

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

June 2003

Vol. 3, Iss. 6

At the Meeting:

Speaker - Our speaker this month was Johnny Visor with Nature By Design. Johnny gave a presentation on the ponds his company installs. The slide program would make you want to completely take out any grass you have and turn your yard into a pond and waterfall sanctuary.

2004 State Master Gardener Conference - Next year's Master Gardener Conference will be held in Corpus Christi, and attendance will count as advanced training hours. Please put it on your calendar (May 6-8, 2004) and try to arrange your schedule so that you can attend. We are considering renting a bus for the trip and having an exhibit at the conference.

Vegetable Show - John Alcorn encouraged people to enter their veggies next year. He entered his for the first time this year, even though he didn't know anything about the show. The Peltiers entered their peppers and tomatoes and won a \$25 prize for the largest tomato.

Fall Plant Sale - The Plant Sale date is September 20, so mark your calendars. The Plant Sale Committee met on June 12 to select seeds and plugs. Cindy asked that everyone look through their flowerbeds for baby plants and give them TLC, so they are as beautiful for the fall sale as they were for the spring sale. If you are interested in being on the Plant Sale Committee, contact Cindy Erndt.

At the Demonstration Gardens:

Status - The talks regarding the Demonstration Gardens went well, and it looks like there may be a cooperative agreement between the county and Angleton ISD. Angleton ISD will be using the horse barn to the back of the property to board FFA horses for some students. All together they will use about 10 acres. That leaves about 140 for a new 15,000 sq. ft. building with new classrooms, a bigger auditorium, new kitchen, live TV room, conference rooms, offices, etc. The Parks Department Head is designing a park on 80 to 100 acres. It has not yet been decided whether the Master Gardeners and Paula will be housed in the old building.

CEMAP Plants - Thanks to Phillip Hollenshead, who was kind enough to travel to Dallas for us, the new CEMAP plants have arrived and this is what we have: 12 roses (Clotilde Soupert, Ducher, Georgetown Tea, Lamarque, Louis Philippe, Nacogdoches, New Dawn, Puerto Rico, Reve d'Or, Sarah Jones, Souvenir de St. Anne's, Spice), 7 annuals/perennials (angel's trumpet hybrid, hullabaloo plumbago, sea hibiscus, squirt bush morning glory, Henry Duelberg mealy cup sage, WSF mealy cup sage and Bouncing Bet), 4 shrubs/trees (evergreen sumac, Pirooska crape myrtle, sugar bush, rus pachyrrachis), a lemon fig, a Parson's Potent Chili Pequin Pepper, and 4 chinese trumpet creepers.

New Projects - A new rose bed was started and a space was cleared for some trumpet creeper on the fenceline. Go check it out.

Help is Needed With Mowing - Since the closure of the A&M Experiment Station the grass at the Demonstration Gardens is having to be maintained by the small riding lawn mower we have. We could sure benefit if a Master Gardener with a tractor with mowing attachment were to volunteer to help cut some of it. Of course, we do not intend to keep the entire site mowed, but the area around the old office building, the CEMAP beds and the horse barn is getting a little high in places. If you can help, contact Ray Michalik or Paula Craig.

Work Days - Tuesdays and Fridays from 7:30/8:00 a.m. until noon.

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|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Mark your calendars for these | July 1 | July 4 | July 8 |
| July work days: | July 11 | July 15 | July 18 |
| | July 22 | July 25 | July 29 |

At the Extension Office:

Progress Report - Soil was delivered - 14 yards - and spread out in the beds. Also, we received a bid for the irrigation system for the beds, and Paula is to discuss the details with Commissioner Clawson.

