

# The American GARDENER<sup>®</sup>

The Magazine of the American Horticultural Society

July / August 2010

Showstopping Tropicals

Capturing and Conserving  
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How to Design Movement  
in the Garden



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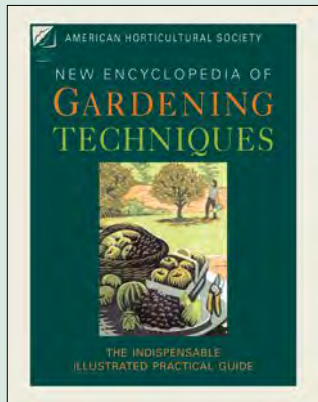
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## NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

WHILE THIS ISSUE of *The American Gardener* has the same look and feel you've come to expect from the American Horticultural Society, behind that familiar façade is an organization that is striving to better meet the needs of today's gardeners, even as we prepare to celebrate our 90th anniversary in 2012.

**Honoring our leaders and engaging our future.** At our spring Board of Directors meeting, we recognized our outgoing members for their service and welcomed a new slate of volunteer leaders. We applauded Susie Usrey, who has admirably served the Society as Board Chair for the last four years, for her work keeping the ship on course during a period of unprecedented challenge. Treasurer Arnold Steiner was recognized for his financial acumen and judgment during the same period. We are grateful to Awards Committee Chair Bill Barrick for his dedication to recognizing and celebrating the best of American horticulture. We will also miss the liveliness of Kurt Bluemel and Missy Marshall; their important contributions have helped make our River Farm headquarters an even more exciting example of American gardening.

**The American Gardener is going digital!** We are supplementing the print version of the Society's flagship publication with a digital edition that will have the same content but also include new search features and capabilities that will allow us to be an even richer resource for our members. All active members who have a valid e-mail address on file will receive the digital edition in addition to the print version. If you would like to receive the digital edition, please let us know—you'll find a link on the homepage of our website ([www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)) that will expedite this process.

**Celebrate summer.** In most regions of the country, gardens are approaching their midsummer glory. In this issue of *The American Gardener*, you will find suggestions for "Showstopping Plants"—bold and dramatic plants that are sure to be attention-getters in your garden. You will also discover how creative design can bring an element of motion to any garden, and learn about "rainscaping," an earth-friendly gardening approach that is being embraced by gardeners across the country.

**Honor a gardener.** Nominations are now open for the 2011 AHS Great American Gardeners Awards. Would you like the AHS to recognize someone who has made an important impact on horticulture, gardens, or gardening? Is there an organization doing great things in your community that should be rewarded? Look for details about the 2011 awards program and how to make a nomination on our website ([www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)).

**Talk back.** An important part of the AHS's mission is to be the voice of the American gardener. To do that we need your support, opinions, and ideas. What is important to you about gardening? How can America become a land of gardens and gardeners? Share your thoughts by sending an e-mail to [tunderwood@ahs.org](mailto:tunderwood@ahs.org) or [hrissetto@ahs.org](mailto:hrissetto@ahs.org). Our editor, David Ellis, also appreciates messages at [dellis@ahs.org](mailto:dellis@ahs.org).

Thank you for supporting the AHS—we're so glad you are along with us for the ride, because we're going places and doing things you won't want to miss.

Happy gardening!

Harry Risetto, Chair, AHS Board of Directors  
Tom Underwood, Executive Director



Tom Underwood and Harry Risetto



### 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).

**THE AMERICAN GARDENER** To submit a letter to the editor of *The American Gardener*, write to The American Gardener, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308, or send an e-mail to [editor@ahs.org](mailto:editor@ahs.org).

**DEVELOPMENT** To make a gift to the American Horticultural Society, or for information about a donation you have already made, call (800) 777-7931 ext. 127.

**E-NEWSLETTER** To sign up for our monthly e-newsletter, visit [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

**INTERNSHIP PROGRAM** The AHS offers internships in communications, horticulture, and youth programs. For information, send an e-mail to [education@ahs.org](mailto:education@ahs.org). Information and application forms can also be found in the River Farm area of [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

**NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH GARDEN SYMPOSIUM** For information about the Society's annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium, call (800) 777-7931 ext. 137 or visit the Youth Gardening section of [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

**RECIPROCAL ADMISSIONS PROGRAM** The AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program offers members free admission and other discounts to more than 250 botanical gardens and other horticultural destinations throughout North America. A list of participating gardens can be found in the Membership area of [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org). For more information, call (800) 777-7931 ext. 119.

**RIVER FARM** The AHS headquarters at River Farm is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays year-round (except Federal holidays), and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays from April through September. Admission is free. For information about events, rentals, and directions, visit the River Farm section of [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

**TRAVEL STUDY PROGRAM** Visit spectacular private and public gardens around the world through the Society's acclaimed Travel Study Program. For information about upcoming trips, call (800) 627-6621, send an e-mail to [ahs@macnairtravel.com](mailto:ahs@macnairtravel.com), or visit the Travel Study section of [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

**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

### A LAVENDER FOR HARSH CLIMATES

Thank you for an excellent magazine. I really enjoyed the aptly named, "A Love Affair With Lavender" article in the May/June 2010 issue. If you live in a region with a harsh climate, I recommend a plant sold as "true lavender" by Bluestone Perennials nursery (possibly a cultivar of *L. xintermedia* sometimes listed as 'Dutch'). I have grown this plant for several years in my south-central Nebraska garden (USDA Zone 4). It has withstood wind, heat, snow, cold, drought, and drenching rains, and it even survived the miserable winter of 2009–2010. I have it planted periodically along the gravel road near our east yard. I mulch it lightly, never fertilize, and only water when the weather is consistently dry.

Patricia McPheeters  
Gothenburg, Nebraska

### Digital edition available now!

Beginning with this issue, *The American Gardener* will be available as both a digital and print magazine. If we already have an e-mail address for you in our records, you will automatically receive an e-mail notifying you when each new digital issue has been published. If you are not sure whether we have your e-mail address, or you would like to sign up to have access to the digital edition, visit [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org) and click on the "Digital Magazine" link on the homepage.

### IMPORTANCE OF NATIVES

I read with interest "What is Wild?...and Why it Matters" by Rick Darke (January/February 2010). To quote from the article: "...are there beautiful accidents in the mix? Among the plantings, do you see any self-perpetuating communities, seeding

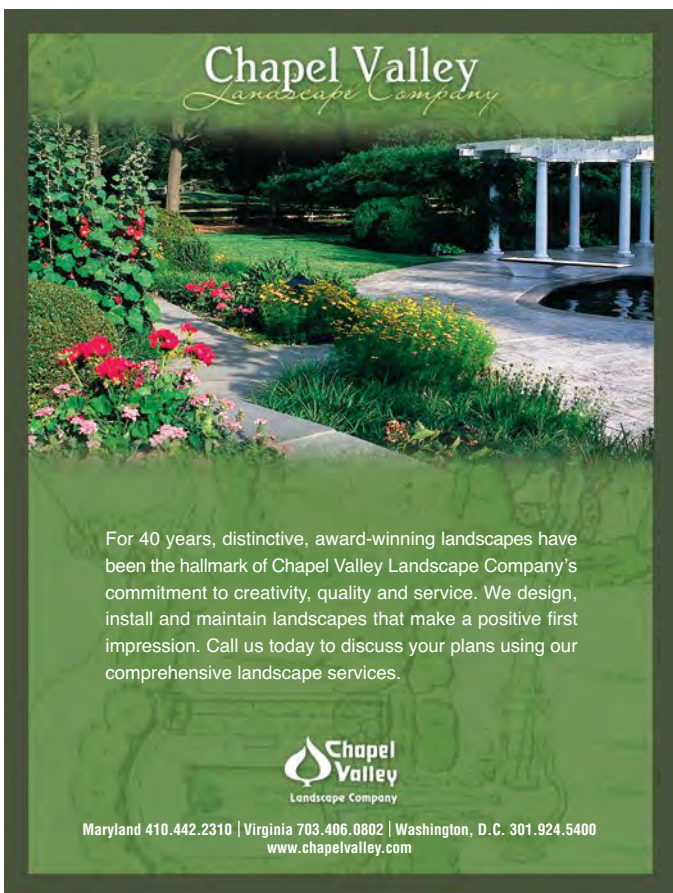
freely, continuing themselves without effort on your part (without watering, fertilizing, or spraying)? Beyond beauty, do these communities also nurture other living things in the garden?"

In my garden, examples of this include spotted jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp.). Both self-seed freely and attract hummingbirds, bees, and sphinx moths all summer long.

Thank you for an uplifting article encouraging our native wildflowers and their place in our gardens as a habitat and food supply for our native wildlife. 🍃


Pam Karaus  
Cincinnati, Ohio

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



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# THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY TRAVEL STUDY PROGRAM 2010–2011 TOURS



## AUTUMN IN SICILY

### Sicily: Gardens and Antiquities

with AHS Host Katy Moss Warner  
and Tour Escort Susie Orso of Specialtours  
October 28–November 7, 2010

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■ From the sparkling seascapes of Taormina to the rugged landscape in the interior, this tour will explore the archaeological sites, historical monuments, and enchanting gardens of Sicily. The island is home to some of the finest classical sites outside of Greece. On this trip we will see marvelous examples of Roman and Byzantine mosaics as well as Norman churches and privately-owned Baroque palaces. We will also visit gardens where succulents, citrus, bougainvillea, and exotic plants abound. Call now to join us on this once-in-a-lifetime travel opportunity.



## 2011 TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

The AHS's Travel Study Program will be bound for three exciting garden destinations in 2011. Start planning now for next year's trips!

early May **Gardens of the Loire Valley**

July/August **Gardens and Innovation: Chicagoland & Rockford**

late September/early October **Castles and Gardens of Bohemia & Moravia**

Full travel itineraries will be available in September.

For more information about upcoming 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)

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## News from the AHS

July / August 2010

PROGRAMS • EVENTS • ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ONLINE AUCTION OFFERS EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES WITH NOTED GARDENERS

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL debut last year, the American Horticultural Society (AHS) is reprising the online auction, "One on One with Great American Gardeners," in conjunction with the Society's Annual Gala, "Gifts of the Garden." The gala will take place on Saturday, September 25 at the AHS's River Farm headquarters. **Laura Dowling**, White House florist and owner of Interieurs et Fleurs in Alexandria, Virginia, is the Honorary Chair for the gala, a black-tie garden event that features an elegant formal dinner and silent auction.

The online auction features exclusive opportunities for four people to have lunch and a garden tour with notable horticulturists throughout the United States. Among the tours is the National Tropical Botanical Garden in Kalaheo, Hawaii, with director and CEO **Chipper Wichman**, nationally recognized for preserving natural and cultural resources in his home state of Hawaii. Also available is a tour with **Michael Dosmann**, curator of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

To learn more about the available opportunities for bidding, visit [www.ahs.org/auction](http://www.ahs.org/auction). The deadline to bid is October 25, 2010. The auction and gala raise funds to support the AHS's mission of offering outreach and educational programs to American gardeners. Call **Courtney Capstack** at (703) 768-5700 ext. 127 or e-mail [ccapstack@ahs.org](mailto:ccapstack@ahs.org) for more information or to reserve tickets for the gala.



Waterfall at McBryde Garden in Hawaii

### AHS AND AMERICAN DAFFODIL SOCIETY COLLABORATE ON DIGITAL REFERENCE

IN THE 1930s, the AHS published collections of articles about daffodils in an annual volume titled *The American Daffodil Year Book*. Only a few copies of these historical references exist, so the AHS and the American Daffodil Society (ADS) are working together to offer digital versions of the year books from 1935 to 1938 on compact disk. These CDs are available online through the ADS website for \$10.

**Mary Lou Gripshover**, ADS chairman for library and archival policy, says that finding new ways to make historical information about daffodils accessible to ADS members and the public is an important element of ADS's educational mission. "We're pleased to be cooperating with the AHS to make these year books available," adds Gripshover.

The year books include articles on growing and caring for daffodils, descriptions of species and cultivars that were new at the time, and tips for various regions and climates. One article from 1935, titled "How Long is the Daffodil Season?" offers insight on ways to extend the blooming season, something gardeners are still attempting to do.

"This collaboration with the ADS is a terrific opportunity to make these wonderful daffodil articles accessible in digital format," says **David J. Ellis**, AHS director of communications. "There are many other valuable gardening references in the AHS archives and we are actively looking for ways to make these available to new generations of gardeners."



## Get Ready for 2011 Seed Exchange

The deadline to donate seeds to the 52nd annual AHS Seed Exchange is coming up this fall, so don't forget to save seeds from your garden for this popular AHS membership program. Members who donate seeds get the first opportunity to select from each year's offerings. For more information, visit [www.ahs.org/membership/seed\\_exchange.htm](http://www.ahs.org/membership/seed_exchange.htm), or look for a reminder in the next issue of the magazine.

To see an article from one of the year books, click on the web special linked to the online version of this article at [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org). For more information on the American Daffodil Society or to order the CD, visit [www.daffodilusa.org](http://www.daffodilusa.org).

### NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS RECOGNIZED AT AHS AWARDS CEREMONY

"THE PURPOSE of life is to discover your gift. The meaning of life is to give it away," said **Robert Herman**, winner of the 2010 AHS Teaching Award, during his acceptance speech at the Great



AHS Board Chair Harry Risetto, left, presents the AHS Teaching Award to Robert Herman at the awards ceremony at River Farm.

American Gardeners Awards ceremony held June 10 at the AHS's River Farm headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. Coming from across the United States, the award recipients and their friends and families joined AHS Board members and staff in celebrating outstanding achievements fields such as landscape design, horticultural research, floral design, communication, and education. Publishers of four garden books were presented with the AHS's annual Book Award as well.

**Melissa Butkiewicz**, horticulturist at Dow Gardens in Midland, Michigan, who accepted the Jane L. Taylor Award on behalf of Dow's "Growin' Gardeners" program, was excited to attend the ceremony under an open tent on a beautiful early summer evening. The Growin' Gardeners program "connects children with plants and joins whole families together," said Butkiewicz. "Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, grandparents—they're learning right along with the kids."

The success of the AHS awards program is based on securing a broad pool of candidates for the different awards categories. To nominate someone for the 2011 Great American Gardeners

Awards, you can download a form from the AHS website ([www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)); turn to page 12 for more information.

### MAKING CONNECTIONS: THE AHS AND THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

ON SATURDAY, May 8, the AHS participated with other regional gardens and gardening organizations at the Smithsonian Institution's fourth annual Garden Fest. This free festival, which



AHS Volunteer Coordinator Jane Underwood, second from right, demonstrates how to make "tree-cookie" necklaces.

attracted thousands of attendees, took place in the Smithsonian's Enid A. Haupt Garden, a four-acre garden located adjacent to the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

AHS staff members hosted a booth at which children could create their own "tree-cookie" necklaces. Tree cookies are thinly sliced sections of tree branches with a hole drilled through the middle. The children used colored markers to decorate the cookies and then ran string through the hole to form a necklace. In the process they counted tree rings to determine the age of the tree limb and learned about different kinds of trees.

Other booths offered fun and instructional projects related to insects, growing tomatoes, and floral arranging. Visitors also learned about the benefits of green roofs, horticulture in zoos, and even how chocolate is made.

To view photos of the day's events, visit the Smithsonian Gardens' Garden Fest website, <http://gardens.si.edu/gardenfest/>.

### THE HOMESTEAD RESORT'S "IN THE GARDEN" SYMPOSIUM

LOOKING FOR an escape in a garden setting this summer? Consider the Homestead Resort's "In the Garden Weekend" in Hot Springs, Virginia, from August 20 to 22. In addition to presentations from five gardening experts during the



The Homestead Resort's formal Spa Garden



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.

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. **Sicily: Gardens and Antiquities.** AHS Travel Study Program. Sicily, Italy.

## Connect with the AHS on Facebook

The AHS is now on Facebook! If you'd like to connect with other AHS members or find out about upcoming events and programs, you'll find both an AHS page and a River Farm page. Convenient links are offered through the AHS homepage ([www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)).

symposium, the event includes a welcome reception, accommodations, breakfast and dinner daily, opportunities to mingle with the speakers, a tour of the resort's landscaped grounds, and complimentary membership in the AHS.

The symposium is headlined by nurseryowner **André Viette**, a renowned horticulturist, author, lecturer, and host of the "In the Garden" radio show. Also participating will be garden designer **Kerry Mendez**, owner of Perennially Yours in Upstate New York, and **Paul Meyer**, director of the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania and noted plant explorer. **Holly Shimizu**, executive director of the U.S. Botanic Garden, will speak about "The Garden of Essential Fragrance—Fragrant Plants and the Power of Smell." **Forrest Lee**, Homestead grounds superintendent, will lead the tour of the resort's many garden areas.

To learn more about this event, visit [www.thehomestead.com](http://www.thehomestead.com).

## WE'VE GOT...VOLUNTEERS!

AMERICA ONLINE (AOL), the corporation that helped to revolutionize Internet communications, sent more than 50 employees to River Farm on May 20 as part of the company's nationwide community service effort. More than 2,500 AOL volunteers performed community service tasks all over the country in what was billed as "Monster Help," a day of service to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the company's founding.

At River Farm, the AOL volunteer crew helped AHS volunteers and staff members tackle a number of different projects, including mulching, weeding, and planting around the grounds, as well as cleaning and painting River Farm's Estate House.

"I think it's wonderful that a company does something like this," says **Tony Derigge**, a regular River Farm volunteer who helped out this day. "I'm thrilled because non-profit organizations like the AHS need lots of help to achieve their goals." AHS Volunteer Coordinator **Jane Underwood** agrees. "We're grateful for AOL's involvement," she says, "because River Farm is so dependent on volunteers to support and extend the work of the staff."



**AOL volunteers help clear the remains of a dead tree at River Farm.**

## 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 April 1 and May 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).

The American Horticultural Society Presents

# Gifts of the Garden

At River Farm in Alexandria, Virginia

17TH ANNUAL GALA

Saturday, September 25, 2010

6:00–10:00 pm

The American Horticultural Society's Board of Directors invites you to join us for an evening of fine dining and entertainment in the garden at our 17th Annual Gala, *Gifts of the Garden*. This year's event will celebrate the many rewards—from inspirational beauty to uplifting discoveries, tranquility, and general health and well being—that gardens provide on a daily basis.

Laura Dowling, celebrated White House florist and owner of *Interieurs et Fleurs* in Old Town, Alexandria, will be the Gala's Honorary Chair. Laura and her floral arrangements have been featured on broadcasts such as *Home and Garden Television* (HGTV) and the Fox network morning news show, and in international publications such as the *Journal di Dimanche* (Paris).

This festive evening under the stars will include an elegant formal dinner and silent auction; attire is black-tie. Advance reservations only; tables for 10 and individual tickets are available.

All proceeds from the Gala and Online Auction benefit the stewardship of River Farm and the American Horticultural Society's outreach and educational programs.

Call Courtney Capstack at 703.768.5700 ext. 127 or email [ccapstack@ahs.org](mailto:ccapstack@ahs.org) for more information or to reserve tickets or tables of 10.

Sponsorship opportunities also available.

## ONLINE Auction

In conjunction with the annual Gala, the AHS is proud to announce its second annual online auction, "One on One with Great American Gardeners." This is your chance to bid on an opportunity for you and three friends to spend time as exclusive guests of a prominent American horticulturist, botanic garden director, or landscape designer.

Visit [www.ahs.org/auction](http://www.ahs.org/auction) for a sample of available experience options and more information about the auction. The deadline to bid is **October 25, 2010**.



AMERICAN  
HORTICULTURAL  
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[www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)

## Call for Nominations

# AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY 2011 GREAT AMERICAN GARDENERS AWARDS



### *It's an Honor...*

Since 1953, the American Horticultural Society's Great American Gardeners Awards Program has recognized individuals and institutions that have made significant contributions to American horticulture. Nominations are now being accepted for 2010.

Nominate your "horticultural hero"—a memorable professor, a favorite garden writer, or the driving force behind an incredible community project.

For additional information and a nomination form, visit [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org) or call (703) 768-5700 ext. 110.

**Nominations must be submitted by September 30, 2010.**



AMERICAN  
HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY



CINDY DYER

**2010 Liberty Hyde Bailey Award**  
Steven Still, Executive Director,  
Perennial Plant Association

#### **Liberty Hyde Bailey Award**

Given to an individual who has made significant lifetime contributions to at least three of the following horticultural fields: teaching, research, communications, plant exploration, administration, art, business, and leadership.

#### **Luther Burbank Award**

Recognizes extraordinary achievement in the field of plant breeding.

#### **Paul Ecke Jr.**

#### **Commercial Award**

Given to an individual or company whose commitment to the highest standards of excellence in the field of commercial horticulture contributes to the betterment of gardening practices everywhere.

#### **G. B. Gunlogson Award**

Recognizes the innovative use of technology to make home gardening more productive and successful.

