



Happy 4th of July!

JULY 2009

The GREENLEAF



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

NEWSLETTER

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*We will be closed on Independence Day
to spend time with family and friends.*

Weather or Not

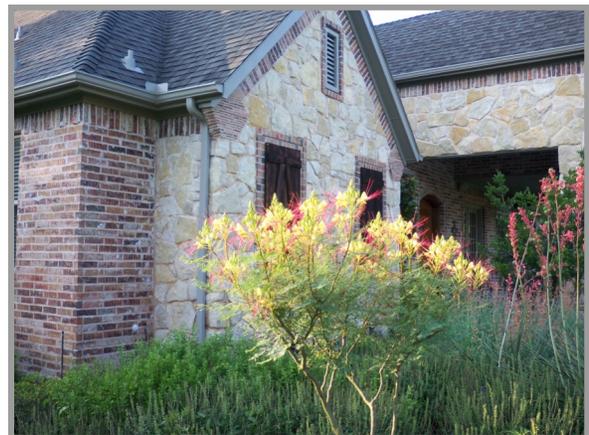
By Jeff McCauley



Weather is a funny thing, even more so in Texas. Over the last 30 years one of the most commonly asked questions is, "When is the best time to plant?" How about when your time is available? No, not just spring.

There are some considerations for not getting the spade out. Severe cold fronts, 30-40 degree drops in temperature or severe drought restrictions. Container items can be planted all year as long as the moisture level is adequate. I would shy away from balled and burlap trees planted between Memorial Day and Labor Day. They sometimes have a problem going through transplant shock. Soil preparation is best done when soil is not muddy or extremely dry. Plants don't mind if you plant them when it's rainy, hot, cold, or windy. If you don't believe me, just ask them.

When going back and looking at 2-year-plus landscapes, I can't tell the difference in the season they were planted. In some instances, plants are larger and more mature in summer and fall. Many times in the summer I catch myself saying, "Why do I live in a place like this?" So I vacation in Seattle, or Colorado, or someplace cool. Then you visit those places in the winter and say, "I'm glad I don't live in a place like this in the winter." I think we should all be happy with the conditions we have, *weather* you like it or not.





TIMELY HINTS

By Rob Wier

PLANT ...

*Add **COLOR** to your planting beds if they are weak or boring. Yes it is hot, so add some of those bright and bold colors – hot pinks, yellows, and reds. Periwinkle, Purslane, and Lantana love this heat. Don't leave out the Tropicals – Crotons, Mandevilla, Duranta, and Hibiscus! If you had just one or two plants in a container that didn't make it, replace just those plants with something fresh and blooming.

*Now is the best time to choose Crape Myrtles for their color. Be sure to check the mature size for the one you choose and be sure to give it the right space. Remember you can prevent 'Crape Murder' by selecting the correct ultimate mature size.

*Container trees can be planted as long as you are prepared to water and tend to your new tree properly. Wait until fall to return for planting B&B (balled and burlapped) trees.

PRUNE ... As needed to shape errant growth. Consider abandoning that hedging syndrome and let your plants grow out naturally. Personally, those little meatballs and cubes went out with my bell bottoms. Spent blooms and flower stalks can be removed from perennials.

FERTILIZE ... with **Gardenville 7-2-2** for everything if you didn't back in June. Use **Colorscapes** or **Osmocote** on color plantings and pots. Most tropicals bloom on new growth so fertilize well to keep them growing and blooming. For those with Palms, we have a good **Palm Food** to help them.

WATER ... Be 'Water Wise'. Just because we have ample supplies now, don't squander it. Be a good neighbor and help those that are new to the area by showing them how to be 'water wise'. Water when plants need it. Check your plantings regularly throughout the summer. Hand-water individual plants as needed between running the whole sprinkler system. Just because some cities allow you to water twice a week doesn't mean you need to. Use your water wisdom and tools (rain gauge

and moisture meter) to determine when and how often your yard needs water. Use automatic mode for vacations (but be sure to have a rain gauge). Potted plants need almost daily hand watering. Put them in shaded areas where the sprinkler can reach them while on vacation or get someone to tend to them while you are away. I'll admit I've come home to many a crispy container on the back porch.

PESTS ...

*Tackle fire ants with a three-pronged attack:

1) **Molasses** drives them out of your yard and improves your soil's health.

2) **'Come and Get It'** is bait which can be used on mounds or over your entire yard.

3) **Mound Drench** those stubborn ant mounds to get back at 'em quickly.

*Watch for Scale on Crape Myrtles, Hollies, and Magnolias. Spray with **'All Season's Oil'** and smother the little plant suckers.