Committee Members - So far the committee members for the Extension Office Gardens is made up of Don Gerard (Chairman), Pat Gerard, Ted Cooper, John Alcorn, and Donie Stowers. If you are interested in being on the committee, contact Don Gerard.

| | |
|---|---|
| Calendar of Events: | |
| <i>*see below for details</i> <i>new items in bold</i> | |
| 2003 Dates: | |
| July 5: | Buchanan's Annual Scratch & Dent Sale |
| July 8: | July Meeting |
| July 7-11: | Master Gardener Specialist Training in Entomology |
| July 10: | The Wonders of Water/Bog Gardens* |
| July 12: | Plumeria Society of America Plant Sale* |
| July 12: | Constructing Nature Ponds And Wetlands* |
| July 19: | Tropical and Ginger Sale* |
| July 20: | Hibiscus Society Show and Sale* |
| July 20: | Native Habitats* |
| July 24: | Composting for Fall/Winter and Next Year* |
| July 26: | Pollinators Exhibition* |
| July 26: | Plant The Fall Vegetable Garden* |
| August 2: | Gorgeous Gingers |
| August 12: | August Meeting |
| August 23: | Tropical Workshop* |
| September 9: | Fall Master Gardener Classes begin |
| September 9: | September Meeting |
| September 20: | Fall Plant Sale |
| September 29- | |
| October 1: | Advanced Hort Food Crops Symposium* |
| October 4-11 | Brazoria County Fair |
| October 14: | October Meeting |
| October 31- | |
| November 2: | Fall Festival of Roses-Antique Rose Emporium |
| November 11: | November Meeting |
| November 18: | Brazoria County Pecan Show |
| December 9: | December Meeting |
| 2004 Dates: | |
| May 6-8: | State Master Gardener Conference |

The Wonders of Water/Bog Gardens - Date: July 10; Time: 6:30-8:00 p.m.; Location: City of Bellaire Recreation Center, 5125 Laurel, Bellaire; Phone: 713-662-8280; Fee: \$20 - Bellaire resident, \$30 - non-resident, class minimum 3.

Plumeria Society of America Plant Sale - Date: July 12; Time: 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.; Location: The Woodlands Recreation Center, 5310 Research Forest Drive; Phone: 936-321-2261.

Constructing Nature Ponds And Wetlands - Date: July 12; Time: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Location: The class (at a real pond and classroom) is at The HISD Marcile Hollingsworth Science Resource Center, 13250 Summit Ridge. Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Offered by Urban Harvest. Our area usually gets sufficient annual rainfall, but unfortunately, it is erratic, falling in large amounts that make gardens unusable. Much of this water then enters the streets taking soil and causing flooding. a few months later, evaporation caused by summer heat together with a lack of rainfall causes drought. This stresses plants and causes hardship for many beneficial insects and birds. Gardeners then start watering and pests proliferate. There is a better way! Build a pond and wetland. Stock it with fish and Gulf Coast wetland plants, and end much of the flood and drought cycle. Summer is often the easiest time to build ponds, so now is the time to learn how. Ron Jones is a wildlife biologist

with the U.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Service. He is a specialist in the creation and restoration of ponds and wetlands. Directions: Summit Ridge runs south off of South Main, just east of Butler Stadium which itself is just east of Hillcroft Ave. Head south off South Main on Summit Ridge and take the first right when you see a building away from the street on the East side of Butler Stadium.

Tropical and Ginger Sale - Date: July 19; Time: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Phone: 281-443-8731. Visit Mercer to find the perfect tropical or ginger for your garden. Many hard-to-find species and varieties will be available. Experts will be on hand to give information and advice.

Hibiscus Society Show and Sale - Date: July 20; Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.; Location: East Harris County Activities Bldg., 7340 Spencer @ Kyle Chapman, Pasadena.

Native Habitats - Date: July 20; Time: 6:30-8:00 p.m.; Location: City of Bellaire Recreation Center, 5125 Laurel, Bellaire; Phone: 713-662-8280; Fee: \$20 - Bellaire resident, \$30 - non-resident, class minimum 3.

Composting for Fall/Winter and Next Year - Date: July 24; Time: 6:30-8:00 p.m.; Location: City of Bellaire Recreation Center, 5125 Laurel, Bellaire; Phone: 713-662-8280; Fee: \$20 - Bellaire resident, \$30 - non-resident, class minimum 3.