#### **Horticultural Therapy Award**

Recognizes significant contributions to the field of horticultural therapy.

## 2011 AWARDS

#### **Landscape Design Award**

Given to an individual whose work has demonstrated and promoted the value of sound horticultural practices in the field of landscape architecture.

#### **Meritorious Service Award**

Recognizes a past Board member or friend of the American Horticultural Society for outstanding service in support of the Society's goals, mission, and activities.

#### **B. Y. Morrison**

#### **Communication Award**

Recognizes inspirational and effective communication—through print, radio, television, and/or online media—that advances public interest and participation in horticulture.

#### **Professional Award**

Given to a public garden administrator whose achievements during the course of his or her career have cultivated widespread interest in horticulture.

#### **Jane L. Taylor Award**

Given to an individual, organization, or program that has inspired and nurtured future horticulturists through efforts in children's and youth gardening.

#### **Teaching Award**

Given to an individual whose ability to share his or her horticultural knowledge with others has contributed to a better public understanding of the plant world and its important influence on society.

#### **Urban Beautification Award**

Given to an individual, institution, or company for significant contributions to urban horticulture and the beautification of American cities.

## “LIVING” RETAINING WALL AT RIVER FARM

EMBRACING THE current interest in vertical gardening techniques, River Farm is one of the first locations in the Washington, D.C., area to have an environmentally friendly SmartSlope living retaining wall on site, thanks to the **Furbish Company**, an AHS Corporate Member. “Demonstrating new products



The new living wall next to the demonstration vegetable garden at River Farm is planted with a mixture of edible and ornamental plants.

and concepts that are aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly is an important element of the AHS’s national mission,” says AHS Horticulturist **James Gagliardi**.

Furbish, a Baltimore, Maryland-based firm specializing in living retaining walls and green roofs, installed the SmartSlope next to the AHS’s vegetable demonstration garden on May 28. The plantings are taking root and will be growing vigorously by the end of the summer.

SmartSlope is an innovative retaining-wall system constructed with blocks that contain only half the concrete used in a typical retaining wall block, thus reducing the wall’s carbon footprint. It also provides space for plants to grow vertically within the wall while reducing stormwater runoff, minimizing ground disturbance, and reducing the heat-island effect in urban areas. “For us, success will be measured by how this system looks a year from now, when visitors will see only vegetation, no concrete,” says **Jimmy Dick**, sales and marketing director of Furbish.

For more information about living retaining walls and green roof systems, visit [www.furbishco.com](http://www.furbishco.com) or [www.smartslope.com](http://www.smartslope.com).

## AMERICA IN BLOOM SYMPOSIUM COMES TO THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST

THIS YEAR’S America in Bloom (AIB) Symposium and Annual Awards will take place from September 30 to October 2 in St. Louis, Missouri. Celebrating the beautification efforts of communities across the nation, AIB will be honoring the most deserving in this year’s symposium, “Gateways, Gardens,

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Grandeur.” Symposium participants can attend sessions on horticultural branding trends, cleaning and greening cities, and protecting and marketing scenic byways as well as take tours through the Citygarden and other St. Louis neighborhoods and gardens.

“We are so pleased to hold our national symposium in St. Louis, with its marvelous heritage, parks, and network of nearly 200 urban gardens,” says **Evelyn Alemanni**, AIB board member, volunteer judge, and chair of the symposium committee. “In addition to excellent sessions focused on community beautification, **Peter Raven**, president emeritus of the Missouri Botanical Garden, and **Anna Ball**, president of the Ball Horticultural Company, will present keynote addresses.”

As a partner to AIB, the AHS supports the organization’s efforts in embracing community involvement, enhancing civic pride, and improving quality of life under the umbrella of planting trees, plants, and flowers for all community members to enjoy. For more information, visit the AIB website ([www.americainbloom.org](http://www.americainbloom.org)) or call (614) 487-1117.

### AHS WINNERS IN GARDEN CLUB PHOTO COMPETITION

THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA and Men’s Garden Clubs of America (TGOA/MGCA), an AHS Horticultural Partner, held its annual convention June 10 to 12 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. During the event, the TGOA/MGCA announced the winners of the group’s 2010 photo competition.

Among the winners were several AHS members. **Anne Allen** (Bennington, Vermont) won for Herbaceous Perennials, and for-



Karin Chaffin’s winning photograph

mer AHS Board member **Arabella Dane** (Center Harbor, New Hampshire) won for Specialty Flowering. **Rodney Toth** (Hubbard, Ohio) won for miscellaneous and was also First Runner-up. **Karin Chaffin** (Denver, Colorado) was the winner for Wildflowers, Annuals, Bulb-like Plants and also Second Runner-up.

To view more winning images, and for additional information and highlights from this year’s TGOA/MGCA convention, visit [www.tgoa-mgca.org/default.htm](http://www.tgoa-mgca.org/default.htm).

*News written by Editorial Intern Meredith Soeder.*

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## Rissetto Named New AHS Board Chair

by Viveka Neveln

**W**ITH THEIR brightly colored flowers of all shapes and sizes, dahlias have transformed many a weekend gardener into a lifelong plant fanatic. At least that's how it happened for **Harry A. Rissetto**, who became chair of the American Horticultural Society's (AHS) Board of Directors in June. First smitten with dahlias more than 35 years ago, Rissetto has always found time for gardening despite his demanding career as a partner in a Washington, D.C.-based law firm. And it was dahlias that first led him to the AHS.

During the 1980s, the AHS worked with the American Dahlia Society (ADS) and National Capital Dahlia Society to maintain a trial garden for new dahlia cultivars at its River Farm headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. Rissetto, who had become involved with the two dahlia societies, helped with the project over the next decade. Though the trial garden no longer exists at River Farm, he has found other ways to be involved.

### LONGTIME AHS MEMBER

Rissetto has been an AHS member for many years and was a founding member of the Friends of River Farm fundraising organization. To share his enthusiasm for dahlias with other members, he co-authored an article about the plants in the February 1990 issue of this magazine. In 2004, he joined the AHS's Board. And now, as Chair of the Board, Rissetto says he "hopes to increase the visibility of the AHS, increase membership and support, and improve the connection between the AHS and other plant societies."

"Harry is an outstanding choice for this position," says **Susie Usrey**, an executive with Monrovia nursery in California. "He brings a great deal of wisdom, passion, and knowledge of the organization," adds Usrey, who served as the AHS Board chair for the past four years. "With his proven commitment to the future



Above: Harry Rissetto admires a frilly dahlia called 'Vicki'. Right: 'Amy's Star' is a cultivar that Rissetto selected from seedlings.



growth and accomplishments of the AHS, I believe the next couple of years will be very successful under his leadership."


Rissetto is no stranger to leading non-profit organizations. He has served as president of both the National Capital Dahlia Society and the ADS, as well as sitting on the boards of several community organizations. "I enjoy the challenge of attracting people to these organizations, and to gardening, and maintaining a dynamic connection with members and potential members."

"Harry has a unique set of talents," says ADS President **Jerry Landerholm**, who has worked with Rissetto for more than 20 years in various capacities through the dahlia society. "He excels at keeping many irons in the fire, and at taking difficult issues and distilling them down to find good solutions. His legal expertise also provides a valuable perspective on running a business successfully."

### PLANT-BREEDING HOBBYIST

In addition to his business acumen, Rissetto is also an enthusiastic gardener. In

his spare time, Rissetto tends his dahlias, growing about 80 different cultivars in an 1,800-square-foot home garden. From these, he likes to grow out seedlings to see if he gets anything worth keeping. One of his seedlings, 'Amy's Star', won an award from the ADS and is available in the trade. And while dahlias may have been his first love, Rissetto also enjoys growing many different kinds of day-lilies, gladiolas, and rhododendrons for their colorful flowers. "It's a wonderful rush when one day you go out in your garden and the bud you've been watching has turned into a flower with bright, beautiful color," he says.

"We have been fortunate to have such strong and talented leadership on our Board through the years," says AHS Executive Director **Tom Underwood**. "With Harry now at the helm, I'm excited to work with him and our other Board members to continue to make great things happen in the world of horticulture." 

*Viveka Neveln is associate editor of The American Gardener.*

**W**E'VE ALL come across plants that stopped us in our tracks: a golden hosta unfurling its first spring shoots; the smoky pink blooms of summer Joe Pye weed covered in dozens of butterflies; a maple flamed red by fall's frosty kiss. But these are ephemeral effects and, magnificent as they are, sometimes we want a plant that knocks us to our knees all season long. The tropics seem to host more than their share of heart-stoppers, plants that astound us with exotic flowers and foliage quite different from the temperate garden palette most of us are used to.

But wait a minute, why should we expect tropical plants to thrive in our gardens? They come from places very different from most North American climates. Who wants to be a love slave to a temperamental prima donna?

The fact is, despite their exotic looks, tropical plants—or tender perennials as they are sometimes described—are easy to grow. Consider this: While a tropical winter may be very different from ours, most of the United States experiences warm to hot summers. Many areas have high humidity, too. Heat and humidity combine to kill their share of ill-adapted species, but they can be assets when you grow plants adapted to those conditions. Tropicals, it turns out, are perfectly adept at handling the dog-day weather in our warm-season gardens.

They don't ask a lot when it comes to growing conditions, either. Average-to-rich soil, a good mulch, and moderate watering will produce excellent results with most species. Most tropicals do well in containers, too, provided they receive adequate moisture—and some will overwinter if you have a greenhouse or cool, dry storage area. They rarely need deadheading or other grooming; in fact, once they're planted and established, tropicals do just fine with minimal attention, which leaves the gardener—and garden guests—more time to be dazzled by their beauty.

In the following pages I discuss some of my favorites and offer nominations from other tropical plant experts around the country. In case none of those strike your fancy, there are nine more choices in the chart on page 20.

# Garden Showstoppers

BY PAM BAGGETT

Looking for that perfect plant for a summer focal point? Seek no further than these flamboyant tropicals guaranteed to stop garden visitors in their tracks.



*Ensete ventricosum* 'Maurelii'

DAVID CAVAGNARO



For gardeners willing to cliff-dive into the tropical look, there's no better place to begin than with a whopping big banana, such as Abyssinian red banana (*Ensete ventricosum* 'Maurelii', Zones 10–11, 12–1). It makes a dramatic statement with its statuesque habit (growing to eight feet in a summer, or to 15 or 20 in a site where it can be grown year-round), and upright leaves highlighted by red margins and mid-ribs. The species is native to forested lower mountain slopes in Ethiopia and Angola. Full sun brings out the best color, but it will tolerate some shade. Don't skimp on water and nutrients, though; bananas are heavy feeders.

If a banana seems too bold, consider instead one of the most beautiful and seductively fragrant of tropical flowers: angel's trumpets (*Brugmansia* spp.). The flared pendulous blooms reflect their common name, but rather than a blast of sound, these foot-long trumpets send a strong perfume wafting over the evening garden. In temperate climates, most angel's trumpets bloom in early summer and again as autumn nears. In flower, there's no finer plant; out of bloom, their plain green foliage is bland. Five-foot-tall *Brugmansia* 'Miner's Claim' (Zones 8–10, 11–7) solves that dilemma with lusciously variegated leaves. Sporting two-tone green foliage with creamy-white edges, 'Miner's Claim' looks delightful even when it's not draped in flesh-pink flowers. Grown in full or half-day sun, a large plant may produce hundreds of blooms in season. Avoid angel's trumpet if you have small children because all parts are poisonous if ingested.

Sensuous fragrance can also be had with the trumpetlike flowers of *Crinum* 'Ellen Bosanquet' (Zones 7–10, 11–4). A hybrid of African *C. scabrum*, 'Ellen Bosanquet' produces clusters of rich, rose-pink blooms borne on two-foot-tall flower stalks beginning in early summer. It is one of the hardiest in this genus of extremely long-lived bulbs, which bear sword-shaped, succulent leaves and over time can form massive clumps. In the southeastern United States, crinums can be found occupying abandoned home sites and even the occasional ditch. Like its kin, 'Ellen Bosanquet' adapts well to drought or monsoon, sandy soil, loam, or clay. It prefers full or part sun, and though it may be happier with mulch and an occasional



*Crinum* 'Ellen Bosanquet'

drink of water, 'Ellen Bosanquet' is darn near unkillable.

It would be difficult to find a more emphatic focal point than *Alocasia 'Portodora'* (Zones 8–10, 12–1). While most elephant ears (*Alocasia* spp.) have dangling leaves, 'Portodora' seems to have stuck a root in an electrical socket—its enormous, three-foot leaves point straight up at the sky. 'Portodora' rockets up to eight feet tall, the leaves borne on purplish stalks that arise from a plump tuber. Like most elephant ears, 'Portodora' produces smaller "pups," but rather than making runners, the plantlets are tucked close to the base of the parent plant. 'Portodora' accepts average soil and moisture but prefers lush conditions in part to full sun. It will even grow contentedly in standing water.

A good companion for 'Portodora' is water-loving chocolate sugar cane (*Saccharum officinarum 'Pele's Smoke'*, Zones 9–11, 12–7). Its grassy blades blend milk chocolate and plum-purple, with pink mid-ribs as an occasional bonus. The leaves are borne on dusky purple canes that grow eight to 12 feet tall. A member of the grass family, 'Pele's Smoke' is also a true sugar cane, though unfortunately not chocolate-flavored. Beware the lone cane sold in a pot at the garden center, for it will be a lonely 12-foot stem by late summer. Instead, select plants with several rooted canes per pot. 'Pele's Smoke' thrives in average-to-rich soil with abundant moisture, though it can tolerate the occasional dry spell. Plant it in full or part sun.

Cannas offer flamboyant flowers that look fabulous from early summer to frost and humongous three-foot leaves that contrast well with more delicate plants. Some gardeners consider the blooms of hybrid cannas too gaudy to be used in spaces smaller than public parks and roadside displays, but six-foot-tall *Canna ×ehemania* (Zones 7–10, 12–1) offers elegant weeping blossoms in a rich but not overpowering cerise-pink shade. Give it full or part sun and the richest soil available. Cannas are somewhat drought-resistant, but *C. ×ehemania* thrives in moist soil and can even be potted and grown in water gardens.

Strong-stemmed, tall, and statuesque, *Tibouchina grandifolia* (Zone 10–11, 12–1) has a regal presence that belies its easy nature. Long before it flowers, you'll be drawn to the shimmering silver-green fo-



*Alocasia 'Portodora'*



*Saccharum officinarum 'Pele's Smoke'*

## MORE SHOWSTOPPERS SUGGESTED BY REGIONAL EXPERTS

**Tony Avent**, president of Plant Delights Nursery in Raleigh, North Carolina, nominated a taro, *Colocasia gigantea* 'Thailand Giant' (Zones 8–11, 12–7) as his favorite showstopper. "This fast-growing monster reaches eight to nine feet tall in a mere 20 weeks of warm temperatures and rich organic soils," says Avent. "Enjoy it for the giant umbrella-size leaves and fragrant white flowers in summer."

Egyptian paper reed or papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*, Zones 10–11, 12–6) was the choice of **Dan Benarcik**, horticulturist at Chanticleer garden in Wayne, Pennsylvania. "Nothing screams 'look at me' like *Cyperus papyrus*," he says. "Its six- to eight-foot vertical columns, festooned with Dr. Seuss-like mop heads of flowers, move in any breeze." Although it's technically an aquatic and will thrive in standing water, it can get by with rich organic soil that is kept moist.

**Scott Calhoun**, an author and garden designer based in Tucson, Arizona, suggested lady's slipper (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*, Zones 10–11, 12–7). "Its nearly leafless succulent stems look like a bouquet of lime-green snakes," Calhoun says. "In the summer, it produces orange-red flowers that remind me of women's high-heeled shoes. Hummingbirds like the flowers as well."

Not one to shy away from color (or puns), **Dan Heims** of Terra Nova Nurseries, Inc., in Tigard, Oregon, picked Bismarck palm (*Bismarckia nobilis*, 9–11, 12–10). "I'm a fan of 'bluitude' and this gem from Madagascar is a 'fan' of bluitude with immense, pleated leaves to 10 feet across. Hardy in Houston, Southern California, and Florida, this is a showstopper you can't miss!"

**Dan Hinkley**, a horticultural consultant and author from Indianapolis, Washington, opted for giant Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia gigantea*, Zones 11–11, 12–7). "Collectively, I love this genus of vines and perennials with their curious flowers and intriguing pollination strategies," says Hinkley. "*A. gigantea* is over the top, however, with flowers one plantsman described as enormous purple flying pancakes attended by a scrotal pouch. Who needs 'Avatar' with such creatures already inhabiting this world?"

Variegated tapioca (*Manihot esculenta* 'Variegata', Zones 10–11, 12–7) was the choice of **Jimmy Turner**, senior director of gardens at the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden in Texas. "I like 'em big, bold, and tough when it comes to plants, and this one never disappoints me," says Turner. "The tri-colored foliage of variegated ornamental tapioca will grow fast enough to look you in the eye by midsummer, and it is drought tolerant enough to take the blast furnace heat of a Texas summer and not even droop a leaf. The shiny, yellow leaves bordered in bright green especially stand out with their bright red stems."

**Holly H. Shimizu**, executive director of the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C., says *Colocasia esculenta* 'Diamond Head' (Zones 9–11, 12–7) "is my absolute favorite tropical outdoor plant at the moment. The gigantic textural leaves of this taro are extremely bold and have rich color variations in changing light. When the sun hits the leaves and you see it from behind, the leaf veins stand out in variations of purple and green. At other times, the plant is a deep, rich dark purple, almost black."

—P.B.



*Colocasia esculenta* 'Diamond Head' dwarfs its container at Chanticleer garden

grow it in a container, choose a big one—at least 20 inches in diameter.

Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*, Zones 8–10, 11–7), bears glossy green, pinnate leaves that make a handsome backdrop for racemes of two-inch tubular blossoms. In the species, native to southern Africa, the flowers are fiery orange, but there is also a pastel lemon-yellow form. It grows as a scandent shrub, throwing long shoots that can be trained to trellises. Where it is stem hardy (Zone 10) it can reach 20 feet tall, but in USDA Zones 7–9 it typically behaves as an herbaceous perennial. Grown as an annual, expect a

liage. The six-inch oval leaves bear silken hairs from which sunlight and morning dew drops sparkle. Unlike some plants with silky foliage, *T. grandifolia* is never damaged by moisture. As they age, the leaves turn bright orange, then scarlet, before dropping from the five-foot stems. At all stages, the foliage makes a lovely counterpoint to flowers that emerge on long stalks beginning in late summer. The 12- to 18-inch panicles bear two-inch, royal purple blossoms accented with white centers that turn crimson as the blooms mature. Plants thrive on rich soil but average conditions in full or part sun will work, too.

*Senna didymobotrya* (Zones 9–10, 12–6) also bears leaves as showy as its late-summer flowers. Known as popcorn bush for the tantalizing fragrance of its foliage, it produces 15-inch compound leaves with matched sets of dainty oval leaflets. Popcorn bush reaches five feet tall before it sends forth spires of golden flowers that burst from burnished brown buds. Its delicate texture contrasts beautifully with broad-leaved bananas or elephant ears. A large shrub or small tree native to subtropical Africa, popcorn bush grows best with considerable sun and appreciates rich soil. Like other large-sized tropicals, if you

grows it in a container, choose a big one—at least 20 inches in diameter.

## MORE SHOW-STOPPING TROPICALS TO CONSIDER

Name (botanical, common)	Height/Width (feet)	Ornamental characteristics	Origin	USDA/AHS Zones
<i>Acalypha hispida</i> chenille plant	6–10/3–6	Fluffy, pendulous, deep-crimson flowers resemble dreadlocks	Malaysia to New Guinea	11–11/12–6
<i>Alpinia zerumbet</i> 'Variegata' variegated shell ginger	10/3–4	Fragrant shell-pink flowers, 2-foot-long leaves with bold yellow striping	(species native to eastern Asia)	9–11/12–1
<i>Begonia carolinifolia</i> palm leaf begonia	2/4	Dark green palmate leaves nearly 2 feet across on burgundy stems 2 feet long	S. Mexico and Guatemala	9–11/12–9
<i>Cycas revoluta</i> Japanese sago palm	3–6/3–6	Robust, fernlike habit with glossy dark green leaves 3 to 6 feet long	Japan	min. 50°F/ 12–6
<i>Dahlia imperialis</i> tree dahlia	12–18/4–6	Leaves 2 to 3 feet long; 6-inch-diameter white, pink, or lavender flowers with yellow centers	Guatemala to Columbia	9–11/12–1
<i>Hedychium coronarium</i> garland flower	10/3	Very fragrant white flowers; 2-foot-long leaves	India	7–11/12–7
<i>Musa</i> 'Siam Ruby' red banana	5–10/5	Burgundy to bronze-colored leaves with attractive chartreuse patterning	Asia	8–10/12–1
<i>Trachycarpus fortunei</i> windmill palm	40/8	Large fan-shaped leaves up to 3 feet across	China	8–11/12–7
<i>Zantedeschia</i> 'Edge of Night' black calla lily	2/1	Purple-black flowers above green leaves with small white spots and maroon edges	(species native to Africa)	7–9/12–1

three- to five-foot-tall specimen. Cape honeysuckle looks great in containers and flowers all year but most abundantly in late summer and fall. It will bloom best in full sun and is somewhat drought tolerant.

