

Easy Gardens for South Florida

By Pamela Crawford

24 Sample Pages

Scroll down to see pages.

STEVE HUDDLESTON AND PAMELA CRAWFORD



EASY GARDENS FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS



Front Cover



Simple

- ✧ Blue ribbon plants
- ✧ Only touch them once a year



Low Water

- ✧ Plants that thrive with just rainwater
- ✧ The latest, water-saving techniques



Colorful

- ✧ Easy plants that are full of color
- ✧ Colorful plants that require less than 5 minutes of care per year!

Texas Gardening Has Never Been So Easy!

The best annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees for the tough, Texas environment.

Learn about plants that:

- ✧ Breeze through 100 degree plus temperatures
- ✧ Take both droughts and deluges
- ✧ Attract birds, butterflies, and hummingbirds
- ✧ Need no toxic chemicals
- ✧ Require minimal time from you!

Plus...

- ✧ 50 budget gardening tips
- ✧ Hundreds of easy color combinations!
- ✧ Lots of great Texas natives

Geographic Areas Covered in Book



Back Cover



COLOR GARDEN
PUBLISHING





Rose, ‘Knock Out’ (EarthKind™ Rose)

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Deciduous (loses its leaves in winter) or semi-evergreen shrub.

Average Size: Easily maintained at 4 to 6 feet tall by 4 to 6 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Fast

Leaf: New growth is maroon; mature leaves are green. Oval-shaped with serrated edges.

Flower: Singles have 5 to 7 overlapping petals. Doubles have 20 to 30 petals. All have yellow stamens. Flower is 3 to 3 1/2 inches wide.

Origin: Roses are originally native to China. This one was hybridized in the U.S.

Spacing: About 6 to 8 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).



‘Double Knock Out’ rose

This shrub blooms the longest with the least amount of care of any shrub in this book. Good color from spring until hard frost. Probably the best choice of roses for beginning gardeners. Produces the most color of any of the EarthKind™ roses. Rates a blue ribbon* because of its ease of care.



If you have ever been surprised by a plant - this is it! While many in the past considered roses too much work, the ‘Knock Out’ roses have changed all the rules. They are low maintenance, carefree shrubs that require no deadheading and little spraying, fertilizing, or trimming. And, they bloom continuously from spring until the first heavy frost. They are planted on the ramp in the rose garden of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, where they command center stage and offer spectacular color all season long. The only limitation is that they do not produce a long-stemmed rose suitable for cutting.

Color Period: Blooms heavily in spring, sporadically through summer, and heavily again in fall. This shrub blooms heavier and longer than any other shrub in this book.

Buying Tips: Garden centers carry many varieties that are clearly tagged. They are also available online. Three great online suppliers are www.chambleerose.com, www.antiqueroseemporium.com, and www.JacksonandPerkins.com. Look for roses grown on their own roots and not grafted.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.*



Attracts Butterflies

31

Avg. Weeks of Color



1



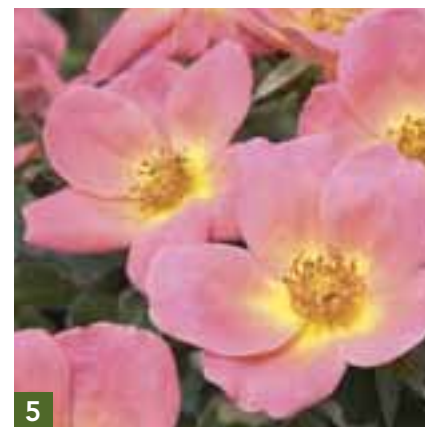
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6



7

1. ‘Knock Out’ rose
2. ‘Double Knock Out’ rose
3. ‘Pink Knock Out’ rose
4. ‘Pink Double Knock Out’ rose
5. ‘Rainbow Knock Out’ rose
6. ‘Blushing Knock Out’ rose
7. ‘Sunny Knock Out’ rose

At the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, the single red variety (simply called ‘Knock Out’ rose) is the most vigorous bloomer, with ‘Rainbow’ the least prolific.

Botanical Name: *Rosa* spp.
Family: Rosaceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun, at least 8 hours per day.

Water: Low after establishment, provided it is well mulched. Likes water every week or two during the growing season, depending on its environment. See pages 28 to 33 for more information.

Soil: For the garden, plant in any fertile, well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Use only good-quality potting mix for containers. See pages 22 to 25 for specific instructions on soil preparation.

Hardiness: Zones 5 to 9

Propagation: Prohibited; plants are currently patented.

Pest Problems: Black spot and powdery mildew are two fungal diseases that produce symptoms on leaves. EarthKind™ roses will grow and bloom in spite of these diseases and without being sprayed. Thrips, extremely small insects barely visible to the naked eye, attack buds and flowers, causing them not to open or to be disfigured if they do open. They are a minor problem, however, and we don’t spray for them.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Roses from containers can be planted at any time. Fall is best because they establish more easily in cooler weather, but you are more likely to find them at your garden center in early spring and summer.



Viburnum, Chinese Snowball

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Deciduous shrub (loses its leaves in winter).

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 8 to 12 feet tall by 6 to 8 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Fast

Leaf: Deep green, whitish on underside, oval shaped; 4 inches long by 2 inches wide.

Flower: A round ball, 6 to 8 inches across, composed of florets less than 1 inch across.

