm headquarters had been managed by annual mowing each year in late winter. The meadow was planted in five installments starting in 2004.

Without some type of management—either mowing or burning—any meadow eventually reverts to woodland. River Farm Manager **Trish Gibson** says that besides being an effective way to maintain meadows and grasslands, burning aids in controlling woody and herbaceous invasive species and can also invigorate older meadows by helping to recycle nutrients and reduce matted vegetation to allow better air circulation.

According to McGlone, the best time to perform a controlled burn is early to mid-spring before birds start nesting. The burn of the André Bluemel Meadow was originally scheduled for late February, but was delayed several times due to the mid-Atlantic snowstorms, a subsequent period of wet weather, and other unsuitable weather conditions. Weather is one of the most important factors to consider when deciding whether to burn; in addition to the need for dry conditions, wind speed and direction and relative humidity must meet specific requirements in order for a burn to be safely executed.

Safety was the primary concern during the meadow burn at River Farm. Neighbors and local fire departments and law enforcement officials were notified beforehand, and everyone involved wore a fireproof suit, leather shoes and gloves, and a hard hat. Metal rakes and shovels were used to tamp out any stray flames along the perimeter.





Opposite: Burn managers set fire to one section of the André Bluemel Meadow at River Farm. Above: The meadow before the burn. Right: One of the burn managers fills a canister with fuel to ignite the burn.



In any prescribed burn, it is necessary to have some type of firebreak to keep the fire within the desired boundaries. In the case of the AHS meadow, the mowed walking paths around the perimeter of each of its five sections proved very effective barriers. Another guideline to take into account is that a slow and steady burn is safer and more effective than a fast one at killing unwanted and invasive plants—Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) and mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) are especially troublesome in River Farm’s meadow. To help facilitate a slower burn, the DOF officials ignited the fire downwind of each area to be burned, forcing the burn to advance against the wind.



Top: New growth emerges in the meadow within two weeks of the burn. Above: Signs of life include the unexpected, asparagus.



Burned areas of the meadow are outlined by the grassy paths.

**Kurt Bluemel**, owner of Kurt Bluemel Nursery in Baldwin, Maryland, and a member of the AHS Board of Directors, plans to seed in areas of the meadow with native wildflowers following this spring’s burn. Bluemel designed the meadow, which is dedicated in memory of his son, **André Bluemel**, and generously donated all of its plants. Bluemel says he plans to continue his support of the meadow by providing more seeds and plugs as are needed, as well his advice on its care. He is an avid supporter of the AHS and hopes the meadow will be a continued place of enjoyment and learning for the members and guests of River Farm.

The burn was chronicled in an article in the environmental section of *The Washington Post* on April 19. To view a link to that article and to see additional photos of the burn, visit [www.ahs.org/meadow](http://www.ahs.org/meadow).

## FLOWER SHOW EXHIBITS HONORED WITH AHS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

EACH SPRING, flower shows around the United States honor top exhibits with the AHS's esteemed Environmental Award, and more than 30 displays were selected as recipients this year. Winning exhibits are those that best demonstrate the bond between horticulture and the environment through creative design, pleasing aesthetics, proper and distinctive use of plants, and the choice of environmentally responsible species and cultivars.



Life's a Garden's award-winning exhibit featured a composting system.

## AHS Annual Gala in September

Reserve your tickets now for the AHS's 17th Annual Gala, "Gifts of the Garden." This year's event will celebrate the many rewards—from inspirational beauty to joyful discoveries, tranquility, and general health and well being—we receive from our gardens on a daily basis. White House Florist **Laura Dowling** will serve as honorary chair for the event.


The Gala will take place on Saturday, September 25, at the Society's River Farm headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. For more information or to reserve your seat, contact **Courtney Capstack** at [ccapstack@ahs.org](mailto:ccapstack@ahs.org) or call (703) 768-5700 ext. 127.

At the 2010 Washington Home & Garden Show, the AHS Award was given to **Through the Garden, Inc.**, a design & build landscape company that operates in the Washington, D.C., area, for its exhibit of an oasis retreat. The display included a garden shed constructed with five vertical panels of living plant material and fountains that incorporated recycled materials and low-voltage lights. The designers chose hardy perennials and drought-resistant evergreens as the plants around the rustic exhibit. Another 2010 winner was **Life's a Garden**, a Phoenix-based landscape and gardening firm that focuses on organic and edible landscapes. Life's a Garden won for its home landscape exhibit at the West Valley Maricopa

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## Spring Arrives at River Farm

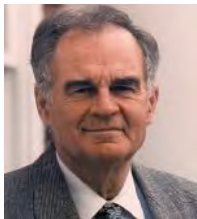


The gnarled trunks and branches of the venerable Osage orange, located in the Garden Calm at the AHS's River Farm headquarters, are softened by the emerging spring foliage.

County Home & Garden Show in Phoenix, Arizona. A favorite of homeowners at the Show, this demonstration landscape featured a rainwater harvesting system and a compost bin. Other recipients of this year's AHS Award were **Nature's Artisans** at the Maryland Home & Garden Show in Glen Burnie, Maryland, and **Pine Lake Nursery** at the Southern Spring Home & Garden Show in Charlotte, North Carolina.

### ANLA HONORS H. MARC CATHEY

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) has elected **Dr. H. Marc Cathey** to its Industry Honor Roll for his lifelong contributions to the industry. In addition to creating a permanent record of Dr. Cathey's accomplishments, the ANLA will make a contribution in Dr. Cathey's name to the Horticultural Research Institute's Endowment Fund. A commemorative bronze medallion was given to Dr. Cathey's family.



**Dr. H. Marc Cathey** Dr. Cathey, who died in October 2008, was an internationally renowned horticulturist. He served two terms as president and CEO of the AHS and was president emeritus of the Society from 1998 to 2005. His creation of the AHS Plant Heat Zone Map is just one example of his immense influence on the horticulture and gardening world, and he was the recipient of countless industry awards.

The AHS has established an endowment fund in Dr. Cathey's honor. To learn more about this endowment, or to make a contribution, contact **Courtney Capstack** at [ccapstack@ahs.org](mailto:ccapstack@ahs.org) or (703) 768-5700 ext. 127.

*News written by Editorial Intern Krystal Fogel.*



AHS NATIONAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

## 2010 CALENDAR

Mark your calendar for these national events that are sponsored or co-sponsored by the AHS. Visit [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org) or call (703) 768-5700 for more information.

JUNE 10. **Great American Gardeners Awards Ceremony & Banquet.** River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia.

JUNE 16–20. **AHS Travel Study Program—Gardens and Innovation: Chicagoland and Rockford, Illinois.**

JULY 22–24. **National Children & Youth Garden Symposium.** Pasadena, California.

AUG. 20–22. **The Homestead's 12th Annual "In the Garden With the Experts" Symposium.** Hot Springs, Virginia.

SEPT. 25. **AHS Annual Gala.** River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia.

SEPT. 30–OCT. 2. **America In Bloom Symposium and Awards Ceremony.** St. Louis, Missouri.

OCT. Date to be determined. **AHS Webinar.**

OCT. 28–NOV. 7. **AHS Travel Study Program—Sicily: Gardens and Antiquities, Sicily, Italy.**

### Gifts of Note

In addition to vital support through membership dues, the American Horticultural Society relies on grants, bequests, and other gifts to support its programs. We would like to thank the following donors for gifts received between February 1 and March 31, 2010.

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If you would like to support the American Horticultural Society as part of your estate planning, as a tribute to a loved one, or as part of your annual charitable giving plan, please contact: Tom Underwood, Executive Director, at (703) 768-5700 ext. 123 or [tunderwood@ahs.org](mailto:tunderwood@ahs.org).

# 2010 AHS NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH GARDEN SYMPOSIUM

## Children and Nature: Restoring the Connection

by Krystal Flogel

**T**HIS YEAR'S National Children and Youth Garden Symposium (NCYGS) in Pasadena, California, will mark the 18th time that the AHS event has united children's gardening advocates and leading youth experts from around the country for three dynamic days of networking and discourse focused on engaging today's youth in gardening.

Hosted by several gardens and children's programs in the greater Los Angeles area (see page 14 for information on the host organizations), "The Vitality of Gardens: Energizing the Learning Environment," set to take place July 22 through 24 will feature keynote presentations by **Alice Waters**, **Sam Levin**, and **Roger Swain**. Participants will also be able to take part in field trips, poster sessions, and workshops as well as a special behind-the-scenes look at the Tournament of Roses®.

### MAKING AN IMPACT

Over the past 18 years, the Symposia have had a significant influence on those involved in the national youth gardening community. Many of these attendees, such as **Carol Krawczyk** of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, who participated in the 2008 Symposium in Pennsylvania, are able to take new ideas back to their own projects and programs. "The Symposium was a real shot in the arm! It has given me greater direction in my design and evaluations of children's gardens and youth involvement," says Krawczyk.

The impact on participants does not just affect their professional pursuits; it can also influence personal goals. **Pam Hosimer** of Damascus, Maryland, says she left last year's Symposium, hosted by Cleveland Botanical Garden, "bursting with renewed energy and enthusiasm, and a newfound confidence and career focus. Now I am very enthusiastic about pursuing my MLS degree in a way that I will be able to merge it with my experi-



School groups enjoy nature at the Kidspace Children's Museum in Pasadena.

ence in education and gardening to develop programming for children and youth," she adds.

When children and youth actively involved in horticulture participate in the NCYGS, they tend to leave a lasting impression on participants. At the 2007 Symposium in Chaska, Minnesota, a group of students from Garza's Gardens in Austin, Texas, presented a seminar about their influence on the community. This was a favorite session of many attendees, including **Cindy Klemmer** of Belmont, North Carolina, who enjoyed "hearing directly from the youth involved in the program." She says "It was interesting food for thought, in anticipating ways that my garden can help serve secondary education."

### CAPTIVATING KEYNOTES FOR 2010

The 2010 Symposium will feature three

keynote speakers, each with a unique perspective on, and passion for, gardening. Alice Waters, chef, author, and proprietor of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California, is committed to using only fresh, organic, in-season produce and is a pioneer in this increasingly prevalent culinary philosophy. Equally devoted to education and the



Alice Waters is an opening keynote speaker.

empowerment of young people, Waters founded the Edible Schoolyard—a one-acre garden and kitchen classroom at Berkeley's Martin Luther King, Jr., Middle School. She also founded the Chez Panisse Foundation in 1996 in order to support the Schoolyard, along with similar youth programs such as the School Lunch Initiative, which aims to include nutritious daily lunch and hands-on experiences cultivating food into the curriculum of all American public schools.

A high school senior who has already made a substantial impact on his community and peers, **Sam Levin** is one of six co-founders of Project Sprout. Now in its third year, this student-run garden on the grounds of Monument High School in Barrington, Massachusetts, supplies three school cafeterias with fresh fruits and vegetables and helps to feed the hungry in the community. The garden itself serves as a living classroom where students can learn about science, nature, and sustainability. Levin says Project Sprout is not a success story, but rather “a message from our generation to all those that came before us that says: We will be the generation that reunites mankind with the earth.”

**Roger Swain**, former host of PBS's *The Victory Garden*, will present the closing keynote. Swain earned his doctorate in biology from Harvard University and says his interest in gardening began “as a form of teenage rebellion.” The author of five books—*Earthly Pleasures*, *Field Days*, *The Practical Gardener*, *Saving Graces*, and *Groundwork*—Swain received the AHS Great American Gardeners Award for Horticultural Writing in 1992. He was also co-host of the HGTV program “People, Places, and Plants” and a long-time science editor with *Horticulture* magazine.



Roger Swain

### FIELD TRIPS, WORKSHOPS, AND SEMINARS

During this year's Symposium, participants will have the opportunity to explore the gardens and programs of many of the host organizations. On Thursday July 22, attendees will visit Kidspace Children's Museum and the Huntington Botanical Gardens,

## TOURNAMENT OF ROSES®

On Wednesday, July 21, the Symposium will kick off with an inside look at the Tournament of Roses®—the famed New Year's Day spectacle held in Pasadena before the Rose Bowl football game. The tour will begin with a trip to one of the barns where the



Crafted from flowers, animals such as this zebra are popular features of the Rose Parade® floats.

Rose Parade®'s extravagant floral floats are assembled. Here, participants will learn about the steps involved in the creation of the parade floats, from their construction to the marketing efforts that are used to promote them to their ultimate debut on Colorado Boulevard.

The tour's next stop will be Tournament House, an Italian Renaissance-style mansion and the headquarters of the Tournament of Roses in Pasadena. The visit will begin with a reception in the house's four-and-a-half-acre display garden and a guided tour of the mansion, which was once the home of William Wrigley, Jr., the United States chewing gum magnate. The visit will conclude with a special dinner in the tournament room highlighted by a presentation from one of the tournament's head volunteers, who will share a behind-the-scenes perspective on what it takes to make this annual spectacle come together.

—K.F.



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## HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS SHARE THE WEALTH

A rich concentration of public gardens and youth-education-oriented organizations in the southern California area yielded an exceptional array of hosts for this year's event.

**Descanso Gardens** features 150 acres of botanical collections and seasonal horticulture displays located in La Cañada Flintridge. For nearly 50 years, special-needs students have taken part in weekly therapeutic gardening sessions in the Harvest Garden, and the gardens offer youth enrichment programs and docent-led tours for school groups.



Descanso Gardens

A community partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District, the **Garden School Foundation** is a coalition of citizens, businesses, and community organizations devoted to bringing sports facilities, traffic buffers, and a variety of gardens to public schools. The foundation features a quarter-acre courtyard with a kitchen garden and orchard where children can plant, harvest, and cook vegetables.

The **Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens** offers a variety of programs oriented towards young gardeners. The 207-acre San Marino estate includes 14 themed gardens and a children's garden, and it regularly holds family workshops, kids' gardening classes, and training classes for teachers.

The **Kidspace Children's Museum** in Pasadena features more than two acres of outdoor educational environments and hands-on science exhibits where kids can learn about nature



Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

while they play. The Museum also offers family cooking classes, summer camps, and parenting workshops.

Its family fun classes, Arboretum summer nature camp, and family adventure hikes make the **Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden** a living classroom that promotes na-



Kidspace Children's Museum

ture and gardening to kids of all ages. Located in Arcadia, the 127-acre botanical garden and historical site is home to plant collections from all around the world.

The largest botanic garden dedicated to preserving California's native plants, the **Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden** in Claremont promotes botany, horticulture, and conservation and strives to educate and inspire guests about the area's native flora.



Common Ground Garden Program

The **University of California Common Ground Garden Program** helps neighborhood residents grow and healthfully prepare their own food. The program empowers low-income, limited-resource, and traditionally underrepresented members of the community to overcome social challenges, and trains community volunteers in the fundamentals of gardening.

To learn more about the Symposium hosts, visit [www.ahs.org/youth\\_gardening](http://www.ahs.org/youth_gardening).

—K.F.



At the Huntington Gardens, kids enjoy experimenting with plants.

where they can take part in their choice of concurrent educational sessions at the Gardens' Botanical Education Center. A progressive dinner will be served that evening among the Gardens' collections.

On Friday, participants can elect to go on one of three tours: the diversity of

school gardens in the Los Angeles area, a "green" tour of TreePeople and the Audubon Center at Debs Park, or tours of Descanso Gardens and the Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden.

This year, Symposium attendees will be able to choose from an expanded line-

up of nearly 60 concurrent educational sessions. Among the seminars will be presenter **Dar Hosta's** "Grow a Poem," an informative look at how to incorporate creative writing into classrooms, libraries, and nature centers. A popular participant in previous Symposia, Hosta is author and illustrator of the award-winning children's book, *I Am a Tree*.

Extension Specialist **Elizabeth Driscoll**, from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, will share her experiences with the Victory Garden Project, a 4-H program that seeks to renew youth's connection to sustainable, local food production.

Growing Up WILD, an early-childhood environmental education program now available in 38 states, will be another session topic. **Josetta Hawthorne** of the Council for Environmental Education in Houston, Texas, will talk about how the program helps children to develop positive impressions about nature and lifelong social and academic skills.

*Krystal Fogel is an editorial intern with The American Gardener.*

## THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY TRAVEL STUDY PROGRAM 2010 TOURS



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### Gardens and Innovation: Chicagoland and Rockford

with AHS Host *Katy Moss Warner*

**June 16–20, 2010**

■ This tour will highlight the innovative gardens that have contributed to the greening of Chicago and influenced the horticultural heritage that distinguishes the surrounding communities. In Rockford, Illinois, an America in Bloom award-winning city, we will see how community spirit has fostered the creation of exceptional gardens.

### Sicily: Gardens and Antiquities

with AHS Host *Katy Moss Warner*

and Tour Escort *Susie Orso of Specialtours*

**October 28–November 7, 2010**

■ From the sparkling seascapes of Taormina to the rugged landscape of the island's interior, this tour will explore the fascinating archaeological sites, historical monuments, and fantastic gardens of Sicily.



For more information about tours in the AHS Travel Study Program, please contact our travel planner, MacNair Travel:

- E-mail: [ahs@macnairtravel.com](mailto:ahs@macnairtravel.com)
- Call: (866) 627-6621
- Visit: [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)



*a love affair with*  
**Lavender**

Revered by ancient herbalists and cooks, lavender is a delightful addition to modern gardens and kitchens.

BY BARBARA PERRY LAWTON

**T**HERE IS something magical about lavender (*Lavandula* spp.). Perhaps it's the fragrance that has permeated so many parts of our lives over the centuries. Perhaps it's the year-round appeal of the tidy gray-green foliage. Perhaps it's the bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects the flowers attract to the garden. Perhaps it's the herb's long history of association with humankind (see sidebar on page 21). Or maybe it's the combination of all these factors. All I know is that I can't get enough of lavender in my garden and in my home.

#### **GENUS OVERVIEW**

Depending on which taxonomist you consult, there are between 20 and 40 species of lavender in the genus *Lavandula*. The plants hybridize readily with each other, however, and the nomenclature, as you will read a little later, is a bit of a minefield. Native to the Mediterranean region through to some Atlantic islands, northern Africa, western Asia, and India, the genus consists of small evergreen (or evergray, to be more precise) shrubs or shrublike perennials bearing foliage and flowers that are singularly fragrant.

As members of the mint family (Lamiaceae), lavender has paired leaves that are equal and opposite, as well as the square stems characteristic of the family. Lavender leaves may be simple and entire or dentate (toothed) to dissected or pinnate. The two-lipped flowers appear in summer on whorled spikes that rise above the foliage on terminal growth. Flowers come in shades of blue, lavender, purple, pink, or white. Lavender oil, often used in commercial products, is produced in the great-

**Lavender grows in multi-colored waves at Cedarbrook Lavender and Herb Farm in Sequim, Washington.**

JOSHUA MCCULLOUGH



est quantities beginning when the flowers are about half open and continuing into the late stages of bloom.

## SPECIES AND SELECTIONS

A number of lavenders are quite hardy, growing in USDA Hardiness Zones 5 to 9; other tender species are cultivated primarily as annuals in cold-winter regions. As a genus, lavender is quite heat and drought tolerant; many species thrive in hot, dry regions such as Texas and central California.

English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) is far and away the most commonly grown species in American gardens. There are many cultivars of English lavender, generally distinguished by height (anywhere from eight inches to two feet tall) and flower colors, which range from white to pink, dark violet, and blue. Most cultivars are hardy in USDA Zones 6 to 9.

Robert Kourik of Occidental, California, likes the English lavender 'Silver Frost'. "The glorious powder-white foliage adds a lovely accent to the garden all year," he says. "Another one that I like on account of its deep-cobalt flower is 'Betty's Blue', which does best in Zones 8 and higher." Kourik, author of *The Lavender Garden* (see "Resources," page 20), notes that the latter selection is "a bit fussy about well-draining soil and so needs more attention than other English lavenders."

'Hidcote', another well-known English lavender, is a favorite of June Hutson, horticulturist at the Kemper Home Demonstration Gardens of the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. "It seems to thrive in our midwestern climate when others go on to greener pastures," she says, "and combines well with other plants that want minimum irrigation in the summer."

"I'm fond of 'Sharon Roberts'," says Rose Marie Nichols-McGee of Nichols Garden Nursery in Albany, Oregon. This English lavender cultivar is hardy to USDA Zone 5 and has dark violet flowers. "Give this selection a light shearing in midsummer and it will soon send up new flower spikes followed by a stunning fall flower display," says Nichols-McGee.

Botanical confusion reigns over the identity of another popular lavender, usually sold as *L. xheterophylla* (commonly called sweet lavender). This hybrid of



'Hidcote' is a popular low-growing English lavender cultivar with dark violet flowers.

French lavender (*L. dentata*) and English lavender originated in southern France. However, plants sold with this name are more likely to be fringed lavender (*L. xalardii*), which is a hybrid of French lavender and spike lavender (*L. latifolia*). Regardless of the name, the plant is hardy to USDA Zone 8 and very tolerant of heat and humidity, so it makes a good choice

for gardeners in the American Southeast and South. The fragrance leans more toward camphor and eucalyptus, so it is not as useful for herbal and culinary purposes.

