

Tough Plants for Tough Weather by Gail Elmore

With all of these high temperatures and the lack of rain – maybe some good can come from it. Over the years I've learned that the plants I grew in other parts of the country either would just not adapt and grow in our conditions or would grow only when I adapted the growing conditions in my yard to suit them. Both circumstances caused those plants to be crossed off my plant list as undesirable. With the extreme growing conditions we're now facing, I can already see that more plants will be crossed off my list by the time this is over.

There are, however, many plants that with regular watering are enduring through it all and even blooming! (Regular watering = approximately 1 inch weekly, depending on outside temperatures.) Lantanas – *L. horrida* and *L. camara* are both blooming and looking great! Crape myrtles are green and blooming, Flame Acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus*) is green and blooming, Standing Cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*) has been in bloom and is about at the end of its growth cycle. The perennial Hibiscus (White Buddie Jewel) is blooming beautiful white blossoms with red centers, rosemary is green and growing, Passion Vine (*Passiflora incarnate*) is green and blooming as is Pigeon Berry (*Rivina humilis*). Standard Nandinas are doing just fine as well as Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*), Butterfly Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*), Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*), Vitex (*Vitex agnus-castus*) and ornamental grasses. And those are only a few! For others, look around your neighborhood, city parks and other parts of town to check out the plants that are looking good. Note whether they are in full sun, shade or part shade.

Someday, we will have rain again and it will be time to replant perennials and shrubs. And what we've learned from this summer's harsh growing conditions will determine our choices for replacing those plants that didn't make it – will we plant another of the same plant that didn't survive? Or will we 'trade up' for one of the survivors?