Origin: China

Spacing: About 8 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Blossoms do not hold up when dried for arrangements. Oc-



'Kern's Pink' viburnum has blossoms tinged with pink. Its blooms are smaller than those of the Chinese snowball.

This plant puts on a breathtaking show when it comes into bloom in early spring. A tough shrub and easily maintained, rating a blue ribbon.*



Chinese snowball viburnum and purple pansies in spring

The giant snowballs that cover this shrub cause a "jaw dropping" experience for all those who see it in early spring. At the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, there is one inside the entry courtyard of the Japanese garden. When it blooms, it stops traffic! This plant needs a lot of space, so be sure to keep that in mind when placing it in your landscape.

Color Period: Blooms for two to three weeks from late March to mid-April.

Buying Tips: There is more than one plant called a snowball bush. For the very large, softball-sized blossoms shown here, be sure you have *Viburnum macrocephalum* (which means big head). Other, smaller blooming shrubs that are available include the Japanese snowballs whose blooms are half the size: 'Kern's Pink' viburnum (pictured, opposite),

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.*



Attracts Birds



Avg. Weeks of Color

Companions: You will love the effect of early-blooming flowers planted in front of it. And when it finishes blooming, it is a great backdrop for tall perennials and annuals.

Try this viburnum with azaleas and forsythia, as shown below.



Chinese snowball viburnum with some companions

Azalea (above, left) blooms in early spring, usually at the same time as the viburnum. Since the azalea is smaller (four to five feet tall), plant it in front of the viburnum. Both will grow in light shade.

Forsythia (above, right) is an early spring-flowering, deciduous shrub that can grow as tall and wide as six feet in full sun to partial shade. Its gracefully arching branches produce a profusion of bright, golden yellow flowers before the leaves emerge. Plant forsythia in front of the taller Chinese snowball for a spectacular display of spring flowers.

Be sure to place the viburnum where it gets at least half a day's sun. Ideal light for this group of plants would be on the east side of your house or in an area that gets morning sun and afternoon shade. The viburnum and forsythia can take full sun, but the azalea will burn up with that much

Botanical Name: *Viburnum macrocephalum*

Family: Caprifoliaceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun to partial shade. Blooms best and has most attractive leaf color in full sun. Very heat tolerant.

Water: Low after establishment. Likes water every week or two during the growing season, depending on its environment. See pages 28 to 33 for more information.

Soil: For the garden, plant in any fertile, well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Use only good-quality potting mix for containers. See pages 22 to 25 for specific instructions on soil preparation.

Hardiness: Zones 6 to 9

Propagation: Cuttings

Pest Problems: Rare

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Viburnum from containers can be planted at any time. Fall is best because they establish more easily in cooler weather, but you are more likely to find them at your garden center in early spring, when they are blooming.

Trimming: Annual pruning right after bloom time in late April to early May.

Fertilization: Medium. Fertilize at planting time and each spring with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.



Texas Sage, Cenizo

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Evergreen shrub.

Average Size: 3 to 5 feet tall, occasionally to 8 feet tall; 4 to 6 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Moderate

Leaf: Silvery-gray to greenish, lightly fuzzy to the touch; 1 inch long.

Flower: Bell-shaped, 1 inch in diameter; blooms periodically over several months, often after summer showers, which is why another common name is the barometer bush.

Origin: Texas

Spacing: 4 to 6 feet on center, depending on cultivar.

Cautions: Highly resistant to deer



1



2

1. Texas sage not flowering
2. Texas sage 'Compactum'

Great silver leaves on a medium sized shrub. Texas native that rates a blue ribbon* because of its ease of care. Lives on rain-water.



Texas sage makes a good screen or hedge and adds a southwestern/native Texas look to the landscape. It rewards the gardener with a gorgeous display of flowers at different times during the summer and early fall. Native to west Texas, this is a shrub that prefers low humidity and takes full sun and the Texas heat. It is easy to grow as long as it has excellent drainage. It is susceptible to cotton root rot, a soil fungus common in alkaline soils and for which there is no chemical control.

Regional Differences: Performs well in zone eight of north central Texas.

Color Period: Texas sage offers leaf color all year, which is the primary reason for using it. It also blooms on and off from summer to early fall for a total of about eight weeks. You never know exactly when this intermittent bloomer will produce its beautiful purple flowers, although it often blooms after a summer or fall rain.

Buying Tips: Several cultivars exist that differ slightly in size, leaf color, and flower color. 'Compactum' (three to feet tall and wide), 'Green Cloud' (four to six feet tall with green leaves), and 'Lynn's Everblooming' (four to five feet tall and wide with green foliage and lavender-blue flowers). If you are really particular about the flower color, purchase Texas

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Attracts Butterflies



Resists Deer



Lives on Rain Water *



Avg. Weeks of Color



Texas Native

Companions: The silvery-gray foliage of Texas sage makes this shrub a beautiful background or companion shrub for plants with blue, purple, red, or pink flowers. Great companions include 'Henry Duelberg' salvia, fall aster, 'Raspberry' autumn sage, summer phlox, purple heart, and



Texas sage with some companions

'Raspberry' Autumn Sage (above, left) is a nearly evergreen perennial that grows two and a half feet to three feet tall and blooms from April to November. 'Raspberry' has vibrant, fuchsia-colored flowers that really stand out against the silvery-gray foliage of Texas sage. Also a west Texas native, autumn sage is a drought-tolerant plant and looks great in both native as well as more traditional landscapes. Use autumn sage in front of the taller-growing Texas sage.