The lavandins (*L. xintermedia*), also known as hedge lavender, are sterile hybrids of English lavender and spike lavender that are noted for their pleasant fragrance and vigorous, shrubby growth



Heat- and humidity-tolerant fringed lavender is a good choice in warmer regions.



habit. Larger (growing two to four feet tall) and more heat tolerant than English lavender, the lavandins produce more essential oil per plant than other lavenders and are thus the source of most commercial lavender oil. Most selections, with the exception of 'Edelweiss', have pale purple flowers.

Personally, I am especially fond of 'Grosso' (sometimes listed as 'Fat Spike'), a lavandin selection hardy in Zones 5 to 10. It has good gray year-round foliage and long-stemmed flower spikes that are excellent for craft projects. Even in the demanding climate of St. Louis, Missouri, where I live, the frigid weather, droughts,

Northwest. Since it's reliably hardy only to USDA Zone 8, gardeners in the East and Midwest are better served by treating it as a summer annual. The flowers are composed of conelike spikes of dark purple flowers, topped by a jaunty plume of contrastingly colored petallike bracts. These odd-looking sterile bracts have given rise to common names such as rabbit ear or papillon (butterfly) lavender.

Popular varieties include 'Otto Quast' with deep purple flowers surmounted by paler bracts; 'Papillon' (sometimes listed as *L. stoechas* ssp. *pedunculata*) with green to reddish-purple bracts topping deeper pur-

lavender makes terrific low hedges, but a drawback is that if individual plants are damaged by dogs or stray soccer balls, it creates a gap for a year or two until new plants can fill in. "If you are installing a hedge of lavender, buy two or three extra plants and place them in the back of the garden somewhere," suggests Ellen Spector Platt, who runs Meadowlark Flower & Herb Farm in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania. "They'll grow at about the same rate as your hedge plants, so you can use them to fill holes in the hedge."

Lavender and roses are traditionally considered companions, and they serve



Opposite: 'Grosso' is a hardy, resilient lavandin selection with pale violet flowers. Above: Spanish lavender, shown in a container, left, and growing with Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis* sp.) in a garden bed, right, is not reliably hardy north of USDA Zone 8.

and other vagaries don't faze it a bit.

An individual selection worth mentioning is 'Goodwin Creek Grey', a hybrid of woolly lavender (*L. lanata*) and French lavender introduced by Goodwin Creek Gardens in Oregon. It grows to about three feet tall and broad, with dense, silvery foliage and deep bluish purple flowers. It is tolerant of heat and humidity, but hardy only to about USDA Zone 8.

Spanish lavender (*L. stoechas*), sometimes referred to as French or Italian lavender because it grows wild in those countries, can be grown year-round in Texas, California, and parts of the Pacific

ple flowers; and 'Kew Red', which has pink bracts atop maroon flowers.

### LAVENDERS IN THE LANDSCAPE

Lavender doesn't need to be confined to a kitchen or herb garden—it is wonderful in the ornamental garden, where savvy gardeners are using it to edge formal beds, in mixed gardens, along drives and walkways, and in containers that can bring handsome definition to patios and terraces. And it is a must-have plant for the butterfly or wildlife garden, attracting bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. An additional virtue is that lavender is deer resistant.

each other well when combined in beds or borders. The soft gray-greens and tidiness of lavender foliage can serve as transitions between ornamentals that would otherwise clash in colors or textures. In garden and landscape settings, the aromatic character of lavender's foliage is an additional asset, releasing its heady fragrance as visitors brush past it.

Lavender is easy to shape by pruning into formal or informal shapes. In cold-winter regions, containerized plants should be protected from damaging freeze-thaw cycles either by storing them in an unheated porch or garage or by

## Resources

**The Encyclopedia of Herbs** by Arthur O Tucker and Thomas DeBaggio. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2009.

**The Genus *Lavandula*** by Tim Upson and Susyn Andrews. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2004.

**Lavender** by Ellen Spector Platt. Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, 1999.

**The Lavender Garden** by Robert Kourik. Chronicle Books, San Francisco, California, 1998.

**Lavender: The Grower's Guide** by Virginia McNaughton and Joan L. Headley. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2000.

For links to 2010 lavender festivals, click on the web special linked to this article on the AHS website.

## Sources

**Mountain Valley Growers**, Dunlap, CA. (559) 338-2775.

[www.mountainvalleygrowers.com](http://www.mountainvalleygrowers.com).

**Nichols Garden Nursery**, Albany, OR. (541) 928-9280.

[www.nicholsgardennursery.com](http://www.nicholsgardennursery.com).

**Ornamental Edibles**, San Jose, CA. (408) 528-7333.

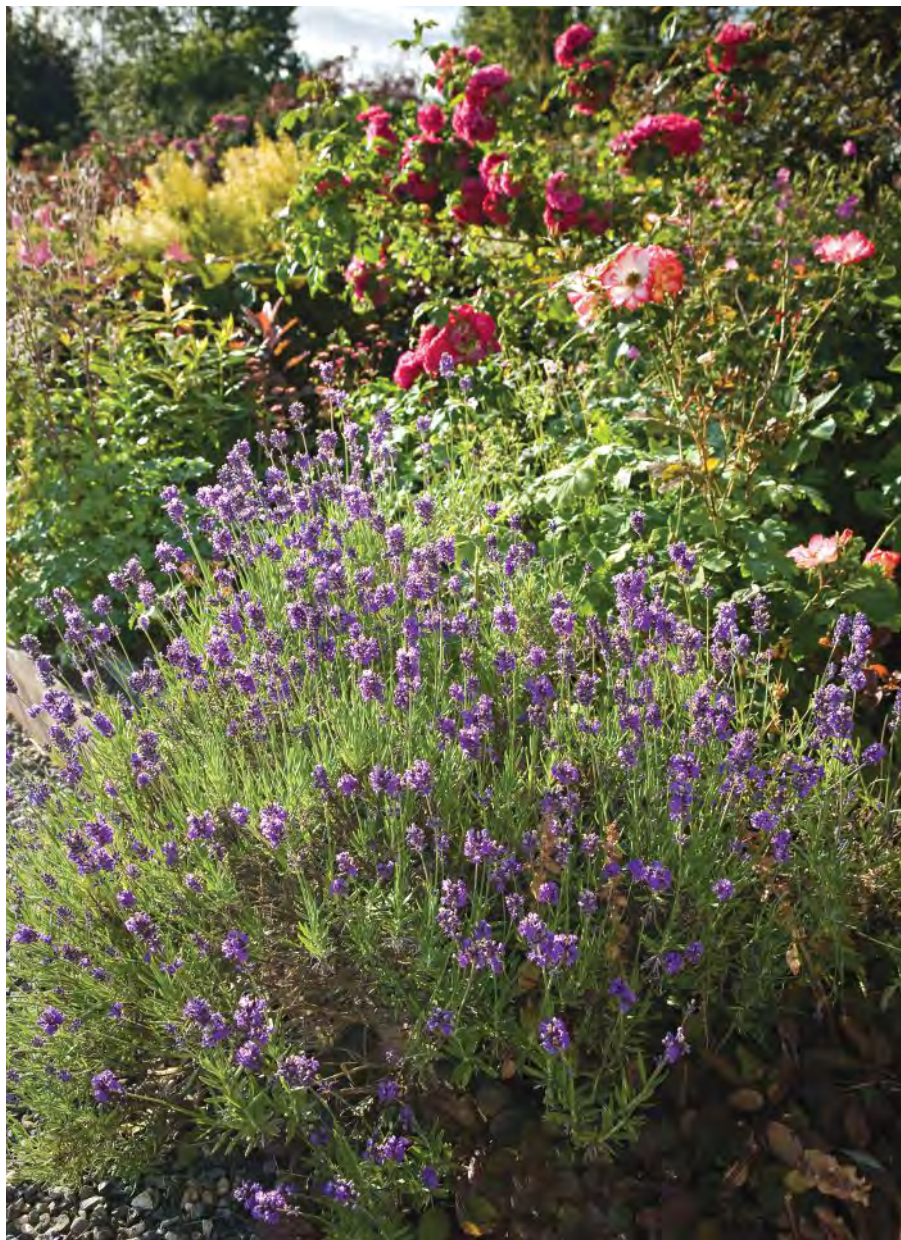
[www.ornamentaledibles.com](http://www.ornamentaledibles.com).

**Park Seed Company**, Greenwood, SC. (800) 213-9976.

[www.parkseed.com](http://www.parkseed.com).

**Shepherd's Garden Seeds**, Felton, CA. (888) 880-7228.

[www.reneesgarden.com](http://www.reneesgarden.com).



Roses and lavender pair well because of their complementary colors, textures, and fragrance.

wrapping them with insulating materials such as straw and burlap.

## CULINARY AND HERBAL USES

Lavender is a marvelous culinary herb but is so strongly flavored that only tiny amounts should be used or you will end up with a dish that smells and tastes like perfume. "If it's flavor you want, select one of the cultivars of English lavender, which has the sweetest taste without the bitter hints of camphor present in other varieties," says Ellen Spector Platt.

Try lavender as a substitute for rosemary in any dish. It's also a good addition to sauces, soups, and stews. Add lavender

leaves or flowers to sugar in a jar and seal it up for a week or so, then use the flavored sugar in recipes for cakes and cookies. You can also use candied lavender as a garnish on baked goods.

In my opinion, lavender is the best of all the edible flowers. The combination of the aroma and color adds zest and a highly decorative effect to light summer fare such as garden salads and potato salads.

Medicinally, lavender has traditionally been used in creams and lotions to soothe and reduce tension and stress. Pillows filled with lavender flowers encourage sleep and relaxation. Infusions of lavender calm the itch of insect bites and soothe ir-

ritated skin. Used in perfumes and soaps since ancient times, lavender is still a common component of these products and in many others, including air fresheners and after-shave lotions.

For centuries, lavender has been used in potpourris and sachets placed around homes to repel insects. For this reason, you will also often find lavender listed as a component of natural-product-based insect repellents. If you rub lavender foliage between your hands and then wipe the residue on exposed body parts, it will repel mosquitoes and gnats. Test it on a small area of skin first to ensure this doesn't cause an allergic reaction.

## HISTORY AND LORE OF LAVENDER

The history and lore of the genus *Lavandula* have been entwined with humankind for thousands of years. The ancient Egyptians used essential oils of lavender to help mummify their honored dead. The Phoenicians and other ancient people of Middle Eastern regions used lavender for bathing and making their homes smell fresher, as well as for cooking.

Both the English and Latin names for lavender are believed to derive from the Latin word *lavare*, meaning “to wash,” although in their book *The Encyclopedia of Herbs*, authors Arthur O. Tucker and Thomas DeBaggio argue that the name relates to the Latin *livare*, “to be livid or bluish.” Roman soldiers—who knew of the herb because it grew wild in the Mediterranean region—mixed lavender into their bath water. Not only did lavender give a fresh yet pungent fragrance to the water, it also had a repellent effect on vermin such as lice, bedbugs, and fleas that often accompanied armies.

Many historians believe that Romans brought lavender to the British Isles during the Roman occupation. Once there, lavender soon became associated with soaps, laundry washing, baths, perfumes, sachets, and potpourris—all the ways of making day-to-day life cleaner and more fragrant. To this day, lavender is used for these purposes and, in addition, is a wonderful culinary and garden herb. —B.P.L.

### GROWING LAVENDER

The keys to growing lavender successfully are good drainage and full sun. A sandy or gravelly loam soil is the best choice for lavender; avoid planting it in heavy clay, which tends to retain too much water. The ideal soil pH is neutral (7) to slightly alkaline. Lavender’s essential oils, which are the source of the plant’s significant fragrance and flavor, are produced in far less quantity when the soil is overly rich, so fertilize lavender sparingly or not at all. Although lavender is drought tolerant once established, if rain is sparse over a long period, it will look better if given supplemental water from time to time.

In humid regions, grow lavender in raised beds and leave plenty of room between plants for air circulation. “A mulch of white sand, granite dust or chicken grit make a great reflective mulch to help keep away fungal diseases,” says Susan Belsinger, an herb expert, author, and blogger who lives in Brookeville, Maryland.

Grow the more tender lavenders, such as Spanish lavender (*L. stoechas*), in containers so they can be moved indoors during cold spells. In order to thrive over a long period indoors, lavender should be placed in a relatively cool room under grow lights, or in a sunny south-facing window.

If grown in full sun and a free-drain-

ing soil, lavender will have few pest and disease problems. Rare infestations by pests such as mealybugs, whiteflies, scale, or spider mites are likely an indication the plants are under stress because of unsuitable growing conditions.

Lavender will self-sow and can be grown from seeds, but to ensure you are getting true-to-type plants, experts recommend propagation by softwood or semi-hardwood cuttings made in the late spring to early summer.

### HARVESTING LAVENDER

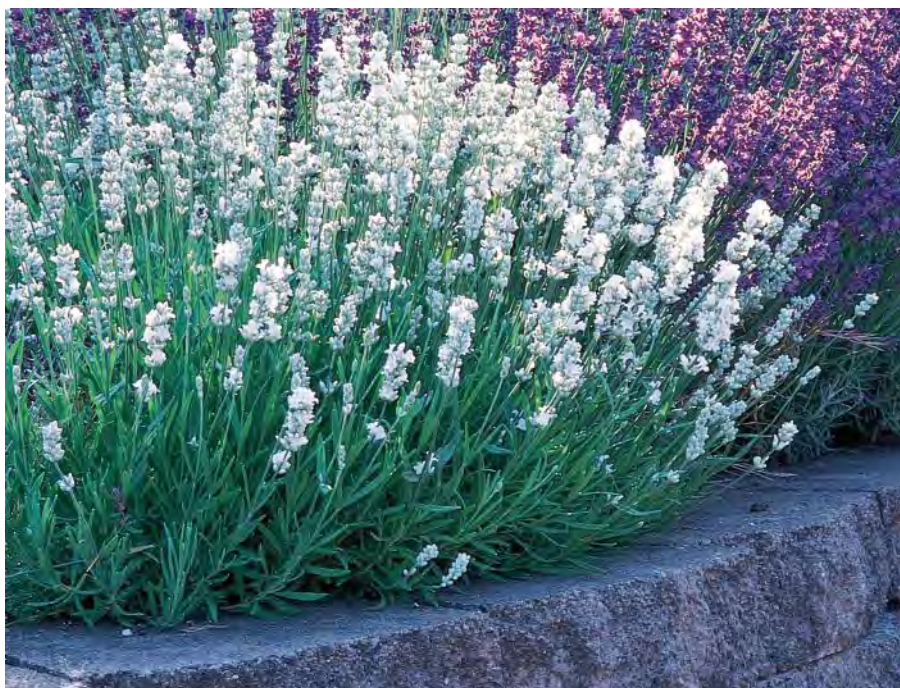
Leaves, stems, flowers, and buds are all valuable for different purposes. Harvest flower spikes for culinary, household, or craft use when the buds are just starting to open. Harvest when the morning dew on the foliage has dried. Tie small bunches together and hang them upside down in a warm, dry, dark place. The flower spikes will usually dry within a week.

If you want to use lavender as a cut flower, cut the spikes early in the morning even if they are dewy. Strip off some of the bottom leaves and put the stems into water that includes a commercial flower preservative. If cut just as the buds begin to open, a lavender arrangement will last as long or longer than other cut flowers.

Growing lavender is easy no matter where you live. And once you have tried it, you’ll find innumerable ways to enjoy the flowers, foliage, and fragrance that have captivated humans for millennia. 🌿

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*Barbara Perry Lawton is an award-winning author of more than 10 gardening books. She lives in Valley Park, Missouri.*



“White Dwarf”, a compact English lavender cultivar, shows to good effect in this raised bed.



# *easy design strategies for a* **Nonstop Garden**

A garden that has four-season appeal starts with a good plan and making disciplined choices.

BY STEPHANIE COHEN AND JENNIFER BENNER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENNIFER BENNER

**E**VEN THE most experienced gardeners will admit that putting a garden together—especially a nonstop garden, or one that is attractive year round—is not a piece of cake. You not only have to contend with site conditions and climate challenges but also must assemble and arrange a group of plants that perform well and look good together. This process has throughout history left gardeners scratching their heads. With a few key design principles in your back pocket, however, you can be well on your way to

creating pleasing plantings. As with fashion and interior décor trends, garden styles come and go, but fundamental design strategies have stood the test of time. The reason? Because they work.

For some, just the words “principles” and “strategies” are a turnoff. We creative types do not want rules interfering with our artfulness. Once we warm up to the idea, however, we usually see that garden design strategies are really tools to success. We can still march to the beat of our own drums and explore our creativity with the

plants, colors, forms, and accessories that we select, but strategies help us put these elements into an attractive arrangement instead of a jumbled mess.

## **BUILD YOUR GARDEN ROOM BY ROOM**

The easiest way to begin building mixed borders is by dividing your landscape into bite-sized spaces. Gardens are less daunting when you break them down into manageable areas. The simplest way to divide a garden is to treat each area like a room in a house.

*This article is excerpted and adapted with permission from The Nonstop Garden by Stephanie Cohen and Jennifer Benner (Timber Press, 2010).*

**Opposite:** Tackling a garden room by room and focusing on the function of each room help make the design process more manageable. Furnished with comfortable patio chairs, this room in the Connecticut garden of Steve Silk provides the perfect setting for lounging and casual entertaining.

Start by pinpointing the function of each area. Do you want a place to entertain, work, or relax? A back patio or deck is a great central location for an entertainment area, while a spa or water feature can be the heart of a relaxation room. Garden rooms may not always be as clear-cut as the rooms in a house, but as you develop the concept, they become more obvious.

If your landscape already has established garden rooms, consider whether they need remodeling. Garden rooms offer a more comfortable experience when they have actual or implied perimeters and thresholds to help define the space for visitors, giving them the lay of the land and indicating where to enter and exit. Perimeters can be as obvious as a hedge or as subtle as a change in materials, such as the point where a patio butts up to a lawn. Likewise, thresholds can take many forms, from an ornate gate to a simple stepping-stone.

Whether you are starting with a blank slate or an established landscape, consider putting garden rooms into play. Once you have them mapped out, it will be easier to begin selecting plants for the mixed plantings in your nonstop garden.

## KNOW YOUR SITE

Just as a square peg will not fit into a round hole, you will have the best outcome by working *with* your site, not against it. You may not like your dry, hot, sunny plot or damp, shady nook, but there is usually little you can do to greatly alter the site you are dealt. The best approach is to capitalize on your site's strengths and accept its limitations.

Choosing plants that do not grow well in your site's conditions will end in failure. *Always put the right plant in the right place.* Get to know your site, do your homework, and choose plants that will thrive in the light and soil that you have to offer.

Of course, you can still allow room for a little experimentation. Sometimes plants let us get away with bending the rules



**For greatest impact, arrange plants in groupings and in random, more natural configurations. In her garden in Oregon, Lauren Hall-Behrens has grouped several bananas to make a focal point.**

slightly. For instance, a plant that is not supposed to be hardy in a cold region may do well given a sheltered location. If it does not, its unfortunate demise provides a great excuse to go shopping for more plants.

## START WITH A PLAN

Before a shovel even touches the ground, make sure you sketch a plan. Having a plan does not mean you cannot change your mind midstream; it just points you in the right direction and helps you stay focused.

A plan doesn't need to be a work of art. It can be a simple sketch of labeled lines, squares, circles, and X's, used to lay out

plantings and their location. You can create a plan for your entire property, each garden room, specific beds, or all three. The more specific you get, the simpler the execution will be. You can make the process super easy (and fun) by drawing an outline of your planting beds, grabbing some old plant catalogs, cutting out the pictures, and arranging and sticking them on the page.

Even though it is easier to design a garden by breaking it up into sections or rooms, you still want the entire garden to feel like a collective whole. You can do this by threading similar elements throughout

each room. Repetition is a strong yet subtle visual tool that helps unify otherwise disjointed areas. For example, if you have a wooden deck, you can build a wooden arbor in one room and include a wooden bench in another. Likewise, the bluestone you used to pave your patio can be used in all the paths that wind through the garden. Another excellent way to bring it all together is to weave your favorite plant, flower form (such as spikes), or color through each room in your garden.

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANTS

When it comes to selecting plants for your garden, a cardinal rule to keep in

for the “If I can’t have it, I’m going to die” plants you may come across throughout the season. By designating space for annuals, biennials, and tropicals and not filling your garden exclusively with hardy plants that come back year after year, you give yourself some shopping trips to look forward to each gardening season.

Impulsive plant purchases can also lead to a garden that looks like it was designed with a blender. It has no rhyme or reason, just a whole lot of one of this and one of that. To create the greatest impact, display varieties in larger drifts and take direction from nature: Place your groups in random configurations, not straight rows, and

Whether your bed is big or small, take cues from nature and create dynamic layers of different-sized plants to establish structure and depth. A naturalized woodland, for example, is made up of tall skyscraper trees that are supported by understory trees and shrubs and a lush carpet of herbaceous plants. A mixed border made up of three-foot-tall plants would look wimpy and out of place running along the base of a two-story house or barn. Include a small, 15-foot-tall tree and a mix of four- to 10-foot-tall shrubs and perennials, and that border will look right at home.

