

JUNE, 2007

The GREENLEAF



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

NEWSLETTER

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Cream of the Crop

by Rob Wier

Let's talk about plants. You don't come here for weak or mediocre plants. You come here to select healthy, quality plants. Right? The "Right Plant". We strive to provide you with the "Cream of the Crop" of plant material.

In farming, 100% of the crop doesn't make it to market. You strive for that, but there is always some percentage of cull. Let's use a one-gallon perennial as an example, from start to finish (planting it in your garden). Our perennials start from seedlings or cuttings. Seed are sown or cuttings are snipped then 'stuck' into plug trays. Plug trays are plastic trays formed to hold 50-72 little cubes of potting soil approximately 1" x 1" in size. The seedling or cuttings root out into these as a small plant, or plug. We propagate a lot of our own plugs and buy others. Regardless, rarely do you get 100% to perform. If you do well and the stars are aligned properly you might get 90-95% to make it. Brice and Alexis* have that ability (talent, science, art, and skill), which is lucky for all of us! In a way, they are the Cream of the Crop when it comes to propagators.

Of all these plugs only the best "Cream of the Crop" get shifted to the one-gallon containers to grow on. Better to cull out a weak plant when it is small than waste precious resources (soil, time, labor, water) on it. When the plants reach a sellable size then we bring them in to the nursery. Out of a group of 100, not all usually get to the store. You guessed it - only the "Cream of the Crop" make the trip to Frisco to call out to you from the

tables.

But even if they made it as far as the nursery tables, occasionally tragedy befalls some of them. They may get toppled over, run over, over-watered, under-watered, smashed by falling tree limbs, or simply get blown away by 100 mph winds (see pg.4 for storm damage pictures!). We try to rogue out these plants so you are left to choose from only ... you got it ... "The Cream of the Crop".

Whether we grow the plants or we purchase them from our great selection of vendors (other grower nurseries that share our passion for quality plant material) this same process is repeated to bring you a healthy plant. Along with all of this,

the varieties of plants are selected that are well adapted to our area. Just another "Cream of the Crop" criteria. Many are locally grown to better be adapted to our local climate.

So by the time you make your selections at the nursery, the plant you select has already been pre-selected numerous times. Healthy plants equal happy gardeners, and the world needs more happy gardeners. So add a little Cream to your

garden, we love to see that smiling face!

**We are proud to be a part of the next generation of horticulturalists in Alexis. Not to mention we're proud she is down in Aggie Land! If anyone out there is part of an organization looking for bright and talented student scholarship applicants ... we'll be glad to pass on the information to her!*



TIMELY HINTS

PLANT ... Heat loving color!

- **Sun lovers** include Zinnias, Lantana, Periwinkle (Vinca), and Mexican Heather.
- **For the shade** you can plant Caladiums (bunch them together for the best show), Impatiens, Coleus, and Torenia.
- **For tropical patio color**, plant Ixora, Mandevilla, Allamanda, Hibiscus, Euryops Daisy, and Duranta ... these will spice up your outdoor living area.
- **Plant Perennials!** You know we'll have the "RIGHT" ones for you that provide color and are well-adapted.
- **Container Trees and large shrubs** can be planted. Invest in a Tregator® bag for the best results for keeping your trees and shrubs irrigated.
- We recommend **postpone planting large B&B** (balled and burlapped) trees until our fall Tree Sale.

PRUNE ... As necessary to shape. Try to let plants grow naturally and "pick prune" rather than "hedge".

FERTILIZE ... Time for the second application of **Gardenville 7-2-2**. We had numerous testimonials from customers that the Gardenville helped their turf survive the water restrictions well. Use **Colorscape**s on blooming plants - annuals, perennials, and especially planted color bowls and tropicals to keep them happy and blooming all summer.

WATER ... As Needed and Allowed. We have helpful handouts in the nursery and online at our website under the "Plant Care" link. Hand-water newly planted plants daily for the first two weeks to make sure they get established. Even drought tolerant plants need this extra care in the beginning until they get settled in. Remember to use your **Tregator®** bag as an efficient watering tool on large trees and shrubs. Consider converting your planting beds to drip irrigation. Water efficient properties are going to become the "norm" just as energy efficient homes have become. You'll recoup your investment in drip irrigation along with having a nice looking landscape.

