

MAY 2010



# The GREENLEAF NEWSLETTER



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**SPRING / SUMMER HOURS:**  
MON - SAT 8:00 A.M. TO 6:30 P.M.  
SUN 10:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.



## Plant Trials 2010

By Brice Creelman

We always try to sell plants that are tried and true for us in North Texas. But each year there are so many new and (maybe) improved varieties out there we need help trialing them to see how they hold up. This is especially true for summer blooming perennials. Few plant breeders really understand what a Texas summer really means. So when they say "drought tolerant and loves the heat", we'll see about that!

In spring, everything grows well in Texas. It's just gorgeous all around. But then, June 1<sup>st</sup> comes and night time temperatures 'drop' all the way down to 85°. Many plants can't take a breath. That's why we say native first, then play. These following 'new to us' plants don't really start blooming until May or June when it is so hot that many other varieties just start giving up as soon as they can. These plants should be fine in our summer heat. We picked them because their brothers and sisters do fine here. But know that we are trying them for the first time. As gardeners, we will always push the limits of what will grow here. We love to constantly try new plants. It is our job, and it's just human nature! No heart breaks here, hopefully.

In order of height, but remember a lot of plant tags stretch the truth in this particular area! First up is Coreopsis "Presto": 6" – 8" tall, 12" wide, not native. Anyone who has been lucky with Coreopsis 'Early Sunrise' or 'Jethro Tull' should try 'Presto'. Some like the double yellow flowers on a real compact plant. Give it as much sun as possible. Presto is perfect for the front of a border or in a mixed container. Tag says 'virtually indestructible', we'll see 'bout that!



Coreopsis Presto



Gaillardia "Oranges and Lemons": 24" tall, 24" wide. Peachy orange center with yellow tips. We had this plant two years ago and didn't think much about it but had a few people tell us that it did very well and they wanted to plant more. I know it does well in the heat. But be careful not to water too much thru the summer. Let it dry between watering. Cut spent blooms for flowers lasting through the first frost. Hard to believe but true!

When Gaillardia "Fanfare" came on the scene, it was different, definitely worth trying, and has proved to be a well-behaved, heat tolerant plant. 'Tizzy' takes it one step further by having fluted blooms that change color over the length of the season. Could be a little more yellow, could be a little more red, hopefully not a



lot more dead! No, it will be fine, but different enough to have next year? You be the judge. It won't be back unless you tell us it is worthy with your votes. I gotta stop watching American Idol so much!

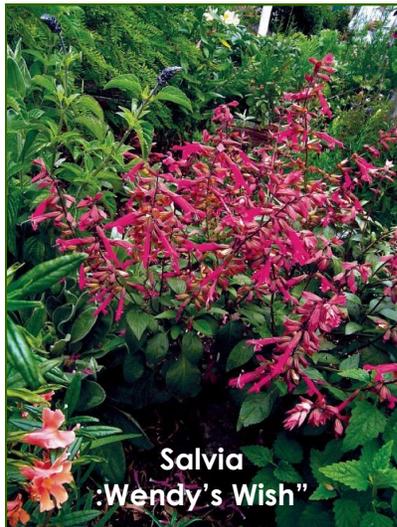


18" to 24" tall, Rudbeckia "Early Bird Gold" (pp #20, 286) is so different it was patented! Let's see, it should be summer and winter hardy, old fashioned "Black eye Susan" flowers, attracts butterflies, and is great for cut flowers. Big buying point, it starts blooming 2 months earlier than "gold strum". Summer and fall blooming "Black eyed Susans"! Ok, I'm buying into that. Let's see if it's true!

issue here is 'weather' you can keep it dry through the heat of summer. Must have well drained soil, which can be a challenge around here. Plant it in a raised bed or enriched or amended soil that drains better than our native clay. Would be excellent in the sandy soil of east Texas, but I am sure it will do well around here as long as it is not overwatered.



Should be kept dry, in case I didn't say it already. Don't over water, likes to be kept dry. I guess that covers it. Did I forget anything? Oh yeah, don't over water....



Salvia "Wendy's Wish", 20" – 40" tall, 30" wide. Hybridized in Wendy's garden in Australia. And it is "Wendy's Wish" that royalty monies will go to her favorite charity. I think we will all be seeing this plant for the first time. Large magenta blooms, dark green foliage with dark maroon stems. Seems like it will be a nice enough plant. Problem (or not?) will be hardiness in winter. Seems like a cross was made with Salvia buchanaris which is hardy in Houston and Austin, but not so much here. If she returns next spring she'll be a keeper, if not, just an expensive annual. It's my wish that it comes back! Keep your plants (and your fingers) crossed for this one!

# TIMELY HINTS

**Plant ...** heat loving seasonal color such as Lantana, Zinnias, Purslane ... we have lots that will work! Perennials ... once again, we've got the Right Plant for the Right Place! Best to wait on B&B (balled and burlapped) trees until the fall. Container grown trees can be planted now, just be prepared to hand water or use "Tregator" bags on them to get them through the summer's heat. Incorporate some Tropical Color out on your patio or pool deck for some extra pizzazz! Tropical Hibiscus, Mandevilla, Ixora, and Duranta, are just a few of the choices you'll find here. Most tropical color blooms on new growth, so be sure to fertilize regularly throughout the summer with "Colorscapes" to enhance blooming.

**Prune ...** just for controlling odd shape growth and to maintain size on plants.

**Fertilize ...** with "Colorscapes" on annuals and perennials to keep them blooming happily. Use "SuperThrive" on newly planted plants or any stressed plants and trees. Use "Gardenville 7-2-2" on lawns again at the end of May or beginning of June.

