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Fashionable Gardens

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Non-gardeners are often surprised to learn that some plants are considered in fashion, while others are definitely out. Roses? Out, but some are predicting a resurgence. Marigolds? Back in after years of being out. Forsythia? Out, for now. Succulents? In. Very in. And the list goes on. Hard to keep up with, isn't it?

How can a plant be in or out of fashion? One reason may be the plant has become too common. Most people want to show their individuality, and if a plant is seen everywhere, people tend to want something different.

Another reason may be perception. As gardeners learn more, they may want to grow plants that are a bit more challenging. All it may take for the plant to come back into fashion in the gardening world is to see the plant used in a new way. This happened to me and the plant commonly known as purple heart (*Tradescantia pallida*). Having seen this plant struggling in neglected planters, I wanted something different in my garden. Until I saw it being used in a magazine photo and realized it would be the perfect plant for a touch of color in my own garden.

Designers and hybridizers change fashions. Designers made grasses fashionable, while hybridizers have changed some plantings to become more desirable. For instance, glossy abelias are large plants with green foliage and small white flowers. Hybridizers bred them to become more compact, sporting various shades of variegated foliage. Abelias are now very fashionable.

Sometimes gardeners learn a plant has become invasive. In this instance, it is a good thing for the plant to be considered out of fashion.

Whenever you hear a gardener say they would never grow a particular plant, question them. Do they have a reason or are they just bending to the trends? Trends change. Grow what you like. You just may start a new fashion revolution.

Ask a Master Gardener about their favorite fashionable plant at the Henderson County Master Gardener booth at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center Outdoor Expo on Saturday, September 21, 5550 F.M. 2495, Athens. Soil sample kits, gardening guides, and other information will be available at the booth.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com, or visit txmq.org/hendersonmq