Agaves are well-adapted to drought. But if you've ever been stuck by an agave's spikes—or if you have small children or pets—you may be reluctant to risk safety for an agave's stunning architectural form. Foxtail agave (*Agave attenuata*, Zones 9–11, 10–4), however, offers satin-smooth foliage without a single thorn. Native to central Mexico, it grows slowly up to three feet tall. The species has succulent, aloe-green leaves, but 'Huntington Blue' offers silvery-blue foliage.

*Solanum quitoense* (Zones 10–11, 12–1) grabs the eye with its oversized growth and shockingly sharp thorns. Inch-long purple spines protrude from the veins of olive-green leaves that grow two feet across. Additional thorns cover the 30-inch-tall trunk, so it's easy to see why gardeners nicknamed this showy plant bed-of-nails. Tucked against the trunk are white flowers, followed by fuzzy green fruits that ripen pumpkin-orange. A relative of tomatoes and eggplants, *Solanum quitoense* grows best with the same regimen that produces robust vegetables: full sun, average-to-rich soil, and regular irrigation.





*Solanum quitoense*



*Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Rosea'

***Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Rosea'** (Zones 10–11, 12–6) A succulent native to tropical Africa and Asia, 'Rosea' bears no resemblance to the usual euphorbias grown in American gardens—in fact it looks more like something a playful child might build. Its common names, flaming pencil tree

and sticks-on-fire, aptly describe its appearance. The plant is made up of a central green trunk, turning brown with age, from which grow numerous branched stems in shades of chartreuse, soft red, and pastel orange. A few tiny leaves are occasionally produced. Its colors are more in-

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tense in full sun, though 'Rosea' grows fine in half-day light. In its native habitat, the species forms a 30-foot-tall tree, but, grown as an annual, 'Rosea' usually tops out at one-and-a-half to two feet. It is long-lived and easily overwintered indoors, however—a task worth attempting because it gets more beautiful with age. Provide well-drained soil and don't overfertilize.

This is just a small sample of the showy, spectacular, or just plain odd tropical plants that will thrive—at least for a long summer—in most gardens. Try at least one or two of these plants, if only to watch your neighbors' jaws drop as they peer over your garden fence.

*The author of Tropicalissimo! (Timber Press, 2009), Pam Baggett lives in Cedar Grove, North Carolina.*

# Cultivators of Confidence

Experienced gardeners offer inspiration and a helping hand for neophytes.

BY DEB WILEY



**T**HERE ARE three kinds of people who hire a garden coach: Overwhelmed novices who don't know a beet from a begonia, long-time gardeners in search of fresh ideas, and almost everyone else who would like a little nudge, an extra pair of eyes, and some professional insight on how to make their garden better.

Though the term “garden coach” entered the lexicon a few years ago, it's still an unfamiliar concept to many people.

But in a culture with sports coaches, life coaches, and executive coaches, it's easy to root out exactly what garden coaches do: inspire, educate, and empower people to create their best gardens.

“I had so many people pestering me, ‘Come to my garden and tell me what to do,’” says Sue Goetz of Gig Harbor, Washington, who has coached since 2004 and worked in the horticulture industry about 15 years. “I always called it garden consulting, but that sounded a lit-

tle too businesslike. Coaching sounds a little more friendly.”

It was a similar story for Russell Camp, a state-certified landscape professional in McDonough, Georgia, who holds a degree in horticulture. Though he'd been coaching for years, he never knew what to call himself. “The word ‘consulting’ wasn't a consumer-friendly word—it sounded expensive,” Camp says. “I decided to reinvent myself as a garden coach who does landscape design.”

**Garden coaching can include a variety of topics. Here Russell Camp, left, discusses sprinkler system settings with a client in McDonough, Georgia.**

When the media latched onto the concept of garden coaching about three years ago, Susan Harris of Takoma Park, Maryland, found her coaching business caught in a wave of publicity that included the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, the Associated Press, “CBS Sunday Morning,” and other media outlets. Suddenly, garden coaching was, if not a hot trend, certainly out of the shade and basking in the sun.

## A GROWING INDUSTRY

It's impossible to know exactly how many people in the United States call themselves garden coaches or provide those kinds of services, but the number appears to be growing.

In April, an online directory of garden coaches started by Harris—*gardencoachdirectory.wetpaint.com*—included more than 100 listings in 38 states. Those numbers were up from 60 in 29 states the previous fall. The directory includes coaches not only in the United States, but in Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Of course, the density of garden coaches tends to be higher in states with higher populations and more major metropolitan regions; for instance there are nine coaches listed in California and seven in New York, but none listed yet for Arkansas, Wyoming, or South Dakota.

Garden coaches tend to select descriptive names for their businesses. Among those in the directory are: Garden HouseCalls (George Weigel in Pennsylvania), Garden Tutor Horticultural Services (Becky Super in Virginia), Garden Mentors (Robin Haglund in Washington), and Gardening with Confidence (Helen Yoest in North Carolina).

## SERVICES OFFERED

Some garden coaches offer specific horticultural services such as landscape design, garden and turfgrass maintenance, plant diagnostics, and irrigation system work. But basic garden coaching doesn't have to include any of those services, just the ability to help clients understand how to solve their problems—and advice on where to go if they need specialized assistance.

“I don't think I hold myself out as an expert,” says Harris, a former court reporter and certified Master Gardener. “I

## Resources

For a list of garden coaching services in different regions, visit [gardencoachdirectory.wetpaint.com](http://gardencoachdirectory.wetpaint.com).

just see myself as an experienced gardener who wants to help others. I used the word ‘coach’ with the woman who first hired me because it implies being paid. It's not like taking a class, not like hiring a big, expensive designer.”

One of Harris's clients was a surgeon who, though calm and competent wielding a knife in the operating room, was terrified when it came to pruning his own shrubs. Faced with an \$11,000 quote to maintain his yard, he hired Harris to show him what to do. As she relates in

one of her blogs (*thegardeningcoachblog.com*), “by the end of the walk-through, he was visibly excited and exclaimed, ‘I feel so empowered!’”

Debbie Notaro, a former real estate broker who found herself out of a job, decided coaching would capitalize on her certified Master Gardener experience and her latent desire to answer frequently asked questions: What's wrong with my grass? How do I deadhead? How do I prune? What about watering and mulching? Is that a weed?

“A lot of people need to be taught basic concepts, like that some plants grow in shade, and some grow in sun,” says Notaro, who is based in St. Charles, Illinois. “Others are primarily looking for design ideas or are interested in learning how to match color combinations.”



Debbie Notaro, right, instructs a client on the basics of gardening—including soil preparation.



Being a landscape designer as well as a garden coach can be advantageous for Sue Goetz of Gig Harbor, Washington, below right, who sometimes designs gardens and then helps her clients install and care for them. One of the gardens Goetz worked on is shown before, left, and after, above.



COURTESY OF SUE GOETZ (3)



Camp searches for simple solutions to chores or problems. "I can boil everything down to a program," he says. "I walk around someone's yard and give them a list of what they have, and what they need, when to prune. For most of your landscape maintenance, what you do month after month is the same year after year. So I give them a list of detailed instructions and tell them, 'Here's what to expect.'"

Camp says coaches are in demand by do-it-yourselfers who want to save money on landscape services. "Garden coaches are a little cheaper than a landscape firm or a lawn service," he says. "That's another way I think I can help; if someone has always hired a lawn service, I can help them do it themselves."

Coaches don't need a special degree, Goetz believes, but they must be extremely knowledgeable about topics beyond mere plants, including soil fertility, drainage, septic and sprinkler systems, rain gardens, and rooftop gardens. "And to be successful, you need to have an outgoing personality," Goetz says.

## GETTING STARTED

Garden coaches take different approaches to their services, but in essence, they listen to their clients and provide feedback for action.

Every situation is different but, according to Notaro, gardeners' concerns often revolve around "Why isn't this growing?" Before Notaro visits a client, she asks them to answer questions such as: What are the top three challenges you face in your garden? What are the light conditions in your front and back yards? What direction does your house face? What are your three favorite colors?

"I walk through and ask questions to get their personality type," Notaro says. "I'm not there to judge or criticize, I'm there to help them reorganize, amend their soil, and generally to be better gardeners."

Goetz says she spends about two hours on each visit with a client. "Our time is very efficient," she says. "Often I'll scribble a rough plan on paper, create plant lists with botanical names, and take notes on whether the soil needs help. Then, I mail a follow-up on how to take care of the yard."

Harris first walks through a client's yard and asks how they want to use their

## THINKING OF HIRING A GARDEN COACH?

If you are interested in hiring a garden coach, it's a good idea to interview several possible candidates so you can identify the ones with the background and personality that will be the best fit for you and your garden. "You should be able to relate to your coach," says Georgia garden coach Russell Camp. "Their specialty should match your needs." Here are some questions you might want to ask during the interview process:

- What's your background and training?
- Can I talk to some of your other clients?
- How much will it cost and how do you charge?
- What will I get for my money?

Consult [gardencoachdirectory.wetpaint.com](http://gardencoachdirectory.wetpaint.com) for a list of coaches by state.



## THINKING OF BECOMING A GARDEN COACH?

Almost anyone can be a garden coach; there are no licensing or testing standards. But based on the advice of the garden coaches I spoke with, before diving into the role headfirst, ask yourself whether you can deliver on these statements:

- I can offer research-based answers to horticulture questions.
- I'm organized and friendly.
- I'm a good listener and can explain horticultural issues accurately.
- I can motivate my clients.
- I have the capability to understand my client's needs and abilities.
- My business plan is in place; clients can clearly understand what they'll get for their money.
- I answer all calls or e-mails promptly and follow through on my promises.

"Being a knowledgeable and passionate plantsperson is not enough," says Sue Goetz of Gig Harbor, Washington. "If you're committed to being a coach you really need to step up a notch and position yourself as a professional." —D.W.

space. “Almost everyone wants low maintenance, by which they mean no maintenance,” she says. “So I try to get them to think sustainably, using plants that do amazing things without watering.”

Since many new gardeners tend to think first in terms of small plants, such as annuals and perennials, Harris tries to instill the importance of shrubs and trees in a landscape, “things that will provide three dimensional interest and cover ground efficiently,” she says.

## COACHING FOR FUN

Maybe it has something to do with the fact that gardeners generally like to grow things and help others, but all the coaches interviewed for this article say they get more than money out of the job.

“A coach can give an enormous amount of help and turn people into gardeners, and that’s cool,” Harris says.

One of Harris’ clients, a Washington, D.C. lawyer, had an absolutely blank-slate yard. “After only a few sessions, she was already transforming into an intensely passionate gardener,” Harris says. “That’s a coach’s dream come true.”

Although most of her clients are one-timers, some have turned into friends. And Harris is slowly helping beautify her neighborhood as people turn to her for advice on a wide range of topics.

Camp says coaching suits his “servant’s heart.” “I feel like I have something to offer and I do enjoy helping people,” he says. “I love to see that little light go off in their head and I enjoy seeing people start to do it for themselves.”

Goetz feels like she’s part helper, part voyeur, part counselor. “It feeds my garden addiction to get into other peoples’ gardens,” she says. “I always get excited to see new spaces.” At times, she’s even served as a mediator: “Sometimes I’m settling an argument between a husband and a wife. I’ll say, ‘I’m not a marriage counselor, but here’s my best advice!’”

She enjoys watching some people shift from being completely clueless to being incredibly passionate. “A young couple with a brand new baby called three years ago with dramatic ideas,” Goetz says. “I drew them a design, a road map. Now, I hear from them every six months or so. Recently the wife called to tell me they had to change the back corner because a

## FINDING THE INNER GARDEN

Looking for coaching that digs deeper into the meaning of gardening? You might be just the right client for Lois de Vries of Andover Township, New Jersey, who calls her business (and philosophy) “Cultivating Your Inner Gardener.”

“A regular garden coach is concerned with plants and soil, but I’m more concerned that people learn about themselves and express that in the garden,” says de Vries, who launched her business earlier this year.



Teaching clients to express themselves in the garden is the goal of Lois de Vries, right.

In the course of her longtime job as a scout for garden magazines, de Vries has visited thousands of gardens. Over time she took notice of various factors that made some much more attractive than others. Eventually, she came to the conclusion that eye-catching gardens came into being because the gardener had infused the space with special meaning. “They all had an intriguing story, something that went beyond their love of plants,” she says.

Memories, values, and meaning all come into play when thinking about your garden, de Vries says. She offers a 10-week online course or a three-month, half-hour every-other-week session that begins with the exploration of “who am I and what do I want to become,” before focusing on common problems in the garden and how to address them.

As part of the process of learning how to coach others, de Vries studied “meaning training” under the guidance of creativity coach Eric Maisel. Her work eventually intersects with more traditional garden coaching: “My clients start out thinking about their process and what they want,” she says, “but at some point they’ve got to get out there and get dirty.” —D.W.

neighbor cut down a tree. She sent me photos, and I was so amazed! It was as enjoyable for me as it is for them to see how far they’ve come.”

Notaro loves what she calls the “V-8 moment” when an idea clicks and the homeowner suddenly gets it and says, “Oh, how could I not think of that!”

Finally, beyond the satisfaction of helping others, coaches get to do more of what they already love—gardening. “Sometimes I find it hard to believe people pay me to do what I enjoy so much,” Notaro says. 🌿

*Deb Wiley is a freelance writer based in Des Moines, Iowa.*



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SUNFLOWERS make folks smile. They are big, happy flowers that evoke country gardens and relaxed summer fun. They're easy to grow—give them sun and decent soil, and they'll perform. They attract goldfinches and other birds in droves. And they make great cut flowers. Few other plants are as well suited for informal gardens.

Sunflowers were among the first crops domesticated by Native Americans who used them for food, medicine, oil, and dye. The seed (actually the fruit, called an achene) was ground into wholesome meal or pressed and boiled to extract oil, a process that has led to the sunflower's present day status as a major oilseed crop.

There are about 62 species of sunflowers, all members of the genus *Helianthus*. In addition, there are numerous subspecies and interspecific hybrids, resulting in a substantial gene pool that has been harnessed by plant breeders to develop selections to satisfy a diverse audience of oilseed producers, birdseed and snack food growers, florists, and backyard gardeners.

There are both annual and perennial species; some develop fibrous roots, others tap roots; some produce rhizomes

The big, bold blooms of this American native brighten up gardens and roadsides in summer.

# *sensational* BY RITA PELCZAR Sunflowers

and/or tubers. Native habitats vary among species, from swamps and wet meadows to dry prairies and roadsides. But every last one of them is native to the Americas. The sunflower is the state flower of Kansas, and some people have

lobbied to make it our national flower. It makes sense if you think about it: It's much more American than the rose!

## PERENNIAL SUNFLOWERS

Perennial sunflowers need plenty of space.



Above: Sunflowers are an important food source for many birds, including American goldfinches. Right: 'Gold Lace', a lower-growing selection of narrow-leaved or swamp sunflower, bears multiple stems of bright golden flowers from late summer into fall.



And in bloom, they can become top-heavy and require support. Most develop rhizomes; in some cases this results in unwanted spread. For example, the Jerusalem artichoke or sun choke (*Helianthus tuberosus*, USDA Hardiness Zones 3–9, AHS Heat Zones 9–5) is a late-summer bloomer native to eastern North America. It develops edible tubers that are somewhat like a crunchy potato, but its aggressive rhizomes spread to form large stands that are difficult to contain.

Unless you are growing Jerusalem artichoke for its tasty tubers, a better garden choice is the swamp sunflower (*H. angustifolius*, Zones 6–9, 9–4). Another eastern North American native, but with rhizomes that stay closer to home, it grows best in moist soil, producing multiple stems that are decked in clusters of three-inch, black-centered yellow blooms in autumn. At six to eight feet tall, it's a great companion for fall-blooming grasses and tall perennials

like Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*). To reduce its height and encourage more branches and blooms, cut developing stems back by a third in early summer. Or seek out the cultivar 'Gold Lace'—a prolific bloomer that only grows five to six feet tall.

Slightly smaller in stature are the small-headed sunflower (*H. microcephalus*, Zones 4–9, 9–4) and the willow-leaf sunflower (*H. salicifolius*, Zones 4–9, 9–6); both grow three to six feet tall and tolerate some drought. Native to the eastern and central United States, the small-headed sunflower has a bushy habit and dark green leaves that provide good contrast with its yellow blooms in late summer. It even tolerates a bit of shade. The willow-leaf sunflower, indigenous to the dry prairies from Missouri to Kansas and Texas, produces thin, slightly drooping lime-green leaves that serve as a vertical accent to the middle or back of a



border throughout summer and fall. Its two-inch yellow flowers appear in late summer. The only downside to this species is that the stems often need staking to remain upright.

The Maximilian sunflower (*H. maximiliani*, Zones 3–9, 9–1) is a drought-tolerant western North American native named for a Russian prince who studied North American plants in the 1830s. Like the swamp sunflower, it develops a large clump of branches and grows quite tall—

**Left:** Cultivars of Maximilian sunflower, such as 'Santa Fe', are suited to Western gardens. **Top:** 'Lemon Queen' is a cultivar of willow-leaved sunflower. **Above:** 'Capenoch Star' is a selection of *H. ×multiflorus*, a natural hybrid between annual and perennial sunflowers.

easily reaching 10 feet, so it makes an effective living screen. From late summer to fall, two- to three-inch daisylike flower heads form at leaf axils all along the stem.

*Helianthus × multiflorus* (Zones 5–9, 9–5), a naturally occurring hybrid between the annual sunflower (*H. annuus*) and the thin-leaf sunflower (*H. decapetalus*), grows four to six feet tall and has given rise to several lovely selections. ‘Flore Pleno’ produces large sprays of double, bright yellow blooms, while those of ‘Capenoch Star’ are daintily single, with lemon-yellow ray flowers and darker yellow disk flowers at the center. The long flowering season—from midsummer to mid fall—make these good choices for the back of the perennial garden.

### ANNUAL SELECTIONS

Annual species grace prairies and roadsides across the continent, so it’s no surprise the cultivated types are easy to grow throughout the United States. Annual sunflowers grow best in full sun in soil that has been amended with compost and a slow-release fertilizer.

With heads only an inch or two across, the bright yellow to orange flowers of the silver-leaf sunflower (*H. argophyllus*) are smaller than most species, but they are borne prolifically on three- to nine-foot stems from August through October. The downy white foliage of this native of Texas, North Carolina, and Florida is prized as much as the flowers.

Despite its common name, the Italian sunflower (*H. debilis*) is another southeastern U.S. native. A selection of the subspecies, *H. debilis* ssp. *cucumerifolius*, ‘Italian White,’ is one of my favorites. The multi-branched, five-foot plants produce oodles of four-inch, creamy white, brown-centered blooms all summer.

The most familiar annual species, *H. annuus*, grows wild throughout North America. It has been bred for many specific uses: as a garden plant for beds, containers, and cut flowers; for birdseed and seeds used for snacks and garnishes; and as the source of sunflower oil. Garden



Left: An All-America Selections winner, the annual sunflower ‘Ring of Fire’ has contrasting circles of red and bright yellow around its flowerheads. Above: Creamy white petals around a brown center are the attraction in the annual ‘Italian White’.



‘Sunny Smile’ grows only 12 to 15 inches tall; deep yellow ray flowers surround a chocolate-brown center on well-branched plants. With its double, red, pollenless blooms that are borne on branched, two-foot plants, ‘Double Dandy’ fits easily into annual beds and flowers make interesting indoor arrangements. Another pollenless choice, ‘Firecracker’ grows two to three feet tall with a branched habit. Its red-and-yellow ray flowers surround a dark brown center.

‘Zebulon’ is a single-stemmed, large-flowered early bloomer that grows three feet tall. ‘Teddy Bear’, sporting shaggy, double, three- to five-inch blooms, also grows about three feet tall in the garden, but in containers only about a foot tall.

cultivars vary in height, branching habit, flower size and color, and production of seed. For cut flowers, pollenless varieties have been developed that have no yellow grains to shed indoors. Height among cultivars ranges from one to 16 feet tall.

On the short end of that range,



**Above:** Cuddly ‘Teddy Bear’ is a double-flowered selection growing to three feet tall. **Left:** The aptly named ‘Elf’ is a dwarf sunflower that reaches only a foot or so tall and is a good choice for containers. **Bottom left:** ‘Soraya’, an All-America Selections winner in 2000, is a sturdy selection that bears orange-yellow ray flowers.