PESTS ... The spring rains, cool April, and drought have contributed to a bumper crop of bugs and diseases out there. Check shrubbery and Crape Myrtles for scale. Many leaf spots and mildews have been present. The good news is the warmer summer temperatures tend to stop disease. We have earth-friendly choices to offer. As always, bring in a sample of the problem you are having and we'll try to steer you in the right direction for control.

OTHER ...

- **Mulch** - to conserve moisture and regulate soil temperatures.
- **Mosquitos** - we carry a granular product called **"YardSafe"** by Cedarside, which can be spread to reduce mosquitos. We also have several home and garden insect sprays.
- Get out and **ENJOY your gardens** and see what "simple surprises" you might find.

Gardening Hint #12 "Summer Dormancy"

Some native plants in Texas bloom in the spring, and then go dormant in the dry summer months (like Winecup). This is called Summer Dormancy.

When you are out admiring your landscape and some wise-acre tries to trip you up by talking about the ONE plant that didn't make it, tell him (or her) that it is in summer dormancy. Keep a straight face, keep walking and re-plant when you have a private moment. To show you have a lot of confidence, use it any time of year. Gardeners ... you gotta love'em!!

~Brice

Simple Surprises

by Rob Wier

Of course I love gardening! As gardeners we love the interaction with nature and observing its wonder and beauty. It's amazing the simple surprises our gardens can provide in such a complicated world.

My wife pointed out one of these simple surprises the other day ... a Cedar Sage had sprouted and grown in



a crevice on a boulder in the landscape. Could it now be considered a rock garden?

You've witnessed garden surprises as well, I'm sure. A hummingbird feeding on flowers ... butterflies drifting across your perennials ... blooms, blooms, and more blooms ... the sweet scent of a gardenia in the morning air.

So do me a favor, please. Our July issue could use your shared photos and/or comments about "Simple Surprises" you've noticed in your garden. Email us your contributions (info@shadesofgreeninc.com), or drop them off at the nursery before June 15th, and we'll try to share as many as we can with your fellow readers!

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Brillo Verde Babies Quiz Answers

- 1-D Lyre Leaf Sage
- 2-C Eve's Necklace
- 3-A Mexican Plum
- 4-B Red Yucca

Congratulations to the Winners!
Thanks to everyone that participated!
Watch for future quizzes!

JUNE COUPON

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June Fragrance Of The Month ...

DIVA



CONFESSIONS

of a Container Junkie

by
Nancy Furth



Shade Loving Container

It seems that the all-inclusive term 'container gardening' just doesn't hit the mark anymore. Although the simple pots of marigolds and geraniums we remember from years past will always be attractive, present-day containers have become exquisite arrangements of plants set thoughtfully into borders, on patios, and adjacent to entryways. As an avid gardener with an obsession for plants of all kinds, I have learned to stretch the boundaries of my gardening spaces by creating container gardens. I must confess I am guilty of cheating by making gardens within gardens. My small perennial beds, shrub borders and xeric alley garden have been filled to capacity for years, yet I continue to feed my horticulture habit by collecting, nurturing and enjoying new plants and plant combinations in pots every season. Gardening in pots offers the gardener 'a quick fix' and in comparison to traditional gardening has the same therapeutic benefits. It also offers the novice gardener the added opportunity to hone his or her design skills without breaking the bank. These individual portable gardens are definitely the 'icing on the cake' in my small landscape. They are thoughtfully placed as focal points, accents

and individual *objects d'art*, each designed with a specific purpose in mind.

Here at the nursery we take each request for help creating pot designs as an opportunity to pull together unique, one-of-a-kind, landscape and garden accents. Staff member Michelle Bradley has proven her penchant for putting 'the right plant in the right place' by always making sure that we have eye-catching color 'bowls' for both sun and shade and attractive herb containers on hand. Every few weeks or so, you will see a fresh new bevy of beautiful containers created by Michelle and other staff members. They are tucked here and there, in and around the nursery's outdoor display areas, attracting attention just as we know they will in your garden.

If you can answer yes to any of the following questions, you will benefit from gardening in containers:

- 🌱 Do you have limited gardening space?



Herb Container

continued on pg 5 ...



Hurricane force winds blew through the area on the ominous evening of May 2nd. We suffered a lot of blown over material (some even blown away!) and broken branches on the trees around the office.