**Water ...** As needed. Hand water newly planted plants to help them establish before summer's heat kicks in. Remember a lot of our drought-tolerant plants have been grown with regular watering in their pots. You need to hand water them after planting for the first two to three weeks and gradually wean them off frequent watering as they establish. Once established (about a month) they can survive on less water.

Consider converting your beds to drip irrigation and/or soaker hoses to use water more efficiently. Landscape water restrictions are probably here for good so the sooner you adapt the happier you and your plantings will be.

**Pests ...** As we've stated before, it is virtually impossible for us to give accurate pest advice over the phone. **Bring in samples of problems** in a baggie and we'll advise you on choices for control. With insects, you identify the insect first then use an appropriate

control for that bug. With fungal diseases (powdery mildew, black spot, leaf spots) you try to be preventative with controls. Once you see the fungus it is hard to clear up the effected spots, but you can spray to prevent new or other foliage from getting the problem. We carry an "organic" disease control product called "Serenade Garden Disease Control". This product is safe for use on fruits, vegetables, and ornamentals. It can be used around people, pets, and wildlife. You can learn more about it through their website, [www.serenadegarden.com](http://www.serenadegarden.com). As always, we try to give you earth friendly options for pest control.

**Other ...**

**Mulch, Mulch, Mulch.** Keep mulch at a minimum of 2" on all planting bed areas. With summer's heat around the corner it will conserve water and keep your plantings healthier. We have a coupon to help you out!

**Keep up with the veggies you planted.** Have more than you can use? Donate them to your local food pantry.

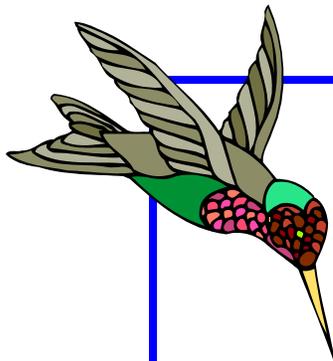
Put out your **Hummingbird feeder!** Better yet, plant the right plants they prefer. We've got a gorgeous selection of plants that attract Hummingbirds and can help you choose. See article on page 4 for ideas and coupon on page 6 for incredible savings!



**DON'T FORGET!**  
*Mother's Day*  
**SUNDAY MAY 9TH!**

We've got containers, flowers, roses, herbs and those cute garden accessories! Make mom proud of how good you turned out!





# AMAZING ARIAL SHOW COMING SOON TO YOUR OWN YARD!



By Rob Wier

Every spring while things are blooming around us, the nature lover in me enjoys the various birds in our area. I'm amazed at the diversity we have both in town and in the surrounding countryside. Gardening is my own way of adding some bio-diversity to our living spaces while also decorating it with plants.

Take hummingbirds for example. Add a few hummingbird plants (just about any type of salvia is a good start) and you'll get hummers. We provided the Collin Country Master Gardeners with some perennials for Myers Park in McKinney last year. It did not take long! A hummingbird showed up while they were still planting the beds.

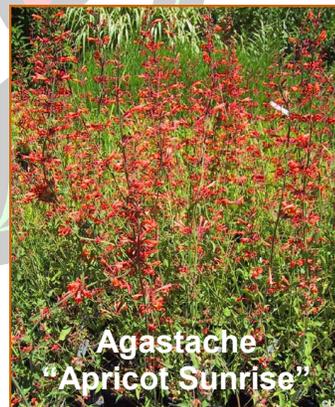
To me, hummers are the closest thing we have to garden fairies. They can be shy and buzz here and there with their brilliant colors. Then in an instant, they become quite defensive of their new found source of nectar when another hummer wants a sample. Hummingbird dive-bomb antics are great fun to watch.

We have them at the nursery, at the farm, and I was glad to see them when we moved into our new home. I planted a cypress vine last year in a post and let it sprawl all over the fence just for them! Its abundant bright red blooms proved irresistible to them.



Pink Skullcap

Here are some more suggestions on plants that hummingbirds love in no particular order. Mexican Flame, Pink Skullcap, Turk's Cap, Agastache, Monarda, Standing Cypress vine, Coral Honeysuckle, Abelia, Vitex,, Yellow Bird of Paradise (this one will drive your neighbors wild too!), Cuphea, and I mentioned any Salvia, tall or small.



Agastache "Apricot Sunrise"



Yellow Bird Of Paradise

I'd suggest adding some within view of your favorite outdoor sitting area. Next, take time to just sit out there in the morning or evening and watch and listen. Hummers can be shy at first but they'll warm up to you.

So for exciting free backyard entertainment this year, add some diversity to your yard and you'll attract birds and butterflies. We've got hundreds of perennials seeking a new home in which to attract our tiny feathered friends here locally.



*McKinney Garden Club*  
*Presents*  
*"Summer Scented Splendors"*  
*the*  
*2010 Garden & Home Tour*

*Evening Garden Party June 11, 7PM-9PM*  
*Tickets \$35 (includes party and tour next day)*

*Garden and Home Tour June 12, 10AM-4PM*  
*Tickets \$15*

**Tickets**  
**Available At**  
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**Happily Supporting**  
**The McKinney Garden Club**  
**2010 Garden & Home Tour**





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Expires May 31, 2010



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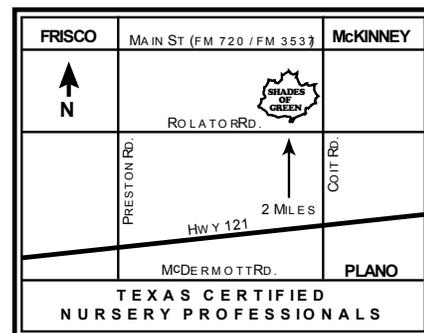
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