If you like double flowers but prefer a bit of height, try ‘Honey Bear’. It develops sturdy stems that reach five to six feet tall—a good choice for a summer hedge. Another mid-size selection, ‘Velvet Queen’ grows four to five feet tall—its red, yellow, and orange ray flowers surround a dark center. In 2000, ‘Soraya’ was the first sunflower to win an All-America Selections award. The sturdy, well-branched, five- to six-foot plants require no support. Bright orange flowers with brown centers are held well above the foliage on 20-inch stems, making for a spectacular display both in the garden and in a vase. The double or semi-double flowers of ‘The Joker’ sport concentric rings of red and yellow around a fuzzy, dark, pollenless center. Plants grow six to seven feet tall.

Giant-size sunflowers look terrific against a garage wall or tall fence and many produce an abundance of seed for snacks or feeding birds. Goldfinches, in particular, flock to them. Good seed pro-

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ducers include the 12-foot-tall heirloom ‘Mammoth Russian’; ‘Titan’ and ‘Kong’, both of which grow to 14 feet; and ‘Sunzilla’, which can soar to 16 feet. Yellow ray flowers fringe a large seed-filled center in all these selections. I like to harvest some of those heads whole with a short piece of stalk and hang them in the trees around my yard where birds can feast on them.

This most American of all plants has so much to offer. Some require a lot of space, but dwarf types easily fit into smaller gardens or can be grown in containers. So add a few sunflowers to your garden and watch them shine. And smile. ☺

*Rita Pelczar is a contributing editor with The American Gardener and editor-in-chief of the AHS Homegrown Harvest: A Season by Season Guide to A Sustainable Kitchen Garden (Mitchell Beazley, 2010).*

Use creative design and plant selection to infuse gardens with a sense of movement and vitality.

# *creating a*

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
KAREN BUSSOLINI

**S**OME GARDENS are gorgeous to look at, yet static and devoid of energy, like an attractive stage set before the actors emerge. Others entice you with an almost magnetic pull, an invitation to enter and explore. They have a palpable sense of motion, offer cues to the pace of your passage, and keep you wondering what you'll find around the next corner. Even a small garden can be dynamic both to look at and to move through. From my experience, the most exciting gardens employ a combination of plants that move in the wind or have a lively habit and design elements that provide a sense of flow.

## **DIRECTING THE FLOW**

Like the art of dance, gardens and landscapes are three dimensional; they unfold over time and have rhythm. But in order to visualize how the components of a garden direct us through that space, I find it helpful to first think in two dimensions, like a plan view drawn on paper.

The primary lines that direct us through a landscape are made by paths and edges, by walls, fences, and other built structures, by massed plantings, and by the boundaries between positive and negative space, especially lawn. It's easy to see that a hard-edged path is a strong element leading through a landscape. Straight paths are going somewhere in a hurry, the shortest distance between two points. For example, the sidewalk leading straight from street curb to front door leaves no doubt about where a visitor should go.

Landscape designers often use perspective—narrowing paths or spaces to funnel the view—as a means to entice visitors into and through gardens. A well-known example of this is the main axis of the garden at the Palace of Versailles outside Paris, which is a precisely delineated opening about the width of a football field set



between parallel walls of trees. When viewed from the palace, the axis appears to narrow into the distance. The eye is naturally drawn to that far away point and the feet want to follow.

Different kinds of lines move us through space in different ways. Edges—of beds, paving, structures, and other features—can be soft or sharply delineated, built or planted, meandering, offset or

strongly directional. They can disappear and reappear farther away, leaving us to connect them visually, or direct us where to go and then change direction. Diagonals always seem more dynamic and exciting than straight-on axial paths and borders. Curves create an appealing sense of flow, inviting us to slow down and look at the garden. Curves often follow or enhance topography, and they can be used



# *moving experience*



**Left:** Long curves and stepped-up plantings create a strong, smooth flow in Pamela Frost's small Vancouver, British Columbia, backyard. **Above:** This narrow dirt path at Chanticleer garden in Pennsylvania entices visitors with its childlike whimsicality.

to conceal what lies ahead, so our curiosity keeps us moving.

How quickly visitors move through a garden can be influenced by the size and shape of the curves. Pamela Frost edged her Vancouver, British Columbia, backyard with deep, curving beds of perennials stepped up to shrubs stepped up to trees on the property lines. The beds' long, slow curves define a lawn that flows

like a wide, lazy river looping on and on until it goes out of sight beyond a bend. The powerful flow of the grass river is irresistible. Taller plants concealing what is around each bend make you want to drift downstream to see what garden wizardry is just out of sight. This strong motion and concealing of boundaries makes the small property seem larger and enormously intriguing.

By contrast, a narrow dirt footpath squiggling down a series of inclines and stone risers at Chanticleer garden in Wayne, Pennsylvania, was so whimsical that it made me want to giggle and skip along its short passage. Upslope from this lighthearted path, a wide bed of thyme calmly arcs across and down a steep hill. The bed's strong, clean upper edge emphatically moves the eye along the downward curve, calling attention to the curve of the hillside above.

## **MOVEMENT THROUGH MATERIALS**

Creative garden designers often use different kinds of stone or other materials in gardens as cues to direct where and how fast visitors move. For instance, you can

walk anywhere, look up and enjoy the long view from a grass path because you don't have to think about your feet. But crossing a stream on individual stepping stones or walking a path of uneven stones or pavers that skitter off sideways requires more deliberation. Surfaces and patterns that signal you to slow down this way invite you to experience the garden more intimately and notice finer details.

The varied patterns in Japanese gardens and Chinese scholars' gardens paved with stepping stones, river rocks, and roof tiles set on edge keep you meandering. Walking barefoot, you can literally feel the direction signals as you go. A stone path with grain lines running the long way—or a gravel path raked down its length—will exert a stronger pull than one in which the grain runs crossways. Laying long, thin stones in the direction of the path accelerates movement; setting them crosswise slows the pace. Varying the pattern by doing both is a playful way to visually enliven the surface and set the feet

## Resources

### Home Outside: Creating the Landscape You Love

by Julie Moir Messervy. The Taunton Press, Newtown, Connecticut, 2009.

“Paths of Discovery” by Kris Wetherbee. *The American Gardener*, Volume 86, No. 1. January/February 2007.

way seem more like a garden terrace, it still leads directly to a double-wide garage door. The owner, who loves Japanese gardens, interrupted the driveway with an irregular stream of gravel running across the front of the house. This cross-current diverts attention away from the garage and gently sweeps you into intimate garden spaces alongside and behind the house.

A gardener I know in Connecticut similarly directs traffic from house to garden by breaking up the grid of a bluestone ter-

forms, colors, or plants—keeps the eye leaping along. A colonnade marches in a regular progression, while trunks of limbed-up trees along a woodland edge might dance to an irregular beat.

Repeated colors or plants—soft mounds of silver plants, patches of eye-catching gold, or zingy red blossoms scattered throughout a long border—encourage visitors to connect the dots and move on at a more leisurely and irregular pace than evenly spaced boxwood balls or urns that march in orderly procession.

Contrasting elements can also trigger movement. We want to move from darkness into the light, from enclosed spaces to open areas. Warm colors in the distance pull us away from cool colors around us, and active textures are enhanced by the contrast with still textures. Focal points direct our attention, as do framed views and borrowed views of scenes outside the garden. Even sound (the splash of a fountain) and scent (the aroma of pine trees on a warm summer day) invite us to move on to find the source.

## PLANTS THAT MOVE

We think of plants as being stationary, but there are lots of excellent plants that overtly offer movement in the garden, from tall ornamental grasses to weeping willows. Plants that provide motion are particularly valuable in winter, when we are most in need of interesting elements to make up for the absence of bright colors and other sensory pleasures.

I could spend all day watching the dainty seedheads of *Deschampsia flexuosa* bobbing or the flowers of poppies (*Papaver* spp.) and gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*) dipping and swaying as they catch the breeze. Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*), fine as baby hair, and delicate love grass (*Eragrostis* spp.) appear to constantly undulate even when it's difficult to detect any wind. In southwestern gardens, the long leaf blades of Mexican grass tree (*Dasyliirion longissimum*) and some yuccas (*Yucca* spp.) remind me of kinetic sculptures. (For a list of additional plants that add life to gardens, view the web special linked to this article on the AHS website at [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).)

Less obvious sources of movement are what I call “gestural” plants, which look like they are moving even when



A cross-current of gravel through the stonework guides visitors in this Austin, Texas, garden.

moving. A jazzy syncopated or undulating paving pattern in a terrace might move without actually going anywhere at all.

Changes in material, pattern, or direction cue us to move in different ways. An Austin, Texas, garden I admire has a short driveway composed of exquisitely fitted irregular limestone slabs. Although the artistic stonework makes the drive-

race with a diagonal swath of randomly laid stones. (For more on use of different materials and styles for paths, see “Paths of Discovery,” in “Resources,” above.)

## MORE WAYS TO MOVE

Many other design devices and sensory cues enhance a sense of movement through space. Repetition—of shapes,

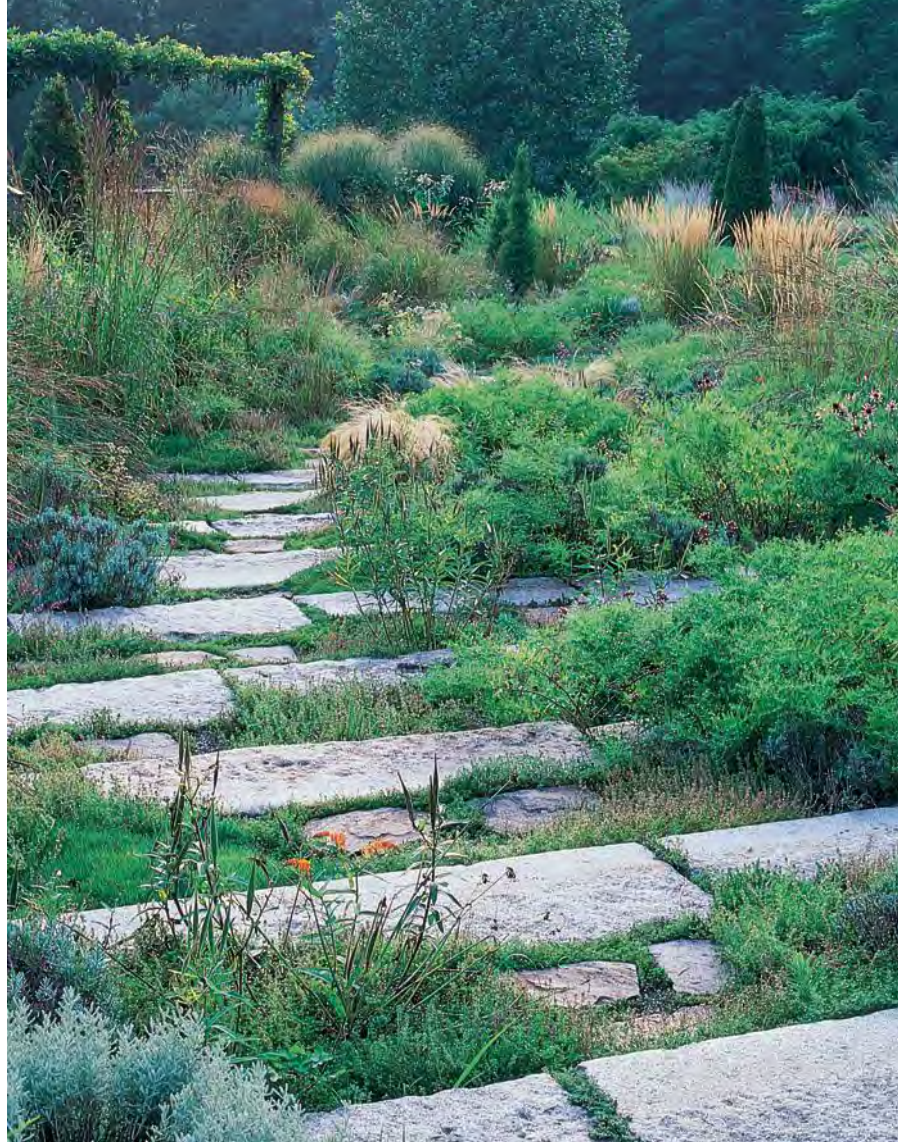
they're not. Some are strongly directional and can be used to enhance a sense of flow. For instance, the graceful Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra*) aligns itself in a way that evokes water streaming downhill—or cascading like a waterfall as it does in the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden in Seattle, Washington. Its cultivars 'Aureola' and 'Albovariegata' have racing stripes that heighten the impression.

I've found it instructional and kind of fun to try to imitate with my hands the actions plants seem to make with their forms. I started doing this impulsively one evening while strolling around Chanticleer garden. First I encountered a pot of floppy elephant ears (*Alocasia* spp.) with blooming papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*) that shot up into the air and reminded me so much of exploding fireworks that I expected to hear a loud "ka-pow." Next was a roiling sea of prairie dropseed grass (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), which required two hands to mimic.



Top: Wind transforms Mexican grass tree (*Dasyliroa longissima*) at Peckerwood Garden in Texas into kinetic sculpture. Above: A waterfall of Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola') at the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden in Seattle, Washington.

Observing energetic plants makes me appreciate their expressive qualities. Japanese roof iris (*Iris tectorum*) isn't just fan-shaped, its leaves fan out actively, positively rocketing from the base. Corkscrew rush (*Juncus effusus* forma *spiralis*) isn't just curly-looking, it coils, springs, and almost goes "boing." Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*) swirls, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus' erupts like a fountain. Others remind me of dance movements. Tiger-eye sumac (*Rhus typhina* 'Bailtiger') recalls a sideways-slashing leap across the stage, an old leaning apple tree with branches extending horizontally suggests balletic movement, as do Japanese maple trunks or branches of *Fagus sylvatica* 'Dawyck' as they sinuously weave in and out.



Above: A strong diagonal line toward framed and concealed views pulls you on, but the syncopated beat of stone steps and stepping-stones requires deliberation and attention to intimate plantings at Chanticleer. Left: To the author, *Rhus typhina* 'Bailtiger' evokes the motions of a dancer.

Water metaphors can be put to good use in the garden to encourage the feeling of motion. For instance, groupings of 'Grey Owl' juniper (*Juniperus virginiana*) recall a tossing gray sea, and masses of Siberian cypress (*Microbiota decussata*) interspersed with the white flowers and silver foliage of *Cerastium tomentosum* remind me of breaking surf around boulders or on top of a stone wall, especially when covered with dew.


### CHOREOGRAPHING THE MOVEMENT

The evening stroll I took through the gardens at Chanticleer gave me a lot of ideas about movement in the garden. One particular section of the garden provided an inspired example of how design cues, materials, and plants can be combined to orchestrate movement and direct attention.

I started on a wide grass path beside a woodland garden, with trees tall and dark to my left. Shrubs along the woodland edge got progressively shorter as the path swept downhill and curved to the right. Open sky ahead and to the right provided additional impetus to move from dark to light, but tall swaying grasses obscured those views, except for distant tree tops. A series of curving beds to the right squeezed the path into a narrower strait, where it picked up speed and disappeared around a curve. Curiosity moved me on.

A completely different experience unfolded around the corner. Suddenly there were massive cut stone steps and stepping stones in syncopated combination veering off across a steep grade ahead under an open sky. Various tall ornamental grasses obscured the top of a tall retaining wall below, while the open "window" of a per-

gola framed the now not-so-distant view of trees backing still unseen gardens at the very bottom of the hill. Throughout the passage, I got only tantalizing glimpses of the gardens and vistas that lay ahead, keeping me moving while at the same time appreciating all that was going on around me.

Gardens like that engage the entire body and all its senses. They move us, physically and emotionally, and transcend the ordinary, making the garden experience an adventure. Why be content with a static garden if you can create something that is alive and full of energy? 

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*Karen Bussolini is a writer and photographer based in Connecticut. Her most recent book collaboration was with author Penelope O'Sullivan on The Homeowner's Complete Tree and Shrub Handbook (Storey Press, 2008).*

# Rainscaping

BY KRIS WETHERBEE

By employing a variety of techniques to keep rainwater on their properties, gardeners can play an important role in protecting the health of local watersheds.

AS A CHILD, I looked forward to rain mainly because I enjoyed sloshing through the puddles. I still revel in the immediate aftermath of a downpour, breathing in the aroma of a freshly washed landscape and admiring the plants glistening with water droplets. And, like most gardeners, I view rain as a natural and welcome part of the process for keeping my plants happy. Until a few years ago, it never occurred to me to think of what effect the excess water that ran down my driveway and sloping lawn—and those of my neighbors—might have on our local waterways and watersheds.

When it rains, water runs off our roofs, sidewalks, lawns, driveways, roads, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces. The resulting runoff picks up and carries with it contaminants such as fertilizers, pesticides, de-icing salts, bacteria from animal waste, and petroleum products. Ultimately this cocktail of contaminants—environmental agencies refer to it as non-point source (NPS) pollution—ends up in local streams, rivers, lakes, and other water bodies.

NPS pollution is most pronounced in our cities and suburbs, where there is a greater percentage of impervious surfaces than there are in rural areas. Over the last couple of decades, urban planners and environmental groups throughout the United States have been recommending a variety of approaches to managing stormwater runoff and lightening the load on our watersheds. These approaches are often collectively called “rainscaping,” a term that evolved in the Mid-Atlantic region in the late 1990s. Credit for coining the term is generally attributed to Joe Keyser, who was public ed-

ucation coordinator with the Montgomery County, Maryland, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) until 2006. According to Keyser, the name was inspired by “the catchy Bayscapes program developed by the nonprofit Chesapeake Bay Foundation.”



Rain barrels, attached to downspouts, can be used to collect water for patio plants.

## LANDSCAPING FOR RAIN

Rainscapes mimic natural processes by helping capture, divert, and store rainwater for later use. “In a typical housing development, about 70 percent of impervious surfaces are on roofs and driveways,” explains Ann English, a RainScapes Planner who works in the same department Keyser did in Montgomery County, Maryland. “Capturing water close to the source using low-im-

pact development techniques both reduces stormwater runoff and enhances one’s property,” says English.

The benefits of rainscaping are multifaceted. “More water infiltrates into the soil or is contained for future use rather than being lost as runoff,” says John Church, an educator in the Natural Resources Management department of the University of Illinois Extension Center. “Reducing runoff can help decrease flooding, streambank erosion, and surface water contamination, as well as replenish groundwater.”

Besides improving water quality and soil infiltration, employing various rainscaping techniques in a garden can also enhance wildlife habitat, increase property value, and reduce a community’s carbon footprint.

## WATER WORKS

Rainscaping techniques range from straightforward solutions that include redirecting downspouts to garden beds, setting up rain barrels and cisterns, installing a French drain, digging a dry well, and planting a canopy of trees and shrubs, to progressive approaches such as creating rain gardens and constructing rainwater-harvesting water features.

Church says that professional planning and construction are typically required for more complex projects such as installing green roofs, porous concrete and hardscapes, and permeable pavers and pavement. “Careful cost analysis, safety considerations, and runoff planning are essential,” he says.

Besides your budget and the consequent do-it-yourself versus professional-for-hire debate, other factors to consider before deciding which rainscaping tech-

niques to implement include the volume and timing of rainfall, topography of your landscape, soil porosity, and the size of your lot and roof. Also identify any problem areas; for instance, underground utilities could interfere with digging (there's a toll-free number you can call to have your site checked before you dig, see "Resources," page 40). Finally, decide whether your goal is to divert or spread out runoff or, rather, to capture and reuse it to water your landscape.

Keep in mind that certain rainscaping practices that work well in one area may perform poorly in another. It all depends on your site, climate, and available conditions for installing each type of system.

English explains that while it may be critical to create a tree canopy in some areas, installing a rain garden may well be the method of choice in other areas. Likewise, water harvesting that implements a "catch and release" system of capturing the water and slowly releasing it might be the best approach for some. In other areas where land is scarce, replacing driveways with permeable interlocking concrete pavers is an excellent solution for reducing rainwater runoff.

Regardless of where you live, there are a wide variety of rainwater management options to consider. Let's look at some of the main ones to help you decide which ones—or which combinations—are right for you.

## RAIN BARRELS AND CISTERNS

A roof equipped with a gutter system can funnel rainwater to rain barrels or a cistern. How much water you collect depends on the size of your roof and the capacity of the cistern or rain barrels.

Consider that a one-inch rainfall over a 1,000-square-foot roof generates about 620 gallons of water. If your average annual rainfall is 40 inches, your yearly water yield rises to nearly 25,000 gallons. That amounts to an ample supply of "on the house" rainwater to fill the birdbath,

replenish water features, and irrigate plants in containers and beds. That is, assuming you have enough containers to accommodate the runoff.

Commercial rain barrels typically hold between 55 and 100 gallons and come in a variety of styles and shapes. It's also fairly easy to make your own; many jurisdictions sponsor rain-barrel workshops. While rain barrels are relatively inexpensive and easy to install, they are, almost literally, a drop in the bucket when it comes to reducing runoff. A roof generating 300 gallons in a typical rainfall would require six 55-gallon rain bar-



Green or living roofs, such as this one at the AHS's River Farm headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, can help reduce runoff by absorbing some rainfall in the growing medium.

rels to house that amount of water.