Fall Aster (above, right) is a perennial that grows about two and one half feet tall by three feet wide. It is a green mound all summer long, but come mid October, it absolutely covers itself with lavender, daisy-like flowers that are beautiful against the foliage of Texas sage. Use fall aster as a bor-

**Lives on rainwater alone in all but the most extreme situations*

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun to light shade

Water: Very low after establishment. Lives on rainwater alone, without supplemental water, in all but the most extreme conditions. See pages 28 to 33 for more information.

Soil: Any fertile, well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Requires good drainage. See pages 22 to 25 for instructions.

Hardiness: Zones 8 to 9

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest Problems: Susceptible to cotton root rot.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Anytime from a container, although fall is best because plants establish more easily in cooler weather.

Trimming: As necessary to keep compact.

Fertilization: Low. Fertilize at planting time with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics. In the years after planting, fertilization needs vary, based on the nutrients in your soil. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.



Lantana

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Tropical perennial used primarily as an annual in Texas, other than *Lantana horrida*, which is a perennial.

Average Size: Varies by variety, from 1 to 5 feet high by 1 1/2 to 4 feet wide. *Lantana montevidensis*, (purple) is 12 inches high by 3 to 4 feet wide. 'New Gold' is 2 feet tall by 3 to 4 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Fast

Leaf: Medium green and pointed. About 1 inch long by 1/2 inch wide.

Flower: Clusters of tiny flowers forming larger flowers of about 1 inch across.

Lifespan: 7 months for annual lantana

Origin: Tropical America

Spacing: About 18 to 24 inches on center (measure from the center of each plant). Closer in containers.

Cautions: Poisonous to humans, dogs, and livestock. Can cause serious illness or death. Almost never damaged by deer.

Colors: White, red, pink, yellow, purple, or orange.



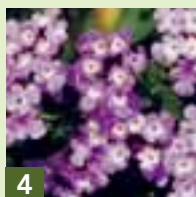
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1. 'Landmark Rose Glow' lantana
2. 'Landmark White' lantana
3. *Lantana horrida*, a perennial in Texas
4. *Lantana montevidensis*

If you could choose just one annual, make it lantana. Unstoppable garden color from early summer to fall. This heat-loving, blue ribbon plant* blooms like crazy and requires very little maintenance.



'New Gold' is a low growing lantana that is covered with blooms all season long.

Lantanas are extremely useful plants in Texas gardens. They tolerate heat and drought and bloom prolifically all summer. Out of 21 varieties of lantana trialed at the Dallas Arboretum in 2007, 'Luscious Tropical Fruit' emerged as a winner of the 2007 North Texas Winner's Circle Awards. Lantana 'New Gold' has been designated as a Texas Superstar™ plant by the Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service. It tolerates heat and drought and produces an abundance of golden-yellow flowers all summer long. Since 'New Gold' doesn't produce seed, all of its energy goes into profuse flower production, as shown in the photo above. Also a Texas Superstar™ plant, purple trailing lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*) produces purple flowers and demonstrates excellent heat, wind, and drought tolerance. A native Texas lantana, *Lantana horrida*, is a perennial that produces orange and yellow flowers on plants that reach four to five feet tall and bloom from May through November.

Color Period: From April until the first frost, non stop

Buying Tips: Remember that, while most lantanas bloom from spring until the first frost, purple lantanas peak in spring and fall, blooming a bit less in the heat of summer. Also, since the height of lantana varies from one to five feet, check the plant tag at your garden center to be sure the selection fits your space.

*Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.



Attracts Butterflies



Attracts Hummingbirds



Resists Deer



Avg. Weeks of Color

Botanical Name: *Lantana camara*

Family: Verbenaceae

Companions: Lantanas are excellent color accents for perennial gardens. Most perennials don't bloom anywhere near as long as lantana does, so adding lantana ensures constant color in your bed. And, if you use perennials that also attract butterflies, like the ones shown below, you will attract clouds of them!



Lantana 'Patriot Firewagon' with some companion plants

Yarrow (above, left) is an easy perennial companion for lantana. Yellow yarrow lights up a garden for about two to three months in summer and contrasts wonderfully with this 'Patriot Firewagon' lantana. Since yarrow grows to about 18 inches tall, place it so it shows up with the size of lantana you choose.

'Purple Emperor' Butterfly Bush (above, center) may be added for a dramatic color accent with the yarrow and lantana. Most of the newer, compact butterfly bushes, like this 'Purple Emperor,' grow to about four feet tall, so put it in the center or back of the bed surrounded by the yarrow and lantana. It, too, blooms for about two months in summer.

'Big Sky After Midnight' Coneflower (above, right) is a great, pinkish-purple color that contrasts well with the other flowers in this grouping. Since it grows to about 18 inches tall, place it so that it shows well with the lantana. This coneflower blooms at about the same time as the yarrow and butterfly bush.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun

Water: Low. Ideal watering is once or twice a week after the initial establishment period (pages 28 to 29). Tolerates water up to three times per week at the most. Requires more water when grown in containers.

Soil: For the garden, plant in any fertile, well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Use only good-quality potting mix for containers.

Hardiness: Lantana is used primarily as an annual in Texas (zones 6 to 8). Grows as a short-term perennial in zones 9 to 10, occasionally in zone 8. 'New Gold' lantana has often overwintered at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden.