## GET MORE BANG FOR THE BUCK WITH FOLIAGE

When drawing up a list of plants for your garden, focus on foliage. Although foliage may seem unexciting compared to flowers, it is one of the most important features on a plant. While flowers are transient, leaves can last several seasons or year round. Choose plants with leaves that dazzle for at least a good portion of the year. If a plant has “yuck” foliage right after flowering, as many spring perennials do, it might be best to plant it in your compost pile.

Foliage comes in all shapes and sizes, from long, one-inch-wide grass blades to huge three-foot-round pads. Leaf colors run the gamut—green, yellow, silver, blue, red, and everything in between. Variegated leaves can be real showstoppers. Used in moderation, they punctuate a mixed border with their unique charm.

Plants with foliage that changes seasonally offer maximum versatility. The glossy green foliage of large fothergilla (*Fothergilla major*) makes a beautiful foil throughout the gardening season. Come autumn, however, the leaves shed their reticence and take center stage with a spectacular display of orange, red, and yellow. Evergreen plants such as hollies (*Ilex* spp.) and hellebores (*Helleborus* spp.) are nothing to shake a stick at either, typically offering handsome foliage 365 days a year.

Foliage also plays a big role in a garden’s visual palette of texture. Each plant has two types of texture: the tactile nature of its flowers, stems, and leaves, and the visual presence of its overall appearance. While tactile texture is often experienced in the garden, visual texture is the primary textural concern when it comes to design. Visual texture is categorized as



At Chanticleer Gardens in Pennsylvania, above, ornamental grasses provide a common theme, threaded throughout beds and garden rooms to create a cohesive whole.

mind is: Avoid impulsive plant purchases. In the heat of the moment, many of us often end up throwing all rationale out the window and purchasing jaw-dropping plants that are inappropriate for our garden conditions or that do not work in our design schemes. This leads to overcrowded, sickly plantings—or a stockpile of homeless plants. It is best to try to only hit the garden center or catalogs with a plan in mind and when you need specific plants. You can allow yourself to indulge a little. Leave some space

plant them in odd numbers (groups of three, five, seven) to give them a more natural appearance.

The exception to the rule is specimen or focal-point plants. With very large or bold plants, one is often all you need. Just be sure to feature them in moderation to achieve the biggest wow factor. Remember that less is more. Try to limit the total number of different species or selections per planting. A good working rule is to allow each plant variety a minimum of four to six square feet of space.





**Above:** Give plants with long-lasting or multiple seasonal attributes a prominent position. Here, hardy geraniums, which bloom from late spring through summer, soften the edges of a brick path. **Right:** Plants with intriguing foliage provide interest in the garden long after flowers have faded.

either coarse, medium, or fine. Think of coarse texture as a walnut that has been broken in half, medium texture as those pieces chopped into quarters, and fine texture as those portions minced into small slivers. Plants such as bold-leaved bananas (*Musa* spp.), lush viburnums (*Viburnum* spp.), and slender fountain grasses (*Pennisetum* spp.) are coarse, medium, and fine, respectively. How plants interact texturally is as important as how they relate chromatically. In a mixed border, combining coarse, medium, and fine textures is the key to creating dynamic visual depth. Placing contrasting textures next to each other helps plants to “pop” instead of getting lost in the crowd.



### ASSESSING GARDEN-WORTHINESS

Even though there is something interesting and beautiful about every plant, it does not follow that every plant is garden-worthy. To create a low-maintenance garden with extended interest, you must choose your plants carefully. Obviously the plants

should match your conditions, hold their own once established, and be largely trouble free. Avoid prima donnas such as hybrid tea roses that need to be coddled to look their best. A better choice would be a plant like catmint (*Nepeta* spp.), which needs maybe an annual feeding and pruning, occasional deadheading or dividing, and perhaps a drink during dry spells.

When making your selections, regionally native plants are good options. These vigorous gems already like your conditions and are the cornerstones of any sustainable landscape. Exotic workhorses are okay, but be sure they are not invasive in your region and do not have the potential to negatively impact the environment. And by all means do not turn your nose up at the dependable average Joes such as impatiens. Some might view them as pedestrian or clichéd, but if they work, who cares?

Finally, regardless of their origins, the best nonstop garden plants are tough, look good for long periods, and feature several different attributes at various times of the year. Perennials and tropicals with attractive foliage and blooms, such as coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) and cannas (*Canna* spp.), top the list, as do trees and shrubs with attractive flowers, leaves, fruit, and stems, such as dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.). Avoid filling your garden with short-term, ephemeral performers, such as columbine (*Aquilegia* spp.), that seduce you with their blooms at the nursery and then die back to the ground after the flowers fizzle out, leaving bare spots in the garden.

That is not to say you should shun ephemeral plants altogether because they help round out the mixed border, offering seasonal color when the main attractions are off duty. Carefree seasonal bulbs such as daffodils (*Narcissus* spp.), ornamental onions (*Allium* spp.), and camas (*Camassia* spp.) are great because they offer colorful blooms and multiply rapidly. Choosing a mix of all-star plants with substance will provide optimum plant diversity, which is key to achieving a non-stop garden.

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# Collected Treasures

East meets Midwest in the Kansas City garden of “the Jims”, a couple of plant fanatics who cultivate their interest in curiosities from all over the world. A challenging climate is half the fun.

BY MARTY ROSS    PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN MUTRUX



Above: *Wisteria frutescens* ‘Amethyst Falls’ covers an arch in the Jims’ garden. The wisteria stays small so it does not overpower the arch. Peonies grow in the beds to the right. Top right: Jim Murrain (left) and Jim Waddick (right) in the greenhouse with a pot of *Oxalis*. Right: The Jims grow dozens of tree peonies; this one is ‘Zi Yan’, a Chinese selection of the flare tree peony (*Paeonia rockii*). The flowers last several days, with the color fading slightly as the blooms age.



The back garden stretches several hundred feet from a deck off the house. New plants and plants from friends are sometimes grown on in pots in the cold frames for a time. Small troughs for cacti are in the foreground; the greenhouse is at right, with bamboo behind.

**Y**OU MIGHT as well check your assumptions at the garden gate that swings gently into Jim Waddick's and Jim Murrain's densely planted property: You won't be needing them anymore. Their garden, a narrow one-acre plot in Kansas City, Missouri, is packed from the front gate to the back fence with curious, collectible, unexpected, rare, and charming plants of every size and description. And every one of them has a story.

On a walk through their garden, Waddick and Murrain—known in Kansas City and to their worldwide circle of friends as “the Jims”—toss out anecdotes, observations, and Latin names with the eagerness and excitement of true enthusiasts. It is a refreshing breeze that blows through their home and garden, which is physically located in the unforgiving continental climate of USDA Hardiness Zone 5 / AHS Heat Zone 7 but is firmly rooted in zone denial. They grow what they love, and their love of plants is boundless.

Waddick, a biologist who left academia and government work in favor of a life of plants, is the author of books on irises, pe-

onies, and bananas. Murrain retired two years ago after a career with AT&T; his knowledge of plants is homegrown and eclectic. For 30 years, they have been gardening together, divvying up space agreeably in their gardens, their homes, their cold frames, and their greenhouse.

Their sprawling garden was designed with the kind of flags utility crews use to mark the location of underground wires. “We garden haphazardly,” Murrain says, “but we thought we'd keep a few lines, so Jim marked the shade of the trees, and that became the shade garden.”

Waddick used the flags to mark the extent of morning and afternoon shade. “Over the course of a few days, we had a good idea of where we could count on mostly shaded planting,” he says. In the shady garden, Murrain grows on the order of 600 species and selections of hellebores.

A sunny spot was outlined for peonies, using a garden hose to make a pleasing shape. Four large cold frames were salvaged from a nursery that was going out of business. A bamboo collection fanned out across the west side, along the street, and a

path runs down the center of the backyard, past a jam-packed greenhouse, a gigantic bed of sand planted with miniature cacti and succulents, a rock garden in a dry-laid stone wall, and a shimmering stand of Chinese golden yellow-groove bamboo (*Phyllostachys aureosulcata* ‘Aureocaulis’).

## THE LAY OF THE LAND

Kansas City is a challenging place to be a gardener. Here on the edge of the eastern woodlands, at the threshold of the vast prairie lands, the terrain is rolling and beautiful, and the soil is mostly clay—it is a fine medium for gardeners with strong backs. Spring is a fickle season, with a balmy, shirt-sleeve day followed by a hard frost that takes the life out of tree-peony flowers just coming into bloom. Summer temperatures soar up to 100 degrees or more, without much relief after the sun sets. Autumn tends to be long and lovely, with the notable exception of treacherous October ice storms that snap healthy tree limbs. Winters are windy and bitter cold, with unreliable snow cover.

“When you get down to it, we have a horrible climate,” Waddick admits. The plants that thrive here must be tough, and the gardeners must be resilient.

### GETTING THEIR ROOTS DOWN

Before they made their present garden together, Waddick and Murrain maintained their collections in two backyards in town, in a disintegrating neighborhood they moved to in the late 1970s. They owned two adjacent homes—they lived in one, rented the other to friends—and gardened in both backyards. One year, to satisfy their curiosity and supplement Waddick’s research on bamboo, they drove to the University of Georgia’s Coastal Farm and Bamboo Garden in Savannah, Georgia, and came home with a truckload of plants.

Hardy bamboo wasn’t much known or appreciated in those days, so Waddick and Murrain were quite likely the first to try many of the species in Kansas City. A surprising number proved hardy, and their backyards soon took on an exotic, jungly atmosphere. The whole neighborhood was bulldozed 16 years ago to make room for big-box stores, but friends still drive by expecting to see bamboo poking up through the parking lot where Waddick’s and Murrain’s homes once stood.

Finding a new home for their plants took them north of the Missouri River to a quiet neighborhood at the top of a hill. Their realtor showed them the property in winter, pronouncing the location ideal for a garden. The previous owners of the ranch house had been organic vegetable gardeners, she told Waddick and Murrain. The site looked bare, but big enough, and they were convinced. Their existing garden was dug up, transplanted to pots, and, in countless trips, driven out to the new garden. Extra plants and divisions were distributed generously to friends and local Powell Gardens.

When spring arrived in their new home, a few grape hyacinths came up, and a clump of red tulips bloomed optimistically. The soil was miserable. “There were no earthworms on the property,” Murrain says. “It took us three years to get a healthy population of earthworms.” While they furiously amended with compost and leaf mold to restore the soil, their garden grew mainly in pots. Bam-



The Jims’ garden is a showcase for irises. *Iris* ‘Lancer’ is an aril-bred iris, a hybrid of a desert species with a tall bearded type, making it easy to grow, but with exotic good looks.

boo slowly took root, and peonies got themselves established in beds out front.

### GETTING AROUND

Waddick is an old-fashioned globe-trotting plant collector. He first traveled to China in 1989, not to study bamboo, but to explore for irises. The trip resulted, in 1992, in the publication of *The Iris of China* (Timber Press), written with Chinese co-author Zhao Yu Tang. There have been many trips to China since, in search of peonies, more irises, bamboo, and other plants and adventures.

Over the years, Waddick has introduced dozens of plants to American gardens, most of them from China. In 1989, he brought back the purple-leaf *Loropetalum chinense* from the Shanghai Botanic Garden. The plant was growing in a pot on his back porch when the late North Carolina plantsman J. C. Raulston spotted it during a visit to Kansas City. “When he saw it, his jaw dropped,” Waddick says, “and I said, ‘If you’ll propagate it, take the whole plant.’”

In Sichuan, Waddick found six previously unknown cast-iron plants (*Aspidistra* spp.), including yellow-speckled ‘Come

## RAISIN' CANE

Jim Waddick and Jim Murrain grow close to a dozen different hardy evergreen bamboos in their garden in Kansas City (USDA Hardiness Zone 5 / AHS Heat Zone 7). Bamboos are nearly indestructible and can spread like wildfire, but they are fascinating and beautiful plants, Waddick says. "It's not a plant for everyone and it's not for the small garden," he says, "but there is nothing like them. If you have the place, plant them."

Hardy bamboos for temperate climates tend to spread by rhizomes underground; tropical and subtropical bamboos, generally, are the ones that grow in clumps. Waddick and Murrain do not use barriers or plant their bamboo in concrete boxes; the bamboo in their garden is controlled by mowing.

"The simplest thing to do is to keep them in an area that can be mowed tightly," Waddick says. "You have to keep after it all the time—but we're out in the garden every day." If a shoot pops up six feet away from a stand, he'll kick it over to stop it in its tracks. Shoots that survive this timely stomp must be dug out or cut back.

Generally, hardy evergreen bamboos thrive in sun; some tolerate part shade. All require well-drained soil. Here are five bam-

boos Waddick recommends, hardy to USDA Zone 5. All are running types, so choose the site carefully before planting.

■ *Indocalamus latifolius* grows to about 10 feet tall, and tolerates shade. It is known for its beautiful foliage, which can be up to 15 inches long.

■ Golden yellow-groove bamboo (*Phyllostachys aureosulcata* 'Aureocaulis') has handsome, slender yellow canes; the species is known for its distinctive bends on the lower portion of canes. It grows to about 35 feet tall in its habitat, but reaches only about 20 feet in the Midwest.

■ *Shibataea kumasaca* is a shrubby, leafy bamboo, growing to five or six feet tall in Kansas City. It tolerates light shade and grows best in acidic soil. *S. kumasaca* forma *albostriata* is a shorter variegated form.

■ *Brachystachyum densiflorum* grows to 12 to 15 feet tall and tolerates part shade. This bamboo is one of the best for its sturdy canes, Waddick says.

■ *Arundinaria gigantea*, known as canebrake bamboo, is the only bamboo native to the United States—its original range encompassed much of the East. It grows up to 20 feet tall in Kansas City, and tolerates shade. —M.R.



A path through a grove of golden bamboo invites visitors to experience a dense forest of the rich golden culms of *Phyllostachys aureosulcata aureocaulis*.

Here Spot', which Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery in Raleigh, North Carolina, has listed in his catalog of new, curious, and collectible plants. Avent has offered a number of Waddick's finds, including the dwarf voodoo lily (*Typhonium roxburghii*), described in the catalog as a "stunning and easy-to-grow little aroid that is completely unknown to all but the most devout plant geeks."

Learning to recognize a cool plant that the world needs to know about takes a discerning eye. "It could be in your own backyard," Waddick says, and that is where he and Murrain spotted a variegated angel's trumpet (*Datura* sp.) growing in the fence line at their neighbor's house. The neighbor whacked the plant down with a string trimmer, but Waddick

grabbed a stem cutting, rooted it, coaxed the plant along, and eventually sent it to Dan Heims at Terra Nova Nurseries in Oregon. Soon afterwards *Datura* 'Missouri Marble' was born.

### GOIN' FISHIN'

Variegated plants are among the Jims' favorites. A variegated Virginia creeper clings to the bricks around their front door; variegated horse chestnut sparkles in the front yard. They grow variegated bamboos, of course, and have made room for the magnificent *Arundo donax* 'Peppermint Stick'. Variegated clivias bloom in the greenhouse in winter.

For a time Waddick was editor of *Anything But Green* (ABG), a journal for variegated-plant fanatics. He and Heims were

co-founders. The group had a hardy following of about 200 members from around the world, Waddick says, including media maven Martha Stewart, but the journal survived only 18 issues (the last one was published in 2002). "Then the internet developed," he says.

"Any plant can be variegated, it's just a matter of people looking for them," Waddick says. He and Murrain are avid "sport fishermen," eagerly scanning plant displays at garden shops for weird foliage mutations of all kinds, but especially for unexpected creamy, silver, gold, or bronze stripes, spots, streaks, or blotches.

### IT'S IN THE MAIL

The Jims' plant predilections mean the long-suffering mail carrier on their route

delivers many an odd box and envelope to their address from plant friends around the world.

On his first trip to China, Waddick met Lin Jin Zhen, who was in charge of the herb garden (where irises were grown as medicinal herbs) at the Hangzhou Botanical Garden. After an animated discussion of irises, Waddick asked Lin what her favorite flower was, and she took him directly to a bare flowerbed containing only labels. They marked the planting site of dormant spider or surprise lilies (*Lycoris* spp.). In the years since, he has imported hundreds of *Lycoris* bulbs, propagating and sharing them with other *Lycoris* devotees. “There are yellows, pinks, blues, whites, all different sizes and shapes—probably 25 or 30 different species and hybrids,” Waddick says. One of the Jims’ dreams is to start a small nursery selling *Lycoris* bulbs, if they can find time for it.

Peony roots, imported for the Kansas City peony club’s very popular biennial plant sale, arrive by the hundreds from Chinese, Japanese, and American specialists and are repackaged for the sale during intense peony parties with friends. Hot food and cold drinks are passed around as plant lists are compiled and the roots are bagged and labeled.

Seeds, cuttings, and little plants come from friends in Thailand, Russia, Italy, China, Georgia—both the country and the state—Ireland, and Bolivia, to say nothing of mail-order specialists. “We get our best stuff from individuals,” Murrain says, dropping the names of a seed specialist in Nova Scotia, an iris expert in British Columbia, and a trillium and native-plant expert in Tennessee. “Mostly you can’t order these things,” he says.

Plants and seeds even come from sellers on eBay, where Murrain found a rare swamp lily (*Crinum* sp.). “I like to troll through eBay,” he says. “You might find things on the edge, supposedly not hardy, maybe some bamboo or *Rohdea*.”

For all the plants that come in, as many go out. Waddick and Murrain swap constantly, and they participate in seed exchanges through groups such as the North American Rock Garden Society, the British Iris Society, the Pacific Bulb Society Bulb Exchange, and many others.

For the past three years, they have coordinated the Species Iris Group of North

## Sources

Jim Waddick and Jim Murrain buy plants from mail-order specialists around the world; here are some of their favorite North American sources:

**Adelman Peony Gardens**, Salem, OR. [www.peonyparadise.com](http://www.peonyparadise.com).  
**eBay**, [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com). (Search for plants by scientific or common name.)  
**Fairweather Gardens**, Greenwich, NJ. [www.fairweathergardens.com](http://www.fairweathergardens.com).  
**Gossler Farms Nursery**, Springfield, OR. [www.gosslerfarms.com](http://www.gosslerfarms.com).  
**Iris City Gardens**, Primm Springs, TN. [www.iriscitygardens.com](http://www.iriscitygardens.com).  
**Joe Pye Weed’s Garden**, Carlisle, MA. [www.jpwflowers.com](http://www.jpwflowers.com).  
**Klehm’s Song Sparrow**, Avalon, WI. [www.songsparrow.com](http://www.songsparrow.com).  
**Pacific Rim Native Plants**, Chilliwack, BC, Canada. [www.hillkeep.ca](http://www.hillkeep.ca).  
**Pine Knot Farms**, Clarksville, VA. [www.pineknotfarms.com](http://www.pineknotfarms.com).  
**Plant Delights Nursery**, Raleigh, NC. [www.plantdelights.com](http://www.plantdelights.com).  
**Seneca Hill Perennials**, Oswego, NY. [www.senecahillperennials.com](http://www.senecahillperennials.com).

## Sources for Bamboos

**Bamboo Garden Nursery**, North Plains, OR. [www.bamboogarden.com](http://www.bamboogarden.com).  
**Steve Ray’s Bamboo Gardens**, Springville, AL. [www.thebamboogardens.com](http://www.thebamboogardens.com).

**The American Bamboo Society** has a long list of plant and product sources on its website ([www.americanbamboo.org](http://www.americanbamboo.org).)



Jim Waddick and Jim Murrain are variegated-plant fanatics and grow all kinds throughout the garden. This striking specimen is a Japanese horse chestnut (*Aesculus turbinata*).



This is a pink form of *Crinum bulbispermum* 'Jumbo', the hardiest crinum in the garden. It should be more widely grown, Waddick says, but it is slow to produce offsets, so it must be grown from seed. Waddick and Murrain plant their crinum bulbs up to two feet deep.

America's annual seed exchange. The project starts in November and continues through March as members send in seeds for distribution. Last winter, with the help of gardening friends, 7,000 tiny seed packets were filled, labeled, and organized for delivery on two tables in their living room.

### IN GOOD SOCIETY

Waddick and Murrain are long-time members of the American Iris Society (AIS) and are both AIS judges. Last May, their garden was a guest garden for the AIS national meeting in Kansas City. The privilege involved planting about 800 irises, beginning three years before the tour, an undertaking that called for a general re-

design of some flowerbeds and the creation of many more. Irises of all kinds were budding and blooming along with the peonies for the tour, and the place sparkled.

Despite the extra work, the Jims did not allow the iris tour to interfere with plans for their annual Hellebore Daze, which is held whenever the hellebores are at their best, usually in early April.


Waddick and Murrain are among the founders of the local Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society and the Heartland Peony Society. The peony society supported the publication of Josef J. Halda's and Waddick's seminal *The Genus Paeonia* (Timber Press, 2004), and the group is also a sponsor of the fabulous tree

peony collection at Kansas City's private Linda Hall Library. Waddick has long been the unofficial auctioneer of rarities offered during a traditional potluck dinner, held the night before the peony society's fall meeting. Holding up an unprepossessing bare-root peony, Waddick may describe coming upon the plant in China and his experience with it in his own garden, and he cajoles his audience to dig deep to support the organization. Prices for individual peonies have been known to soar to extravagant heights, but there are always bargains, too.