The next step up is to install a cistern, which is a super-sized water tank that can hold anywhere from 1,000 to 10,000 gallons. "To really make a difference in utilizing runoff, one would need to install a very sizeable cistern, or direct the excess water from your rain barrel or cistern to another containment feature, such as a rain garden," note Mark Sindell and Zack Thomas, landscape architects with GGLO, an architectural firm in Seattle, Washington.

If you live in a region where mosquitoes are a problem, you will need a mosquito-proof screen on your rain barrel or cistern. Or you can add non-toxic products that kill mosquito larvae, such as Mosquito Dunks, to containers.

## DRY WELLS AND FRENCH DRAINS

A dry well is a good option when rainfall is intermittent. Water enters the passive underground structure through one or more entry pipes or channels located at its top, and is then discharged through a number of small exit openings, where it gradually dissipates into the ground.

A French drain moves surface and groundwater from one area to the next. This type of system uses a perforated pipe placed in a gravel-lined trench. The pipe is topped with a grate or filter fabric and then covered with soil. Grass is often planted on top. Church suggests using a French drain to catch the runoff from a paved surface (such as a home foundation, patio, or retaining wall) so that it can slowly spread into the rest of the landscape. Water from a French drain can also be directed to a dry well or rain garden.



### SWALES AND VEGETATIVE FILTER STRIPS

A grassy or planted swale is a good alternative for homes lacking a curb and gutter system. The system is similar to a French drain except the earthen channels are covered with a dense growth of hardy grasses or other low-growing vegetation. Swales provide runoff control but may not prove effective in regions with sandy soils. They also remove pollutants through the filtering action of the plants. Filtering potential and runoff control depend on the area, slope, height and density of the grass, and the quantity of flow.

Like swales, vegetative filter strips reduce stormwater runoff from rooftops, pavement, and lawns. Typically they are tightly planted with grass, but they can include shrubs or other plants. The strips run parallel to pavement, at least one foot from the edge, and are situated between the paved surface and a pond, wetland, or other surface water collection system. Vegetative strips help reduce the influx of pollutants and sediment, but are less effective at removing soluble pollutants.



Homeowners have diverse options for keeping rainfall in their gardens. Swales, top, can be attractively landscaped with moisture-loving plants. In more formal landscapes, permeable pavers are both functional and decorative.

### PERMEABLE PAVERS AND POROUS SURFACES

A great choice for patios, sidewalks, and driveways, permeable hardscaping provides the strength and stability of asphalt or concrete while allowing water to filter through the surface. The pavers are produced with holes or larger aggregates that create voids within the system. Water runoff and surface runoff of pollutants are reduced, snow melts faster, and summer heat levels are reduced. This system also makes for great curb appeal.

Examples of permeable paving systems include grass pavers, gravel pavers, interlocking concrete pavers created in grid-like fashion, and porous concrete. The type of paver determines how much water can soak through, though usually you can expect up to 80 percent water infiltration, sometimes more. Proper installation is essential, so you may want to enlist the help of a certified contractor.

### A FUNCTIONAL WATER FEATURE

Having a water feature in the garden or landscape is on nearly everyone's wish



Decorative water features that recirculate rainwater stored in underground tanks, such as this one installed by Mark Harp in Washington, are sophisticated solutions for reducing runoff.

## Sources

**Aqua Barrel**, Gaithersburg, MD. (301) 253-8855. [www.aquabarrel.com](http://www.aquabarrel.com).  
**Cascata Rain Barrel**, Cambridge, Ontario. (866) 476-6311.  
[www.gardensupermart.com](http://www.gardensupermart.com).  
**Eagle Peak**, Athold, ID. (877) 868-1195. [www.epcontainers.net](http://www.epcontainers.net).  
**Green Culture**, Lake Forest, CA. (877) 204-7336. [www.greenculture.com](http://www.greenculture.com).  
**Planet Natural**, Bozeman, MT. (800) 289-6656. [www.planetnatural.com](http://www.planetnatural.com).

## Resources

**811: Call Before You Dig** hotline. [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).  
**Backyard Conservation Wetland** by the National Resources Conservation Service, Washington, D.C. [www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature.backyard](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature.backyard).  
**Master Gardeners and County Cooperative Extensions**—link to regional offices through the American Horticultural Society website ([www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)).  
**Rain Gardening in the South** by Helen Kraus and Anne Spafford. Eno Publishers, Hillsborough, North Carolina, 2009.  
**Rain Gardens: Managing Water Sustainably in the Garden and Designed Landscape** by Nigel Dunnett and Andy Clayden. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2007.

list. But a water feature on its own does little to reduce stormwater runoff. At least, that used to be the case.

Some newer sustainable stormwater management solutions now combine a recirculating decorative water feature with a sub-surface rainwater harvesting collection system. The underground tank is connected to a high pressure pump, so you can have access to the stored water and use it to hand water or irrigate the landscape.

A water feature can also be installed on top of permeable pavers, allowing them to collect the water and direct it to the storage system; overflow can be directed to a rain garden or allowed to slowly infiltrate into the soil. Mark Harp, owner of the Pond Store in Sumner, Washington, says that combining the aesthetics of a water feature with the environmental benefits of rainwater harvesting also can give you an emotional lift every time you see it at work.

## RAIN GARDENS

A rain garden is a natural or artificial saucer-shaped depression in the landscape. Its primary function is to slow down runoff, store it temporarily, and release it gradually so it has time to spread out and soak in, but rain gardens also filter sediment and pollutants while adding color and interest to the home landscape. The soil at the bottom of the depression is often amended with a mix of organic matter, sand, and gravel to facilitate drainage.

Rain gardens are typically planted with hardy, non-invasive plants adapted to the region and the light exposure in the garden. These should include drought- and flood-tolerant selections suited to the variable moisture conditions found in different sectors of the rain garden. Regional agencies often offer lists of plants for rain gardens (for links to regional plant recommendations, visit the web special linked to this article on the AHS website.) For tips on selecting an appropriate site for a rain garden, see the sidebar, opposite page.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Once you know what works well in your area, you can combine several rainscaping methods to achieve your overall goal. English recalls one example where a rain garden overflowed into a conservation landscape swale equipped with three dry wells that doubled as stepping paths





Dry streambeds such as the one in Tucson, Arizona, top, provide a way to channel and slow down stormwater. Green bulrush (*Scirpus atrovirens*), above, irises, and many other water-loving plants are good choices for rain gardens in temperate regions.

through the swale. She says that the combination of the techniques allowed the homeowner to reduce not only the runoff on his property, but that of two neighbors upstream.

Sindell and Thomas noted a recently designed rain garden that incorporated “waves” of rain garden plant masses in varying textures and colors. Several design elements were incorporated into the site, including an ethnobotanical urban agricultural garden and moss roof garden. “The planted ‘waves’ were an organiza-

## CHOOSING A SITE FOR A RAIN GARDEN

When planning a rain garden, three important factors to consider are size, location, and permeability of the soil. You’ll need a sizeable space for the rain garden and overflow area. According to University of Illinois Extension educator John Church, homeowners often designate an insufficient area for the volume of water it will collect or for the porosity of the soil in the given space. The depth is determined by the soil porosity while the length and width depend on how much water you want to capture. Typically, rain gardens range from three to six inches deep, but heavy clay soil may require up to a 12-inch depth.



Rain gardens offer an aesthetically pleasing way to solve stormwater management issues.

Before deciding on a site, check the soil to be sure that it drains adequately. One way to do this is to dig a hole 12 to 18 inches deep and fill it with water. Allow the water to drain, fill it again, and then measure the depth of the water and how long it takes to drain. “This will give you an approximation of the infiltration rate in inches per hour,” say landscape architects Mark Sindell and Zack Thomas. Soil that drains faster than one inch per hour is ideal; if it drains at a rate less than a quarter inch per hour, you may want to select a different location.

In *Rain Gardening in the South* (see “Resources,” opposite page), authors Helen Kraus and Anne Spafford note that to be effective as a pollution filter, a rain garden’s volume (depth × length × width) should be between five and 10 percent of the impervious area (rooftop and driveway, for instance) that drains into it. The garden also needs to be able to drain in two to three days.

Rain gardens should be located at least 10 feet from the house, away from septic systems, wells, and underground utilities. Be sure to site them downhill of your home or other structures. Avoid existing low, moist spots, which are probably better suited for consideration as a bog garden. If you have a steeply sloping property or get a high volume of stormwater, consult a licensed landscape architect for advice. —K.W.

tional tool used to simplify and weave together several design elements on a tight site,” Thomas says.

We can all make a difference in reducing stormwater runoff, no matter what rainscaping techniques we implement in our landscapes. “Even a small residential rain garden helps to counter the threat to

water quality created by the alarming pace of urbanization, suburban sprawl, and habitat loss,” says Sindell. “Get inspired, get out there, and do your part.”

*A frequent contributor to The American Gardener, Kris Wetherbee is a freelance writer based in Oakland, Oregon.*

## Teresia Hazen: Helping Patients Recover through Gardening

by Mary Yee

**L**EGACY HEALTH is a large network of five hospitals and related healthcare facilities in Oregon where many of its critical-care/long-term care patients are fortunate to have the opportunity to leave their sterile rooms for a respite with nature just steps away on the hospital's grounds. Here patients and visitors will find shade trees, perennial borders, raised beds filled with herbs and vegetables, sitting areas for resting—and a healing influence no pill or surgery can provide. “A garden should be a place of peace for restoration,” says Teresia Hazen, a registered horticultural therapist and Legacy’s coordinator of therapeutic gardens and horticultural therapy. “The beauty of having the gardens at the hospitals is that they are available to the patients 24/7 so they can go out any time to relax or find solace. There are about 9,000 employees in the Legacy system, and hospital staff also use and benefit from the gardens.”



Hazen helped develop nine therapeutic gardens at several Legacy treatment centers. Three gardens have received design awards from the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA). In 2007, the American Horticultural Society recognized Hazen’s contributions to her field with its Horticultural Therapy Award. Hazen is also an instructor for the horticultural therapy certificate program at Legacy and the healthcare garden-design certificate program at Chicago Botanic Garden in Illinois.

Managing Editor and Art Director Mary Yee talked to Hazen about the important role gardening can play in healthcare and horticultural therapy as an emerging profession. (For more about therapeutic gardens, see the article “Gardens for Recovery” in the November/December 2009 issue of *The American Gardener*.)

**Mary Yee: How did you get into horticultural therapy?**

**Teresia Hazen:** I grew up in a family of 10 on a 120-acre farm in southeastern Washington, so I have always enjoyed working with people and gardening. I started my career in education, including special education, but after 20 years in the field I took a break to pursue classes in horticulture. I had never heard of horticultural therapy (HT) until 1989, when I came across an article about it in a professional journal. I was so inspired that I started to do private consulting at nursing homes almost immediately, and I was hired by Legacy in 1991.

**What is your role at Legacy?**

As a horticultural therapist, I work as part of a rehabilitation team with physicians, nurses, physical therapists, and others to meet the treatment goals of individual

patients using gardening techniques.

As the coordinator of therapeutic gardens at Legacy, I work with healthcare experts and landscape designers to facilitate the creation of gardens at the hospitals that will address the needs of our patients. For instance, none of our patients can bend to the ground to garden, so we incorporate raised beds in the designs to bring the garden up to them. I also manage the ongoing care of all the gardens.

**Is gardening an effective form of therapy for all patients?**

Gardening is a good toolbox for rehabilitation. Of course, before we start any treatment, we always ask the patients to make sure they are interested in gardening. Most people are in some way—if they are not gardeners, they might be nature lovers, weekend hikers, or birdwatchers.

Even if a patient doesn’t garden, documented studies have shown that after just three minutes of *being* in a well-designed therapeutic garden, patients experience positive changes in mood and show measurable physiological reductions in stress—without having to do anything.

**Can you give some examples of how gardening is used for therapy?**

I worked with a group of stroke patients recently who had problems with memory and sequencing thoughts. To address the goal of memory improvement, I showed the patients how to plant basil seeds indoors in pots. This exercise challenged the patients to remember the steps I demonstrated, then each person took turns planting the seeds.

Another patient I am working with had a stroke that caused his left side to be weak

and impaired his attention span. Because he still needs a wheelchair, I have him plant annuals in a raised bed while sitting to strengthen his left arm and begin coordinating both arms to work together again. At the same time, he is practicing focusing his attention on the task. As his balance improves, he will perform the same tasks from a standing position to continue developing his balance. These are skills the patient can use at home after he has been discharged from the hospital.



Horticultural therapist Teresia Hazen shows a stroke patient how to use a hand trowel to plant marigolds in a raised bed at one of Legacy's therapeutic gardens.

#### How are the therapeutic gardens at the Legacy facilities maintained?

Both paid gardening staff and many trained volunteers contribute to the care of the gardens. It is essential for our patients that the gardens engage and stimulate all their senses, so we are always planting in order to keep the gardens botanically rich and looking fresh year round. This also gives me a chance to try out some of the interesting new plants I read about in gardening magazines!

#### HT is still a developing therapeutic field. Can you tell us about some of your efforts to advance it as a profession?

Interest in HT has been increasing—especially as the senior population continues to grow—but at the present time a person doesn't need credentials to be a horticultural therapist. Since 2008, the AHTA has

begun requiring a four-year degree and all training as college-transcribed coursework to receive AHTA credentials. I have been a part of developing and teaching two programs for training horticultural therapy professionals—one at Portland Community College (PCC) and one for Oregon State University (OSU).

The PCC gerontology program offers the six-course therapeutic horticulture series required by the AHTA for registration, as well as an option for earning an HT cer-

tificate. OSU students can take these courses at a Legacy facility as part of a new four-year HT degree.

Because HT is a newer field in some parts of the world than it is here, I have also been fortunate to have been invited to countries such as China, Japan, and Britain to share my knowledge with fellow caregivers. This fall, I will be at a large geriatric hospital in Paris for a day to teach the staff how to integrate gardening techniques into patient treatment plans.

#### Are you working on any new projects?

We are at about 80 percent of needed funds to begin building our newest garden at Meridian Park Medical Center. We are hoping to break ground this summer. ☺

*Mary Yee is Managing Editor and Art Director of The American Gardener.*

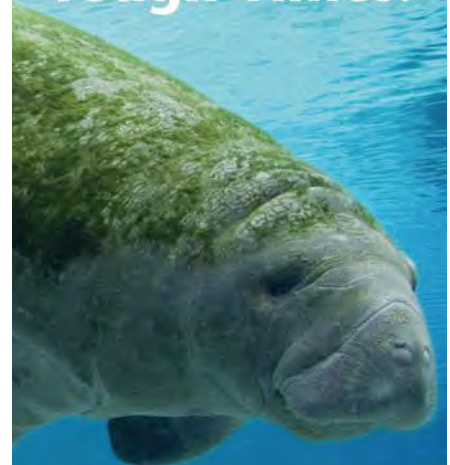
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Photo © David Schirchte

## Summer Squash Secrets

by Kris Wetherbee



Left to right: Yellow crookneck, 'Spaceship' pattypan, and 'Magda' are just a few of many varieties of summer squash to choose from.

**I**F YOU EQUATE summer squash with just green grocery-store zucchinis, you're in for a surprise. Flying saucers, billiard balls, and clublike mandolins in solid, speckled, or striped colors from buff yellow, to golden yellow and deep forest green—with every hue in between—offer an exciting range of choices for the garden. And with tasty varieties varying from mild and buttery to full and nutty, the culinary possibilities are endless.

### GROWING GUIDELINES

With origins in North America, it stands to reason that this warm-season native can be grown throughout the United States. Summer squash (*Cucurbita pepo*) is also one of the easiest veggies to grow. But there's more to producing quality fruit than simply plopping in a plant or tossing a few seeds in the ground.

Squash performs best when grown in full sun and moderately fertile, well-drained soil enriched with plenty of organic matter, which will help increase uptake of both water and calcium. (Growing plants in raised beds solves drainage issues.)

A slightly acidic soil (between 5.8 to 6.8 pH) and a soil temperature range between 65 to 80 degrees is ideal. Like all members of the cucurbit family, summer squash is sensitive to cold weather, which can stunt plants and hamper fruit production and quality.

Plants need plenty of water in order to thrive. Actually, it's their roots that are thirsty. The foliage, however, is best kept dry because excess moisture on leaves can increase the likelihood for disease. Supplemental water is best applied to the base of plants using a soaker hose or drip irrigation system.

### Sources

**Johnny's Selected Seeds**, Winslow, ME. (877) 564-6697.

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

**Pinetree Garden Seeds**, New Gloucester, ME. (207) 926-3400.

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

**Territorial Seed Company**, Cottage Grove, OR. (800) 626-0866.

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

If plants look wilted in the morning, it's a cry for water. In hot weather, the plants often use water faster than the roots can supply. The remedy? Lots of water. When roots get too dry or are watered irregularly, the plants produce higher concentrations of cucurbitacin, resulting in bitter-tasting fruit. And when watered inconsistently, fruits are often misshapen.

Amending the soil with a shovelful or two of compost or aged manure helps get plants off to a great start. Add crushed oyster shells or another calcium-rich amendment to keep the fruit looking its best. Once the blossoms appear, sidedress plants with aged compost or a fish-and-seaweed foliar fertilizer. Alternatively, water with compost tea every two to three weeks during the growing season.

If your plants have lots of flowers but little fruit, the reason may be poor pollination. Plants bear both male and female flowers so active insect pollinators are needed in order to bear fruit. If bees are lacking, you may need to do the pollinating yourself. It's easy. Use a cotton swab to gather pollen from the male flower and distribute it onto the golden stigma in the

center of the female flower. Determining which is which is also easy: Female flowers have a small ovary or swelling behind a short-stemmed flower. The male flowers are larger and have longer, thinner stems.

## PEST AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Cucumber beetles, squash bugs, and squash vine borers are the most common pests. If these are a problem in your area, grow seedlings and young plants beneath floating row covers until they start flowering.

Cucumber beetles spread diseases and feed on flowers and fruit, especially if plants have higher concentrations of cucurbitacin. Avoid drought stress and you may just avoid this beetle.

Squash bugs suck the sap from plants, and as they feed, they release a toxin that can make plants wilt. To deter these bugs, rotate any cucurbit family member, such as cucumbers, melons, and squash. Interplanting radishes or marigolds is reputed to repel these bugs. The tachinid fly is a natural predator, so grow plants such as yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) that attract these beneficial insects.

Squash vine borers can cause plants to wilt and die. Be alert for leaves that suddenly become limp, indicating a squash borer may be feeding within the stem. To



**Squash plants need a lot of growing room and regular harvesting of fruits in the summer.**

remove the offender, slit the stem just above the entrance hole, remove and dispose of the borer, then mound soil or compost over the wound. Repel potential invasions by planting radishes or sprinkling wood ashes or crushed black pepper around the base of the vines. Plant coreopsis, yarrow, or anise hyssop in the bed to attract trichogramma wasps, a natural predator.

Common squash diseases include bacterial wilt, mosaic virus, and mildew. Implement disease-prevention methods, such as rotating crops, providing adequate spacing, controlling aphids, and watering regularly at the soil level—not overhead.

## RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

No matter their appearance, all summer squash have thin skins, soft seeds, and delicate flesh.

Choice, disease-resistant varieties include ‘Tigress’, ‘Sungreen’, ‘Soleil’, and ‘Plato’. Short on space? Try compact ‘Cute Fancy’ or ‘Bush Baby’. If lack of adequate pollination is a concern, consider ‘Cavili’, ‘Partenon’, and ‘Sultan’, self-fertilizing varieties that need no insect activity in order to produce fruit. As for me, my must-

have collection includes buttery ‘Yellow Crookneck’, nutty ‘Magda’, ‘Black Beauty’ zucchini, pattypan ‘Peter Pan’ and ‘Starship’, and ‘Floridor’, a bright yellow, round zucchini.

## ENJOYING THE HARVEST

Summer squash can be harvested and eaten at different stages.

The blossoms are delectably tender, especially when stuffed, battered, and fried. Harvest baby squash—which is sweet and delicate in flavor—with the blossom intact or just after the flower fades. Pick young fruits when brightly colored; about two to four inches in diameter for pattypan and round types; four to six inches long for crooknecks and compact varieties; and six to eight inches long for most zucchini and straightneck types.

The fruits grow fast once the plants start to produce, so check them often. Large squash isn’t quite as tender, but as long as your thumbnail can easily pierce the skin and the fruit weighs less than one pound, it is still edible.

Use squash raw in salads, serve with dips as an appetizer, or create a sensational summer sauté. Squash can also be baked, boiled, steamed, grilled, roasted, deep-fried, or stir-fried.

*Kris Wetherbee is a garden writer based in Oakland, Oregon.*

## Planting Basics

### GETTING STARTED

Plant in early spring after danger of frost has passed, or about two weeks after your last spring frost. Plant from spring to midsummer for subsequent harvests into fall. For transplants, sow seeds indoors three to four weeks before your last spring frost.