Propagation: Cuttings

Pest Problems: If brown spots appear on the leaves, it is a fungus. These spots are routine, especially in the summer. If possible, cut back on water. Spray only if they become quite severe.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Spring and summer.

Trimming: Accept lantana as an informal plant, if you are looking for low maintenance. We never trimmed ours in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden.

Fertilization: Fertilize at planting time with a timed-release product. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.

BUDGET GARDENING TIP

Lantana is sometimes twice as expensive as other annuals. However, it usually cover 4 to 6 times as much space, so it is much cheaper because you will need fewer to fill your garden.



Scaevola, Fan Flower

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Tropical perennial used as an annual in Texas.

Average Size: About 6 inches tall by 12 to 18 inches wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Medium green, oblong and pointed.

Flower: Small flowers shaped like a fan.

Lifespan: 7 months

Origin: Australia

Spacing: About 12 inches on center (measure from the center of each plant). Closer in containers.

Cautions: Rabbits love them! Sometimes damaged by deer.

Colors: Blue or white



1. *Scaevola* 'Whirlwind Blue'
2. *Scaevola* 'Whirlwind White'

Excellent annual for Texas gardens. Blooms all season with very little care. Butterflies love it! Plant it properly in spring, and don't touch it (other than water) all summer long. Rates a blue ribbon* for its high performance and ease of care.



Scaevola thrives in hot, humid climates, where it produces fan-shaped flowers that bloom all season long. It blooms all spring, summer, and fall, never taking a break. Scaevola is a bit pickier about performing well when planted in the ground, however. If it is a year of average or below average rainfall (20 to 33 inches), scaevola does incredibly well. It cannot take either too much rain (60 inches plus) or poor drainage when planted in the ground, though. Scaevola also takes heat beautifully. It performs especially well in containers. Scaevola 'New Wonder' has been designated a Texas Superstar™ plant by the Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service.

However, it takes longer to get going than most other annuals. Don't expect it to grow and thrive until it has been planted for about three weeks. We have noticed it going into a wilt shortly after planting, even if the soil is moist. Don't give it extra water (unless it stays in a wilt for more than a day or two), and it will perk up shortly.

Color Period: Spring through fall, continuously

Buying Tips: We have never had any trouble with scaevola. All cultivars have excelled in our gardens.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.*



Attracts Butterflies



Attracts Hummingbirds

31

Avg. Weeks of Color

Botanical Name: *Scaevola aemula*

Family: Goodeniaceae

Companions: Blue scaevola needs bright companions if it is to be viewed from a distance. Yellow (like melampodium and lantana) and red flowers (like 'Tidal Wave Cherry' petunias) are ideal companions for distance viewing.

If you are planting scaevola in a location for up-close viewing, try using other shapes of blue or lavender flowers accented with colorful foliage, as shown below.



Blue scaevola and some companion plants

'Cora Deep Lavender' Vinca (above, left) makes an excellent companion for scaevola and creates a cool, soothing color scheme. These non-stop, all-summer-long blooming annuals get 14 to 16 inches tall and should be placed behind the shorter scaevola.

'Dark Star' Coleus (above, center) can be added as well. It matures at 15 inches tall and can be placed on either side of the vinca or alone behind the scaevola.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Sun to light shade

Water: Medium. Once or twice a week after establishment. Requires more water in containers.

Soil: For the garden, plant in any fertile, well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Use only good-quality potting mix for containers. See pages 22 to 25 for specific instructions on soil preparation.

Hardiness: Winter hardy in zones 10 through 11.

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest Problems: No serious insect or disease problems.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Spring or summer

Trimming: None required

Fertilization: Fertilize at planting time with a timed-release product. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.



Our favorite scaevola container combines it with salvia and creeping jenny. Easy-to-plant container and column are from www.kinsmangarden.com.



Agastache, Hummingbird Mint

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Deciduous perennial (dies back in winter).

Average Size: 36 inches tall and 18 inches wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Slightly-fuzzy, green leaves have a minty, licorice scent when crushed.

Flower: Tall, upright spikes studied with numerous tiny flowers that attract bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies.

Origin: Native species, such as *A. foeniculum*, crossed with others.

Spacing: About 18 inches on center (measure from the center of each plant). In 3 years, a single plant will form a 2 foot wide clump.

Cautions: Attracts bees, but almost never eaten by deer.

Flower Colors: Lavender-blue, pink, coral.



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1. *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune'
2. *Agastache* 'Tutti-Frutti'
3. *Agastache* 'Acapulco'

Agastache is a great butterfly and hummingbird plant, offering both ease of care and drought tolerance. Removal of dead flowers is not needed to keep it blooming for a full three months. Rates a blue ribbon* because it gives a lot for just a little bit of your time.



Agastache 'Tutti-Frutti' with caladiums and purple fountain grass

New varieties of agastache are definitely worthy of space in your perennial garden. 'Blue Fortune' is but one of several new hybrids making its way into nurseries. The Fort Worth Botanic Garden has been pleased with the performance of 'Blue Fortune' in its perennial trial garden.

Expect a modest bloom the first year, with a much more robust clump and heavier set of flowers in subsequent seasons.

Color Period: Late spring to late fall, blooming constantly

Buying Tips: Lots of new agastaches are constantly appearing. Some have the reputation for getting a bit rangy. We have only tried the three pictured (left) and have been happy with all of them.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.*



Attracts Butterflies



Attracts Hummingbirds



Resists Deer



Avg. Weeks of Color

Botanical Name: *Agastache* spp.