Pollinators Exhibition - Date: July 26 through Sept. 21; Location: Cockrell Butterfly Center, Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle; Phone: 713-639-4695.

Plant The Fall Vegetable Garden - Date: July 26; Time: 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane. Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). It is still hot, but experienced gardeners know that a great fall garden starts with preparation and effort now. Do the basics right this fall. Learn how to prepare the soil with compost and organic fertilizer; get the right seeds; transplant your tomatoes and other crops without killing them; grow great beans, corn, cabbage, broccoli, lettuce and other crops. Dr. Bob Randall is author of Year Round Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers for Metro-Houston. Diana Liga is staff horticulturist for Urban Harvest.

Tropical Workshop - Date: August 23; Time: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Phone: 281-443-8731. Learn more about how to grow tropical plants and which are best suited for Houston gardens. A tour of Mercer's tropical garden follows the program. Lunch is provided. Class size is limited to 50. Reservations guaranteed through payment on a first-come, first-served basis. Mercer Society members \$35. Non-members \$45. Make checks payable to The Mercer Society.

Advanced Hort Food Crops Symposium - Date: September 29-October 1; Location: Rudder Tower, Texas A&M University. The Symposium is intended as a medium to provide in-depth information on a range of topics impacting plant growth, yield, quality and profitability of production. Topic discussions will be more basic than those normally presented at typical Extension grower meetings. With the exception of the breakout sessions for fruit, grape and vegetables, the discussion will not be crop specific. Instead, emphasis is placed on common factors influencing plant growth, development and yield. The Symposium will follow a college lecture format with the topics presented by outstanding members of the teaching and extension faculties from Texas A&M University. Fee: Early Registration: \$130 (prior to September 15) Late Registration: \$140; included in fee: Symposium, 1 lunch, 1 dinner, day parking passes (not in the tower parking garage, restricted to a nearby uncovered lot). For further information, contact Paula Craig.

News to Know:

Condolences - We extend our sympathy to Linda Sanders on the loss of her husband, Leonard.

July Meeting Speaker - Come to the July meeting and enjoy our own Marti Graves speak on hibiscus.

Courthouse Rose Bed - The original five member Courthouse Rose Bed committee is down to two members (Pat Cayer and "Swede" Swenson). They are in need of more committee members and also volunteers to help keep it looking good. This is one of the gardens where we actually have a sign "Maintained By Brazoria County Master Gardeners," so our image is out there for everyone to see. Working there does have some drawbacks because parking near the site is at a premium during courthouse hours but is an excellent project for

those who only have weekends available to get their hours in. If you decide to help out, be sure to bring garbage bags and a broom. There is no equipment there.

Farmers Market - Sale of Master Gardener grown (greenhouse) produce at the Farmers Market was good this year. We earned \$33 on the sale of our garden's vegetables the first week. The "market" operated every Saturday morning in June at the gazebo in Angleton.

Congratulations - Sherry Summers has passed her exam and is now, as she says, "a plain old registered EMT" for Danbury. Sherry has been working hard on, so please congratulate her on her accomplishment!

Safety Town - Safety Town is a two-week long summer program for Kindergarten graduates. They learn about safety with insects, snakes, traffic, railroad crossings, stranger danger etc. Last week, Paula Craig, Ellen Pedisch, Ron King and John Alcorn did a program on stinging insects for about 190 kids at Velasco Elementary in Freeport. The volunteers did an excellent job and the kids were great. They will be doing the same at AP Beutel Elementary in Lake Jackson on July 1.

Hours - Don't forget to turn in your hours to Mark Snyder at the next meeting. If you can't make it, you can mail them to him.