### DIRECT SEEDING

Sow seeds directly in the ground after danger of frost has passed and when the soil temperature reaches 65 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Sow seeds about a half to one inch deep, with two to three seeds per hole or three to five seeds per hill.

### SPACING

For rows, sow seeds about 18 inches apart in rows spaced four to five feet apart; or grow in hills spaced four feet apart. Follow the same spacing for transplants.

### DAYS TO MATURITY

47 to 60 days from seed, depending on the variety and time of year planted. Subtract about 10 days if using transplants.

## Horticultural News and Research Important to American Gardeners

### FEDERAL COURT SHELVES PESTICIDE

Following a lawsuit filed by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Xerces Society, a New York Federal court ruled that the systemic insecticide spirotetramat be removed from circulation due to concerns about its long-term effects on honeybees and other



A honeybee gathers pollen on a wild radish.

pollinators. The pesticide, produced by Bayer CropScience, goes by the trade names Monvento, Ultor, and Kontos. It was approved for use on hundreds of crops—including apples, pears, peaches, oranges, and tomatoes—by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in June 2008, but the court found that the EPA did not meet the legal requirements for registering spirotetramat as a pesticide. When an insecticide manufacturer submits an application for its product to be registered by the EPA, the agency is legally obligated to publish it for review by the public, as well as allow for public comments for 30 days. In the case of spirotetramat, the EPA failed to follow this process.

The NRDC and the Xerces Society filed the lawsuit, in part, because of beekeepers' fears that the insecticide may have a delayed, negative impact on bee populations that is not fully understood because of the absence of long-term data. The court ordered the removal of spirotetramat from the market in December 2009, and in March 2010, the EPA an-

nounced a temporary cancellation order, which bans its sale and distribution. The agency must now reevaluate the pesticide to determine whether it is likely to cause chronic damage to bee colonies.

### LOGAN PASS SITE NAMED MONTANA'S FIRST IMPORTANT PLANT AREA

The Montana Native Plant Society recently designated a region in the central part of Glacier National Park as Montana's first Important Plant Area (IPA). The 26,770-acre area, centered at Logan Pass, is a haven to nearly 30 rare plant species, including glaucous gentian (*Gentiana glauca*), running pine (*Lycopodium lagopus*), and Macoun's draba (*Draba macounii*), three plants that cannot be found growing wild anywhere else in Montana. The site also fosters a variety of habitats, such as alpine meadows, wetlands, and hanging gardens.

The IPA program is modeled on the Audubon Society's Important Bird Areas, an international program designed to identify and preserve critical bird habitats. Similarly, though IPAs are not legal

site designations, identifying them helps to pinpoint areas that would benefit from research, conservation efforts, and funding. Plantlife International, an environmental organization committed to preserving Britain's plants, fungi, and lichens, has been the major force behind implementing IPAs. While IPAs have been designated throughout the United Kingdom and several other European countries, Logan Pass is the first IPA site in the United States.

In Montana, citizens can nominate an area to be designated as an IPA, and the site must meet specific criteria regarding the conservation status of the plant species found there. Each state that implements an IPA program has its own guidelines to determine what constitutes an eligible site.

To learn more about Important Plant Areas in the United States, visit [www.plantsocieties.org/importan.htm](http://www.plantsocieties.org/importan.htm).

### PEOPLE'S GARDENS ON THE RISE

A year ago, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack started the first "People's Garden" just outside of the U.S. Department of Agri-



Many rare alpine plants flourish at Logan Pass in Montana's Glacier National Park.

culture's (USDA) headquarters in Washington, D.C. This garden was created as a living exhibit of the work the USDA does with plants. Vilsack also challenged all USDA employees to build People's Gardens at their locations across the country. This past June, Vilsack announced that more than 400 People's Gardens now exist in all 50 states, two U.S. territories, and three foreign countries.

According to the USDA, these gardens demonstrate the "connections we can make between providing access to nutritious food, while protecting the landscape where that food is grown, serving our communities, and helping those in need. These gardens provide educational opportunities for children and adults about nutrition and sustainability as well as introduce younger generations to agriculture and fresh foods."

Already, thousands of pounds of produce grown in People's Gardens around the country have been donated to those in need. And in an effort to teach children healthy lifestyles and the advantages of gardening, People's Gardens and the White House Kitchen Garden championed by First Lady Michelle Obama have teamed up to promote community service and civic involvement by donating vegetables to local food pantries.

To find out about starting or joining a People's Garden in your community, visit [www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden](http://www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden).

## PILOT SUSTAINABILITY RANKING SYSTEM LAUNCHES ACROSS THE U.S.

After debuting in 2005, the Sustainability Sites Initiative™ (SITES) has announced a nationwide pilot program to rank various sites in achieving sustainable landscape and development. SITES partners American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and the United States Botanic Garden officially began a two-year pilot program this June. Released in November 2009, *The Sustainable Sites Initiative: Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks 2009*, the guide outlining the 250-point, four-star rating system, will be the core of this new program.

Pilot locations range from residential facilities to farms across the United States, Canada, and Europe. For each site, teams look to reduce waste, improve

irrigation in gardens, preserve natural ecosystems, initiate alternative energy sources, and rehabilitate recreational areas. While each project has its own specific goals, the new program will rank locations on project type, site design—including water, soil and vegetation, materials selection, and human health and well-being—construction, operations and maintenance, and monitoring and innovation. The ultimate goal of the program is to improve the sustainability of locations throughout the world.

Among the 150 pilot projects are the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans, which garnered national attention for its decimation by Hurricane Katrina in 2005; the Phipps Center for Sustainable Landscapes in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the Wildflower Farm in Coldwater, Ontario; and the Magnolia Power Plant in Burbank, California. Each location will be subject to SITES guidelines and will be responsible for achieving Pilot Certification. To find out more about this new program, visit [www.sustainableites.org](http://www.sustainableites.org).



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## PEOPLE and PLACES in the NEWS

### Gardening Expert and Radio Personality Ralph Snodsmith Dies

Accomplished gardening expert, author, and longtime radio host Ralph Snodsmith passed away in April due to complications from a broken leg. Known for his lively approach to answering gardening questions, Snodsmith hosted the radio show, Garden Hotline®, for 35 years, and appeared as gardening editor on *Good Morning America* for eight years. In addition to writing the gardening column for *Americana Encyclopedia Yearbook*, he was a lecturer at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) since 1968.

Among Snodsmith's many accolades are the American Horticultural Society's Communications Award (1992), the New Jersey Agricultural Society's William H. Allen Agricultural Communications Award (1982), and the NYBG Distinguished Educator in Plant Studies Award (1985). Also, in recognition of Snodsmith's many years of service, a Brewer's spruce (*Picea breweriana*), a western native not commonly grown on the East Coast, was planted in his honor at the NYBG in 1998.

### American Floral Endowment Honors Will Carlson

The American Floral Endowment (AFE) announced in February that it has established a memorial tribute in honor of Will Carlson, who died in January. A prolific writer, Carlson was a professor emeritus of floriculture at Michigan State University (MSU) for 36 years. In addition to teaching more than 31,000 undergraduate, graduate, and extension students during his career, he established and coordinated the Michigan Master Gardener Program. He also co-founded the magazine *Greenhouse Grower*, for which he wrote the "One to Grow On" column for more than 30 years. He also established MSU's Horticultural Demonstration Gardens, was a chairperson of the MSU Garden Consortium, and helped to set up the Professional Plant Growers Association.



Will Carlson

Carlson is remembered in the floriculture industry as a dynamic and pioneering individual, and was the recipient of many prestigious awards, including the AHS's H. Marc Cathey Award.

If you would like to make a contribution to the Will Carlson Memorial Tribute, you can mail your donation to the AFE, c/o Will Carlson Memorial Tribute, 1601 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

## ORGANIC FOOD GARDENS MAKE A SPLASH AT CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

According to a *New York Times* article published in May, the edible gardening trend is catching on in the business world. Big corporations like PepsiCo, Google, Best Buy, Aveda, and Kohl's all have started vegetable gardens for their employees. Workers may not be getting raises or other benefits in this economy, but thanks to these gardens, they can take home the fresh produce they grow. Plus it's a good excuse to escape the cubicle for a break outside, while getting some exercise to boot.

"Regardless of the motives behind the gardens," says Sarah Parsons, sustainable food editor for Change.org, "I think they're an important educational tool for workers across the nation. The trend brings the backyard gardening movement a huge step forward, making healthy eating and sustainable agriculture a vital part of the workplace."

## ASSESSMENT OF NORTH AMERICAN COLLECTIONS UNDERWAY

A joint effort of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BCGI), the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, and the United States Botanic Garden



This workplace garden is on the roof of Google's headquarters building in Mountain View, California. Company employees grow a wide variety of plants in a system of containers.

(USBG) in Washington, D.C., is currently underway to identify how many plant species are growing in North American public garden collections. The North American Collections Assessment began in May and will run through August 1, and its success depends on the par-

ticipation of the nearly 900 gardens located throughout Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

The BCGI stresses that input from gardens of all sizes, as well as seed banks and tissue culture facilities, will be valuable to the assessment and the gardens themselves.



The ultimate goal of this project is to advance plant conservation efforts by determining which endangered and rare species are currently being cultivated in living collections and which are not.

The BCGI, Arnold Arboretum, and USBG plan to make the assessment results globally available in a report titled *Conserving North America's Threatened Plants*. Also, all data collected by August 1 will be part of the BCGI's global analysis of plant collections, which the organization will present at the 10th annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity this fall in Nagoya, Japan.

For more information about the assessment, visit [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org) and click on the link to the Plantsearch database.

### SMARTPHONE APPS FOR THE MODERN GARDENER

Who says that technology does not belong in the garden? Smartphone users can now get gardening tips straight from their mobile devices. Among the many garden-related applications (or apps for short), there's "Eden Garden Designer," which can help you design your garden based on a photo of the blank slate that will be your garden. There are also apps for diagnosing plant problems. "The Plant Doctor" offers 32 symptoms to choose from and remedies for plant ailments. "Houseplant 411" is a similar app that offers care instructions for 70 common houseplants and an "Ask Judy" feature for questions on your specific plant problems. Indoor-plant expert Judy Feldstein says, "Houseplant 411 is a timesaving and money-saving app allowing you to quickly diagnose existing indoor plant care concerns and to select the best plants prior to purchase for your particular indoor environment based on temperature and lighting recommendations."

Smartphone users can also take advantage of botanical garden tour apps. The Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden in Ohio and the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, Arizona, have created iPhone apps with tours, maps, videos, podcasts, and schedules of events.

You can find links to other gardening apps by clicking on the online version of this article at [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

*News written by Editorial Interns Meredith Soeder and Krystal Flogel.*



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# Improving Water Efficiency in the Garden

by Rita Pelczar

**A** FEW YEARS of drought in typically moist western North Carolina has taught me a lot about water conservation. Thankfully, the drought in my region has ended, but the practices and tools that increase water efficiency in a garden are well worth remembering, not only to implement during the next drought, but to conserve water every day.

## CULTURAL PRACTICES

A number of strategies can be employed to improve water efficiency in the garden, beginning with soil preparation and grading. Incorporating organic matter into sandy soils will help retain moisture; adding it to a heavy, clay soil will improve drainage. Proper grading and use of porous surfaces for walkways and driveways help prevent runoff during heavy rains and improve moisture infiltration into soil.

Mulching the soil surface increases water efficiency by reducing surface evaporation, minimizing crusting of the soil surface that can prevent moisture penetration, and inhibiting weeds that compete with garden plants for available water. Effective mulch materials include compost, leaf mold, shredded or chipped bark or wood, and pine needles.

In vegetable and small fruit gardens, I like to use newspaper (non-glossy black-and-white pages only) beneath straw. Black plastic is a good choice for heat-loving vegetables such as melons and squash. In addition to conserving water, red plastic mulch used around tomatoes and strawberries promotes early fruit set and increases productivity.



In this vegetable garden, a combination of a drip line and straw mulch provide and conserve water for a row of leeks, a crop that tends to require plenty of moisture, particularly when young.

Pre-cut **Tree Rings** made of recycled plastic or coconut fiber, both available from Gardener's Supply, provide a neat, long-lasting mulch around trees.



Appropriate plant selection and placement can forestall many water-related problems. Plants that are adapted to your soil and light conditions will be more tolerant of a shortage or excess of moisture and less subject to stress. Place plants with similar water requirements in close proximity so that they can be tended more efficiently and reduce the need for dragging hoses around the yard. When plants need supplemental water, it is usually best to apply it early or late in the day, when less will be lost to evaporation.

## COLLECTING RAIN

Use rain barrels to collect water from your



Touch 'N Flow wand

roof to use in the garden rather than allowing it to run off. They are easy to install, connecting directly to your existing downspouts, and come in various sizes, colors, and styles. I have mine on corners of the house and garage where I don't have spigots, so they provide a handy water source for the gardens nearby. For greater capacity, two or more rain barrels can be linked.

Once your barrel fills with rainwater—which happens very quickly, even with light to moderate rainfall—you can attach a hose to the spigot. Raise your rain barrel on a sturdy platform, such as cement blocks, to increase the water pressure. And if you live where it freezes in winter, don't forget to drain and detach the barrels at that time.

### DELIVERING WATER

Despite your plant selection, most garden plants will need at least occasional watering;



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even drought-tolerant plants need to be watered until they become established. And if you grow vegetables and fruit, adequate moisture—at key times in the crop's development—can mean the difference between a bountiful harvest and a bust. A sturdy hose with a nozzle or water breaker and a good watering can are key tools for this task.

The **Element™** line of garden hoses from Colorite Plastics are lead-free, bacteria resistant, and durable. I particularly appreciate their heavy-duty couplings. To avoid wasting water and time, it's important to have a high-quality nozzle that allows you to shut off the water at the delivery end of a hose without having to return to the spigot. It helps if your nozzle has spray options so you can adjust the stream to suit your plants. Dramm's **Touch 'N Flow** wand offers fingertip shut-off; you just squeeze the ergonomic grip to open the water flow. It has a variety of spray patterns, from soaker to mist.

My preference for small watering jobs—a freshly germinated row of lettuce

seedlings, a newly planted shrub, or a planted container—is the watering can. I keep one handy at the various spigots and rain barrels on my farm. They come in handy for those small jobs that don't require lugging a hose around. My newest, and perhaps handiest, watering can is the **U-Can®**. This molded plastic unit has a two-gallon capacity and a removable sprinkler head (with a post to store the head), as well as a waterproof compartment for fertilizer. The grip is comfortable and the can has been engineered to distribute the weight evenly when full.

### SELF-WATERING CONTAINERS

If you grow outdoor plants in containers, you know that keeping them from drying out can be a challenge. In hot weather,



Lechuza self-watering container

containers may require watering twice a day. Self-watering containers are equipped with a reservoir, so although you still need to supply water, the frequency is reduced.

**EarthBox**, with its three-gallon reservoir, is a good choice for growing vegetables on a deck or patio. Kits include potting mix and casters for moving the box. For ornamental plants, **Lechuza** has a great range of styles that are equipped with a sub-irrigation system that has a water level indicator. Lechuza-Pon is a mineral substrate that is placed between the reservoir and the soil to provide maximum drainage and six to 12 months worth of slow-release fertilizer.

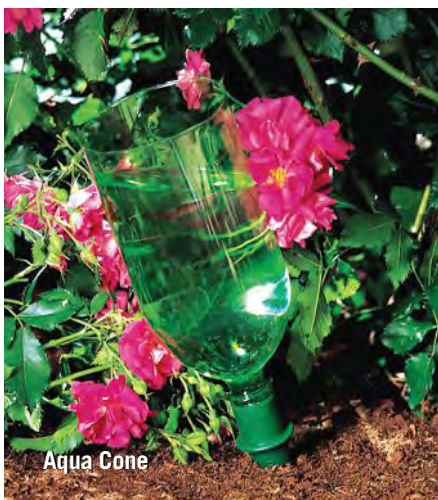
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- Elements Garden Hose, [www.elementhose.com](http://www.elementhose.com).
- Gardener's Supply, [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com).
- Lechuza Self Watering Containers, [www.lechuza.com](http://www.lechuza.com).
- Lee Valley Garden Supply, [www.leevalley.com](http://www.leevalley.com).
- Rain Bird, [www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com).
- U-CAN, [www.theucanbrand.com](http://www.theucanbrand.com).

## A GOOD SOAKING

When plants need water, it's best to aim for their root zone. Soaker hoses, such as Dramm's **Colorstorm™** series, deliver water slowly at ground level, increasing the chances that it will be absorbed by the soil rather than run off and supply a steady seep of water to the roots without wetting the foliage, which can spread diseases. They work best for plants that are closely spaced, and they're a great option for rows of vegetables, strawberries, and bush fruit. They also work well for beds of densely planted annuals.

If you've ever forgotten to turn off your soaker hose or sprinkler, you'll be interested in Dramm's **Water Timer**—a simple device that you connect to your hose. You can set it to run for up to two hours and it will shut off automatically.



Aqua Cone

**Aqua Cones**, available from Gardener's Supply, are low-tech perforated spikes that screw onto the top of empty two-liter soda bottles from which the bottoms are removed. After filling the spike with clean sand, it is inserted into the soil as close to the plant as possible and the bottle is filled with water. The water gradually seeps through the sand into the soil near the plant's roots. Aqua Cones can be used with 12-ounce, 16-ounce, or one-liter bottles for watering container plants—even hanging baskets. Of course, you still have to add water to the cones, but this system saves time, reduces waste, and puts the water where it's most useful.

Similarly, the **Tree Irrigator** from Lee Valley Supply Company is a 15-gallon capacity vinyl ring that slowly allows water to seep through emitters over a period of five to eight hours depending on your

soil type. This assures a good soaking without runoff; it's especially useful for newly transplanted specimens.

## DRIP, DRIP, DRIP...

The ultimate in efficient water delivery is the drip irrigation system. These range from small, gravity-fed systems for containers to high-tech, pressure-regulated systems for large gardens. The basic idea is the same: tubing connects a water source to areas where plants are growing; smaller tubing and emitters or micro-sprays direct water to individual plants or containers.

Lee Valley's **IV Drip Watering** is the simplest system I have seen, and it's ideal for keeping your patio containers or window boxes from drying out. It consists of a two-and-a-half-gallon water bag that is hung on a wall or post; gravity delivers the water to up to six adjustable emitters.

Larger systems can be designed for more extensive gardens. Rain Bird has a do-it-yourself sprinkler design service that



Rain Bird Landscape Drip Watering Kit

can help you design and implement a system that suits your garden's needs (see "Sources," page 52). Rain Bird also has a **Smart Irrigation Control System** that can save an estimated 30 to 70 percent of your irrigation water. It suspends irrigation when it's raining and measures the amount of the rainfall, adjusting the watering schedule accordingly. It also takes factors such as sun/shade, soil type, and slope into account. For more details about drip irrigation, read the "The Merits of Drip Irrigation" by Lee Reich in the July/August 2006 issue of this magazine.

*Rita Pelczar is a contributing editor with The American Gardener.*

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③ SEEDLINGS	TO PLANT THEM ALL SAFELY, UNIFORMLY — and GROWING MORE STRONGLY	
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 LAWNES	To Make QUICKER, deeper, TOUGHER TURF from SEED, SOD, Stolons, Sprigs, HYDRO-seeding	
⑧ FLOWERING	And TO GET MORE FLOWERS, LONGER and MORE BEAUTIFUL	
⑨ FRUITING	For EARLIER, HEAVIER, BEARING?	
11 XMAS TREES	17 HYDROSEEDING	22 FLOWERING PLANT
12 REFORESTATION	18 LANDSCAPING	COMPETITIONS
13 HYDROPONICS	19 PROPAGATION	23 INTERIORSCAPING
14 FIELD CROPS	20 ANTI-EROSION	24 CUT FLOWERS
15 BONSAI	21 ENVIRONMENTAL	25 WEATHER DAMAGE
16 TISSUE CULTURE	IMPROVEMENT	26 WATER GARDENS

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## Recommendations for Your Gardening Library

### Urban and Suburban Meadows: Bringing Meadows to Big and Small Spaces

Catherine Zimmerman. Matrix Media Press, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2010. 272 pages. Publisher's price, softcover: \$29.95.

THE CONCEPT of a meadow garden is simple: wildflowers, grasses, butterflies, and minimal maintenance. In reality, meadows are complex ecosystems that require some know-how to create. Enter horticulturist and landscape designer Catherine Zimmerman and her new book *Urban and Suburban Meadows*. Chock full of concise information, this book enables readers to envision meadows and prairies as achievable, low-maintenance gardens that offer a viable alternative to lawns.

Imbued with Zimmerman's passionate commitment to sustainable gardening, this well-researched book starts off by building a convincing case for meadow ecosystems versus monocultural lawns, complete with charts comparing costs. (On average, meadows are twice as expensive to install but half as expensive to maintain over time.) Integrating advice from a handful of experts, Zimmerman leads readers step by step from conception to fruition. Chapters cover topics such as site preparation, design, establishment, and maintenance, enhanced by plenty of color photographs, illustrations, and sidebars. A plant key presents recommended regional wildflowers and grasses grouped by soil moisture requirements.