Family: Lamiaceae

Companions: Agastache likes plenty of sun and rather dry conditions, so it is best teamed up with other dry garden standouts, such as black-eyed Susans or ornamental grasses. 'Blue Fortune' looks great with mound-forming yellow flowers, such as coreopsis, or you can pair it with drought-tolerant annuals like cuphea, gomphrena, or 'Profusion' zinnia.

'Blue Fortune' grows three feet tall when it's in full bloom, so it has no trouble rising up behind a foreground planting of coreopsis. Because of its upright form and bottlebrush-shaped flower spikes, agastache is ideal for mixing with mounding plants that have daisy-shaped blossoms.

Since 'Blue Fortune' has such a long bloom period, pair it with some other Texas stars for a bed that blooms all season long, as shown below.



Agastache 'Blue Fortune' and some companions for easy color layers

Black-eyed Susans (above, left) are one of the best perennials to use with 'Blue Fortune' because they both bloom for most of the summer, like full sun, and have different shaped flowers. The blue and yellow colors contrast well, too. Since black-eyed Susans grow to about 18 inches tall, plant them in front of the 'Blue Fortune.'

'Knock Out' Roses (above, right) bloom spring, summer, and fall, so they will keep the bed in color for the entire growing season. These tough roses crave sun, like both the black-eyed Susans and agastaches. They grow taller than the 'Blue Fortune,' so plant them as the tallest plant in the bed.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun

Water: Medium after establishment. Likes water once or twice a week during the growing season.

Soil: For the garden, plant in any fertile, well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Use only good-quality potting mix for containers.

Hardiness: Zones 6 to 10

Propagation: Division in spring. Better yet, root 4-inch-long stem tip cuttings taken in early summer. Hybrid plants do not breed true from seed.

Pest Problems: Rare

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Agastache from containers can be planted anytime. Fall is best because they establish easier in cooler weather, but you are more likely to find them at your garden center in spring or summer when they are blooming. Expect a modest bloom the first year, with a much more robust clump and heavier set of flowers in subsequent seasons.

Trimming: Agastaches don't need much trimming when they are blooming. Removing dead flowers is not necessary, but the plants might need some neatening up at some point in the summer. Cut back the dead foliage (to the ground) in late fall or early winter after it freezes.

Fertilization: Medium. Fertilize at planting time and annually with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics.

Division: Divide in spring or fall, but fall is better. Division is not necessary to keep the plant healthy, so do it every 3 to 5 years, only if you want more plants.



Amaryllis, Hardy Red

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Deciduous (dies back in winter) perennial bulb.

Average Size: 2 feet tall and equally as wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Medium green, smooth, strap-shaped, up to 2 feet long.

Flower: Trumpet-shaped, 4 to 5 inches wide, in clusters on 2 foot stems.

Origin: South America

Spacing: 1 foot on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: None known. Moderately deer resistant.

Colors: Flowers are bright red with a white stripe down the center of each petal.



Spectacular, spring-flowering bulb well-suited to the clay soils of north central Texas. This is a cold-hardy amaryllis that returns year after year to produce a myriad of flowers each spring. It is definitely a blue ribbon plant* because of its adaptability to our growing conditions, its low maintenance, and its show-stopping blooms.



Hardy red amaryllis is an easy-to-grow, heirloom bulb that makes a striking statement in the spring garden with its abundance of bright red, trumpet-shaped flowers. Plant this bulb in just about any kind of garden soil - even unamended clay - and leave it alone. Within a few years, the original bulbs multiply and form a large clump. Leaves appear after the flowers bloom in the spring and persist through the summer. Partial shade is best for the foliage of the hardy red amaryllis, although the plant will grow in full sun if watered well during the summer.

Hardy red amaryllis is the earliest of all amaryllis hybrids. It was produced by an English watchmaker named Johnson somewhere between 1799 and 1812. The flowers of this hybrid may not be as large as the flowers of the modern Dutch hybrids, but it produces more flowers per stem. It also lives longer in the garden than the modern hybrids because most of them are bred for growing in pots.

Regional Differences: A zone eight plant

Color Period: Blooms continuously for about three weeks beginning in early April.

Buying Tips: This plant is occasionally available in some garden centers through online bulb companies that specialize in heirloom plants. The Fort Worth Botanic Garden often offers this plant at its spring and fall plant sales.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.*

3

Avg. Weeks of Color



Lives on Rain Water*

Botanical Name: *Hippeastrum x johnsonii*

Family: Amaryllidaceae

Companions: Hardy, red amaryllis combines very well with other spring-flowering plants, such as irises and columbines. Alternate clumps of those plants for a spectacular effect, as shown below.



Amaryllis and some companions

'Texas Gold' Columbine (above, top) blooms at the same time as amaryllis and offers contrast in flower color, form of plant, and in leaf shape. Since the two plants grow about the same height (two feet), plant them in clumps beside each other.

Irises (above, bottom) bloom about the same time as the amaryllis and offer contrast in flower shape and color. Blue irises would contrast well with the yellow columbine and the red amaryllis. Irises grow in a wide range of sizes, so arrange the three plants based on the height of the iris. If your iris grows about two feet tall, it works well to alternate clumps in between the columbine and amaryllis. All three plants grow well in light shade.

**Lives on rainwater alone in all but the most extreme situations.*

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: Very low after establishment. Lives on rainwater alone, without supplemental water, in all but the most extreme conditions. See pages 28 to 33 for more information.