*For the fungus among us we carry **'Serenade'** which is a new organic fungicide that controls a broad spectrum of fungal problems.

*As always, bring us samples – it's hard to make accurate recommendations over the phone.

OTHER BITS AND PIECES...

*Check our website under the **'Plant Care'** link for summer gardening tips.

*Check newly planted trees regularly (at least twice weekly) for water. Adjust guy wires if needed, mulch and use **Superthrive™** if needed for stress.

*Be on the lookout for hummingbirds. They can be shy, so early morning and late evening is the best times to spot them.

*Fresh spearmint makes the best 'mojito' or ice tea, mmm refreshing!



July 2009

PLANT O' THE MONTH

By Brice Creelman

Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum

Viburnum rufidulum

(vi-BURN-um rue-FID-you-lum)

I know I use the word "premium" too much, but Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum is a premium small tree. Back in the day, say 1980 or so, every nursery person talked about where to find this plant or who was growing it or who figured out how to get the seed started. Why has it always been so hard to find? Basically it's close to impossible to propagate; seed needs warm and cold stratifications (you can look it up) sometimes taking two years to sprout. Cuttings are somewhat easier but have a brittle root system, and the small plants have to be handled like your "gee-ma's" old china. That explains why it is so hard to find and why our availability will be limited also. However, it is a gorgeous shrub. We have two planted at Shades of Green and I believe this year they will be old enough to set some seed. If you have one planted that has seeds, I want it. (The seed.) Plant in full sun or part shade. Native to Texas. Usually 20' x 20'. Quite fast-growing and drought tolerant. Named for the rusty brown colored buds in winter. Can be left as a large shrub or pruned up to a small tree. Fragrant, white flowers in spring, purple berries in fall. Loved by birds. Glossy green leaves with excellent fall color. If one was to walk around the woods in this area of Texas they would find some Viburnums. Seed pulp is edible. Tastes like stale raisins, the kind your gee-ma used to bake with. (Maybe that was just mine.) Maintenance-free and pest-free. Truly a...well, you know.

P.S. Paul Cox of the San Antonio Botanical Garden is working with a *Viburnum rufidulum* and *Viburnum obovata* Walter's cross and named the seedling *Viburnum* x "Lord Byron." We have a limited number of these available also. (You can count how many on one hand.) Still trialing it here. Can't tell you much about it, but if you need one, we will work something out.



Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum
Fall Color

Garden Furniture Sale

July 10th, 11th, & 12th ONLY!

50 % off

While supplies last. All sales are final,
no returns or exchanges.

Tyler
CANDLE COMPANY™
"Experience the Difference"

25% Off

CUDDLE

*July's Fragrance
Of the Month*

Share Your Experience

By Rob Wier

Last fall we asked for people to share their gardens and gardening experiences with us. Out of 10,000-plus newsletter readers, we got one response from Jan Gregg of Plano. I'd like to share with you a visit with her and her yard from mid-June.

Let me start with a letter she wrote to the newspaper; it says a lot so well.

Why I Garden
House & Garden
The Dallas Morning News

Why do I garden? Is it an addiction? an obsession? a hobby? a pastime? a necessary part of home ownership? - or, all of these and then some. It must be an addiction for me because that is where I spend all of my time and all my spare cash...I would pack lunch for a week to be able to buy some more flowers! But to me it is more than that; it keeps my body strong (and dirty and sunburned and worn out); it renews my soul, that gets tattered with every day commuting on Central Expressway and being pulled every which way in my job as an Executive Secretary to a Bank President; it calms my emotions and de-stresses my life - no phones, faxes, computers out there! Gardening also gives me a quiet time that enables me to think and meditate and marvel...

If I had my 'druthers' I think I would live out of the city in a beautiful place, but since I can't do that right now, I try and bring the beauty of nature to me in the city. I plant things that attract birds and then hang feeders to feed them; I grow vines and flowering shrubs, tomatoes and cucumbers to share with friends, perennials, annuals, containers...anything and everything. I find more joy 'piddling' around my garden and picking riotous colored bouquets, than I do from any material possession I own. Whatever I do in my garden I am always happy (and most times - dirty and sweaty). I think God made humans to work hard and then appreciate the beautiful world around us - I'm just adding one more little bit of beauty to the rooftops and concrete of North Plano!

Contentedly yours,

Jan Gregg



Jan in her grotto area

Continued on Page 5...

Continued from Page 4...