### REGULAR GUYS

Growing irises from seed may sound like a pastime for plant snobs, but Murrain and Waddick are neighborhood gardeners without pretension. Even though they delight in rare plants, you can still find them pushing a shopping cart among the houseplants at big-box stores and filling cardboard flats with herbs and annuals at local garden shops. Like thousands of gardeners in the Midwest, they hunt through the Burpee and Jung catalogs in the winter, looking for something new.

As gardeners, they each have their territories, but they overlap broadly. The garden's new greenhouse, purchased as a propagation house, is packed full of their collection of tender plants. Waddick shows off unusual *Oxalis* species; Murrain insists that they shouldn't fill the greenhouse with so many tropicals, even though he clearly enjoys them. Waddick started the bamboo collection, but it was Murrain who carved out a hideaway, with a couple of garden chairs, among the luminous canes of the towering yellow-groove bamboo.

Although Murrain turns pale green at even the mention of air travel, he is always up for a plant-related field trip within driving distance, and few places seem too far to reach by car. Late this winter, they headed to Virginia for a hellebore festival. It was more than 1,000 miles each way, but Waddick and Murrain learned a long time ago that the shortest distance between two plants is often quite an adventure. 

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# space-saving Buckeyes

BY RUSSELL STAFFORD

COMPRISING THE horse chestnuts (from Europe and Asia) and the buckeyes (from North America), the genus *Aesculus* holds many garden treasures. Yet, in American gardens, only one species has long held sway. Since arriving from Europe some 300 years ago, common horse chestnut (*A. hippocastanum*) has not only darkened many an American dooryard, it has also overshadowed many other *Aesculus* species and hybrids that in reality are far better subjects for the typical garden.

Even if large horse chestnuts are out of scale for your garden, you can still enjoy a number of attractive shrubs and small trees in the genus *Aesculus*.

Massive, imposing, and of somber Victorian cast, common horse chestnut complements expansive landscapes such as estates and parks, particularly when its drooping branches are studded with tall spires of white, red-blotched flowers in late spring. Its hulking presence is less welcome on smaller properties, however—even when it isn't bombarding residents with large spiny-husked nuts, or prematurely dropping the brown, shriveled remains of its drought-scorched, fungus-riddled leaves. Many a garden has felt the pall of a misplaced horse chestnut.

This brings us to those other *Aesculus* varieties—the ones better suited for gardeners who don't have acreage or pith helmets. Chief among these are several delightful and relatively small species from the American side of the clan. The gardener who fancies the steeped flowers and bold, hand-shaped foliage of the genus *Aesculus*—but who prefers a decorous shrub



Hummingbirds and butterflies are drawn to the clustered scarlet flowers of red buckeye.

or small tree to a debris-strewing behemoth—will find the answer among these little buckeyes that have yet to receive the attention or use they deserve.

## RED BUCKEYE

This injustice is ironically exemplified by red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*, USDA Hardiness Zones 5–9, AHS Heat Zones 9–5).

Native to the southeastern and south-central United States, it was introduced to Europe, where it crossed with horse chestnut to produce the popular red horse chestnut (*A. xcarnea*), yet it remains relatively uncommon in American gardens. This is baffling, for few hardy plants can equal it in mid- or late spring, when conical, five- to 10-inch clusters of



tubular red flowers arise from its branches like tongues of flame, attracting hungry hummingbirds.

Typically seen in gardens as a single- or multi-trunked, 15- to 20-foot tree, it is handsome in all seasons, possessing a rounded, pleasingly irregular habit; smooth, dark gray bark; pest and drought tolerance; and large, five-fingered leaves that are purple-bronze when new, maturing to deep glossy green. In these and most other respects (including its bristle-free fruits) it surpasses horse chestnut as a garden subject, working well in lawns, woodland edges, and mixed borders, and blending beautifully with fellow natives.

A variable species found in moist woodlands from North Carolina and Florida west to Texas and southern Illinois, red buckeye has spawned numerous taxonomic wrangles, borne multiple botanical monikers, and given rise to many beautiful forms. Nurseries usually offer anonymous seed-grown plants, which differ somewhat in form and flower, but are still well worth acquiring.

Even more desirable (and considerably rarer), however, are named selections. The blooms of 'Atrosanguinea' are deep cherry-red; those of 'Splendens' (formerly listed as *A. splendens*) are brilliant scarlet. At the other end of red buckeye's spectrum is the yellow-flowered variety *flavescens*, from central Texas. Plants offered under the obsolete epithet *discolor* often have multi-hued blossoms with tints of red, rose-pink, and yellow.

All the above are large shrubs or small trees with single to multiple trunks and ascending upper branches. Space-challenged gardeners can opt instead for the dwarf cultivar 'Humilis', which grows slowly to six feet tall and wide. References often describe it as low and spreading, but in my experience it tends to be upright and rounded. It bears good red flowers in somewhat abbreviated spikes.

As if this weren't enough, *A. pavia* also hybridizes readily with other buckeyes (the genus is known to be quite incestuous), resulting in additional interesting selections that will be addressed a little later.

These buckeyes, as well as all other eastern U.S. natives discussed below, take readily to gardens from New England to the Southeast to the Pacific Northwest, growing best in humus-rich, somewhat

acid, not overly dry soil in sun or part shade. And all are resistant to horse chestnut's many scourges, including the leaf miner that is currently ravaging European plantings of *A. hippocastanum*.

### MISCELLANEOUS SMALL BUCKEYES

Less flamboyant in flower than red buckeye, but in most other ways quite similar, painted buckeye (*A. sylvatica*, Zones 6–9, 9–5) derives its vernacular name from the pink and red highlights that sometimes suffuse its pale yellow spring blooms.

A common shrub or small tree in moist

forests of the Piedmont, the species is anything but common in nurseries. When offered, it is usually as seedlings of colorfully flowered forms. These are well worth seeking out, especially for naturalistic gardens. Even more to be desired, though, would be named, vegetatively propagated selections. At present, these are not available in the trade.

Ohio buckeye (*A. glabra*), covered in the box on page 36, usually gives the impression of a high-rise *A. sylvatica*, offering flowers of a similar pale greenish-yellow on plants several times the altitude. Texas



Painted buckeye, native to the Southeast, has yellow-green flowers sometimes tinged pink.

buckeye (*A. glabra* var. *arguta*, Zones 5–9, 9–5) departs from the norm, however, maturing as a 10- to 20-foot shrub or small tree. It also proves that lesser can sometimes be better. The flowers—being closer to the ground—show to greater advantage, and the plant’s stature befits smaller gardens. This botanical variety is also distinguished by its seven- (rather than five-) parted leaves, and by its warty (rather than prickly) fruits. Like Ohio buckeye, its leaves turn a lovely pumpkin color in fall. The cultivar ‘Pollack’—with rose-stained flowers—is sometimes available.

As expected given its native range (Texas to Iowa), Texas buckeye tolerates considerable heat, although it appreciates some shade. Often occurring on limestone ledges in the wild, it does well in slightly acid to slightly alkaline soil.

### WORTHY HYBRIDS

These little buckeyes have parented more than their share of hybrids. The closely related Southeasterners *A. pavia* and *A. sylvatica* have teamed in various ways—sometimes via hybrids too complex to describe here—to produce some compact and comely offspring.

Originating at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Massachusetts, ‘Harbisonii’ has flamboyant bicolored flowers with lemon-yellow petals protruding from bright rose-pink calyces.

A selection variously known as ‘Koehnei’, ‘Induta’, or ‘Rosea Nana’ has paler, rose-pink, yellow-flushed blooms. Also belonging to this hybrid group is ‘Penduliflora’, whose flowers—resembling those of ‘Harbisonii’—are somewhat sparsely deployed on rose-tinged stems that bow from the branches.

All these cultivars grow slowly into large shrubs or small trees (eight to 10 feet high and wide is typical)—and all make excellent choices for the space-challenged garden. The somewhat larger ‘Ellwangeri’ is a dense, 20- to 30-foot tree that bears red flowers with yellow tips.



Texas buckeye adapts better to dry, hot sites than other buckeyes but prefers some shade.



The attractive flower spikes of bottlebrush buckeye light up the deep green foliage in midsummer.

Given the opportunity, *A. glabra* var. *arguta* (and other dwarf forms of Ohio buckeye) are likely to hybridize with *A. pavia* and *A. sylvatica*, and their progeny would almost certainly have ornamental merit (plant breeders, please take note!). The last two cross readily with several full-sized *Aesculus*, including sweet buckeye (*A. flava*) and Ohio buckeye, but most of the resulting hybrids are beyond and, literally, above the scope of this article (see sidebar, page 36).

One remarkable exception is *A. ×neglecta* ‘Erythroblastos’. It arose more than 100 years ago in what is now southwestern

Poland, from a spontaneous garden cross between *A. sylvatica* and *A. flava*. The leaves of this small (to 25 feet), round-headed tree emerge a head-turning salmon-pink in early spring, soon fading to cream. The pale yellow, pink-tinged flowers open in mid-spring, as the leaves morph to apple-green. The foliage turns yellow in early fall. The Royal Horticultural Society deemed it worthy of the coveted Award of Garden Merit, yet it is rarely seen in American gardens.

### BOTTLEBRUSH BUCKEYE

One smaller buckeye that has found its way into the horticultural mainstream is bottlebrush buckeye (*A. parviflora*, Zones 4–8, 8–4), native to the southeastern United States. An eight- to 14-foot tall suckering shrub that thrives in most soils and exposures, it gradually and inexorably spreads to form broad, undulating mounds. In midsummer, above a cumulus of large five-parted leaves, it bears numerous tall frothy panicles of white flowers that bristle with long whiskery stamens. And in all its guises, bottlebrush buckeye contributes to the autumn garden, its leaves turning attractive rusty yellow tints. Woody plant expert Michael Dirr, author of the *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, calls *A. parviflora* the pick of the small buckeyes for southeastern gardens because “it is consistently the best performer, from early leafing to sum-



California buckeye compensates for a short growing season with its sculptural form.

mer flowers to superb yellow fall color.”

The tall and tardy variety *A. parviflora* var. *serotina* (usually represented by its large-panicked cultivar ‘Rogers’) opens its blooms a couple of weeks later than other forms, prolonging the species’ flowering season. “If you have a big enough space for a mass planting, I often recommend planting straight species *Aesculus parviflora* mixed with *A. parviflora* var. *serotina*,” says Jamie Blackburn, curator of woodland gardens at the Atlanta Botanical Garden in Georgia. “This extends the bloom time of the mass nicely.”

Although of shrubby stature, *A. parviflora* possesses the longevity of a tree. Century-old specimens flourish at the Arnold Arboretum, as well as in many other private and public gardens. Old plants can become lanky, but usually respond well to severe pruning, producing a flush of new, more compact stems.

### CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE

With its shrubby stature, five-segmented leaves, and long, cylindrical plumes of fragrant, pinkish-white flowers from mid-spring to summer, California buck-

## Sources

**Fairweather Gardens**, Greenwich, NJ. (269) 624-6233.

[www.fairweathergardens.com](http://www.fairweathergardens.com).

**Forestfarm**, Williams, OR. (541) 846-7269. [www.forestfarm.com](http://www.forestfarm.com).

**Oikos Tree Crops**, Kalamazoo, MI. (269) 624-6233.

[www.oikostreecrops.com](http://www.oikostreecrops.com).

**Whitman Farms**, Salem, OR. (503) 585-8728.

[www.whitmanfarms.com](http://www.whitmanfarms.com).

**Woodlanders, Inc.**, Aiken, SC. (803) 648-7522. [www.woodlanders.net](http://www.woodlanders.net).

## Resources

### Manual of Woody Landscape Plants

(6th edition), by Michael A. Dirr. Stipes Publishing, Champaign, Illinois, 2009.

**Native Trees for North American Landscapes** by Guy Sternberg with Jim Wilson. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2004.

eye (*A. californica*, Zones 7–9, 9–6) superficially resembles bottlebrush buckeye. But the similarities stop there. Generally multi-trunked, with spreading, sinuous branches, it forms a broadly rounded, picturesque shrub or small tree generally growing 15 to 25 feet tall and wide over time. Its beauty is further enhanced by its blue-green foliage and smooth, ghostly gray bark. Although it sometimes defoliates in early summer, it is as striking out of leaf as in.

“In a small garden setting, it can be a very attractive tree,” says Bruce Reed, nursery manager at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in California. “Even naked, the tree looks handsome—the mature fruits hang on after the leaves fall and are quite ornamental, splitting to expose the glossy brown seeds.” According to Reed, one of the problems homeowners encounter is caused by overwatering during the tree’s dormant period in summer and fall. “In California, it grows best in a well-drained situation with winter and spring water only,” he says.

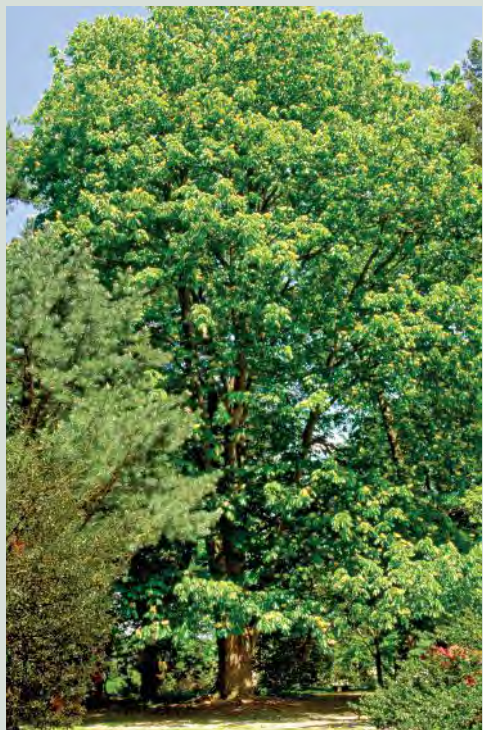
Introduced to horticulture during the Gold Rush, California buckeye remains one of the best and most underutilized woody plants for California and southern

## THE BIG BUCKEYES

For gardeners who have space for statuesque shade trees, two American native buckeyes are worth consideration.

### YELLOW BUCKEYE

A medium to large tree native to the Appalachians and lower Midwest, yellow buckeye (*A. flava*, Zones 3–8, 8–3) contributes to the garden in every season. Compact,



Yellow buckeye—not for the small garden.

to deep-yellow flowers dot its branches just as the foliage emerges, creating an elegant early spring tableau. The five-fingered leaves usually remain verdant and healthy through summer before morphing to showy sunset hues in fall. In winter, attention shifts to the handsome bark, whose flaking, patchwork surface suggests something from the canvas of a contemporary painting. Even the plump, tan, thin-walled fruits speak of good breeding: They lack the fearsome spines of horse chestnut.

Yellow buckeye crosses readily with most other buckeyes, producing a goulash of hybrids and selections. Among those that will outgrow small gardens are ‘Autumn Splendor’—a dense, round-headed, relatively compact (30- to 40-foot) cultivar from South Dakota—and the somewhat larger ‘Homestead’.

Both feature disease-resistant foliage, superior cold-hardiness, and good red fall color—the last is not surprising, considering both have *A. glabra* in their pedigree.

### OHIO BUCKEYE

The other native *Aesculus*, Ohio buckeye (*A. glabra*, Zones 3–7, 7–3) is more modest in most respects. Native to the lower Midwest from Pennsylvania west to Nebraska and south to Kansas, its greenish-yellow, mid-spring blooms go largely unnoticed among the large, five-spoked leaves, which expand weeks before those of many other trees. Its rounded habit and dense healthy foliage prompt neither scorn nor praise in summer, and its scaly gray bark turns few heads in winter. But when fall comes, modesty goes. Its autumn color spans the bonfire spectrum from rich pumpkin yellow to five-alarm red, and at its brightest rivals that of any tree. At one time, Ohioans would carry the glossy rounded seeds as a cure for rheumatism; nowadays, some people keep them as a good luck charm. They are toxic if ingested, however, so should be kept away from young children.

Several cultivars have been selected for autumn incandescence, including ‘Fall Red’ and ‘J.N. Select’. Spring foliage can also be colorful, with some Ohio buckeyes flushing in showy bronze or mahogany hues.

Among the best of its many hybrids is *A. ×bushii*, a hybrid with *A. pavia*. Superior forms become medium-sized trees with showy red flowers, attractive flaking bark, good yellow fall color, and bronze-toned new leaves.

—R.S.

Pacific Northwest gardens. One unfortunate characteristic is that its nectar and pollen are toxic to the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*). Native bees, however, browse the flowers with impunity.

There’s really only one readily available cultivar, ‘Canyon Pink’, which offers lilac-pink flowers in relatively condensed clusters. Introduced by the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, this outstanding selection remains scarce, partly because it is propagated by grafting.

As for hybridization, few if any plant breeders have attempted to mate California buckeye with the Asian horse chestnut, to which it is closely related. Crosses with Japanese horse chestnut (*A. turbinata*), Chinese horse chestnut (*A. chinensis*), or the majestic Indian horse chestnut (*A. indica*) might yield spectacular results.



‘Canyon Pink’, a grafted cultivar of California buckeye, has pink flower spikes.

Rather than wringing my hands over the untapped garden potential in this genus, however, I prefer to focus on the positive and continue to enjoy the many fine plants that are currently available. For most of us throughout North America, there’s a buckeye that will make a charming and in-scale addition in our small to mid-size gardens.

*Russell Stafford is the proprietor of Odyssey Bulbs, a mail-order company specializing in unusual varieties of bulbous plants. A horticulturist, plant ecologist, and writer, he lives in South Lancaster, Massachusetts.*

# taking cues from Nature

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY KAREN BUSSOLINI

Pennsylvania-based landscape designer Larry Weaner blends ecology and horticulture to create sustainable native landscapes.

**F**OLLOWING IN the footsteps of pioneering 20th-century practitioners such as Jens Jensen in the Midwest, modern ecological designers seek to create landscapes that are pleasing and useful to people while functioning in much the same way as natural plant communities.

Yet designers who strive to work in partnership with nature face an uphill battle. Sara Stein, in her groundbreaking 1993 book *Noah's Garden: Restoring the Ecology of Our Own Backyards*, described how traditional gardening and landscaping practices had devastating ecological



Landscape designer Larry Weaner

consequences to the land in rural and suburban areas. The question of how to mend this fractured and depleted patchwork landscape is being deliberated by a diverse community of plant scientists, wildlife biologists, entomologists, propagators, land-care professionals, restoration ecologists and home gardeners.

Many have found a supportive community of like-minded individuals through the New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL) symposium, an annual event initiated by Pennsylvania landscape designer Larry Weaner in 1992. Many of Weaner's col-



**At this property, landscape designer Larry Weaner encouraged white meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba* var. *latifolia*), a low-maintenance, thicket-forming native shrub, to develop a dense colony around a birch grove, crowding out aggressive wild blackberries and other invasive woody weeds. Mowing lets the shrubs spread into a pre-determined zone but no further.**

leagues view him as an influential and visionary thinker in the still-evolving field of ecological landscape design.

“Larry Weaner’s work as a designer and as an educator, through the conferences he has supported, place him in a unique group of people who have raised the awareness of the fact it is possible to create, restore, and manage landscapes that are at the same time ecologically sound and experientially rich,” says Darrel Morrison, a noted landscape architect and former professor at the University of Georgia. “His approach, while centered in the Northeast, has implications for landscape design in a much broader geographic area.”

Doug Tallamy, a professor of wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark and author of *Bringing Nature Home* (Timber Press, 2009) is a regular speaker at the NDAL symposium. “Larry was ahead of the curve, but the curve has caught up with him because we now realize the function of plants,” says Tallamy. “They’re not just ornamental, they have an ecological role that has to play out in our landscapes. People once thought that natives weren’t good for landscaping. Larry’s major contribution

is that he is showing people they are.”

### BLENDING ECOLOGY AND HORTICULTURE

Weaner has one foot firmly planted in the world of horticulture and one in the science of ecology. Working primarily on the East Coast on properties both large and small, he creates artful self-sustaining communities of native plants in partnership with nature. He is particularly well known for creating designed meadows (for a sidebar on tips for creating meadows, see the web special linked to this article on the AHS website).

He traces his interest in sustainability to a summer job working with Philadelphia-based landscape designer Eugene Varady. One day, Varady posed the question, “Do you think what we do is good for the environment?” They talked about how planting things seemed like it had to be good and how it did sometimes feed the birds, but then again they did use herbicides and pesticides, which probably weren’t so good. Weaner has been asking questions, questioning the obvious, observing nature, and tracking down relevant research ever since.

After earning a degree in ornamental horticulture, Weaner began designing

landscapes that were loose and informal with lots of curvy lines. Billing himself as a “natural” landscape designer, he tried to recreate the sense of mystery and discovery he experienced as a child in a patch of woods in his Philadelphia neighborhood. But he slowly came to the realization that the gardens were static compositions that took a lot of work to keep from changing, while nature was endlessly fascinating because it constantly changed.