Soil: Any good, garden soil. Amaryllis does very well in the heavy clay soils of north central Texas.

Hardiness: Zones 7 through 10

Propagation: Division of clumps

Pest Problems: No serious insect or disease problems.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Amaryllis from containers can be planted at any time. Fall is best because they establish more easily in cooler weather, but you are more likely to find them at your garden center in early spring when they are blooming.

Planting Depth: Cover with soil to the neck of the bulb.

Trimming: Remove old, dead leaves at the end of the summer.

Fertilization: Medium. Fertilize at planting time and annually with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.

Division: Clumps may be divided in the fall after the leaves have died down; reset in the ground with the necks of the bulbs left slightly above ground level.



Coreopsis, Threadleaf

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Deciduous perennial (dies back in winter).

Average Size: 18 to 24 inches tall by about 18 inches wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Narrow, thread-like, green leaves.

Flower: Flat, daisy-like blossoms with a tuft of yellow in the centers; 1 to 2 inches in diameter.

Origin: Southeastern U.S.

Spacing: About 18 inches on center (measure from the center of each plant). Closer in containers.

Cautions: Attracts bees but seldom damaged by deer.

Colors: Flowers are yellow



These easy, sun-loving flowers rebloom repeatedly all summer. The 'Moonbeam' variety won the Perennial Plant Association's 1992 Perennial Plant of the Year award. Soft texture for the perennial garden. Blooms for months with very little care. Rates a blue ribbon* because of its ease of care.



Coreopsis is one of the ten best-selling perennials. There are many different types, but most of our experience has been with threadleaf coreopsis, which differs from the rest because of its thin, needle-like leaves. Threadleaf coreopsis has the reputation for being one of the toughest of all of them and blooms for quite a while with no attention at all other than weekly watering. Many of the other kinds of coreopsis require frequent deadheading (removal of dead flowers) to keep blooming. Two of the best performers are 'Moonbeam,' (which is the best-known) and 'Zagreb' (which is sure to please). Both 'Moonbeam' and 'Zagreb' are featured in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden perennial trial garden.

Color Period: May or June through July, with a final flush of flowers in the fall. The best varieties bloom for three months or more.

Buying Tips: Threadleaf coreopsis doesn't look great in a nursery pot, as it is a bit thin and floppy when in a container. It does beautifully after it has been planted for just a short time.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.*



Attracts Butterflies

14

Avg. Weeks of Color

Companions: Grow coreopsis with other perennials that take baking sun such as agastache and scabiosa. Since coreopsis is so fine-textured, the larger agastache and scabiosa flowers show up well with it.

The combination below shows coreopsis with 'Big Sky Twilight' coneflower and 'Homestead Purple' verbena. The three fit together well as three layers of different heights. And, with internet shopping, you can now find all these plants, even if you can't locate them at your local garden center.



Coreopsis with some companions that form easy color layers

'Big Sky Twilight' Coneflower (above, top) is an excellent choice as a background for threadleaf coreopsis. The textures of the plants are quite different, they both like sun, and they share the same bloom period. This coneflower grows to about 30 inches tall. Place the 18 inch coreopsis in front of it.

'Homestead Purple' Verbena (above, bottom) blooms for the entire warm season, from spring until fall. And, like the coreopsis, it loves sun. Use this low-growing (about a foot tall) verbena as a front border for the coneflowers and the coreopsis. This hot combo will stop traffic in your neighborhood!

Botanical Name: *Coreopsis verticillata*

Family: Asteraceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun, at least 6 hours per day.

Water: Low after establishment. Likes water every week or two during the growing season, depending on its environment. See pages 28 to 33 for more information.

Soil: Very well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Coreopsis does very well in heavy clay soil as long as it has been amended.

Hardiness: Zones 3 to 9

Propagation: Division

Pest Problems: Rare, but can develop fungus problems if overwatered.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Coreopsis from containers can be planted anytime. Fall is best because they establish more easily in cooler weather, but you are more likely to find them at your garden center in early spring, when they are blooming.

Trimming: If the plants become unsightly in late summer, cut them back to 8 to 10 inches to encourage a rebound of healthy, new growth. Cut back the dead foliage (to the ground) after it freezes in late fall or early winter.

Fertilization: Low. Fertilize at planting time with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics. In the years after planting, fertilization needs vary, based on the nutrients in your soil. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.

Division: Divide every 2 to 5 years in fall or spring to maintain the vigor of the plants. The plants divided from the edges will be the healthiest. Discard the center if it appears weak.



Lilies, Spider or Hurricane

3

Avg. Weeks of Color

Botanical Name: *Lycoris radiata*

Family: Amaryllidaceae

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Perennial bulb; winter foliage dies back in summer, which is the reverse of most bulbs. The plant flowers with no leaves. The flowers disappear by the time new leaves form.

Average Size: About 18 inches tall in bloom; 8 to 10 inches wide during foliar growth phase.

Growth Rate: Fast

Leaf: Dark green with a silver stripe down the center. Leaves are narrow, like grass. Foliage emerges in the fall and persists until spring.

Flower: Clusters of 4 or more florets atop bare stems; spider lilies have long stamens, with florets resembling those of azalea.

Origin: China and Japan

Spacing: About 7 to 9 inches on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Bulbs are mildly toxic if eaten. Somewhat resistant to deer.