Garden entrance

No doubt a seat on the back porch by her ‘grotto area’ would be relaxing. I was amazed at her ‘Meyers Lemon’ tree, which produced fifty plus lemons last year. I learned she tucks it under the south facing porch and covers it with a blanket in severe freezes to overwinter it. I’m impressed!

Jan admitted to amending her soil each spring. Her recipe was molasses, compost and humic acid. She uses a claw tool to cultivate it all into the soil. She has been doing that for years and rarely fertilizes, yet her plants seem to be larger than normal. Many of the plantings suffered in the drought of ’06 but came back with the rains of recent years. She has a good mix of natives and well-adapted varieties. Like many of us she’s not afraid to try something new when changing out underperforming plants.

She collects a lot of cut flowers throughout the year and many get dried for her own potpourri. She shared with me her potpourri box of blooms drying. She agreed to do a program on how she makes it, keep posted for details.

I hope the pictures tell most of the story. I’m not a photographer or garden writer, but I enjoy sharing gardening with you and others. One thing is for sure, I’ve learned most of my gardening knowledge from other gardeners.

Jan - thank you for sharing your garden and experiences with us. It was a real treat for myself to spend a morning meeting you and your yard.



Jan's backyard

As I drove down her street I could tell which house was hers. It was not your ordinary front yard, even though she has plans to improve on it. It was a humid morning, so we sat at the breakfast table talking and admiring the view. My eyes were immediately drawn to her “Bottle Tree” as a focal point out back. While we talked, I couldn’t help but notice the constant movement of the various birds.

I could easily relate to her comments on gardening here locally. After embarking on doing it herself, it (gardening) just “gets under your skin and fingernails.” She found gardening a great stress relief both physically and emotionally at the end of the day. Like many of us, she’s had her share of plants that tried to take over and needed to be controlled or eliminated. As we talked, I thumbed through pictures of her home from new and barren to garden beds of various stages. She agreed she has made some poor planting choices and made changes over the years. She admitted her gardens are ever-changing while telling of her plans to adjust the plantings.

We did a walk-through to get up close and personal with the yard. As soon as we stepped onto the back porch I could hear the soothing sound of water running in her fountain.



A view from the breakfast nook

KILLDEER UPDATE

By Rob Wier

On June 2nd the eggs hatched and believe it or not, one day later, the chicks were up and running. Their parents led them off into the taller grass of the pasture. I got this picture before they disappeared.



Killdeer chick

Operation NICE!

Plant of the Season - Summer 2009

Perennial ground cover for shade:

Pigeon-Berry (*Rivina humilis* L.)



Photo: Kathy Saucier

Description: Pigeon-Berry (*Rivina humilis* L.), also called Coralito, or Rouge Plant, is native to the southern US as far north as Oklahoma. It is a small shrubby perennial that can grow from 18 to 34 inches tall in North Texas with smooth (glabrous) leaves that are 1 to 3 inches long. It has an upright habit. Pigeon-Berry is perennial and deciduous, going dormant over the winter in North Texas.

Flowers and Berries: Pigeon-Berry has very small pinkish-white flowers during most of its growing season, that give rise to brilliant red berries. The plant often has berries and flowers at the same time.

Planting sites: Pigeon-Berry can be planted in dappled, part or full shade and in many types of soils.

Watering Instructions: Pigeon-Berry should be watered after planting and again every other week during its first growing season. Once established, Pigeon-Berry will grow with existing rainfall because of its drought tolerance; during extreme drought, it may go dormant, but will re-emerge from the soil after the first rainfall.

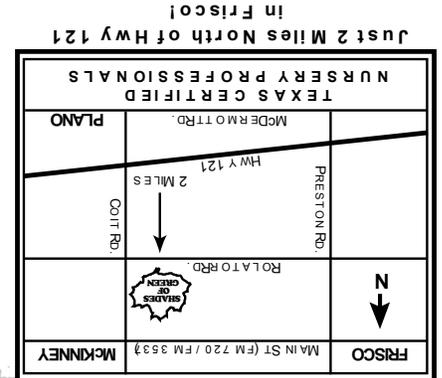
Comments: Pigeon-Berry is an outstanding addition for shady areas that

are not irrigated. Its wavy foliage is very attractive and its red berries are irresistible to birds and will attract a variety of birds to your yard. However, neither the berries nor other parts of this plant are for human consumption. Consider using Pigeon-Berry instead of hosta in shady areas – Pigeon-Berry won't need the supplemental water that hosta must have to survive our North Texas summers.

Look for the NICE! Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery. Thank you for using native plants in your landscapes.

Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas Meetings are the 4th Thursday in Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Sep & Oct, TWU's ACT building 6:30 pm, 2nd floor.

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



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