Taking a three-day course on establishing native meadows with legendary landscape architects A.E. Bye and Ted Browning at Harvard Graduate School of Design made him realize that a naturalistic style wasn’t necessarily like nature at all—and certainly wasn’t self-sustaining in the same way as naturally occurring plant communities. “[Bye and Browning] taught me that things happen in nature for a reason,” says Weaner. “A meadow isn’t just a place with pretty plants and no straight lines. Its patterns, processes, and interactions make it what it is. If you want to plant a meadow and don’t understand the underlying ecology, it’s not going to happen.” Weaner also studied the work of ecologists Frank Egler and William Nier-



In this Connecticut meadow, different plant communities are separated by a mowed path. On the left is a wet swale planted with false sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*); on the drier side to the right is cutleaf coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) and gray coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*).



In this Weaner landscape, eastern columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) and alumroot (*Heuchera villosa*), formed self-sustaining colonies alongside the limestone foundation of the house.

ing. “What I learned,” he says, “is they weren’t planting and arranging every plant like gardeners do, they were setting a process in motion.”

### WHAT IS NATURAL DESIGN?

Weaner’s research, observation, and practical experience have combined to inform his design philosophy. He describes natural landscape design as having a positive influence on the surrounding environment and he invokes the Hippocratic oath, “first, do no harm.” In Weaner’s definition, what constitutes a natural landscape is dependent on a number of factors.

To start, it provides wildlife habitat through use of native plants. “There has been an attitude that if you throw greenery out there, or if it has berries, you’re doing something for wildlife,” says Weaner. “But wildlife has needs that are more

specific. Native wildlife evolved with native plants and needs them to survive.” And many plants depend upon specific animals or insects to spread their seeds.

Another important consideration is conserving water by using drought tolerant plants and rainscaping techniques to reduce runoff from gardens and hardscapes. This theme of resource conservation also applies to reducing air and water pollution caused by use of lawn mowers and synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

Preserving a sense of place is also significant for Weaner. He strives to create aesthetic and ecological continuity with the surrounding regional plant communities and geographic features.

Another of Weaner’s goals is to provide an environment where people become closer to nature and experience it over time rather than as static plant vignettes. Plants

### New Directions in the American Landscape Symposium

Now co-sponsored by the Connecticut College Arboretum and the Morris Arboretum, the annual two-day symposium is held each year in winter.

For more information, visit the symposium website ([www.ndal.org](http://www.ndal.org)).

move around; something is always changing, and there are always surprises.

In the end, one of the key goals for Weaner is to create a landscape that, over time, requires less maintenance than a conventional landscape. This means people with busy lives can spend more time enjoying their garden and less time taking care of it. “I’ve never had a client ask me to design a high-maintenance landscape,” quips Weaner.

### GARDENS, RECONSIDERED

Accomplishing these goals requires changing the way we think about gardens. A garden designer, Weaner says, would look at a property and say, “What do I want this place to be?” A restoration ecologist, on the other hand, would ask, “What does nature want this place to be?” Weaner sees his job as blending the two approaches, creating a sustainable foundation with an ornamental overlay. “It is critical to look at the inclinations of the site, to see what is already there, to understand where the plant communities want to go and what the clients want,” he says. “The point isn’t to create a couple pockets of natives, it is to create an entire property that has an overall positive effect on the surrounding landscape.”

As Weaner puts it, “Nature is too big for us to handle, so we can’t treat it like a garden.” If so, how do we learn how plants grow in the wild and apply that understanding to a garden setting?

First, we need more information on the plant’s habitat (dry rocky uplands, coastal plains, oak-hickory forest, etc.), how it grows in community, and its role in the process of succession. Second, we need to understand whether it is widely adaptable or requires specific conditions, its relative competitiveness, and how all these factors play out in space and over time so plants can be chosen for their function, rather



Filling niches in time and space in a foundation planting, golden ragwort (*Senecio aureus*) and alumroot cultivars ‘Autumn Bride’ and ‘Atropurpurea’ co-exist under leggy native shrubs and taller pink turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*), which fills in later.

than just for ornamental qualities.

Weaner cites the example of eastern columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), a short-lived perennial native to eastern North America. In ecological terms, it is an early successional plant that quickly colonizes disturbed areas, especially in rocky limestone soils, where it is soon replaced by more competitive plants. Weaner put a drift of columbine in a Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, border with slower-growing, longer-lived, more-competitive perennials. It bloomed prolifically the first year, in patches the next, and then petered out. But it reappeared in splendor along with *Heuchera villosa*, another lime and gravel-loving plant, between the house’s limestone wall and a path of stepping stones set in gravel. Aided by frequent disturbance from scuffing feet, the two plants formed a dense, self-perpetuating colony that sends seed out to any receptive niche.

On a property where excavation for a new house was about to start, Weaner noticed that there were patches of native grasses on rolling hillsides off to one side. This told him that the site, much of which had been highly disturbed, was inclined toward being grassland. So, rather than re-

grading, bringing in topsoil, killing off the native grasses and planting lawn everywhere, as is so often done, he created a small lawn and incorporated large areas of designed meadows beyond. These sweeps of grassland required very little input and could take care of themselves while supporting wildlife and reducing runoff.

In a Connecticut woodland, Weaner saw that desirable woodland natives Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*), and hay-scented fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) didn’t exceed 15 inches, while the

flower stalks of unwanted garlic mustard towered above them. Trimming everything except native tree and shrub seedlings taller than 18 inches prevented the invasive garlic mustard from setting seed, depleted its resources, gave the desirable plants light, and reduced competition so they could reproduce on their own.

Recognizing that people do want some colorful plants around their homes, Weaner often uses native cultivars and plants that fill complementary niches in space or over time, but don’t necessarily grow together in the wild, for aesthetic effect near the house in garden beds and foundation plantings.

## Resources

**The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center**, [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org).

**The USDA Plants Database**, <http://plants.usda.gov>.

**Native Trees, Shrubs and Vines for Rural and Urban America** by Gary Hightshoe. John Wiley, Inc., New York, New York, 1988.

**Bringing Nature Home** by Doug Tallamy. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. 2009.

## RETHINKING GARDENING TECHNIQUES

Farther away from homes, plant communities are more literally copied from nature. Weaner suggests thinking in terms of ecological zones—fern glades, grasslands, woodlands, shrubby thickets, rocky outcrops and other habitats and plant communities found in nature—rather than artificial themes such as “the white garden,” “the perennial garden,” or “the herb garden.” Establishing and maintaining these plant communities re-





In this south-facing woodland, invasive garlic mustard was eliminated by encouraging native perennials such as Canada mayflower and hay-scented fern to form thick colonies.

quires making good selections and then stacking the deck to favor desirable plants. It also involves re-thinking some standard gardening practices such as:

**Amending the soil.** Our tendency as gardeners is to amend poor soil on a sunny, gravelly hillside, but those conditions are perfect for little bluestem grass and butterfly weed and probably too dry for weeds. Improving the soil would give competitive advantage to the weeds. Instead, Weaner says, select plants suited to the soil that is already there and they will thrive.

**Cultivating and weeding.** Disturbing the soil encourages weeds by exposing seeds in the soil to sunlight, where they can germinate in bare soil without competition. Once a dense native groundcover is established, it will decrease weeds by shading out seedlings. Weaner recommends cutting weeds at the base instead, and painting the stubs of invasive woody plants with

herbicide or torching them. Weeding in nature is done by competition from other plants, plants that are dominant because they are in the right habitat.

**Mulching.** Rather than putting down mulch, rely on ground-covering plants that overlap and leave no empty space.

**Spring planting.** Native meadow grasses and flowers are warm-season, heat-adapted plants. If you wait until July to seed a meadow, you bypass the season when cool-season weeds are most competitive and give an advantage to the natives.

**Fertilizing.** Plants adapted to the site have the advantage and don't need fertilizer. Weeds, out of their element, make better use of it. Weaner firmly believes that fertilizing favors weeds.

**Watering.** Once established, plants selected for their suitability to the prevailing soil and climate don't need to be watered. As with fertilizing, watering benefits weeds

more than the well-adapted natives.

Weaner says much of the information needed to make good decisions on plant selection and placement is found not in horticultural books, but in field guides and other references on regional plant communities. He also advises gardeners to observe plant communities in nearby natural areas. Local nature centers, botanical gardens, and arboreta that have displays based on habitat—such as the Crosby Arboretum in Mississippi and the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden in California—are treasure troves of information because they explain what we may have seen in nature, but don't know how to interpret or put to use.

Although specific plants adapted to ecological niches vary tremendously throughout the country, the underlying principles are often predictable. Even a small property offers opportunities to use acquired knowledge to save time and effort. One example Weaner cites is Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*), which requires staking in a standard garden setting, but stands tall in a wet meadow—even a tiny one, such as a rain garden—when supported by a community of tall grasses.

“We have a responsibility to treat the land as more than our personal paint canvas,” says Weaner. “The landscape designer should be part artist and part repairman, creating beauty based on ecology. It's a partnership between the planned and what nature dictates.”

## WIDENING THE CIRCLE

Through the NDAL symposia and other educational forums, Weaner is sharing his insights and experience with gardeners, horticulturists, landscape architects, and nurseryowners. “The work Larry does acquaints the traditional nursery industry with native plants and is making inroads with traditional gardeners,” says Robert Grese, an associate professor of landscape architecture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and director of the university's Nichols Arboretum. “Most importantly, Larry sees the big picture when it comes to handling long-term maintenance issues and is training people how to care for native landscapes over the long term.”

*Photographer, writer, and lecturer Karen Bussolini gardens in Connecticut.*

## David Creech: Saving Southern Natives

by Mary Yee

ONCE THOUGHT to be extinct, Texas trailing phlox (*Phlox nivalis* ssp. *texensis*) is one of the state's most endangered native plants. A creeping subshrub with needlelike foliage and pink spring flowers, it occurs naturally in the pineywood (long-leaf pine savanna) ecosystem in East Texas. "It's megacharismatic," says David Creech, Regents Professor of Horticulture at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) in Nacogdoches,



David Creech with a plot of Texas trailing phlox at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Texas. Creech has long been active in helping to conserve this and a number of other threatened Texas natives. Efforts to reintroduce Texas trailing phlox, however, have been mixed. Many new plantings, says Creech, "end up as deer and rabbit candy." He and other horticulturists and conservationists are still learning the best ways to successfully propagate and reintroduce native populations of threatened plants.

Last year, Creech received the Sidney B. Meadows Award for Merit from the International Plant Propagator's Society Southern Region for his efforts in plant rescue and the development of new plant introductions. Now semi-retired from teaching, Creech still serves as director of the SFA Mast Arboretum and Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden and is co-director of Pineywoods Native Plant Center (PNPC). The PNPC will host the 5th Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference this June (for details, visit <http://arboretum.sfasu.edu>).

Managing Editor and Art Director Mary Yee spoke to Creech to find out how the PNPC is helping to conserve Texas's endangered native plants and also develop new plant varieties for southern gardens.

### Mary Yee: How did the Pineywoods Native Plant Center come into being?

**David Creech:** In 1998, my colleague, Dr. James C. Kroll, received a grant to create the Forest Resources Institute that included 40 acres of land on the north side of the campus. At the time, native plants were mixed into the arboretum's various theme gardens, and a small "endangered plants of East Texas" garden never attracted much attention. So when James and I discussed what we should do with the 40 acres of land, the idea of dedicating it solely to native plants struck me as a great opportunity. We shook hands on the idea, and the Pineywoods Native Plant Center was born.

In April 2000, Lady Bird Johnson made the PNPC the third affiliated garden of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center [in Austin, Texas].

### What is the PNPC's role in saving endangered Texas plants?

First and foremost, we are horticulturists here—we grow plants. By connecting our talent with the reintroduction strategies of botanists in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Center for Plant Conservation, and other agencies, we've built significant numbers of several endangered species by acting as the "grower" on the projects.

We feel that the first two or three years of establishment make or break a project. Creating a "self-sustaining" colony in the wild is measured in terms of decades. We're now convinced that introducing thousands of small herbaceous plants into an appropriate habitat is more likely to result in success than introducing a few here and there. As an affiliated garden with the Lady

Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, we cooperate with its botanists and horticulturists, and our mission is similar, except we focus on the plants of the pineywoods.

### What are the challenges of propagating and reintroducing endangered plants into the wild?

With Texas trailing phlox, we learned quickly that deer can wreak havoc with a new planting, particularly if the introduced plants have been heavily fertilized in the nursery. Lack of fire in the habitat and subsequent shading by other types of vegetation create challenges for the successful reintroduction of this plant.

### What are some other endangered plants that the PNPC has worked on?

One is *Hibiscus dasycalyx*, the Neches



Left: A xeric garden at the PNPC. Above: *Gaillardia aestivalis* var. *winklerii* 'Grape Sensation' is an SFA Gardens introduction.

River rose mallow. It's found in only a few spots along the Neches River, all on private lands. It's endangered because of agricultural practices and genetic swamping with more prevalent species such as *H. moscheutos* and *H. laevis*. We've been successful in reintroducing plants into appropriate habitats on public land, so the long-term survival of the species is good. Still, challenges exist. Wild pigs destroyed one of our wet marsh plots at the Davey Crockett National Forest.

*Gaillardia aestivalis* var. *winklerii*, the Texas white firewheel, has been easier to keep from the brink of extinction because it's also a showy garden plant. We've been promoting it as a full-sun, dry garden landscape species for years.

Right now we're working on the Kentucky lady slipper (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*), a very rare and showy terrestrial orchid. It's our first attempt at orchid propagation via tissue-cultured plants from East Texas germplasm. Their num-

bers aren't overwhelming, but we hope to make our first plantings this fall.

**Part of the PNPC's work is to introduce improved selections of plants suited to the South. Tell us about some of these.**

I've been collaborating on baldcypress (*Taxodium* spp.) research with Professor Yin Yunlong at the Nanjing Forestry University in China since 2001. *Taxodium distichum* 'Nanjing Beauty' was our first introduction from that program. My colleagues at SFA have also made introductions. Dawn Stover developed a Texas white firewheel with dark centers and purple petals called 'Grape Sensation'. Greg Grant's introductions include *Tecoma stans* 'Gold Star', *Hibiscus* 'Peppermint Flare', and *Lupinus texensis* 'Alamo Fire'.

Our latest exciting development is a burgundy-foliaged Chickasaw plum (*Prunus angustifolia*) that is currently at six evaluation spots across the South. We think it'll be popular with the "natives" and "edibles" crowd.

*Mary Yee is managing editor and art director for The American Gardener.*

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## Basil Offers a World of Flavor

by Barbara Perry Lawton



**L**IKE MANY classic culinary herbs, basil is a member of the mint family and shares those indelible minty characteristics—equal and opposite leaves on a square stem and lipped flowers. Genetically malleable, basil comes in a variety of forms, sizes, colors, scents, and flavors. The genus *Ocimum* is native to widespread areas of Asia and Africa as well as Central and South America. Botanists now recognize anywhere from 60 to 150 basil species, and hundreds of named selections have been made.

Although basil is a traditional garden companion to tomatoes and is often served with them, it is also a valued ingredient in the cuisines of many countries, including Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Basil's rich, tangy flavor improves meat, fish, egg, and vegetable dishes. And it is the key ingredient in many pesto recipes.

Basil can be dried and used in potpourri and to make herbal wreaths. Further, it has a long tradition in medicinal usage and is especially well known as a treatment for digestive complaints—try a basil tea the next time you have an upset stomach.

### GROWING GUIDELINES

Because basil is hardy only in frost-free areas, gardeners in cooler regions must treat it as an annual. It is wonderfully easy to grow. Give it a sunny location, a soil pH that is between 5.5 and 6.5, and a well-drained soil that is moderately rich in organic matter, and it will thrive.



'Genovese', above, is a popular variety of sweet basil, a key ingredient in the flavorful Italian sauce called pesto, top.

Avoid over-fertilizing, as basil, similar to other mint family herbs, will be more flavorful and richer in its essential oils if grown in soil on the lean side. Mulch the soil to conserve moisture. Ensure that the soil remains moist but not soggy, and water at the base of the plants so that the foliage remains dry.

As soon as new seedlings are well established, begin pinching or pruning the top set of leaves on each stem to encourage branching—this will result in a bushier plant and slow the development of flowers. Following these easy directions will result in healthy plants that quickly grow into bushy, vigorous specimens.

### PESTS AND DISEASES

Although basil has a well-earned reputation as an insect repellent, it nonetheless may be subject to pests that include aphids, mealybugs, grasshoppers, and Japanese beetles. Texas gardeners particularly have had problems with grasshoppers while those in the lower Midwest have cursed mealybugs and fungus gnats. Wash away pests with a strong spray of cold water from a hose. If that fails, use a pepper spray or insecticidal soap spray to reduce pest populations.

Although basil is said to be susceptible to a number of fungal and bacterial diseases, with proper care, including well-drained soil, you should have no problems. In the central Midwest region where I live, I have never had any pest or disease problems with basil.

### RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

There are so many varieties of basil that recommending and selecting just a few is challenging. And basil is notoriously promiscuous, which results in a constant increase in cultivated varieties. *Ocimum basilicum*, the species known as sweet basil, is the best known and most often used of all the culinary basil. Used prominently in Italian cuisine, it has a sweet, pungent fragrance and

## Planting Basics

### GETTING STARTED

Growing basil from seed is easy. Easier yet is to grow basil from seedlings purchased at any reliable local nursery. Once you have basil actively growing, you can propagate it from cuttings. Take cuttings that include a half dozen true leaves, strip the leaves from the lower half and place in a small container of water. When new rootlets appear in two to three weeks, plant in a small pot or out in the garden.

### PLANTING

Plant basil outdoors only when all threat of frost has passed and the soil is warm. Broadcast seeds on prepared garden soil and keep the seedbed moist. If starting seeds indoors, sow the seeds four to six weeks before the average last frost. If you use a lot of basil, make several plantings for a continuous supply. For fresh basil year round, you can grow basil indoors if you have a bright sunlit window or a good grow-light setup.

### SPACING

Spacing will depend upon which basil varieties you are growing; most will be satisfied with a spacing of eight to 18 inches between plants. Check the seed packets for individual space recommendations.

### DAYS TO FIRST HARVEST

This will depend upon the warmth of the environment. Under ideal, hot, sunny conditions, you may be able to harvest the first young leaves in only three to four weeks.

## Sources

**Garden Medicinals & Culinaries**, Earlysville, VA. (540) 872-8351. [www.gardenmedicinals.com](http://www.gardenmedicinals.com).

**Johnny's Selected Seeds**, Winslow, ME. (877) 564-6697. [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com).

**Ornamental Edibles**, San Jose, CA. (408) 528-7333. [www.ornamentaledibles.com](http://www.ornamentaledibles.com).

**Well-Sweep Herb Farm**, Port Murray, NJ. (908) 852-5390. [www.well-sweep.com](http://www.well-sweep.com).

## Resources

**Basil: An Herb Lovers Guide** by Thomas DeBaggio and Susan Belsinger. Interweave Press, Loveland, Colorado, 1996.

**Basil: An Herb Society of America Guide** by the Herb Society of America. Kirtland, Ohio, 2003. Online at [www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org).



Basil comes in many forms, including 'Greek Columnar', above left, and 'Purple Ruffles', right.

tastes somewhat like licorice. Although other species are grown, most selections are cultivars of this species.

'Blue Spice' is a fairly new cultivar with a spicy fragrance and a hint of vanilla. It is recommended for dishes that call for a sweet basil flavor such as fruit dishes, marinades, dressings, and chicken dishes.

'Greek Columnar' is more pungent than other basil and thus is used in hearty dishes such as stews. It grows in an attractive dense column to 36 inches tall.

'Purple Ruffles' is a beauty that grows up to 18 inches tall and has ruffled purple leaves. The flavor and aroma have more licorice and cinnamon characteristics than sweet basil.

'Spicy Globe' (*O. basilicum* 'Minimum') is a smaller, more compact variety. Its dense, rounded habit makes it a good choice for knot gardens. It is also suited for containers and small patios. Its flavor is spicier than other basil, which makes it a good choice for Thai and Italian dishes.

Other well-known basil cultivars, often named for their taste or place of origin, are 'Anise', 'Cinnamon', 'Genovese', 'Sweet Thai', and 'Siam Queen' ('True Thai').

## ENJOYING THE HARVEST

Harvest basil in the morning when the dew has evaporated and before the heat of the day. Cut back the leaves and branches to about one-quarter inch above the nodes. Pinch back flower buds as soon as they appear to keep plants producing new leaves. You can begin harvesting the leaves when the plants have three pairs of true leaves. Once plants are growing vigorously, you may be able to harvest weekly.

Leaves can be used fresh or dried. To dry basil, hang small bunches upside down in a dark, dry room or dry the leaves on a low setting in a microwave oven. Lay the leaves on a paper towel and cover with another paper towel, then set the oven on low and check every couple of minutes. Another way to dry basil is to lay the leaves on trays or foil and put them in a frost-free refrigerator. Whole leaves will dry in about a week; chopped leaves in a few days. You also can freeze basil in ice cube trays. 🌿

*Barbara Perry Lawton is a garden writer based in St. Louis, Missouri.*

## Horticultural News and Research Important to American Gardeners

### SURVEY SHOWS EDIBLE GARDENING TREND STILL GROWING

According to a gardening trends study conducted by the Garden Writers Association Foundation (GWAF), the significant increase in household vegetable



gardening reported in 2009 is expected to continue through this year. Conducted in November, the 2009 Edibles Gardening Trends Research Report involved telephone interviews of more than 900 households throughout the United States.