Many trees, homes, and fences suffered in the surrounding areas as well.

Blow, Blow, ...



Blow Your Trees Down!

It just reminds us that no matter what ... we are not able to control Mother Nature!

Well, at least the old windmill is still standing!



Container Junkie ...continued

by Nancy Furth

- ☞ Do you have less time than you would like for gardening?
- ☞ Is your gardening space unsuitable for growing the plants you want to grow because of poor drainage, soil conditions, or too much shade or sun?
- ☞ Do you have a desire to be a creative garden artist?
- ☞ Are you physically limited to working in raised beds or containers?



Our sales staff members are all experienced gardeners who look

forward to helping you design the color, form and texture container combinations that will be unique and compliment your specific requests. Here are some helpful design guidelines to keep in mind when creating container gardens:

1. The pot or container choice is an important part of the overall design. Gardens are doubly enriched when plants and containers are artistically combined.
2. Every pot needs a drainage hole. Many receptacles have the potential to become attractive plant containers if holes are drilled to provide drainage.
3. The size of the pot determines the number and size of plants used. Larger pots hold more plants and, therefore, have more visual impact.
4. Always combine plants having similar light and water requirements.
5. Use plants that 'spill' or cascade as edging plants.
6. Use tall or dramatic plants, keeping in mind the overall scale of the design and the height and breadth of the container. A rule of thumb is to make the pot one-third the total height of the finished

container garden.

7. Use several 'filler' plants of medium height to complete the design.
8. Use the best quality, lightweight potting soil you can find, which isn't really soil, but a combination of sphagnum peat moss, perlite and/or vermiculite. Never use garden soil!
9. Light colors (pastels) and white brighten shaded locations, while dark colors (purple and blue) recede.
10. Bright colors such as the crayon colors of red, orange and yellow shout for attention.
11. Using shades and tones of just one or two colors, and an interesting combination of foliage textures can be both pleasing to the eye and in keeping with natural plantings.
12. Use variegated foliage carefully. It should compliment and not overpower the other plant choices. Incorporate flowers of the same colors or shades of colors found in foliage plants such as coleus.
13. Last but not least, since irrigation and nutrients run quickly through containers filled with well-draining potting soil, remember to feed your containers often.

Gray Creeping Germander

[*Teucrium cossonii*]

By Michelle Bradley

What a surprise! This little gray plant will definitely make you do a double take.

At 3" tall, it makes a wonderful "evergray" groundcover for a hot dry spot. I planted three little quart size pots two falls ago, and this spring I have a 3' x 3' carpet of tiny light lavender flowers. It loves poor soils and is perfect in a xeriscape.

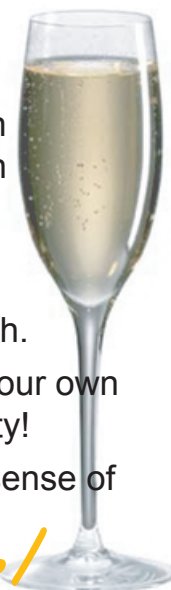
Try it! You'll like it!



"Contain Yourself!"

Champagne Container Hour
Thursday, June 14th 5pm-6pm

Master Gardener, Nancy Furth, will provide a brief presentation on container planting and design. She and Michelle Bradley will then help provide guidance for you to plant up a fabulous container!



We'll provide:

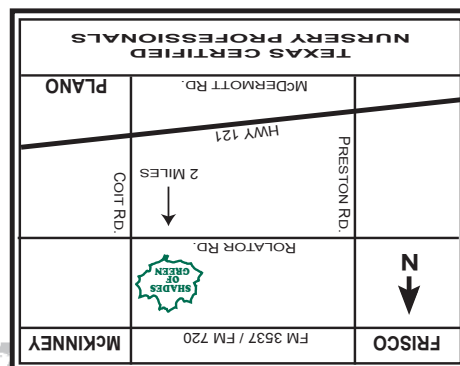
The Place out front on the shaded lawn.
 Free potting soil, spagnum moss, and cocoa moss.
 Complimentary glass of bubbly and fun.
 For purchase -- pottery, wire garden planters, "The Right Plants", and fertilizer.

You provide:

Your own container, if you wish.
 Dress appropriately to plant your own container and possibly get dirty!
 A smiling face and your own sense of creativity.

Cheers!

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



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