Meet a Master Gardener - Wildlife Habitat and Butterfly Lady:

from Viki Brushwood

Barbara Burkhardt was born in Luling (which was said to be named after a cook, Lu Ling, on the South Pacific RR — a little trivia for you). She has been in Lake Jackson since 1960, where she went to work for Dow as a Chemist. She has been married 18 years and has 2 daughters. She is from the MG class of 1996, graduating in '97. Barbara has always loved gardening. Her great aunt had a flower shop and had to grow her own flowers. Barbara's dad was a gardener too! It runs in the family, and by looking at her yard it shows! At 13 years old, Barbara worked for her aunt as a professional florist. When asked why she wanted to become a MG, she said she wanted to "find out correct methods of planting and more about plants in general. But the best thing is learning about new plants!" She also says that gardening has saved the lives of two husbands, 2 kids and numerous co-workers and bosses because she has been able to vent her frustrations on pruning, pulling weeds and digging instead of doing them in! Her backyard is landscaped in the cottage style and is abundant with flowers, shrubs, trellises, and vegetable garden. She has a greenhouse off the back of her garage, which is the home of "Slinky," her resident garter snake. She knows he is there but every now and then gives her a quite a start. Barbara's yard was recognized by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Texas in 1997, and was awarded as a Wildscapes Backyard Wildlife Habitat. All of her work has certainly paid off as her yard is a host for many butterflies and birds. You can really tell she has really put a lot of herself into the yard. It is beautiful!

On the Herbal Side - Ginseng:

from DiAnna Munson

There are three forms of recognized Ginsengs - Korean Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), Siberian Ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*), and American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*).

Siberian Ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) has been studied by a Soviet researcher, Israel Brekhman, for the past 30 years in U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. Brekhman wrote ginseng "possesses a remarkable wide range of therapeutic activities - protecting the body against stress, radiation, and various chemical toxins, and increasing general resistance." American scientists often view Soviet research with suspicion. But some U.S. researchers agree ginseng is an adaptogen, a technical term for what traditional herbalists call a tonic. Norman R. Farnsworth, Ph.D., research professor of Pharmacognosy at the University of Illinois School of Pharmacy, had described the herb's many effects in the journal *Economic and Medicinal Plant Research*. He lists: Siberian Ginseng counteracts fatigue without caffeine and improves physical stamina. Russian, Chinese, and Korean Olympic athletes use ginseng in their training and before events, and some American athletes have begun using the herb as well; it counteracts the damage caused by physical and emotional stress; it prevents the depletion of stress-fighting hormones in the adrenal gland; and it enhances memory. The Siberian plant is not true ginseng, but it contains similar active chemicals, and studies show it has similar effects. As a result, all three are grouped together as "ginseng," and used interchangeably only in the West.

The history of Ginsengs comes from the ancient Chinese who called the plant "man root," *jen shen*, which became "ginseng." The first great Chinese herbal, the *Pen Tsao Ching (The Classic of Herbs)*, compiled by the

mythological emperor/sage Shen Nung. Shen Nung recommended it for “enlightening the mind and increasing wisdom,” and noted that “continuous use leads to longevity.” In China, ginseng’s fancied resemblance to the human form led to the belief that it was a whole-body tonic, particularly for the elderly. It was widely used to treat infirmities of old age; lethargy, impotence, arthritis, senility, menopausal complaints, and loss of sexual interest. Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese still consider ginseng the best health promoter, though their calling it the “root of immortality” stretches things a bit.

As the popularity of ginseng spread throughout ancient Asia, demand soared and rapacious collection decimated the supply. Chinese ginseng became increasingly rare-and more valuable than gold. Unscrupulous merchants sold other roots as ginseng, and adulteration is still a problem today.

Ginseng owes its healing value to several chemicals called ginsenosides. They are not fully understood, and their effects can be downright confusing. For example, some ginsenosides stimulate the central nervous system; others depress it. Some raise blood pressure; others reduce it. These observations need to be clarified with additional research. But researchers have learned a great deal about this herb and its many effects. Identified vitamin and mineral content of ginseng shows that it is rich in the B-complex vitamins, and high in selenium. Moderate amounts of vitamins A, C, E, and G. Small amounts of phosphorus, iron, copper, manganese, cobalt, aluminum, sulphur silicon, choline, biotin; and has shown to increase synthesis of nuclear RNA.