Survey responses reflected a definite increase in gardening with edibles in 2009—more than one-third of the participants who reported having a garden in 2008 grew more edible plants the following year. The report also showed an interest from novice gardeners, as seven percent of the households with gardens in 2009 were made up of individuals who had no prior experience with growing edible plants. As for 2010, 66 percent of the respondents said they plan on growing edibles again this year, and more than half of those households stated an intention to grow more than they did in 2009.

Gene Sumi, a certified professional horticulturist and the education coordinator at Homestead Gardens in Davidsonville, Maryland, witnessed the heightened interest in vegetable gardening last year when the nursery and garden center ran out of vegetable seeds and plugs. “All signs are that these trends will continue this spring,” says Sumi, and he notes that expectations for another busy season are reflected in

Homestead’s larger inventory of cool-weather vegetable crops. Sumi points to the recent economic downturn as one possible cause for customers’ renewed interest in growing their own foods, and adds that the availability of dwarf cultivars of fruit trees and shrubs, and products such as portable self-watering containers, makes gardening possible even for people with limited space.

Mail-order seed suppliers have also seen a boost of sales for edible plant seeds in the last two years. Renee Shepherd, founder of Renee’s Garden in Felton, California, says the trend is also making her optimistic about the next generation of gardeners. “After years of declining veggie seed sales,” she observes, “the whole cycle has completely reversed and we are experiencing tremendous interest from a new generation of gardeners who want to, for the first time, start a garden to grow food.”

### CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN EVALUATES SPEEDWELLS

The Chicago Botanic Garden’s Plant Evaluation Program has released the results of two long-term studies comparing 64 species and cultivars of speedwells (*Veronica* spp.) and seven cultivars of



*Veronica spicata* ‘Baby Doll’, left, and *V. gentianoides*, right, are among the speedwells that earned top marks in the Chicago Botanic Garden’s 10-year evaluation.

Culver’s root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*). The goal of the Garden’s program is to carry out scientific trials of plant groups commonly available to gardeners in the upper Midwest. The evaluations focus mainly on ornamental value, pest and disease resistance, and hardiness.

The speedwells, a member of the figwort (Scrophulariaceae) family, are treasured for their low maintenance, variety of forms, and long bloom time. “Speedwells of all types, from prostrate spreading to upright bushy, are prized as long-blooming, easy-care perennials,” says Plant Evaluation Manager Richard Hawke. “The Garden’s comparative trial tested old favorites against many new selections and discovered a variety of top-performing speedwells for gardens.”

Trials began in 1999 on a somewhat harsh site with exposure to wind and full-sun in USDA Hardiness Zone 5b. To mimic home garden conditions, the plants were watered sparingly and were not fertilized. After 10 years, seven of the speedwells received the highest ratings of good-excellent, in part for their lack of disease and pest problems and profuse flower production. Among these are *Veronica* ‘Fairytale’, *V.* ‘Giles Van Hees’, *V. austriaca*



ca 'Ionian Skies', and *V. longifolia* 'Blue John'. Another 18 selections also performed very well, receiving ratings of four out of five stars.

Evaluations of Culver's root also began in 1999, and the test plots were exposed to the same conditions as the speedwells. Once considered a type of *Veronica*, Culver's root differs in its flower structure and leaf arrangement and is a frequently chosen native perennial for North American gardens. Four of the seven cultivars tested—'Apollo', 'Fascination', 'Lavendelturm', and 'Pink Glow'—received good ratings, primarily because they remained attractive longer than the others. Dieback and stem breakage after flowering are common setbacks of *Veronicastrum*, especially if grown in shady areas. The top-rated cultivars benefited from being cut back to the base in late summer to promote more vigorous growth. To read the entire report, visit [www.chicagobotanic.org/research/plant\\_evaluation/](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/research/plant_evaluation/).

## GENETICALLY MODIFIED EUCALYPTUS TREES RAISE CONCERN

In 2005, the joint biotech and tree improvement venture ArborGen, LLC, which is based in Summerville, South Carolina, planted its first field test site of genetically engineered (GE) eucalyptus tree hybrids in Baldwin County, Alabama. Since then, the company has requested deregulation from the USDA to commercialize its freeze-tolerant eucalyptus trees. It has also applied for permits from the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to continue research on existing sites, plant more trees, and allow additional test trees to flower.

The eucalyptus ArborGen has developed is a hybrid of two species, *Eucalyptus grandis* and *E. urophylla*, native to Australia and Indonesia, respectively. Eucalyptus is one of the fastest-growing hardwoods, and ArborGen has genetically modified the hybrid to make it more cold hardy so that it can be grown commercially in the southeastern United States. Because of concerns about its potential invasiveness, ArborGen implanted the hybrid with a gene that prevents pollen production.

Doria Gordon, director of conservation science at the Nature Conservancy in Florida, argues that this safeguard does not

make the trees 100 percent sterile. The Nature Conservancy has advised the USDA that the GE eucalyptus trees should not be allowed to flower in regions where a source of viable eucalyptus pollen is in close proximity, because the trees are still capable of producing seed. Gordon says that because there are currently non-sterile eucalyptus in cultivation in Florida, and since *E. grandis* has begun to naturalize in parts of Florida and is invasive in other places, such as South Africa, there is concern that the same thing could happen with its hybrid.

Les Pearson, ArborGen's director of regulatory affairs, says that the company "has completed a number of assessments and the scientific evidence supports that this product will not be invasive, even though we are the first to admit there is no such thing as 100 percent certainty."

The USDA has issued a draft environmental assessment in response to ArborGen's latest requests for permits (to view the assessment, visit [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)). To learn more about ArborGen, visit [www.arborgen.com](http://www.arborgen.com).



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## GERANIUMS MAY BE THE KEY TO CONTROLLING JAPANESE BEETLES

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists in Ohio recently began an in depth investigation into findings—dating back to as early as the 1920s—that the flowers of the zonal geranium (*Pelargonium zonale*) are deadly to Japanese beetles. The bright, colorful blooms of geranium attract the



**Japanese beetles are one of the most destructive pests of ornamental plants.**

beetles, which are known to feed on nearly 300 species of plants, but contain compounds that cause temporary paralysis in the destructive ornamental pest within 30 minutes after consumption. This paralysis, which can last up to 24 hours, is not necessarily fatal in a laboratory setting, but when it occurs under field conditions the beetles are often eaten by predators before they can recover.

Entomologist Chris Ranger, who works at the ARS Application Technology Research Unit in Wooster, Ohio, is attempting to exploit the effects of the poisonous compounds, which have been isolated from geranium flowers, by using them to create a natural, botanical control product. Such a product would have substantial economic implications for growers of ornamental and turf plants and home gardeners—an estimated \$450 million is spent each year to replace plants damaged by Japanese beetles and to pay for methods for controlling them.

## MORE 2010 PLANT AWARD WINNERS

Each year, the Garden Club of America (GCA) awards an exceptional cultivar or species of a North American native plant with the Montine McDaniel Freeman Horticulture Medal. The GCA, which is made up of nearly 200 regional clubs in 40

## PEOPLE and PLACES in the NEWS

### Insurance Settlement Helps Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Recover From Fire Damage

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden has announced that it reached an insurance settlement of \$6.8 million to help pay for the damage sustained in the Jesusita Fire. The May 2009 fire destroyed 60 acres of the Garden, along with tools, vehicles, and many structures (an article about the fire was published in “Gardener’s Notebook” in the July/August 2009 issue of *The American Gardener*).



Santa Barbara Botanic Garden’s meadow

Reconstruction of the home demonstration garden deck has already begun, but the insurance settlement will help fund its completion, as well as rebuild greenhouses, the Gane House, and other damaged structures. “The insurance settlement funds will go a long way toward bringing the Garden back. These funds, along with the Vital Mission Plan, will ensure the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is once again a world class research and education facility,” says Garden President Ed Schneider.

Although acres of trees and other plantings were destroyed in the disaster, a welcome surprise came with the early spring this year as large numbers of rare, native wildflowers have already begun to bloom. To learn more about the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and its ongoing restoration efforts, go to [www.sbbg.org](http://www.sbbg.org).

### Lawrence Halprin Honored in Cultural Landscape Foundation Oral History Project

The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) recently chose the late Lawrence Halprin, a prominent landscape architect whose innovative work spans the country, to be the focus of the fourth edition of its Pioneers of American Landscape Design Oral History Project. The TCLF is a not-for-profit foundation that aims to increase public awareness of historic American landscapes and preserve them for the future.



Lawrence Halprin

Halprin was known for incorporating a sense of movement into the landscape. Among the landscapes attributed to his design are Heritage Park in Fort Worth, Texas; the Donnell Garden in Sonoma, California; and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. You can hear clips from the Halprin oral history or download the interview transcript at <http://tclf.org/oral-history/lawrence-halprin>.

### Park Seed and Jackson & Perkins will Restructure

On April 5, the Geo. W. Park Seed Company, Inc., Park Seed Wholesale Company, and Jackson & Perkins (J&P), which are sister companies based in Greenwood, South Carolina, announced that they voluntarily filed to restructure under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. The decision came after considerable efforts were made by the companies to cut costs and implement payment programs.

Park Seed and J&P President and CEO Chas Fox attributes the companies’ cash-flow problems to the economic downturn that began in 2008. “All of our brands experienced significant decreases in sales for core products, including roses, perennials, and garden-inspired gifts,” he says.

Park Seed and J&P were given 120 days from the date of the bankruptcy filing to create a financial plan that includes a new capital structure. According to a company spokesperson, there will be no change in the normal operations of the companies’ business office, garden center, websites, or service to customers.





Indian pink, above, and Home Run™ shrub rose, right, received honors for 2010.

states, has named Indian pink (*Spigelia marilandica*) as the 2010 Plant of the Year. In addition to being a hummingbird and butterfly magnet, the hardy herbaceous perennial is usually deer resistant, thrives in part to full shade, and boasts vibrant red-and-yellow tubular summer flowers. To learn more about *Spigelia* and to view past winners of the Freeman Medal, visit [www.gcamerica.org](http://www.gcamerica.org).

Another plant that is being honored in 2010 is the shrub rose Home Run™ ('WEKcisbako'), which earned the American Rose Society's (ARS) Members'



Choice Award. This selection has bright velvet red petals and deep green foliage, and was chosen for its disease resistance, reliability, and ease-of-maintenance. Each year, the ARS selects the winner from hundreds of nominations that are submitted by members from around the country. To learn more about Home Run and to see lists of other recommended roses, visit the ARS website at [www.ars.org](http://www.ars.org).

The International Herb Association

(IHA) is among the plant societies that award edibles with an annual honor. Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) has been chosen as 2010's highlighted species by the Herb of the Year Program. The program's selection process requires that the winning herb be considered exceptional in two of three basic categories—medicinal, culinary, and decorative. The IHA publishes a compendium of information on the herb, including recipes and growing information. Visit [www.iherb.org](http://www.iherb.org) to learn more about the IHA and to order a copy of this year's booklet on dill.

To view a list of other 2010 plant awards from around the country, click on the link to "Plant Awards" on the contents page for the March/April issue of *The American Gardener* at [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

### RAFT DESIGNATES 2010 AS THE YEAR OF THE HEIRLOOM APPLE

To stem the rapidly declining number of apple cultivars produced in the United States, the Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT) alliance is promoting the cultivation and use of endangered heir-

LEFT: COURTESY OF BEVERLY FITTS; RIGHT: COURTESY OF ARS

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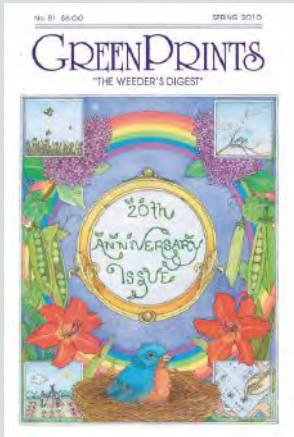
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## Celebrating 20 Years of GreenPrints

This spring, the 80th issue of *GreenPrints: The Weeder's Digest* was published, marking the 20th anniversary of the one-of-a-kind garden magazine.



Editor Pat Stone, who lives in Fairview, North Carolina, started *GreenPrints* in 1990 when he faced the possibility of losing his job at *Mother Earth News*, since the publication was moving its offices and cutting staff. Stone realized that there was already an abundance of how-to garden journals in publication, and he wanted to develop a magazine that, instead, explores the human side of gardening. *GreenPrints* achieves this by sharing personal stories written by gardeners about their gardening experiences, and their occasional mishaps. Also setting the quarterly magazine apart from its contemporaries is its format—it is bound like a paperback book rather than a typical magazine—and the unique sketches

and illustrations that accompany each article.

The 20th anniversary issue of *GreenPrints* is special, says Stone, but not because it is a super-sized edition or includes a vast compilation of his favorite articles. “Literary fireworks or hype didn’t feel to me like that would represent what *GreenPrints* really is: an intimate sharing among gardeners,” he explains. Stone says that the story “Johnny Lilyseed”—an article about a man who plants daylilies around his town in Massachusetts—best captures the theme of the anniversary issue: warmth. Also included in the special spring edition is a reflection by Stone on the past 20 years of *GreenPrints*, and a light-hearted expose titled “10 Things You Didn’t Know About the Editor of *GreenPrints*!”

You can view a sample *GreenPrints* article and link to the publication’s website (<http://greenprints.com>) through a web special linked to the contents page for the online version of this issue. At the *GreenPrints* website you can read sample articles, or download “Pets & Plants,” a free e-book containing classic *GreenPrints* articles.

—Krystal Fogel, Editorial Intern

loom apples. As part of its Forgotten Fruits Initiative, RAFT is encouraging each region of the country to re-introduce at least 90 varieties of endangered apples to orchards, apple-processing facilities such as cideries, and farmers’ markets.

RAFT, which is a partnership of food, farming, environmental, and culinary advocates managed by Slow Food USA, cites the demise of independently operated nurseries as one cause for the loss of the nation’s apple diversity. According to RAFT’s



Preserving heirloom apple varieties is the goal of the Forgotten Fruits Initiative.

Forgotten Fruits Manual & Manifesto, over the past 15 years, 600 such businesses have been lost. RAFT points to the alarming statistics that the cultivar ‘Red Delicious’ accounts for two-thirds of the apples produced in the country, and 90 percent of the apples sold in grocery stores belong to only seven common cultivars.

However, RAFT hopes that increased marketing efforts for heirloom apples and a growing interest in community-supported-agriculture projects will have a positive influence. “Heirloom apples are finding new markets among hard-cider makers, local foods restaurants, and producers of value-added heritage products such as jams and baked goods,” says Gary Nabhan, RAFT’s founder and facilitator. “Each apple’s texture, flavor, and keeping qualities can be matched with a distinctive use. A ‘Red Delicious’ or a ‘Gala’ isn’t all that a superlative apple can be.”

To learn more about the Forgotten Fruits Initiative and ways you can get involved, visit [www.raftalliance.org](http://www.raftalliance.org).

Written by Editorial Intern Krystal Fogel.

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# Techniques for Controlling Garden Pests

by Rita Pelczar

**P**ESTS HAVE a knack for homing in on your favorite garden plants. Critters large and small, from grazing deer to nearly invisible spider mites, have a taste for the things we grow. Although the smaller pests don't eat much individually, they can attack in large numbers and often multiply exponentially once they find your prized roses or ripening tomatoes, causing significant damage. Larger foragers may not be as numerous, but they tend to take bigger bites.

One of the best ways to deal with many garden pests is to prevent them from reaching your plants in the first place. Techniques that are aimed at specific pests require advance planning. Learn which pests are likely to appear in your garden—your own past experience may be all you need. Or ask a neighbor who grows similar plants or inquire at a local garden center.



Then determine when they are likely to appear so your prevention measures are in place well before the invasion.

Safe and effective mechanical techniques and products can also be employed if pest infestations do occur.

## BARRIERS

An effective way to prevent pests from damaging favored plants is to block their access to the plants. Fences, if they are sturdy and tall, are probably the most effective way to keep deer away. On a smaller scale, the stems of newly transplanted vegetables can be surrounded with a two- to three-inch cardboard or plastic collar that extends into the soil about an inch to prevent cutworm damage. Rabbits that nibble on emerging salad greens can be thwarted with a tent of chicken wire, closed at the ends and pegged into the soil with metal staples. Hungry birds can be deterred from ripening blueberries and cherries with netting.

**Bird Control Pop-Up Nets** from Gardener's Supply, available in low (20-

inch) and tall (48-inch) versions, will safeguard strawberries, lettuce, blueberries, and other crops from the feeding of both birds and rabbits. The three-by-three foot and three-by-six foot sizes can be used to cover areas of your garden while they are susceptible to these pests, then rotated to other areas as needed. Equipped with loops and stakes for anchoring, the nets fold flat for storage.



**The Bird Control Pop-Up Net from Gardener's Supply, above, can also protect vegetable and fruit crops from common garden pests such as rabbits, top.**

**Surround®**, available from Planet Natural and Gardens Alive! is a wettable powder derived from kaolin clay that can be applied to many vegetable and fruit crops as well as landscape plants to create a mineral film barrier. Among the pests for which it provides protection are aphids, Japanese beetles, leafhoppers, thrips, grasshoppers, whiteflies, cutworms, weevils, and loopers. It is particularly useful for fruit trees, where it also protects fruit against sunscald. Although effective on ornamental plants, it leaves a temporary white film that can be unsightly.

If gypsy moths, canker worms, codling moths, or other tree pests are a problem in your yard, try **Tanglefoot Sticky Tree Bands**, available from Planet Natural. Wrapped around the trunk of the tree, these bands literally stop the larvae in their tracks as they climb the trunk to reach the foliage. A foam strip ensures that crevices are filled that otherwise might allow the pest to sneak under the band.



Floating row covers are great for eluding cabbage worms, squash bugs, vine borers, flea beetles, potato beetles, and leaf miners. Gardener's Supply offers a **Summerweight Garden Fabric** that allows 85 percent light transmission without excessive heat build-up. The spun fabric can be suspended over a frame or draped over the plants with sufficient slack to allow the plants to grow. The fabric must be secured at the base to pre-

## Sources

**Clean Air Gardening,**  
www.cleanairgardening.com.  
**Gardener's Supply,**  
www.gardeners.com.  
**Gardens Alive! Inc.,**  
www.gardensalive.com.  
**I Must Garden,**  
www.imustgarden.com.  
**Messina Wildlife Management,**  
www.MessinaWildlife.com.  
**Planet Natural,**  
www.planetnatural.com.

vent wind from dislodging it and to keep pests from finding their way inside. **Earth staples**, also available from Gardener's Supply, suit this purpose. Be sure to remove the cover from plants that require insects for pollination (for example, most cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, and squash) once flowering begins.

## REPELLENTS

Scarecrows, guard dogs, and noise-makers are deterrents that have all been employed to keep animals at bay. Repellents, which make your plants less tasty to pests, provide another layer of protection.

Most repellents require repeated applications throughout the year and it is advisable to switch repellents periodically so pests do not become too familiar—and complacent—with one. Both ready-mixed

and concentrated formulations of specific repellents for deer, moles and voles, rabbits, squirrels, dogs and cats, groundhogs, even armadillos, are available from I Must Garden. Messina Wildlife Management also offers a full line of pest repellents.

Products from both of these companies are weather resistant and do not smell unpleasant to humans.

## TRAPS

Insect pest traps serve a dual purpose. By checking traps each day, you can monitor the arrival of a pest to your garden and the growth of its population. And once trapped, the pest will do no further dam-

age. Gardeners should be aware that many traps use pheromones to attract the pest, hence they may lure more pests to your yard than would normally appear, so place the trap where it will not lead the pest to its favored host plants.

**Yellow Sticky Traps**, available from Planet Natural and many garden centers and hardware stores, are effective for both monitoring and reducing populations of thrips, midges, and whiteflies. **Blue Sticky Traps**, also from Planet Natural, capture leaf miners and thrips.

The **Sure Catch™ Cucumber Beetle Trap** from Gardens Alive! is effective for trapping this destructive pest for three to four weeks depending on the temperature. One trap is suggested for every 400 square feet of growing space.

Slug traps are effective for the slimy garden pests. Gardener's Supply offers



mushroom-shaped soapstone **Slug Traps** that double as garden art. Just fill them with beer to lure slugs while adding an attractive accent to your landscape.

## OTHER MECHANICAL METHODS OF CONTROL

Big bugs such as tomato hornworms and Colorado potato beetles can often be dispatched by hand-picking. Tiny pests such as aphids and mites are better dislodged by a strong spray of water. The **Bug Blaster** from Clean Air Gardening has a 30-inch wand and connects to a garden hose to deliver a 360-degree spray of water to wash away small voracious pests.

Using such non-chemical devices often provides your plants with sufficient protection from pests without harming beneficial creatures. Take note this year of the pests in your garden and when they appear. That way, next year you will be ready for them before they arrive.

Rita Pelczar is a contributing editor with The American Gardener.