Colors: Flowers are red

ALTERNATE SELECTIONS

If you have a partially shaded, white garden, seek out the white flowering spider lily (*Lycoris x albiflora*), the perfect companion for 'Monroe White' liriop. Yellow-flowered species (*Lycoris aurea*) are available, but they are often not as dependable as red spider lilies.

Sudden bursts of color in late summer or early fall that provide strong and dramatic accents. Short bloom period but incredibly easy to grow. Survives both droughts and floods. Easily rates a blue ribbon.*



Like their cousins, the naked lady lilies (pages 142-143), spider lilies spend most of the summer hibernating until late August or early September. At that time, their bare stems pop out of the ground with clusters of predominately red flowers. They are often called hurricane lilies because their blooms often follow on the heels of tropical storms. They develop thin, grass-like leaves in fall that persist until spring. Although the bloom time is short, lasting less than three weeks, these bulbs endear themselves by persisting for decades with no care and providing lovely color when little else is in bloom. The slope behind the floral clock at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden features a beautiful display of red spider lilies every fall. These bulbs multiply rapidly.

Color Period: Late August to early October, depending on rainfall. Blooms last about two weeks. Spider lilies frequently don't bloom until their second year in the ground.

Buying Tips: If you can't find these plants at your local garden center, they are readily available online or from catalog companies.

Companions: Spider lilies steal the show when they are in bloom, so they are definitely a focal point flower. They work well interspersed among clumps of daylilies, which hide the failing foliage from view in early summer. These bulbs need a period of summer dryness, so avoid combining them with plants that need abundant water.

For major color impact, combine spider lilies with flowers of contrasting colors, like blue and yellow. Try layering this lily with blue perennial salvia and golden shrimp plants for a high-impact accent area, as shown below.



Spider lilies with companion plants that form easy layers of color

Black and Blue Salvia (above, left) grows to about four feet tall and dependably blooms at the same time as spider lilies. This salvia also grows well in light shade, an ideal light condition for spider lilies. Use this salvia as the tallest layer in this grouping.

Golden Shrimp Plant (above, right) is an annual that is always blooming in the late summer to early fall period, when the spider lily flowers. Use it as the mid layer in this grouping, with the spider lilies as the border.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Sun in winter; partial shade in summer.

Water: Plants need water only in spring, their active period of growth. A dry period in summer, followed by drenching rain, triggers flowering. Keeping them moist during the flowering period keeps them in bloom longer.

Soil: Any fertile, well-drained soil that stays dry in the summer.

Hardiness: Zones 7 to 10; survives in zone 7 if planted in a protected location and mulched.

Propagation: Division

Pest Problems: Rare

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Fall. Bulbs may not bloom their first year.

Planting Depth: 4 to 6 inches

Trimming: When the leaves turn brown in early summer, trim them off with a sharp knife or pruning shears if you find them unsightly.

Fertilization: Medium. Fertilize at planting time and each spring with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.

Division: Dig, divide, and replant in early summer to increase your supply, but no more often than every 4 or 5 years. Newly-planted bulbs often take 2 years to bloom.

*Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.



Althea, Rose of Sharon

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Deciduous shrub (loses its leaves in winter).

Average Size: Most altheas grow quite tall, 10 to 12 feet by 6 to 8 feet wide. New dwarfs grow only about 3 feet tall.

Growth Rate: Fast

Leaf: Green, 3-lobed leaves, about 3 inches long.

Flower: About 4 inches across with prominent stamens.

Origin: China and India

Spacing: About 6 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant). Closer for the dwarfs.

Cautions: Seedlings from the older varieties are a nuisance. Occasionally damaged by deer.

Colors: Flowers are white, purple, violet, pink, blue, including many bicolors.



1. 'Blue Chiffon' althea
2. 'Little Kim' althea
3. 'Rose Satin' althea

Exotic, tropical-looking flowers from early summer to fall. Heat tolerant and easy to grow. Old ones seed enough to be a nuisance, but new ones don't. Easily rates a blue ribbon* because of high performance with very little care.



'White Chiffon' althea

Thomas Jefferson planted seeds of this shrub at Monticello in 1794, and it went on to become a popular garden plant. Old varieties tend to release too many seeds and become weedy, and their flowers are often small and not very showy. Newer altheas have much more to offer, including larger flowers and a longer period of bloom, and several varieties produce very few seeds. If you are looking for low maintenance, be sure you choose a sterile one!

Color Period: Older varieties bloom in midsummer, with some flowering continuing until fall. Newer varieties begin blooming in June and continue to set buds through October.

Buying Tips: We have done well with the Goddess series, as well as with 'Chiffon' and 'Satin.' 'Little Kim' is a tiny dwarf we have tried for only one season with great success.

*Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 12. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 22 to 39.

20

Avg. Weeks of Color

Companions: Altheas go well with many summer-blooming perennials and shrubs that like sun, including agastache and black-eyed Susans.

For a long-blooming shrub garden, combine althea with 'Knock Out' roses and shrub crapemyrtle, as shown below.



Althea and some companions

'Sunny Knock Out' Rose (above, top) has a more compact growth habit than the original 'Knock Out,' growing to about four feet tall. The flowers start out yellow and fade to cream. Both colors complement the althea. This rose blooms on and off from spring until fall, so it should bloom with the althea. Use the althea as the tallest plant of this grouping, with the rose in front of it.