Ginseng appears to stimulate the immune system of both animals and humans. It revs up the white blood cells (macrophages and natural killer cells) that devour disease-causing microorganisms. Ginseng also spurs production of interferon, the body’s own virus-fighting chemical, and antibodies, which fight bacterial and viral infections. Russian researchers gave 1,500 factory workers 4 milligrams of ginseng a day. Compared with workers who did not receive the herb, the ginseng users lost significantly fewer work days due to colds, flu, tonsillitis, bronchitis, and sinus infections. Russian cosmonauts take ginseng to increase stamina and prevent illness in outer space. American researchers have confirmed ginseng’s antiviral and immune-boosting effects. In one study, ginseng eliminated chronic herpes sores, the results of herpes virus infection. After the herb treatment ended, the sores reappeared.

Ginseng reduces cholesterol, according to several American studies. It also increases good cholesterol (high-density lipoproteins, or HDLs). As good cholesterol increases, heart attack risk drops. If the arteries that supply blood to the heart have been narrowed by cholesterol deposits (atherosclerotic plaques) and blood clots form in the, the results is a heart attack. Ginseng has an anti-clotting effect, which reduces the risk of these clots - and heart attack.

Ginseng reduces blood sugar levels, suggesting value in managing diabetes. Diabetes is a serious condition requiring professional treatment. Diabetics might try the herb in consultation with their physicians.

It protects the liver from the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol, and other toxic substances. In one experiment, researchers gave what should have been fatal doses of various narcotics to experimental animals pretreated with ginseng extract. The animals survived. And in a pilot human study, ginseng improved liver function in 24 elderly people suffering from cirrhosis, liver damage from alcohol.

It can minimize cell damage from radiation. In two studies, experimental animals were injected with various protective agents, then subjected to doses of radiation similar to those used in cancer radiation therapy. Ginseng provided the best protection against damage to healthy cells, suggestion value during cancer radiation therapy.

Because of ginseng’s rarity, read the labels carefully. Look for products identified by species made with whole, unprocessed, six-year-old roots. Ginseng tastes sweetish and slightly aromatic. To take advantage of ginseng’s many healing benefits, use root powder, teas, capsules, or tablets, all of which are available at health food stores and through herb outlets. Recommendation ranges from the equivalent of about ½ to 1 teaspoon per day. Use ginseng for five days in a row and off for two. This way the herb will continually benefit the body. If used continually, a tolerance will occur and the benefits will begin to diminish with time.

Garden Talk:

from Ray Michalik

These are my trials, tribulations and observations of growing tomatoes this year. Some of them were about the same as last year, and some will probably be the same next year.

I've been composting/mulching the garden stop for many years, so I don't have raised beds. I planted six varieties of tomatoes this year: Celebrity, Goliath, Homestead, 4th of July, Health Kick and International Delicious. I bought the first four varieties from our Master Gardeners. I can't recall exactly when I planted these in the garden, but it was well before the last good cold snap we had. Many of the gardeners lost their plants due to the heavy frost. For whatever reason, my plants didn't miss a beat. The plants bloomed and set very early, when I thought it was way too cold, but they held. These blooms were very close to the soil.