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④ TREES	To GET "TWO YEARS' GROWTH IN ONE"??
⑤ BULBS	To START THEM VIGOROUSLY, Beating Soil-rot, Hastening Better BLOOMING
⑥ SEEDS	To Help GERMINATION Percentage and SPEED EARLIER, BETTER YIELDS, including Vegetables
⑦ LAWN	To Make QUICKER, deeper, TOUGHER TURF from SEED, SOD, Stolons, Sprigs, HYDRO-seeding
⑧ FRUITING	For EARLIER, HEAVIER, BEARING?

11 XMAS TREES	17 HYDROSEEDING	22 FLOWERING PLANT
12 REFORESTATION	18 LANDSCAPING	COMPETITIONS
13 HYDROPONICS	19 PROPAGATION	23 INTERIORSKAPING
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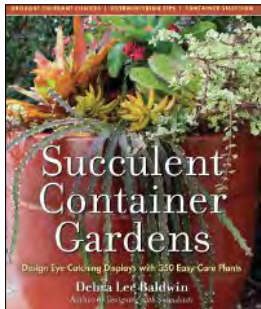
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## Recommendations for Your Gardening Library

### Succulent Container Gardens: Design Eye-Catching Displays with 350 Easy-Care Plants

Debra Lee Baldwin. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. 2010. 248 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$29.95

YOU DON'T HAVE to live in a dry climate zone in order to be able to grow succulents in containers, so if you harbor even the slightest interest in these intriguing plants you should take a look at *Succulent Container Gardens*. As soon as you start thumbing through the pages, I predict you'll be as irresistibly drawn into this splendid book as I was.



Author and primary photographer Debra Lee Baldwin leads off with insightful design basics (including those applying to containers and

their embellishments) and then exposes readers to a dazzling array of succulents and seemingly endless and creative ways to combine and display them. Among the more unusual sites in which she showcases succulents are between stair treads, on ladders, as a "purse," in a shoe, and under the glass surface of a patio table.

But Baldwin doesn't just tell you what plants to choose and where to grow them. In Part Three, Creative Designs and Displays (my favorite part of this succulent celebration), she engagingly explains why specific plants and pots look so good together, and encourages readers to indulge their own imaginations while exploring the beauty and image-conjuring appeal of this most sculptural plant category.

In Part Four: Planting, Care, and Propagation, she offers practical nuts-and-bolts information on how to plant and nurture succulents, then brings this exhilarating exploration to a close in the final section with very handy listings of succulents grouped by various characteristics (height, size, foliage color, texture, cold hardiness, etc.) that are useful for selecting plants to combine.

If you're still not convinced to add this jewelbox to your gardening library, find a copy and take a look at page 175. I dare you to tell me that the picture of a *tour de force* vertical garden—which to me suggests an image from Google™ Earth or a Gustav Klimt painting—doesn't knock your socks off. You'll find many other equally compelling images, along with authoritative advice based on Baldwin's personal experience, as you savor the pages of *Succulent Container Gardens*.

—Ray Rogers

*Ray Rogers is the author of several books, including Encyclopedia of Container Plants, which will be published by Timber Press this fall.*

### Great Gardens of America

Ted Richardson, photographs by Andrea Jones. Frances Lincoln Limited, London, England, 2009. 304 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$50.

### A Clearing in the Woods: Creating Contemporary Gardens

Roger Foley. The Monacelli Press, New York, New York, 2009. 208 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$50.

BOTH *Great Gardens of America* and *A Clearing in the Woods* are photograph-driven books that introduce the reader to some of the country's finest gardens, both public and private.

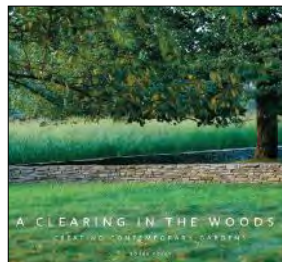


Tim Richardson's focus in *Great Gardens of America* spans the continent—including two Canadian gardens—and the centuries. Readers can go back in time to Thomas Jefferson's garden at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia, and Middleton Place in Charleston, South Carolina, which was

begun in 1741. Also well represented are outstanding examples of early and mid-20th century gardens, including DuPont and Rockefeller estates and the privately owned Donnell (Sonoma, California) and Miller (Columbus, Indiana) gardens.

Richardson's text is excellent, giving the reader fascinating background to the historical context of each garden as well as fresh insights to the artistic and cultural influences that lead to the creation of each of them, but he is not well served by Andrea Jones's photographs. While there are scattered examples of pictures that are outstanding, a lot of the photographs are poorly exposed. The photographer apparently had the misfortune of visiting many of the gardens on bright sunny days, which can cause very difficult light conditions for garden photography. Consequently, there are many pictures, including the cover, with dark shadows and high contrast that diminish their effectiveness.

Roger Foley is both author and photographer of *A Clearing in the Woods*. As might be expected from an award-winning



photographer, the pictures in this book reflect Foley's usual high standards. An added delight is to discover that Foley also is a fine writer. He introduces each garden with a succinct description that gives the reader a clear idea of the garden and the process that went into

creating it. Then follows a photographic “essay” of each garden, drawing in the reader so you feel you are there.

With the exception of Longhouse Reserve, a sculpture garden in East Hampton, New York, that is open to the public, all 26 of Foley’s featured properties are private. Hence, this book gives readers a rare opportunity to “see beyond the garden wall” into the cutting-edge private creations of some of the country’s top landscape designers, including Raymond Jungles, Edwina von Gal, Charles Stick, Jack Lenor Larsen, and Oehme, van Sweden & Associates.

Geographically, the gardens are located primarily in the eastern part of the country, ranging from tropical masterpieces in Florida to a strikingly modern garden in Massachusetts designed by Mikiyoung Kim. Notable exceptions are two gardens in Texas and two in Oklahoma.

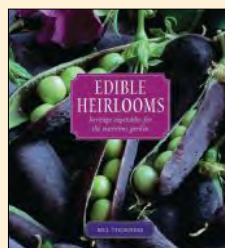
If you’re looking for a deeper understanding of the historic and artistic roots of North American gardens, opt for *Great Gardens of America*. But if you’re looking for cutting-edge ideas and a glimpse of the work of contemporary landscape designers and homeowners, then *A Clearing in the Woods* is the book for you.

—Catriona Tudor Erler

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*Catriona Tudor Erler is a freelance garden writer, lecturer, and photographer based in Charlottesville, Virginia. She has written more than 14 garden books, most recently Design Ideas for Home Landscaping (Creative Homeowner, 2007).*

Even if you don’t live at the seaside, you will enjoy ***Edible Heirlooms: Heritage Vegetables for the Maritime Garden*** by Bill Thorness (Skipstone, 2009, \$18.95). This



diminutive and attractively illustrated book covers heirloom vegetables and their culture in an easy-to-understand format. A resident of Seattle, Washington, Thorness focuses his attention on vegetables that grow well in the maritime climate of the Pacific Northwest, but his plant choices and cultural advice apply to gardens in any cool climate region.

The concept of an “heirloom” variety is carefully and completely defined with an emphasis on the history of the heirloom movement. A short section of instructions for site selection, season extension, and garden structures flows into the main body of the text, where you will find information on growing, harvesting, and storing specific, alphabetically-listed vegetables. Also included is information on seed-saving techniques and a list of popular varieties of each vegetable.

The end matter features a listing of additional books and resources relating to heirloom vegetables and retail sources. The delightful color illustrations are by Thorness’s wife, Susie.

—Keith Crotz, proprietor of American Botanist, booksellers in Chillicothe, Illinois.

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PHOTO BY DEBRA KAVATA FROM 2010 GARDENERS' CALENDAR

### 2010 “Gardener’s” Calendar

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## Regional Gardening Books

WHEN LOOKING FOR books to fill your garden library, it can be fun and worth your while to search for references specific to your region or city. Besides being useful in that they contain plant information suited to your climate, these types of books often make you more aware of botanical treasures, such as gardens and conservatories, that are found right in your community. They can also contain unique information about regional plant communities and notable historical figures and events. Here are some recently published regional gardening references.

Ecologically-minded urban residents, students of environmental science, and anyone who has paused to appreciate a resilient weed growing through the cracks of a city sidewalk will enjoy *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast* (Cornell University Press, 2010, \$29.95) by Peter Del Tredici. In this unique field guide, which includes descriptive information and full-color photographs for 222 species of plants commonly found growing spontaneously in northeastern cities, Del Tredici aims to help readers “develop an appreciation for the role” urban flora play “in making our cities more livable.” The guide begins with an introduction on how to incorporate spontaneous urban vegetation into the landscape, an overview of urban ecology, and a thought-provoking discussion of what it means to be a weed.

*Jewel of Como* (Afton Press, 2009, \$40), written by Leigh Roethke and Bonnie Blodgett, tells the story of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, the centerpiece of St. Paul, Minnesota’s Como Park. Complete with historic photographs and sketches of Como Park and its artwork, as well as some of the nation’s first major glass conservatories, this comprehensive account of St. Paul’s “crystal palace” will appeal not just to those who have visited the Conservatory, but to anyone interested in the design of early greenhouses and indoor landscapes. Seven chapters span the park’s inception, the completion of the Conservatory in 1915, and upcoming plans for expansion of what is now an “environmentally conscious, state-of-the-art horticultural and educational facility.”

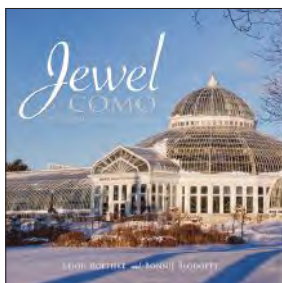
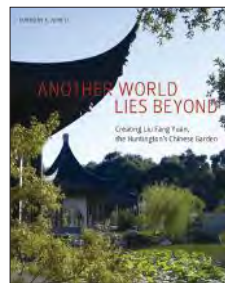
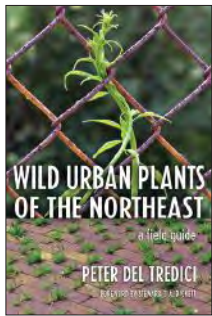
In *Sustainable Gardening for Florida* (University Press of Florida, 2009, \$24.95), Ginny Stibolt provides Florida gardeners with an in-depth guide to designing and maintaining a garden in ways that limit the impact on the environment and make the most

of available resources. One of the techniques she discusses is making compost bins out of readily available materials and using compost and compost teas to amend the soil. Managing smaller and more sustainable lawns, choosing native plants that are well-suited to their environment, and using cultural and preventive measures to control pests are just a few of the other strategies Stibolt covers. Each chapter lists additional online and printed resources and provides hand-drawn sketches that help to clarify the text.

Flip through the pages of *Another World Lies Beyond* (Huntington Library Press, 2009, \$34.95), edited by T. June Li, and you will undoubtedly add Liu Fang Yuan, the newly-opened Chinese garden at Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, to your list of must-see destinations. The book’s contributors, including Huntington staff and Asian language and culture experts, discuss the history, design, and construction of Huntington’s “Garden of Flowing Fragrance.” The authors also describe in detail the naming of the garden’s architectural structures and scenic areas, a necessary component of a traditional Chinese garden. Stunning photographs and Chinese artwork and calligraphy make the book a poetic account of how Liu Fang Yuan “continues the long tradition of Chinese gardens, past and present.”

Joan Hockaday’s *Greenscapes* (Washington State University Press, 2009, \$29.95) chronicles landscape architect John Charles Olmsted’s numerous design projects throughout the Pacific Northwest—including major undertakings like the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exhibition in Portland and Volunteer Park in Seattle, as well as smaller projects for private clients. Hockaday uses personal letters written by Olmsted, who was the first president of the American Society of Landscape Architects, to his wife to give readers a firsthand account of his successes and challenges on the West Coast. She also includes quotes from local newspapers and official parks reports, creating a detailed account of the events that culminated in Olmsted’s legacy as “the most qualified landscape architect of the early 20th century.”

—Krystal Fogel, Editorial Intern





## Horticultural Events from Around the Country

### NORTHEAST

CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT

**RAP** JUNE 5. **25th Annual Spring Plant Sale.** Tower Hill Botanic Garden. Boylston, Massachusetts. (508) 869-6111. [www.towerhillbg.org](http://www.towerhillbg.org).

JUNE 6. **Pathways & Blooms: A South Windsor Garden Tour.** Down to Earth Garden Club & Wood Memorial Library. South Windsor, Connecticut. (860) 289-1783. [www.freewebs.com/downtoearthgardenclub](http://www.freewebs.com/downtoearthgardenclub).

**RAP** JUNE 9. **Battery Park City: Maintaining a Public Park with Organic Methods.** Lecture. New York Botanical Garden Midtown Education Center. Manhattan, New York. (800) 322-6924. <http://conted.nybg.org>.

JUNE 10. **Green with Envy: Grandiflora Garden Tour.** Garden Education Center of Greenwich. Cos Cob, Connecticut. (203) 869-9242. [www.gecgreenwich.org](http://www.gecgreenwich.org).

**RAP** JUNE 18–20. **Garden Fair: The Maine Gardeners and Artisans Festival.** Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. Boothbay, Maine. (207) 633-4333. [www.mainegardens.org](http://www.mainegardens.org).

**RAP** JUNE 19. **19th Annual Plant Sale.** The Fells. Newbury, New Hampshire. (603) 763-4789. [www.thefells.org](http://www.thefells.org).

JUNE 26–29. **25th Annual Seeley Conference.** Cornell University. Ithaca, New York. (607) 255-4568. <http://hort.cals.cornell.edu>.

**RAP** JUNE 30. **Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes.** Lecture. Polly Hill Arboretum. West Tisbury, Massachusetts.

Events sponsored by or including official participation by AHS or AHS staff members are identified with the **AHS** symbol.

Events hosted by botanical gardens and arboreta that participate in AHS's Reciprocal Admissions Program are identified with the **RAP** symbol. Current AHS members showing a valid membership card are eligible for free or discounted admission to the garden or other benefits. Special events may not be included; contact the host site for details or visit [www.ahs.org/events/reciprocal\\_events.htm](http://www.ahs.org/events/reciprocal_events.htm).

### Brooklyn Botanic Garden Celebrates Centennial

THE BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN (BBG) will be celebrating 100 years as a New York City environmental and educational sanctuary this spring, with special events planned throughout the summer and early fall. On Saturday, June 12, the community is invited to take part in BBG's Bee-Day Celebration, the Garden's official centennial event, which will include a symposium featuring lectures by prominent bee experts, as well as beekeeping demonstrations, bee-oriented garden tours, and a honey tasting. Kids can also pot up their own bee-friendly plants.



The Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden is one of many themed gardens at the BBG.

Festivities will continue in June and July with evening events, weekly members' picnics, and tours and workshops highlighting the BBG's Native Flora Garden. In addition, some of the garden's most veteran staff will share their horticultural and scientific knowledge during special guided tours throughout spring and summer.

A major component of its anniversary will be the inception of the BBG's Centennial Projects—a series of expansion projects set to develop over the next several years—with the opening of the newly redesigned Herb Garden in August. According to BBG President Scot Medbury, “the Centennial Projects constitute the most significant garden-making effort since the garden's founding 100 years ago.” Plans “will include the expansion of three of our most exciting gardens—the Herb, Discovery, and Native Flora gardens. The new, expanded Herb Garden will showcase culinary and medicinal plants from around the world,” says Medbury.

Other key events include the exhibition “100 Years 100 Stories,” a display of personal stories, memorabilia, and photographs contributed by New Yorkers who have visited the garden over the years, and a botanical art display called “Florilegium Biennial.” For more information, visit [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org).

—Krystal Floegel, Editorial Intern

(508) 693-9426. [www.pollyhillarboretum.org](http://www.pollyhillarboretum.org).

## MID-ATLANTIC

PA, NJ, VA, MD, DE, WV, DC

**RAP** JUNE 5. **Great Swamp Bonsai Society Open House.** Frelinghuysen Arboretum. Morris Township, New Jersey. (973) 326-7601. [www.arboretumfriends.org](http://www.arboretumfriends.org).

JUNE 9. **Stone Garden Planters.** Workshop. Rosemary House and Gardens. Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. (717) 697-5111. [www.therosemaryhouse.com](http://www.therosemaryhouse.com).

**RAP** JUNE 11. **5th Annual Garden Party Fundraiser.** Camden Children's Garden. Camden, New Jersey. (856) 365-8733. [www.camdenchildrensgarden.org](http://www.camdenchildrensgarden.org).

**RAP** JUNE 11 & 12. **From Roses to Rock Gardens Annual Garden Tour.** Van Vleck House & Gardens. Montclair, New Jersey. (973) 744-4752. <http://vanvleck.org>.

**RAP** JUNE 12. **Meadows and Ponds Evening Estate Hike.** Winterthur Museum & Country Estate. Winterthur, Delaware. (800) 448-3883. [www.winterthur.org](http://www.winterthur.org).

JUNE 17. **Bringing Meadowscaping to Big and Small Spaces.** Lecture. United States Botanic Garden. Washington, D.C. (202) 225-1116. [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov).

**RAP** JUNE 20. **Wilmington City Garden Tour.** Delaware Center for Horticulture. Wilmington, Delaware. (302) 658-6262 ext. 105. [www.dehort.org](http://www.dehort.org).

JUNE 26 & 27. **Potomac Lily Society Lily Show.** Brookside Gardens. Wheaton, Maryland. (301) 962-1400. <http://montgomeryparks.org/brookside>.

## SOUTHEAST

AL, FL, GA, KY, NC, SC, TN

JUNE 10. **Let's Talk Plants Garden Walk.** Plant Delights Nursery. Raleigh, North Carolina. (919) 772-4794. [www.plantdelights.com](http://www.plantdelights.com).

**RAP** JUNE 12. **Hibiscus Festival.** Sunken Gardens. St. Petersburg, Florida. (727) 551-3100. [www.stpete.org/sunken](http://www.stpete.org/sunken).

**RAP** JUNE 12. **Wanted: Special Ferns for Special Places, Sun & Shade.** Seminar. Aldridge Botanical Gardens. Hoover, Alabama. (205) 682-8019. [www.aldridgegardens.com](http://www.aldridgegardens.com).

**RAP** JUNE 12 & 13. **Butterfly, Herb, & Native Plant Fair.** University of South Florida Botanical Gardens. Tampa, Florida. (813) 910-3274. [www.cas.sf.edu/garden](http://www.cas.sf.edu/garden).

**RAP** JUNE 26. **Daylily Sale.** Western Ken-

tucky Botanical Gardens. Owensboro, Kentucky. (270) 852-8925. [www.wkbg.org](http://www.wkbg.org).

### Looking ahead

JULY 8-11. **Mountains in Bloom Garden Festival.** The Bascom. Highlands, North Carolina. (828) 526-4949. [www.mountainsinbloom.com](http://www.mountainsinbloom.com).

JULY 28-31. **27th Annual Cullowhee Conference: Native Plants in the Landscape.** Western Carolina University. Cullowhee, North Carolina. (828) 227-7397. <http://nativeplantconference.wcu.edu>.

**RAP** SEPT. 26. **Garden of Eden Ball.** Gala. Atlanta Botanical Garden. Atlanta, Georgia. (404) 876-5859. [www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org](http://www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org).

## NORTH CENTRAL

IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI

MAY 31-JUNE 5. **American Iris Society Convention.** Madison Marriott West Hotel. Madison, Wisconsin. (608) 825-7423. [www.irises.org](http://www.irises.org).

**RAP** JUNE 4-6. **Garden Fair.** Klehm Arboretum & Botanical Garden. Rockford, Illinois. (815) 965-8146. [www.klehm.org](http://www.klehm.org).

**RAP** JUNE 5. **Horticulture Gardens Plant Sale.** Michigan State University Horticulture Gardens. East Lansing, Michigan. (517) 355-5191 ext. 1359. [www.hrt.msu.edu](http://www.hrt.msu.edu).

JUNE 5. **Spring Gourd Festival.** Illinois Gourd Society. The Great Pumpkin Patch. Arthur, Illinois. (217) 543-2394. <http://the200acres.com>.

**RAP** JUNE 5. **Wildflower Week Plant Sale.** Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. Lincoln, Nebraska. (402) 472-2971. <http://arboretum.unl.edu>.

**RAP** JUNE 5 & 6. **Kingwood Spring Flower Show.** Kingwood Center Gardens. Mansfield, Ohio. (419) 522-0211. [www.kingwoodcenter.org](http://www.kingwoodcenter.org).

**AHS** JUNE 10-12. **TGOA/MGCA National Convention.** The Gardeners of America and Men's Garden Clubs of America. Hilton Hotel. Grand Rapids, Michigan. (515) 278-0295. [www.tgoa-mgca.org](http://www.tgoa-mgca.org).

**RAP** JUNE 11. **Assisted Migration of Plants: A Janet Meakin Poor Research Symposium.** Chicago Botanic Garden. Glencoe, Illinois. (847) 835-8261. [www.chicagobotanic.org/school/symposia/JMP.php](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/school/symposia/JMP.php).

**RAP** JUNE 26. **Design Ideas to Shrink Your Lawn.** Lecture. Hidden Lake Gardens. Tipton, Michigan. (517) 431-2060. [www.hiddenlakegardens.msu.edu](http://www.hiddenlakegardens.msu.edu).

## SOUTH CENTRAL

AR, KS, LA, MO, MS, OK, TX

**RAP** MAY 29. **North Texas Daylily Society Show.** Fort Worth Botanic Garden. Fort Worth, Texas. (817) 871-7686. [www.fwbgo.org](http://www.fwbgo.org).