The chapter on maintenance, with its dramatic photographs of raging conflagrations, may put a few readers off. While burning is the best way to maintain grasslands, it isn't always tenable due to community ordinances, spatial concerns, and the expertise required to conduct a burn. That said, the book presents alternatives such as annual mowing, which are more practical for the home gardener.

It is difficult for any book to cover an entire continent, though this volume makes an attempt. The book's overall focus is clearly east of the Rockies, yet a large number of pages are devoted to other regions, including brief descriptions of 84 eco-regions with diverse floras that are excluded or glossed over by the plant key. And because, as Zimmerman puts it, "finding local resources, such as nurseries, providing plants native to your area is a key element in the successful outcome of your meadow or prairie planting," there is a section listing these resources for various regions around the country.

Despite the book's ambitious scope, any reader considering a meadow as a landscaping alternative will find it contains

a wealth of information and clearly articulated step-by-step methodology for meadow making.

—C. Colston Burrell

*C. Colston Burrell, author of Perennial Combinations (Rodale Press, 2008), writes and gardens in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Charlottesville, Virginia.*

### Chlorophyll in His Veins: J.C. Raulston, Horticultural Ambassador

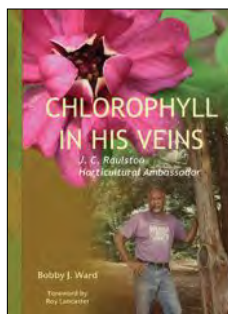
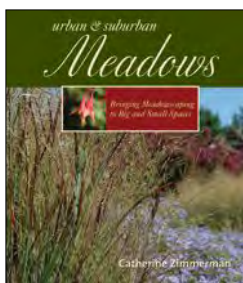
Bobby J. Ward. BJW Books, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2009. 332 pages. Publisher's price, softcover: \$25.

THE NAME J.C. Raulston may not evoke the same horticultural veneration as does those of Frederick Law Olmsted, Gertrude Jekyll, or Thomas Jefferson, but in *Chlorophyll in His Veins*, author Bobby J. Ward lays out the case for his greatness. Jefferson and others might have matched Raulston's energy, but when it came to "evangelical" fervor for gardens and plant introductions—or a fondness for banana split parties—the native Oklahoman was the undisputed winner. Ward's well-written biography tells the story of a complex, charismatic teacher and plantsman who inspired a generation of gardeners before tragically dying in a car accident in 1996, at the age of 56.

The first part of the book covers the main points of Raulston's life, spanning from his childhood to his untimely death. Born in 1940 in Lucien, Oklahoma—a once-prosperous Great Plains oil town—Raulston grew up among sprawling wheat fields and a paucity of native trees. Despite his monocultural surroundings, plants and gardening fascinated him from an early age. Years later he gave a talk titled "Why We Garden," saying, "We garden to seek our private, secret world or find the rural childhood we never had."

Raulston's love of plants ultimately led him to become a professor of horticulture at North Carolina State University (NCSU) in 1975. Within months, he helped bootstrap the university's eight-acre arboretum, though he had to buck some horticulture department resistance, including one jealous colleague who wrote to the dean demanding, "This concept of an arboretum must be stopped." Luckily, it wasn't stopped, and this now legendary arboretum that bears Raulston's name is living proof of his tremendous legacy.

This legacy is the subject of the second part of the book. Along with lists of Raulston's many awards through the years



and plants named in his honor, this section includes stories about all the plants he promoted and introduced into the horticulture industry. There are five presentations Raulston delivered, which give insight not only into his horticultural prowess, but also the quirky sense of humor that dazzled his audiences across North America and the world.

For the last 15 years of his life, Raulston signed his letters with what became his mantra: Plan and plant for a better America. This book compellingly chronicles how Raulston did just that.

—Allen Bush

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*Allen Bush is director of special projects for Jelitto Perennial Seeds in Louisville, Kentucky. He became friends with Raulston when he was the owner of Holbrook Farm and Nursery in Fletcher, North Carolina.*

### Hybrid: The History & Science of Plant Breeding

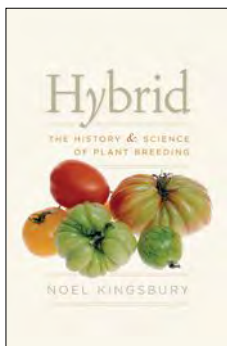
Noel Kingsbury. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 2009. 512 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$35.

BRITISH HORTICULTURIST Noel Kingsbury has produced an absorbing perspective on an exceedingly complex topic in his new book, *Hybrid: The History and Science of Plant Breeding*. Teeming with names familiar to students of horticulture—Linnaeus, Bailey, Mendel, Burbank, Borlaug, Wallace—this book provides a unique historical overview of plant domestication, propagation, hybridization, diversity, and genetic management, presented in two parts.

The first part focuses on the origins of plant breeding, beginning with the role of our Neolithic ancestors in managing the environment for ease of food acquisition. Moving chronologically, this section covers the genetically dynamic landraces of edible plants, the Agricultural Revolution, crop globalization, and the introduction of Gregor Mendel's revolutionary principles of genetics, which ultimately transformed plant breeding from trial and error into an applied science.

Part two addresses the continuing study of plant hybridization and genetics. Here, Kingsbury delves into the political and philosophical ramifications of genetically modified plants, while hearkening back to the historical efforts to create better crops. He explains that the technology behind genetically modified crops "arrived at the time it did primarily because the science behind it had developed sufficiently." He even-handedly discusses the ethics, legalities, and social and political dilemmas of modern plant breeding trends, including the thorny issues of ownership and patents.

The scope of this well-researched book is stunning; it is apparent that the work was a labor of love. Kingsbury is thorough, and each chapter is a rewarding feast of narrative and information. And, while the use of technical terms is unavoidable, the author makes every effort to keep the book from becoming academic through his conversational writing style and a helpful back-of-the-book section, titled "Technical Notes," that provides explanations of some of the more esoteric material.



## Books in Brief

Documented evidence shows that climate change is influencing plants and their habitats, so what's a gardener to do?



According to editor Janet Marinelli in *The Climate Conscious Gardener* (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 2010, \$12.95), "Gardeners, with their intimate connection to the natural world, have a unique opportunity to demonstrate how to transform concern over climate change into effective action." After examining how climate changes are affecting plants, the seasons, gardening techniques, and "green"

lifestyle practices overall, this book shows readers how to make climate conscious gardens through the tools they use, the plants they choose, and the ways they use energy. At the end of the book, a handy list of resources includes books, websites, and organizations that can provide further insight, instruction, and assistance.

—Meredith Soeder, Editorial Intern

Relying primarily on the bounty of her garden in Oyster Bay, New York, Suzy Bales offers a seasonally organized guide to floral arrangements in *Garden Bouquets and Beyond* (Rodale, 2010, \$35). Her creations range from simple tussie-mussies and single-stem bouquets to elaborate garlands, centerpieces, and faux topiaries. The focus on using seasonally available materials encourages creativity, especially in winter, when Bales relies heavily on foliage, berries, and seedheads for her designs. The



first section of the book showcases the seasonal arrangements through large, colorful photographs. Another section, appropriately titled "Tricks of the Trade," covers the details of how to create different kinds of arrangements, as well as tips for getting buds to open and conditioning flowers to prolong their vase life. Anyone who enjoys floral arrangements will find both inspiration and information in this new book, which is lushly illustrated with more than 150 color photographs by Steven Randazzo.

—Krystal Fogel, Editorial Intern

This book will have great appeal to botanists and horticulturists, as well as to the home gardener with an interest in the origins of horticulture and a curiosity about the future of global agriculture. *Hybrid* is a masterful work by an admirably ambitious author.

—Kathryn Lund Johnson

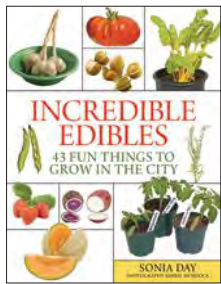
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*Kathryn Lund Johnson is a freelance nature writer and photographer based in Middleville, Michigan.*

## Edible Gardening

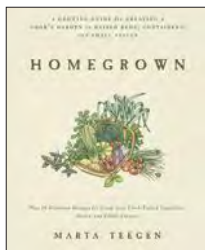
WHETHER YOU'VE grown a few herbs in a pot or have an extensive plot to raise bumper crops of veggies, there's nothing quite like eating something you've grown yourself. Not only is homegrown produce fresher and tastier than store-bought, but it often comes with a healthy helping of accomplishment. The best part is that anyone can do it and there are lots of new books to help you get started or get smarter about how to grow your own food. Books on edible plants are currently the hottest publishing commodity, so here are a few reviewed by AHS staff members.

If you're a city dweller like me but think you don't have enough room for food gardening, Sonia Day's *Incredible Edibles* (Firefly Books, 2010, \$14.95) just might convince you otherwise. Day opens with insightful tips, such as how to avoid common pests and which plants start easily from seed. The remainder of the book describes edible plants to grow in limited spaces, from the not-so-common asparagus pea to popular garden favorites such as basil. Each plant profile provides helpful details such as recommended varieties, when to harvest, common problems of the plant, and even the degree of difficulty to grow. Combined with Barrie Murdock's enticing photographs, Day's advice surely will inspire you to start cultivating some incredible edibles, and maybe you'll even have enough to share!



—Courtney Capstack, *Development and Outreach Manager*

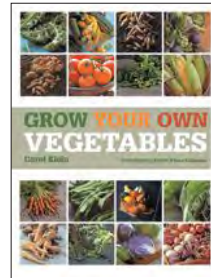
*Homegrown* (Rodale, 2010, \$19.99) by Marta Teegen is another good book for those who are short on space but would still like to grow their own fresh produce. Founder and owner of a kitchen garden design business in Los Angeles, California, Teegen has plenty of ideas for starting a space-saving kitchen garden from scratch. The book is filled with useful diagrams and discussions of everything from containers to soil to sunlight exposure. Teegen doesn't stop there; she also includes dozens of great recipes for using the fresh herbs, vegetables, fruit, and edible flowers that can be grown in small kitchen gardens.



—Meredith Soeder, *Editorial Intern*

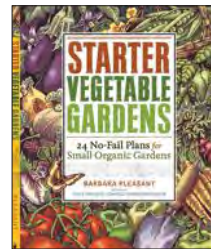
For beginning gardeners looking for a little guidance, *Grow Your Own Vegetables* (Mitchell Beazley, 2010, \$19.99) by Carol Klein

and Editor Fiona Gilsean provides a fun and straightforward approach to getting started. Divided into two sections—the first on designing, preparing, and constructing your garden area and the second on how to grow specific vegetable crops—this easy-to-follow handbook comes complete with an artistic arrangement of vivid photographs. Whatever your reason for wanting to grow your own food—to be a more sustainable consumer, spend time with your family, or ensure that you have fresh, seasonal produce—Klein will have you growing your own in no time.



—Krystal Fogel, *Editorial Intern*

*Starter Vegetable Gardens* (Storey Publishing, 2010, \$19.95) by Barbara Pleasant is another great resource for new gardeners or those without a lot of time and space for growing edibles. This book not only contains ideas for getting started, it provides guidance for expanding your garden over three years as you gain more confidence. Pleasant takes pains to remove all the guesswork by including plans customized for various climates, plant lists, step-by-step instructions for maintaining your garden depending on the season, and plenty of colorful diagrams and photographs to illustrate concepts. The book also goes into detail on techniques such as mulching, staking, and extending the growing season.



—Viveka Neveln, *Associate Editor*

*Eat Your Yard!* by Nan K. Chase (Gibbs Smith, 2010, \$19.99) offers the perfect blend of gardening advice, recipes, anecdotes, tidbits of botanical history, and beautiful color photographs showing edibles both in the garden and harvested. The author has grown most of the 35 fruits, nuts, and herbs she discusses—from apple, lavender, and blueberry to olive, kumquat, and prickly pear—and writes of them with authority and affection. Even if you have no desire to grow your own almonds or bake a batch of almond biscotti, this book makes for an enjoyable read and will leave you feeling good just knowing more about what you eat.



—Mary Yee, *Managing Editor and Art Director*





## REGIONAL HAPPENINGS

# Horticultural Events from Around the Country

### NORTHEAST

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

THROUGH AUG. 29. **Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design.** Exhibit. Morgan Library and Museum. New York, New York. (212) 590-0312. [www.themorgan.org](http://www.themorgan.org).

**RAP** JULY 19 & 20. **Bedrock Exposure: Geology of the Gardens.** Class and field walks. Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. Boothbay, Maine. (207) 633-4333. [www.mainegardens.org](http://www.mainegardens.org).

JULY 22–24. **Nantucket Garden Festival.** Nantucket Lighthouse School. Nantucket, Massachusetts. (508) 228-0427. [www.nantucketlighthouseschool.org/gardenfest/](http://www.nantucketlighthouseschool.org/gardenfest/).

**RAP** AUG. 4. **Kitchen Tour 2010.** Merry-spring Nature Center. Camden, Maine. (207) 236-2239. [www.merryspring.org](http://www.merryspring.org).

**RAP** AUG. 5. **Designing Gardens and Landscapes: 25 Years on Martha's Vineyard.** Lecture. Polly Hill Arboretum. West Tisbury, Massachusetts. (508) 693-9426. [www.pollyhillarboretum.org](http://www.pollyhillarboretum.org).

**RAP** AUG. 7. **Exciting Introductions or Stealth Invaders?** Class. Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. Boston, Massachusetts. (617) 384-5209. [www.arboretum.harvard.edu](http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu).

AUG. 27–29. **Hollister House Garden Study Weekend II.** Seminar, rare plant sale, gala reception, and tour of gardens. Hollister House Garden & the Garden Conservancy. Washington, Connecticut. (860) 868-2200. [www.hollisterhousegarden.org](http://www.hollisterhousegarden.org).

**RAP** AUG. 28. **Introduction to Seed Saving.** Class. New England Wild Flower Society. Nasami Farm. Whately, Massachusetts. (508) 877-7630. [www.newenglandwild.org](http://www.newenglandwild.org).

#### Looking ahead

SEPT. 11. **Gathering of Gardeners: Fall Symposium.** Master Gardeners of Monroe County. Rochester Museum and Science Center. Rochester, New York. (585) 461-1000 ext. 225. <http://gatheringofgardeners.com>.

### MID-ATLANTIC

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

THROUGH SEPT. 12. **Gargoyles in the Garden.**

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).

Flower show. Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. (412) 622-6914. <http://phippconservatory.org>.

JULY 23–25. **Shore Orchid Festival.** American Orchid Society. Silva Orchids. Neptune, New Jersey. (732) 922-2635. [www.silvaorchids.com](http://www.silvaorchids.com).

**RAP** JULY 27. **Outdoor Gardens of the USBG.** Tour. United States Botanic Garden. Washington, D.C. (202) 225-1116. [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov).

**RAP** JULY 31. **45th Annual Open House Festival and Wine Tasting.** Gardening talks and activities. Rutgers Gardens. New Brunswick, New Jersey. (732) 932-8451. <http://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu>.

AUG. 3–5. **Penn Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (PANTS).** Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center. Oaks, Pennsylvania. (800) 898-3411. [www.pantshow.com](http://www.pantshow.com).

AUG. 7 & 8. **Cactus Show.** National Capital Cactus and Succulent Society. Brookside Gardens. Wheaton, Maryland. (301) 962-1400. <http://montgomeryparks.org/brookside>.

AUG. 21. **Native Plant Seminar and Sale.** Irvine Nature Center. Owings Mills, Maryland. (443) 738-9200. [www.explorenature.org](http://www.explorenature.org).

#### Looking ahead

SEPT. 10 & 11. **Historic Plants Symposium & Heritage Harvest Festival.** Monticello. Charlottesville, Virginia. (800) 243-0743. <http://heritageharvestfestival.com>.

### SOUTHEAST

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

THROUGH SEPT. **CASA Community Garden Work Days.** CASA of Madison County. Huntsville, Alabama. (256) 533-7775. <http://casamadisoncty.org>.

**RAP** JULY 17. **Natural History of Georgia Plants.** Class. The State Botanical Garden of Georgia. University of Georgia Visitor Center. Athens, Georgia. (706) 542-1244. [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden).

**RAP** JULY 24 & 25. **Southeastern Regional Bonsai Show.** Cheekwood Botanical Garden & Museum of Art. Nashville, Tennessee. (615) 337-4728. [www.cheekwood.org](http://www.cheekwood.org).

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

**RAP** AUG. 7. **Palms 101.** Workshop. Mounts Botanical Garden. West Palm Beach, Florida. (561) 233-1757. [www.mounts.org](http://www.mounts.org).

AUG. 11–13. **Summer Green Show.** North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association. Greensboro Coliseum. Greensboro, North Carolina. (919) 816-9118. [www.ncnla.com/events-tradeshows-sg.php](http://www.ncnla.com/events-tradeshows-sg.php).

AUG. 24. **Tomato Tasting Party.** Boone County Extension Office. Burlington, Kentucky. (859) 586-6101. <http://ces.ca.uky.edu/boone>.

### NORTH CENTRAL

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

**RAP** JULY 17. **The Art of Bonsai.** Exhibition and demonstration. Morton Arboretum. Lisle, Illinois. (630) 968-0074. [www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org).

**RAP** JULY 29. **How to Handle an Overgrown Foundation Planting.** Class. Holden Arboretum. Kirtland, Ohio. (440) 946-4400. [www.holdenarb.org](http://www.holdenarb.org).

**RAP** JULY 23–25. **41st Annual Ikebana Show.** Sogetsu School of Ikebana, Columbus Branch. Franklin Park Conservatory. Columbus, Ohio. (614) 645-8733. [www.fpconservatory.org](http://www.fpconservatory.org).

## Food and Garden Festival Debuts in Cleveland

FROM SEPTEMBER 24 to 26, the Cleveland Botanical Garden (CBG) in Ohio will be presenting RIPE!, its first food and garden festival, which celebrates the growing interest in edible gardening. Participants can enjoy fresh produce at its peak from local farmers, gardeners, and food purveyors and can learn all about growing, maintaining—and, best of all—eating this fine produce. The event will kick off with a Harvest Moon Dinner on Thursday, September 23.

CBG's extensive gardens and conservatory will provide an ideal backdrop for visitors to interact with regional foodies and green thumbs, including farmers, restaurants specializing in local food, and slow-food practitioners. Visitors will take away new ideas they can use in the garden and kitchen, as well as tips for healthier living.

"With the edible gardening and the local-food revolution having become a way of life for so many people, RIPE! is an idea whose time has come," says Natalie Ronayne, CBG's executive director. "The garden in autumn is a perfect home for a three-day celebration of our diverse and thriving local food community."

CBG is a participant in the American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP), so admission to the garden is free. There is no RAP discount for the festival or the Harvest Moon Dinner, but discounted tickets for the festival will be on sale through CBG's website. For more ticket and festival information, visit <http://cbgarden.org/Ripe.html>.

—Meredith Soeder, Editorial Intern



Much of RIPE! will take place on the Geis Terrace at the Cleveland Botanical Garden.

JULY 20. **Plant Auction.** St. Louis Water Gardening Society. Orthwein Floral Display Hall at Ridgway Visitor Center. St. Louis, Missouri. (314) 514-8348. [www.slwgs.org](http://www.slwgs.org).

JULY 24. **Home Vegetable Gardening: Emory's Favorite Varieties and New Introductions.** Lecture. Hilltop Arboretum. Louisiana State University. Baton Rouge, Louisiana. (225) 767-6916. [www.lsu.edu/hilltop](http://www.lsu.edu/hilltop).

**RAP** AUG. 8. **Orchid Society of Greater St. Louis Annual Auction.** Missouri Botanical Garden. St. Louis, Missouri. (636) 296-5661. [www.osogsl.org](http://www.osogsl.org).

**RAP** AUG. 19. **Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants.** Lecture. Tulsa Garden Center. Tulsa, Oklahoma. (918) 746-5125. [www.tulsaadubon.org](http://www.tulsaadubon.org).

AUG. 20–22. **2010 Nursery Landscape Expo.** Texas Nursery & Landscape Association. Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. San Antonio, Texas. [www.nurserylandscapeexpo.org](http://www.nurserylandscapeexpo.org).

AUG. 21. **Wildflower ID & Ecology.** Class. Shaw Nature Reserve. Gray Summit, Missouri. (636) 451-3512. [www.shawnature.org](http://www.shawnature.org).

**RAP** AUG. 28. **Daylily Sale.** Botanica, The Wichita Gardens. Wichita, Kansas. (316) 264-0448. [www.botanica.org](http://www.botanica.org).

**RAP** AUG. 28 & 29. **Bamboo Show and Sale.** Zilker Botanical Garden. Austin, Texas. (512) 477-8672. [www.zilkergardens.org](http://www.zilkergardens.org).