Most of my plants were very tall, 16"-18." These I laid horizontally and left the 4"-6" plants upright. I gave each a shot of slow release fertilizer a few inches below the root system. I also sprinkled a little Sevin dust around the base of the stem to deter the dreaded cut worm. As the plants started growing, I put 10" diameter, 8" tall, containers around the plants and filled them with compost/mulch. This will help in supporting the plant and retain moisture and deter grass. As the plants continued to grow, I put my cages 5' tall, 22"/24" in diameter, around the plants. I then put compost/mulch on the inside of the cages. This also helps with the grass and moisture. It works very well for me. As the plants grew, I cut all the suckers that appeared. Some were missed as the foliage thickened. As the plants grew out of the top of the cage, I pinched the lead growth, in hopes of energy going toward producing larger tomatoes. I think the two above-mentioned items helped my production as I have nice-sized tomatoes, 10"-12" above my cages, which I don't remember having last year. In the beginning, I watered every 4th day, and as the drought set in, I increased it to every 3rd day. In hindsight, I should have stuck with every 4th day, as some of my tomatoes started cracking on top. With the soil well-composted, which retains moisture, my plants were over-watered, I think. I experienced no blossom end rot.

As the tomatoes started ripening and the days' heat increased, the ever opportunistic stink bugs started arriving. First, just a few. And then these suckers went and told their family and friends. In just a short while, I had a heard of these guys feasting on my beautiful tomatoes. These same tomatoes that I babied, nurtured and talked to for the past several weeks. Was I upset? Was I upset!

With dusting I hadn't had much luck. And they would scurry off when they saw this large hand reaching for them to pinch their head off. So one morning - no, no - one evening, I got myself an adult beverage and sat on the front porch and began thinking about this problem. I told myself, "Self, there has to be a remedy." Well, the longer I thought about it, the more liquid I ingested which meant the clearer I could think - right? I finally came up with this brilliant idea of using a vacuum cleaner. Boy what an idea! I scurried off to the ever ready Wal-Mart, and sure enough, there was this approximately 5 lb., portable, \$20 vacuum cleaner with 3' flex hose, a strap, so you can hang it around your neck, and a small nozzle - just waiting for me. Guess what - it works like a champ for me. The first 2-3 times I went hunting, I sucked up a bunch of stink bugs. Each time thereafter, there seemed to be fewer and fewer. I know there are probably some bugs in the foliage hiding, just laughing at me, but I think I'm gaining on them. I know that my neighbors are laughing at me more than the bugs, but I hope to have some nice looking tomatoes late in the season, and they'll have two ugly ones.

I also think it's very helpful if you plant your garden where when you step out your back door you are more or less forced to look/see it. You've heard the old expression "out of sight out of mind." It applies. I know everyone can't do this, though. I think it's also very helpful if you give these plants daily TLC. They will respond.

Well, that's my 25¢ worth of info. If you try some of this stuff, and it doesn't work - go see and talk to a pro. Now, I've got to go hunting with my vacuum cleaner and then do some canning.

Happy Gardening - Ray

In the Garden:

Cocoa Bean Mulch -

As spring approaches, people will start to tend their lawns and gardens. Many will consider using cocoa bean mulch as a fertilizer. Made from spent cocoa beans used in chocolate production, cocoa bean mulch is organic, deters slugs and snails, and gives a garden an appealing chocolate smell. However, it also attracts dogs, who can easily be poisoned by eating the mulch.

Cocoa beans contain the stimulants caffeine and theobromine. Dogs are highly sensitive to these chemicals, called methylxanthines. In dogs, low doses of methylxanthine can cause mild gastrointestinal upset (vomiting, diarrhea, and/or abdominal pain); higher doses can cause rapid heart rate, muscle tremors, seizures, and death.

Eaten by a 50-pound dog, about 2 ounces of cocoa bean mulch may cause gastrointestinal upset; about 4.5 ounces, increased heart rate; about 5.3 ounces, seizures; and over 9 ounces, death. (In contrast, a 50-pound dog can eat up to about 7.5 ounces of milk chocolate without gastrointestinal upset and up to about a pound of milk chocolate without increased heart rate.)

If you suspect that your dog has eaten cocoa bean mulch, immediately contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (1-888-426-4435). Treatment will depend on how much cocoa bean mulch your dog has eaten, when the mulch was eaten, and whether your dog is sick. Recommended care may include placing your dog under veterinary observation, inducing vomiting, and/or controlling a rapid heart beat or seizures.