'Cherry Dazzle' Crapemyrtle (above, bottom) blooms from June through September. Their bloom period coincides with althea's summer color period. Since dwarf crapemyrtles grow from three to five feet tall, plant them beside the roses. All three of these plants prefer sun.

Botanical Name: *Hibiscus syriacus*

Family: Malvaceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun, at least 6 hours per day.

Water: Low after establishment. Likes water every week or two during the growing season, depending on its environment. See pages 28 to 33 for more information.

Soil: For the garden, plant in any fertile, well-drained soil that has been enriched with organic matter. Use only good-quality potting mix for containers. See pages 22 to 25 for specific instructions on soil preparation.

Hardiness: Zones 4 to 9

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest Problems: Rare. White flies, aphids, and Japanese beetles occasionally.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Althea from containers can be planted at any time. Fall is best because they establish more easily in cooler weather.

Trimming: Don't need annual pruning unless you are trying to maintain it at a smaller-than-mature size. Any pruning should be done in early spring, before new growth starts.

Fertilization: Low. Fertilize at planting time with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics. In the years after planting, fertilization needs vary, based on the nutrients in your soil. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.

ALTERNATE SELECTIONS

See hibiscus on page 134 if you want the showy flowers of althea on a smaller plant that dies back to the ground in winter.



Oaks, Bur and Lacey

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Deciduous tree (loses its leaves in the winter).

Average Size: Bur oak grows 60 to 80 feet tall and 60 to 80 feet wide. Lacey oak grows up to 35 feet tall by 30 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Slow to moderate for bur oak; moderate for lacey oak.

Wind Tolerance: Medium

Leaf: Bur oak has leaves 6 to 10 inches long, 4 to 5 inches wide; 5 to 9 lobes separated by deep cuts; dark green above, pale green underneath. Lacey oak has leathery, oblong-shaped leaves with a few shallow lobes.

Flower: On the bur oak, inconspicuous male and female flowers appear on the same tree in the spring. The lacey oak has yellow, drooping flower spikes in the spring that are rather inconspicuous.

Origin: Bur oak is native from the eastern U.S. to Texas. Lacey oak is native to central Texas.

Spacing: For the bur oak, 60 to 80 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant). For lacey oak, 20 to 30 feet on center.

Cautions: Bur oak acorns and leaves have low toxicity if eaten, and the tree is sensitive to root zone disturbance caused by construction. Deer will eat lacey oak foliage.

Colors: Bur oak has dark green leaves during summer, dull yellow-brown leaves in fall. Lacey oak leaves are peach in the spring, blue-green in summer, and peach in the fall.

Bur oak forms a huge, majestic tree that likes plenty of room. Tough and durable. Tolerant of poor soils and low rainfall. Bur oak definitely rates a blue ribbon* because of its low maintenance.



Above, mature bur oak; below, large acorns that grow as large as golf balls

Bur oak is a native tree, adapts to a wide range of soils, and tolerates drought. It is definitely not for small yards. This slow growing, long-lived oak rewards the gardener with large, attractive leaves and plenty of shade when it reaches its mature size. Bur oak produces very large acorns, almost golf ball size. The acorn sits in a deep cup that has coarse scales and a fringed margin. It is resistant to oak wilt.

Color Period: Yellow-brown fall color for two to three weeks.

Buying Tips: Available in nurseries and garden centers.



Attracts Butterflies*



Attracts Birds



Lives on Rain Water*



Texas Native



Avg. Weeks of Color

Botanical Name: *Quercus macrocarpa*
Quercus laceyi

Family: Fagaceae

Lacey oak's most appealing feature is its foliage. The leaves emerge a peach color in spring, turn a beautiful blue-green in summer, and turn peach again in the fall. Lacey oak deserves a blue ribbon* because it tolerates alkaline soil, high heat, and drought.



Above, mature lacey oak; below, leaves of the lacey oak

Lacey oak is an attractive small to medium-sized tree that is ideal for small yards. Branches are erect and spreading, and the tree can have single or multiple trunks. The more trunks the tree has, the smaller it is. This is a good tree for a wildscape because it provides food and cover for small mammals and birds. It is native to limestone or rocky soils, but it will tolerate a wide range of soils as long as they are well drained.

Color Period: Leaves assume a different color in spring, summer, and fall.

Buying Tips: Available in nurseries and garden centers, especially those that sell native plants.



GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun for bur oak; light shade to full sun for lacey oak.

Water: Very low after establishment. Lives on rainwater alone, without supplemental water, in all but the most extreme conditions. See pages 28 to 33 for more information.

Soil: Grows in unimproved soil, including clay, provided the soil has not been compacted. Compaction occurs most commonly from heavy equipment working around a house under construction. See page 27 for instructions on tree planting.

Hardiness: Zones 3 to 9 for bur oak; zones 8 to 9 for lacey oak.

Propagation: Fresh acorns

Pest Problems: No serious insect or disease problems.

PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

When to Plant: Bur and lacey oaks from containers can be planted at any time. Fall is best because they establish more easily in cooler weather. Likewise, fall is the best time for balled-and-burlapped oaks.

Trimming: Trim only to shape trees when young or to raise the canopy. Raising the canopy means removing branches from the trunk that are closest to the ground.

Fertilization: Low. Fertilize at planting time with a timed-release product. Less fertilizer is needed with the application of more organics. In the years after planting, fertilization needs vary, based on the nutrients in your soil. See pages 36 to 39 for more instructions.