### SOUTHWEST

AZ, NM, CO, UT

**RAP** JULY 23–25. **Weekend Workshop: Artist's Visual Journal.** Denver Botanic Gardens. Gateway Canyon Resort. Gateway, Colorado. (720) 865-3500. [www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org).

JULY 24 & 25. **Herb and Lavender Fair.** El Rancho de las Golondrinas. Santa Fe, New Mexico. (505) 471-5623. [www.golondrinas.org](http://www.golondrinas.org).

**RAP** JULY 29. **The Kitchen Ecosystem.** Lecture. Denver Botanic Gardens. Denver, Colorado. (720) 865-3500. [www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org).

AUG. 13. **Southwestern Horticulture Annual Day of Education (SHADE).** Arizona Nursery Association. The Renaissance Glendale. Glendale, Arizona. (480) 966-1610. <http://azna.org/shade>.

AUG. 21. **Garden Fair.** Utah Botanical Center Greenhouse Complex. Kaysville, Utah. (801) 593-8969. <http://utahbotanicalcenter.org>.

AUG. 1–5. **North American Prairie Conference.** Tallgrass Prairie Center. University of Northern Iowa. Cedar Falls, Iowa. (319) 273-3836. [www.northamericanprairieconference.org](http://www.northamericanprairieconference.org).

**RAP** AUG. 3. **MSU Garden Plant Showcase.** Michigan State University Horticulture Gardens. East Lansing, Michigan. (517) 355-5191 ext. 1359. [www.hrt.msu.edu](http://www.hrt.msu.edu).

AUG. 6–8. **Midwest Native Plant Conference.** Midwest Native Plant Society. Bergamo Center. Mount St. John Preserve. Dayton, Ohio. (513) 941-6497. <http://cincinnatibirds.com/mwnp/>.

**RAP** AUG. 21 & 22. **Malott Japanese Garden Summer Festival.** Chicago Botanic Garden. Glencoe, Illinois. (847) 835-8284. [www.chicagobotanic.org/calendar](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/calendar).

**RAP** AUG. 21 & 22. **Dahlia Show.** Badger State Dahlia Society. Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Madison, Wisconsin. (608) 246-4550. [www.olbrich.org](http://www.olbrich.org).

### SOUTH CENTRAL

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

**RAP** JULY 17. **Firefly Festival.** Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. Fayetteville, Arkansas. (479) 750-2620. [www.bgozarks.org](http://www.bgozarks.org).

AUG. 29 & 30. **African Violet Demonstration.** Rio Grande Botanic Garden. Albuquerque, New Mexico. (505) 764-6200. [www.cabq.gov/biopark](http://www.cabq.gov/biopark).

## WEST COAST

CA, NV, HI

**RAP** JULY 17. **Companion Planting.** Class. Descanso Gardens. La Cañada Flintridge, California. (818) 949-7980. [www.descansogardens.org](http://www.descansogardens.org).

JULY 23 & 24. **Kaimuki Orchid Society Show.** Kalani High School. Honolulu, Hawaii. (808) 737-1882. E-mail: [kaimukiorchidsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:kaimukiorchidsociety@hotmail.com).

JULY 24. **Ground Rules for Gardening.** Class. The Springs Preserve. Las Vegas, Nevada. (702) 822-7786. [www.springspreserve.org](http://www.springspreserve.org).

**RAP** JULY 25. **Pruning and Gardening Lecture.** South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation. Palos Verdes Peninsula, California. (310) 544-1948. [www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org](http://www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org).

**RAP** AUG. 7. **Summer Gardening Fair.** San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum. San Francisco, California. (415) 661-1316. [www.sfbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org).

AUG. 12-15. **Festival of Fruit.** California Rare Fruit Growers, Los Angeles Chapter. Cal Poly Pomona. Pomona, California. (805) 584-6244. [www.festivaloffruit.org](http://www.festivaloffruit.org).

**RAP** AUG. 14. **Plant Sale and Garden Workshop.** Ruth Bancroft Garden. Walnut Creek, California. (925) 944-9352. [www.ruthbancroftgarden.org](http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org).

AUG. 17-22. **American Begonia Society Convention.** Embassy Suites. San Francisco, California. (415) 931-4912. [www.begonias.org](http://www.begonias.org).

AUG. 21 & 22. **Fall Biodiversity Plant Sale and Garden Tours.** Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. Occidental, California. (707) 874-1557. [www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org).

### Looking ahead

SEPT. 4 & 5. **Hawaiian Plumeria Festival.** Southern California Plumeria Society. Casa del Prado. Balboa Park. San Diego, California. (619) 461-5942. [www.socalplumeriasociety.com](http://www.socalplumeriasociety.com).

## NORTHWEST

AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY

**RAP** JULY 17 & 18. **Parade of Ponds.** Alaska Botanical Garden. Anchorage, Alaska. (928) 770-3692. [www.alaskabg.org](http://www.alaskabg.org).

JULY 18. **16th Annual West Seattle Garden Tour.** West Seattle Garden Tour. Seattle,

## Arizona Highlands Garden Conference Addresses Sustainability

TAKING PLACE in Payson, Arizona, on August 27 and 28, the 11th Annual Arizona Highlands Garden Conference will focus on "Sustainable Gardening for Homes and Communities." The conference is sponsored by the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension and local Master Gardener volunteers.



On Friday, August 27, the conference kicks off with optional demonstration tours to local garden sites. Attendees will have the opportunity to visit different locations in and around Payson to learn effective ways to capture and harvest rain, how to design and maintain a firewise garden, how to create square foot vegetable gardens, and about plants adapted to dry gardens.

On Saturday, August 28, the main conference opens at the Mazatzal Hotel & Casino just south of Payson. Keynote presentations will be made by David Wann, author of *Affluenza* and *Zen of Gardening*, who will address "Why We Garden," and desert permaculture innovator Greg Peterson of the Urban Farm in Phoenix, whose presentation is titled "Simple Sustainability: My Ordinary Extraordinary Yard!" Throughout the day, there will be breakout sessions focusing on vegetable, herb, community, and even songbird gardens, as well as outdoor demonstrations and time to browse for books and gardening supplies from a variety of vendors.

"The conference centers on sustainable gardening, but will include useful information for gardeners in high elevations from 3,000 to 7,000 feet. It's not just for Master Gardeners but for anyone interested in gardening in this region," says Hattie Braun, Master Gardener Coordinator with Coconino County, Arizona.

Discounted registration is available until July 30. For more information or to register, contact Susan Bolt at (928) 474-4160, or download the registration form at <http://extension.arizona.edu/gilalhorticulture>.

—Meredith Soeder, Editorial Intern

Washington. (425) 417-4161. [www.westseattlegardentour.com](http://www.westseattlegardentour.com).

JULY 24 & 25. **Northwest Herb Fest.** Herbal Transitions. Wise Acres. Pleasant Hill, Oregon. (541) 736-0164. [www.herbaltransitions.com](http://www.herbaltransitions.com).

AUG. 14. **Dahlia Show.** 5 Valleys Dahlia & Glad Society. Western Montana Fair. Missoula, Montana. (406) 375-0331. E-mail: [briley@montana.com](mailto:briley@montana.com).

AUG. 14 & 15. **Western International Show.** Idaho Gladiolus Society. Eagle Senior Center. Eagle, Idaho. (208) 459-7295. [www.gladworld.org](http://www.gladworld.org).

**RAP** AUG. 21 & 22. **Eastside Fuchsia Society Show & Sale.** Bellevue Botanical Garden. Bellevue, Washington. (425) 451-3755. [www.bellevuebotanical.org](http://www.bellevuebotanical.org).

AUG. 26-28. **Farwest Show.** Greenhouse and nursery industry trade show. Oregon Association of Nurseries. Oregon Convention Center. Portland, Oregon. (800) 342-6401. [www.farwestshow.com](http://www.farwestshow.com).

### Looking ahead

SEPT. 9. **Productive Vegetable Gardening**

**in Small Spaces.** Class. Washington State University. King County Extension. City of SeaTac Council Chambers. Sea Tac, Washington. (206) 205-3210. [www.king.wsu.edu/gardening](http://www.king.wsu.edu/gardening).

## CANADA

JULY 18. **3rd Annual Green Festival.** Educational sessions and family activities. Devonian Gardens. University of Alberta. Devon, Alberta. (780) 987-3054. [www.ales.ualberta.ca/devonian/](http://www.ales.ualberta.ca/devonian/).

JULY 19. **Vancouver Shade Garden Society Annual Show.** VanDusen Botanical Garden. Vancouver, British Columbia. (604) 602-6644. [www.vancouvershadegardensociety.ca](http://www.vancouvershadegardensociety.ca).

AUG. 7 & 8. **Art in the Garden.** Exhibition. University of British Columbia Botanical Garden. Vancouver, British Columbia. (604) 222-8372. [www.artinthegarden.ca](http://www.artinthegarden.ca).

AUG. 28 & 29. **1st Annual Dahlia Show.** Alberta Dahlia & Gladiolus Society. Bower Place Centre. Red Deer, Alberta. (403) 346-4902. [www.dahliaShows.com](http://www.dahliaShows.com).

# 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 zones 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–D

**Acacia schaffneri** uh-KAY-shuh SHAF-ner-ee (USDA Zones 8–10, AHS Zones 12–7)  
**Acalypha hispida** ah-kuh-LEE-fuh HISS-pih-duh (11–11, 12–6)  
**Acorus gramineus** AK-or-us grah-MIN-ee-us (6–9, 9–5)  
**Adiantum pedatum** ad-dee-AN-tum peh-DAY-tum (3–8, 8–1)  
**Alpinia zerumbet** al-PIN-ee-uh zeh-RUM-bet (9–11, 12–1)  
**Agave attenuata** uh-GAH-vee uh-ten-yew-AY-tuh (9–11, 10–4)  
**Albizia julibrissin** al-BEEZ-yuh jew-lih-BRISS-en (6–10, 10–6)  
**Ananas cosmosus** uh-NAN-us koz-MO-sus (11–11, 12–1)  
**Aristolochia gigantea** uh-ris-toh-LO-kee-uh jy-GAN-tee-uh (11–11, 12–7)  
**Asarum europaeum** uh-SAR-um yew-ro-PEE-um (4–8, 8–1)  
**Begonia carolinifolia** beh-GOHN-yuh kair-o-lin-ih-FO-lee-uh (9–11, 12–9)  
**Bismarckia nobilis** biz-MARK-ee-uh NO-bil-iss (9–11, 12–10)  
**Brunfelsia nitida** broon-FEL-see-uh NIT-ih-duh (min. 45° F, 12–8)  
**Carex albula** KAIR-eks AL-bew-luh (7–9, 9–6)  
**C. flagellifera** C. fla-jel-EE-fer-uh (7–9, 9–7)  
**Canna xehemaniai** KAN-nuh xeh-heh-mah-NEE-eye (7–10, 12–1)  
**Cerastium tomentosum** sair-ASS-tee-um toh-men-TOH-sum (3–7, 7–1)  
**Colocasia esculenta** kol-o-KAY-see-uh es-kyew-LEN-tuh (9–11, 12–7)  
**C. gigantea** C. jy-GAN-tee-uh (8–11, 12–7)  
**Crinum scabrum** KRY-num SKAY-brum (8–11, 11–5)  
**Cucurbita pepo** kew-KER-bih-tuh PEH-po (0–0, 8–1)  
**Cycas revoluta** SY-kas reh-vo-LOO-tuh (min. 50° F, 12–6)  
**Cyperus papyrus** sy-PEER-us puh-PY-russ (10–11, 12–6)  
**Dahlia imperialis** DAHL-yuh im-peer-ee-AL-iss (9–11, 12–1)  
**Dasyliirion longissimum** das-ih-LIR-ee-on lon-JIS-sih-mum (9–11, 11–7)  
**Deschampsia flexuosa** deh-SHAMP-see-uh flex-yoo-O-suh (4–9, 9–1)

## E–I

**Ebenopsis ebano** eb-en-OP-sis EH-buh-no (8–10, 11–7)  
**Ensete ventricosum** en-SEH-tee ven-trih-KO-sum (10–11, 12–1)  
**Eupatorium purpureum** yew-puh-TOR-ee-um pur-PUR-ee-um (3–9, 9–1)  
**Euphorbia tirucalli** yew-FOR-bee-uh tih-rew-KAL-ee-eye (10–11, 12–6)  
**Fagus grandifolia** FAY-gus gran-dih-FO-lee-uh (3–9, 9–1)  
**F. sylvatica** F. sil-VAT-ih-kuh (4–7, 7–3)  
**Gaura lindheimeri** GAW-ruh lind-HY-mur-eye (6–9, 9–6)  
**Hakonechloa macra** ha-kon-ee-KLO-uh MAK-ruh (5–9, 9–4)  
**Hedychium coronarium** heh-DEE-kee-um kor-o-NAIR-ee-um (7–11, 12–7)  
**Helianthus angustifolius** hee-lee-AN-thus ang-gus-tih-FO-lee-us (6–9, 9–4)  
**H. annuus** H. AN-yoo-us (0–0, 12–1)  
**H. argophyllus** H. ar-go-FIL-us (0–0, 11–1)  
**H. debilis** ssp. **cucumerifolius** H. DEB-ih-liss ssp. kew-kew-mur-ih-FO-lee-us (8–11, 12–1)  
**H. decapetalus** H. dek-ah-PET-uh-lus (5–8, 8–5)  
**H. maximiliani** H. maks-ih-mil-ee-AN-eye (4–9, 9–4)  
**H. microcephalus** H. my-kro-SEF-uh-lus (4–9, 9–4)  
**H. xmultiflora** H. xmul-tih-FLOR-uh (5–9, 9–5)  
**H. salicifolius** H. sal-iss-ih-FO-lee-us (6–9, 9–3)  
**H. tuberosus** H. too-bur-O-sus (7–9, 9–6)  
**Iris tectorum** EYE-riss tek-TOR-um (5–9, 9–3)  
**Impatiens capensis** im-PAY-shenz kuh-PEN-sis (0–0, 12–1)

## J–M

**Juncus effusus forma spiralis** JUNG-kus eh-FEW-suss forma spih-RAL-iss (6–9, 9–6)  
**Juniperus procumbens** joo-NIP-er-iss pro-KUM-benz (4–9, 9–5)  
**J. virginiana** J. vir-jin-ee-AN-uh (3–9, 9–1)  
**Larix decidua** LAY-riks deh-SID-yew-uh (3–7, 7–1)  
**Leucaena retusa** loo-KAY-nuh re-TEW-suh (7–10, 11–7)  
**Leucophyllum candidum** loo-ko-FIL-um KAN-dih-dum (8–1, 12–8)  
**Leucophyta brownii** loo-ko-FY-tuh BROWN-ee-eye (min. 50° F, 12–10)

**Liriope muscari** lih-RY-o-pee mus-KAR-eye (6–10, 12–1)  
**Lysimachia nummularia** liss-ih-MAHK-ee-uh noom-yew-LAIR-ee-uh (4–8, 8–1)  
**Manihot esculenta** MAN-ih-hot es-kew-LEN-tuh (10–11, 12–7)  
**Microbiota decussata** my-kro-by-O-tuh day-kuh-SAY-tuh (3–7, 7–1)  
**Miscanthus sinensis** miz-KAN-thus sih-NEN-siss (6–9, 9–1)

## N–Z

**Nassella tenuissima** nah-SEL-luh ten-yew-ISS-ih-muh (7–11, 12–7)  
**Papaver atlanticum** puh-PAH-vur at-LAN-tih-kum (5–7, 7–4)  
**Pedilanthus macrocarpus** peh-dih-LAN-thus mak-ro-KAR-pus (10–11, 12–7)  
**Pennisetum setaceum** pen-ih-SEE-tum seh-TAY-see-um (8–11, 12–8)  
**Phormium tenax** FOR-mee-um TEN-aks (9–11, 12–2)  
**Picea breweriana** PY-see-uh brew-ur-ee-AN-nuh (6–8, 8–6)  
**Polygonatum odoratum** pah-lih-GO-nay-tum o-doh-RAY-tum (4–8, 8–1)  
**Rhus typhina** RUS TY-fee-nuh (3–8, 8–1)  
**Saccharum officinarum** sak-AH-rum o-fiss-ih-NAR-um (9–11, 12–7)  
**Scirpus atrovirens** SKEER-pus at-ro-VY-renz (3–8, 8–2)  
**Senna didymobotrya** SEH-nuh did-ee-mo-BOT-ree-uh (9–10, 12–6)  
**S. wislizenii** S. wiz-lih-ZEN-ee-eye (8–10, 11–7)  
**Solanum quitoense** so-LAH-num key-TOH-en-see (10–11, 12–1)  
**Sporobolus heterolepis** spor-OB-o-lus het-ur-o-LEP-iss (3–8, 10–2)  
**Tecomaria capensis** tek-o-MAY-ree-uh kuh-PEN-sis (8–10, 11–7)  
**Tibouchina grandifolia** tih-boo-KY-nuh gran-dih-FO-lee-uh (10–11, 12–1)  
**Trachycarpus fortunei** trak-ee-KAR-pus for-TEW-nee-eye (8–11, 12–7)  
**Yucca faxoniana** YUK-uh fak-son-ee-AN-uh (6–10, 10–5)  
**Y. rostrata** Y. ros-TRAY-tuh (5–11, 12–2)

# 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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## A Silver Lining for Hot Climates: Violet Silverleaf

by Scott Calhoun

WITHOUT HYPERBOLE, I can say that violet silverleaf (*Leucophyllum candidum*) is the most silver landscape shrub I have ever laid eyes on. Next to the nearly metallic shine of violet silverleaf's foliage, the leaves of some other so-called silver plants look dull as dishwater. This shrub's rounded filigree of tiny leaves is so silver, it appears almost white. And I haven't even mentioned the royal purple, bell-shaped flowers, which bloom so profusely that they nearly obscure the silver foliage.

Violet silverleaf is a member of the genus *Leucophyllum*, a group of evergreen woody shrubs commonly referred to as Texas ranger, Texas sage, or cenizo. Because the bloom cycle of Texas ranger is triggered by warmth and humidity, it is also sometimes known as barometer plant.

### DESERT NATIVES

Texas rangers are all native to the Chihuahuan Desert region—a vast, dry, and relatively cold desert. This area includes much of western Texas and several Mexican states, where nearly all of the rainfall comes in the form of monsoonlike storms during the summer months.

Violet silverleaf has the smallest and most striking leaves of any of the shrubs in the *Leucophyllum* genus. The fuzzy white hairs on its leaves reflect the sun and minimize transpiration, making the shrub very heat and drought tolerant.

It typically grows between three and five feet tall with an equal spread, blooming during hot, humid spells in the summer about 10 to 20 days after a rainfall. Two notable selections developed at Texas



*Leucophyllum candidum* 'Silver Cloud'

A & M University in College Station are *L. candidum* 'Silver Cloud' and 'Thunder Cloud'. Although both have intensely silver leaves with dark purple flowers, 'Silver Cloud' is slightly larger and blooms less profusely, while 'Thunder Cloud' is more compact and blooms repeatedly throughout the summer and early fall.


### GROWING TIPS

Violet silverleaf is appropriate for gardens from Arizona east to Florida where tem-

peratures rarely drop below 10 degrees Fahrenheit (USDA Hardiness Zones 8–11, AHS Heat Zones 12–8) and soils are not soggy during the winter. Violet silverleaf will thrive if planted in a site with full sun and fast-draining soil.

Of all of the members of the genus, *L. candidum* is the most sensitive to poor drainage and overwatering, so avoid planting it in basins where rainwater may accumulate around the trunk or root zone. Loose rock or gravel makes the best mulch. If using an organic mulch, make sure to keep it well away from the trunk.

Violet silverleaf can be used singly or *en masse* and is particularly well adapted to rock gardens. It mixes nicely with bold succulent plants with darker green leaves, such as Faxon yucca (*Yucca faxoniana*) or Mexican grass tree (*Dasyllirion longissimum*). Violet silverleaf is also handsome when placed against brightly colored walls. It can be mixed with yellow-flowering shrubs such as shrubby senna (*Senna wislizenii*) or planted near fine-leaved trees such as twisted acacia (*Acacia schaffneri*), Texas ebony (*Ebenopsis ebano*), or goldenball leadtree (*Leucaena retusa*).

Violet silverleaf is a great choice for anyone in harsh, hot climates looking for fine silver foliage and cool-colored flowers in the steamiest part of the summer. I recommend it wholeheartedly. 

*Based in Tucson, Arizona, Scott Calhoun is a garden designer and author of five gardening books.*

### Sources

We were not able to locate mail-order sources for the cultivars listed in this article. We suggest asking your local garden center to order them for you. Wholesale sources include:

**Monrovia**, Azusa, CA. [www.monrovia.com](http://www.monrovia.com). (The website includes a search function so you can look for retail sources near your home.)

**Mountain States Wholesale Nursery**, Glendale, AZ. [www.mswnc.com](http://www.mswnc.com).

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