JUNE 2-5. **Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference.** Native Plant Society of Texas. SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center. Nacogdoches, Texas. (936) 468-4404. <http://arboretum.sfasu.edu>.

JUNE 5. **Little-Known and Underused Perennials.** Class. Garden Adventures Nursery. Nixa, Missouri. (417) 725-3223. [www.gardenadventuresnixa.com](http://www.gardenadventuresnixa.com).

**RAP** JUNE 5. **St. Louis Carnivorous Plant Society Show & Sale.** Missouri Botanical Garden. St. Louis, Missouri. (314) 577-5100. [www.mobot.org](http://www.mobot.org).

JUNE 5. **Through the Garden Gate.** Tour of private gardens in northwest Arkansas. Flower Garden & Nature Society of NW Arkansas. (479) 442-4640. E-mail: [gloriamc@cox.net](mailto:gloriamc@cox.net).

JUNE 12 & 13. **Austin Pond Society Pond Tour.** Austin, Texas. (512) 789-4703. [www.austinpondsociety.org](http://www.austinpondsociety.org).

**RAP** JUNE 26. **Summer Plant Sale.** Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens. Humble, Texas. (281) 443-8731. [www.hcp4.net/mercer](http://www.hcp4.net/mercer).

**RAP** JUNE 26 & 27. **Cactus Show & Sale.** Botanica, The Wichita Gardens. Wichita, Kansas. (316) 264-0448. [www.botanica.org](http://www.botanica.org).

## SOUTHWEST

AZ, NM, CO, UT

MAY 22. **Living Green Conference.** Phoenix Permaculture Guild. Phoenix Zoo. Phoenix, Arizona. (602) 509-3356. <http://livinggreenconference.com>.

MAY 29. **Seed Saving for Homegrown Vegetables.** Class. Tucson Botanical Gardens. Tucson, Arizona. (520) 326-9686. [www.tucsonbotanical.org](http://www.tucsonbotanical.org).

**RAP** JUNE 5 & 6. **Urban Gardening Festival.** Gardens on Spring Creek. Fort Collins, Colorado. (970) 416-2486. [www.fcgov.com/horticulture](http://www.fcgov.com/horticulture).

**RAP** JUNE 6 & 13. **Garden Tours.** Santa Fe Botanical Garden. Santa Fe, New Mexico. (505) 471-9103. [www.santafebotanicalgarden.org](http://www.santafebotanicalgarden.org).

**RAP** JUNE 17. **Green Roofs for the West.** Symposium. Denver Botanic Gardens at York

Street, Denver, Colorado. (720) 865-3500.  
[www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org).

**RAP** JUNE 26. **Hummingbird Festival.** Arboretum at Flagstaff. Flagstaff, Arizona. (928) 774-1442. [www.thearb.org](http://www.thearb.org).

#### Looking ahead

JULY 12–18. **Crested Butte Wildflower Festival.** Crested Butte Nordic Center. Crested Butte, Colorado. (970) 349-2571.  
[www.crestedbuttewildflowerfestival.com](http://www.crestedbuttewildflowerfestival.com).

### WEST COAST

CA, NV, HI

**RAP** JUNE 5. **Sick Plant Clinic.** University of California Botanical Garden at Berkeley. Berkeley, California. (510) 643-2755.  
[www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu](http://www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu).

JUNE 10. **Planting Sculpture, Sculpting Plants.** Lecture. Southern California Horticultural Society. Friendship Auditorium. Los Angeles, California. (818) 567-1496.  
[www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org).

**RAP** JUNE 12 & 13. **Fuchsia Show & Sale.** South Coast Fuchsia Society. South Coast Botanic Garden. Palos Verdes Peninsula, California. (310) 544-1948.  
[www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org](http://www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org).

**RAP** JUNE 19. **Planting Your Fall Vegetable Garden.** Class. Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens. Fort Bragg, California. (707) 964-4352. [www.gardenbythesea.org](http://www.gardenbythesea.org).

**RAP** JUNE 19. **The Basics of Organic Gardening.** Class. Descanso Gardens. La Cañada Flintridge, California. (818) 949-4200.  
[www.descansogardens.org](http://www.descansogardens.org).

JUNE 20. **Garden Tour.** Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. Occidental, California. (707) 874-1557. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org).

#### Looking ahead

**RAP** JULY 3. **Free Native Plant Clinic.** Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Claremont, California. (909) 625-8767 ext. 258.  
[www.rsabg.org](http://www.rsabg.org).

### NORTHWEST

AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY

**RAP** MAY 22. **Glorious Containers.** Workshop. Idaho Botanical Garden. Boise, Idaho. (877) 527-8233.  
<http://idahobotanicalgarden.org>.

MAY 30. **Spring Native Plant Sale.** Sawtooth Botanical Garden. Ketchum, Idaho. (208) 726-9358. [www.sbgarden.org](http://www.sbgarden.org).

JUNE 9. **Chanticleer Garden: The Art and Artistry of the Staff.** Lecture. Center for Urban Horticulture. Seattle, Washington.

## Pomona to Host 2010 Festival of Fruit

THE 14TH ANNUAL Festival of Fruit, presented by the Los Angeles chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG), is set to take place August 12 through 15 at Cal Poly Pomona and will celebrate the year of the pitahaya, or dragonfruit. The CRFG, which is the largest amateur fruit-growing organization in the world, was established in 1968 to promote education, preservation, and interest in edible fruits that are not commonly produced. Membership in the non-profit organization is diverse, including nurserymen, commercial growers, government and university researchers, and hobbyists from the United States and 30 other countries.



The festival will include exotic-fruit tastings.

provides him with “a huge shot of enthusiasm.” Couch stresses that participation in the festival mirrors the makeup of the CRFG’s membership, running the gamut from professionals in the industry to individual hobby gardeners growing rare fruits in pots in their backyards or community gardens.

This year, the attendees will be able to participate in a number of tours of area attractions, including Melissa’s/World Variety Produce, Inc. in Los Angeles, which is the largest distributor of specialty produce in the United States, and the University of California South Coast Research and Extension Center. Tours will also be offered to Huntington Gardens in San Marino, Elk Creek Ranch in Fallbrook, and Fullerton Arboretum in Fullerton, California. In addition to tours, the Festival will include a full day of seminars, and participants will be able to choose from a variety of concurrent sessions. Among this year’s presentations are “Fruit Wine Making 101,” “Pitahayas/Dragonfruit for the Future,” and “Fruit Trees: Problems and Solutions,” as well as classes on avocados, jujubes, and eugenias.

While the CRFG encourages all members to attend the 2010 Festival of Fruit, anyone interested is welcome to participate. For more information and to register, visit [www.festivaloffruit.org](http://www.festivaloffruit.org).

—Krystal Flogel, Editorial Intern

(206) 527-1794. [www.northwesthort.org](http://www.northwesthort.org).

**RAP** JUNE 12. **Plant Sale.** The Oregon Garden. Silverton, Oregon. (503) 874-8100. [www.oregongarden.org](http://www.oregongarden.org).

#### Looking ahead

JULY 18–24. **Perennial Plant Symposium & Trade Show.** Perennial Plant Association. Doubletree Hotel Lloyd Center. Portland, Oregon. (614) 771-8431. [www.perennialplant.org](http://www.perennialplant.org).

### CANADA

JUNE 12 & 13. **Desert Plant Society of Vancouver Show & Sale.** VanDusen Botanical Garden. Vancouver, British Columbia. (604) 878-9274. [www.vandusen.org](http://www.vandusen.org).

**RAP** JUNE 19. **RBG Auxilliary Used Bulb Sale.** Royal Botanical Gardens. Hamilton, Ontario. (905) 527-1158. [www.rbg.ca](http://www.rbg.ca).

JUNE 20. **Vancouver Rose Society Rose Show.** VanDusen Botanical Garden. Vancouver, British Columbia. (604) 521-4455.  
[www.vancouverrosesociety.org](http://www.vancouverrosesociety.org).

JUNE 26. **Pollinator Workshop.** Arboretum at the University of Guelph. Ontario Agricultural College. Guelph, Ontario. (519) 824-4120. [www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum](http://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum).

#### Looking ahead

**RAP** JULY 10. **Organic Island Festival.** Glendale Gardens & Woodland. Victoria, British Columbia. (250) 479-6162.  
[www.glendalegardens.ca](http://www.glendalegardens.ca).

## PRONUNCIATIONS AND PLANTING ZONES



Most of the cultivated plants described in this issue are listed here with their pronunciations, USDA Plant Hardiness Zones, and AHS Plant Heat Zones. These zones suggest a range of locations where temperatures are appropriate—both in winter and summer—for growing each plant.

While the zones are a good place to start in determining plant adaptability in your region, factors such as exposure, moisture, snow cover, and humidity also play an important role in plant survival. The codes tend to be conservative; plants may grow outside the ranges indicated. A USDA zone rating of 0–0 means that the plant is a true annual and completes its life cycle in a year or less.

### A–C

**Aesculus × bushii** ES-kyew-lus BUSH-ee-eye (USDA Hardiness Zones 4–8, AHS Heat Zones 8–4)  
**A. × carnea** A. KAR-nee-uh (7–8, 8–6)  
**A. × neglecta** A. neh-GLEK-tuh (5–8, 8–4)  
**A. californica** A. kal-ih-FORN-ih-kuh (7–9, 9–6)  
**A. chinensis** A. chy-NEN-sis (6–8, 8–6)  
**A. flava** A. FLAY-vuh (3–8, 8–3)  
**A. glabra** A. GLAB-ruh (3–7, 7–3)  
**A. glabra var. arguta** A. GLAB-ruh var. ar-GOO-tuh (5–9, 9–5)  
**A. hippocastanum** A. hip-o-KAS-tuh-num (3–8, 8–3)  
**A. indica** A. IN-dih-kuh (7–8, 8–7)  
**A. parviflora** A. ES-kyew-lus par-vih-FLOR-uh (4–8, 8–4)  
**A. parviflora var. serotina** A. par-vih-FLOR-uh var. sair-OAT-ih-nuh (4–8, 8–4)  
**A. pavia** A. PAY-vee-uh (5–9, 9–5)  
**A. pavia var. flavescens** A. PAY-vee-uh var. flay-VESS-enz (5–9, 9–5)  
**A. sylvatica** A. sil-VAT-ih-kuh (6–9, 9–5)  
**A. turbinata** A. tur-bih-NAY-tuh (6–8, 8–6)  
**Anethum graveolens** uh-NEE-thum gruh-VEE-o-lenz (0–0, 12–1)  
**Aquilegia canadensis** ah-kwi-LEE-juh kan-uh-DEN-siss (4–9, 9–1)  
**Arundinaria gigantea** ah-run-dih-NAIR-ee-uh jy-GAN-tee-uh (5–9, 9–5)  
**Arundo donax** ah-RUN-doh DOH-naks (6–11, 12–1)  
**Aster novae-angliae** ASS-tur NO-vee-ANG-lee-ay (4–8, 8–1)  
**Baptisia alba var. macrophylla** bap-TIZ-yuh AL-buh var. mak-ro-FIL-luh (5–9, 9–6)  
**Brachystachyum densiflorum** brack-ee-STAK-ee-um den-sih-FLOR-um (7–11, 11–7)  
**Carex pensylvanica** KAIR-eks pen-sil-VAN-ih-kuh (4–8, 8–1)  
**Chelone lyonii** chee-LO-nee lie-O-nee-eye (3–9, 9–3)  
**Clethra alnifolia** KLETH-ruh al-nih-FO-lee-uh (4–9, 9–1)  
**Crinum bulbispermum** KRY-num bul-bih-SPER-mum (6–10, 10–7)  
**Cypripedium kentuckiense** sip-rih-PEE-dee-um ken-tuh-kee-EN-see (3–7, 7–1)  
**Cyrtilla racemiflora** sy-RILL-uh ruh-sem-ih-FLOR-uh (6–10, 12–5)

### D–L

**Dennstaedtia punctilobula** den-STET-ee-uh punk-tih-LO-bew-luh (3–8, 8–1)  
**Echinacea purpurea** ek-ih-NAY-see-uh pur-PUR-ee-uh (3–9, 9–1)  
**Eragrostis spectabilis** air-uh-GROS-tiss spek-TAH-bih-liss (5–11, 11–1)  
**Eupatorium maculatum** yew-puh-TOR-ee-um mak-yew-LAY-tum (5–11, 9–1)  
**Gaillardia aestivalis var. winkleri** gay-LARD-ee-uh es-tih-VAL-iss var. WINK-ler-eye (6–10, 10–5)  
**Geranium maculatum** juh-RAY-nee-um mak-yew-LAY-tum (4–8, 8–1)  
**Heliopsis helianthoides** hee-lee-OP-siss hee-lee-an-THOY-deez (4–9, 9–1)  
**Heuchera villosa** HYEW-kur-uh vih-LO-suh (5–9, 9–1)  
**Hibiscus dasycalyx** hy-BISS-kus das-ee-KAL-iks (8–10, 10–7)  
**H. laevis** H. LEE-vis (4–9, 9–1)  
**H. moscheutos** H. mos-KEW-tos (5–10, 12–1)  
**Ilex glabra** EYE-leks GLAB-ruh (5–9, 9–3)  
**I. vomitoria** I. vom-ih-TOR-ee-uh (7–10, 12–7)  
**Indocalamus latifolius** in-doh-KAL-uh-mus lat-ih-FO-lee-us (7–10, 10–6)  
**Lavandula × allardii** lah-VAN-dyew-luh al-LAR-dee-eye (8–10, 10–3)  
**L. angustifolia** L. ang-gus-tih-FO-lee-uh (5–8, 8–5)  
**L. × heterophylla** L. het-ur-ah-FIL-luh (8–10, 10–3)  
**L. × intermedia** L. in-ter-MEE-dee-uh (5–8, 8–5)  
**L. dentata** L. den-TAY-tuh (5–9, 9–4)  
**L. lanata** L. lah-NAY-tuh (8–9, 8–1)  
**L. latifolia** L. lat-ih-FO-lee-uh (5–8, 8–1)  
**L. stoechas** L. STEE-kas (7/8–9, 9–1)  
**Loropetalum chinense** lor-o-PEH-tal-um chy-NEN-see (8–9, 9–8)  
**Lupinus texensis** loo-PYE-nus teks-EN-sis (0–0, 9–5)

### M–R

**Maianthemum canadense** my-AN-theh-mum kan-uh-DEN-see (3–8, 8–3)  
**Monarda fistulosa** moh-NAR-duh fis-tyew-LO-suh (3–9, 9–1)  
**Myrica cerifera** my-RIH-kuh seh-RIF-er-uh (7–10, 10–5)  
**Ocimum basilicum** OSS-ih-mum buh-SIL-ih-kum (0–0, 12–1)

**Paeonia rockii** pay-O-nee-uh ROK-ee-eye (3–8, 8–1)  
**Pelargonium zonale** peh-lar-GO-nee-um zo-NAL-ee (10–11, 12–1)  
**Phlox nivalis ssp. texensis** FLOKS nih-VAL-iss ssp. teks-EN-sis (6–8, 8–6)  
**Phyllostachys aureosulcata** fil-lo-STAY-kiss aw-ree-o-sul-KAY-tuh (5–11, 12–3)  
**Prunus angustifolia** PROO-nus ang-gus-ti-FO-lee-uh (5–9, 9–5)  
**Ratibida pinnata** rah-TIH-bih-duh pin-NAY-tuh (3–9, 9–4)  
**Rudbeckia hirta** rood-BEK-ee-uh HUR-tuh (3–9, 10–1)  
**R. laciniata** R. luh-syn-ee-AY-tuh (4–8, 8–1)

### S–Z

**Schizachyrium scoparium** skits-ah-KEER-ee-um sko-PAR-ee-um (2–7, 7–1)  
**Senecio aureus** seh-NEE-see-o ORE-ee-us (3–8, 8–2)  
**Shibataea kumasaca** shih-BAH-tee-uh koo-muh-SAH-kuh (6–11, 12–1)  
**S. kumasaca forma albostrata** S. koo-muh-SAH-kuh f. al-bo-str-AY-tuh (6–11, 12–1)  
**Sorghastrum nutans** sor-GASS-trum NOO-tanz (4–9, 9–1)  
**Spigelia marilandica** spy-JEE-lee-uh mair-ih-LAN-dih-kuh (5–9, 9–2)  
**Spiraea alba var. latifolia** spy-REE-uh AL-buh var. lat-ih-FO-lee-uh (2–6, 6–1)  
**Taxodium distichum** taks-O-dee-um DIS-tih-kum (5–11, 12–5)  
**Tecoma stans** teh-KO-muh STANZ (11–11, 12–10)  
**Typhonium roxburghii** ty-FO-nee-um roks-BUR-jee-eye (7–10, 10–5)  
**Veronica austriaca** ver-ON-ih-kuh aw-STREE-ay-kuh (4–8, 8–3)  
**V. gentianoides** V. jen-shen-OY-deez (4–7, 7–1)  
**V. longifolia** V. lon-jih-FO-lee-uh (4–8, 8–1)  
**V. spicata** V. spy-KAY-tuh (3–8, 8–1)  
**Veronicastrum virginicum** ver-on-ih-KASS-trum vir-JIN-ih-kum (4–8, 8–3)  
**Wisteria frutescens** wis-TEER-ee-uh FROO-tess-ens (6–9, 9–6)

## GARDEN MARKET

CLASSIFIED AD RATES: All classified advertising must be prepaid. \$2.75 per word; minimum \$66 per insertion. Copy and prepayment must be received by the 20th of the month three months prior to publication date. Display ad space is also available. To place an ad, call (703) 768-5700 ext. 120 or e-mail [advertising@ahs.org](mailto:advertising@ahs.org).

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## PLANT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

# *Cyrilla racemiflora*: A Southern Native Adapted to Northern Climes

by Eva Monheim

**M**Y INTRODUCTION TO swamp cyrilla (*Cyrilla racemiflora*, USDA Hardiness Zones 6–10, AHS Heat Zones 12–5) came more than 30 years ago when I visited my aunt at her home near Doylestown, Pennsylvania. The garden featured an array of uncommon plants including cyrilla, which is also known by intriguing common names such as leatherwood and swamp titi.

The nurseryowner who sold the cyrilla to my aunt told her it would grow no more than three to four feet in height and width. This claim lost veracity after only a few years, and my aunt now has a beautiful, small tree that stands 12 feet tall and 15 feet in diameter. Cyrilla usually matures into a large shrub or small tree and has been known to reach 30 feet tall and wide in the wild.

### FOUR-SEASON INTEREST

Cyrilla offers appealing ornamental characteristics nearly year round. The oblong, alternate leaves have a reflective glossy finish and are deciduous to semi-evergreen, depending on the region where the tree is growing. The emerging spring foliage is a vivid green color that darkens in summer. Fall color is wonderfully handsome in orange, red, and burgundy shades.

In spring to midsummer, depending on region, tiny, deliciously fragrant, white to cream-colored flowers bloom densely along spikelike racemes four to six inches in length. The racemes form in starlike clusters that emerge at the tips of the previous year's growth. In the Philadelphia region, flowering begins in late June and persists for almost a month before the for-



Left: Cyrilla usually grows as a large shrub or small tree in gardens. Above: Its leaves turn to orange or red in fall.

mation of seed capsules that eventually turn russet brown and remain on the plant through the winter.

### GARDEN USE

The rich, acidic, humus-rich soil and moist riverside woodland location that my aunt chose for the cyrilla was similar to much of cyrilla's native habitat in the southeastern United States. In the wild, cyrilla ranges along the coastal plain from Virginia and Delaware south to Florida and into eastern Texas. It is also found in the West Indies and along the eastern coast of South America into Brazil. In the Southeast, cyrilla spreads by suckering stems and typically develops into large thickets. It is often found growing with other moisture-tolerant understory natives such as inkberry (*Ilex glabra*), southern bayberry (*Myrica cerifera*), and summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*).

Among a limited number of cyrilla selections is 'Scott Arboretum', which is billed as a cold-hardy form by RareFind-

Nursery in New Jersey. A selection called 'Graniteville', made by Robert McCartney of Woodlanders Nursery in South Carolina, is reportedly slower growing and smaller leafed than the species.

Adaptable to sites ranging from full sun to part or near full shade, cyrilla is not affected by any serious diseases or pests. It will thrive in moist to wet acidic soils high in organic content and tolerates seasonal flooding.

If you are fond of wildlife, cyrilla is an excellent addition to the garden, providing nourishment and shelter for a wide variety of creatures. Orchard bees (*Osmia lignaria*), eastern tiger swallowtail butterflies (*Papilio glaucus*), and summer azure butterflies (*Celastrina neglecta*) are among the pollinators drawn to the flowers. If you plant it, they will come.

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### Sources

**Growing Wild Nursery**, Burgaw, NC. (910) 200-2112. [www.growingwildnursery.net](http://www.growingwildnursery.net).

**RareFindNursery**, Jackson, NJ. (732) 833-0613. [www.rarefindnursery.com](http://www.rarefindnursery.com).

**Woodlanders, Inc.**, Aiken, SC. (803) 648-7522. [www.woodlanders.net](http://www.woodlanders.net).

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