Source: http://www.asPCA.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=12729&security=2143&news_iv_ctrl=1101 (6-29-03)

Home Remedies -

from Pat Cayer

Organic recipe to keep your lawn green:

2 cups water
1 cup ammonia
1 cup Epsom salt
1 cup beer.....drink remaining
mix..... use in hose sprayer

Organic recipe for the bugs will not to harm critters:

1 cup mouth wash antiseptic kind
1 cup dish liquid...cheapest available
1 cup tobacco tea - filter pack in panty hose - soak in water
1 cup water
mix.... use in hose sprayer

Plant Feature - Jewel of Opar:

Donie sent this out in an email: There was a "no-name" plant at our spring plant sale that I believe Marti Graves brought. I recently found it in a seed/plant catalog. Its name is Jewel of Opar (*Talinum paniculatum*). Grows to 3' tall, full sun, drought tolerant and likes well draining soil. Tiny starry pink flowers turn to red to burgundy seed capsules - the jewels. The catalog, don't remember which one, says it is an annual that will reseed itself. I recognized the plant from its picture and I think its name is so appropriate as the seed capsules really do look like little jewels on the plant.

So, I decided the feature plant this month should be Jewel of Opar. I will admit - I had a hard time finding much information on it.

Talinums have elegant 5-petalled flowers in clear colors, but those are ephemeral. Their big contribution to a garden is their fleshy, waxy-looking, often blue-green leaves, which make mounds or mats and last from spring till frost. *Talinum paniculatum* (Jacquin) Gaertner, commonly called Jewels of Opar; Panicked fameflower; Tu ren shen (Chinese). Hot pink flowers bloom in a delicate, open panicle above a rosette of large, glaucous leaves. The flowers open in July-August and are gradually replaced by long-lasting seed pods like flattened globes that ripen from amber to cinnabar-red. This delightful plant is native to the central and southern United States, and to Central America. In China, *Talinum paniculatum* is cultivated as a medicinal herb. In Southeast Asia, it is used as a spice.

Source: <http://www.hillkeep.ca/per%20talinum.htm> (7-1-03)

Family: Portulacaceae
Genus: *Talinum* (TAL-ih-num)
Species: *paniculatum* (pan-ick-yoo-LAY-tum)
Category: Annuals/Tropicals/Tender Perennials
Height: 18-24 in. (45-60 cm)
Spacing: 18-24 in. (45-60 cm)

Hardiness: USDA Zone 9a (-3.9° C to -6.6° C)
USDA Zone 9b (-1.2° C to -3.8° C)
USDA Zone 10a (1.6° C to -1.1° C)
USDA Zone 10b (4.4° C to 1.7° C)

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Toxicity: None known.

Bloom Color: Pink

Bloom Time: Late Spring/Early Summer/Mid Summer/ Late Summer/Early Fall

Foliage: Smooth-Textured

Other details:

May be a noxious weed or invasive

Drought-tolerant; suitable for xeriscaping

Self-sows freely; deadhead if you do not want volunteer seedlings next season

Soil pH requirements: 6.1 to 6.5 (mildly acidic)

Propagation Methods:

From seed; sow indoors before last frost

From seed; direct sow after last frost

Source: <http://plantsdatabase.com/go/777/> (7-1-03)

Happy Birthday!

July Birthdays - Ruth Tvedt - July 22

Larry Lewis - July 23

Lillie Lickliger - July 25

Gary Gardner - July 26

If you haven't already given Viki your birthday please do so.

Happy Gardening!!!

Newsletter Editor: Anna Gawlik

The Brazoria County Master Gardener Association shall not be affiliated with any commercial enterprise for the profit of an individual member or group of members. No member shall use their position with the Association to further the manufacture, distribution, promotion or sale of any material, product or service in which they have either a direct or indirect financial interest.



Paula Craig
CEA - Horticulture
Brazoria County