

The Garden Path

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PLANT OF THE MONTH By Marty Finkel

August brings a couple of alliums for the perennial beds/borders, *A.* 'Sugar Melt', and *A. tuberosum*



Allium 'Sugar Melt'



Allium tuberosum

Photos courtesy of the JCRA

'Sugar Melt' allium has light pink flowers on 16" stems above 6-inch tall foliage and blooms July to September. It is one of the best non-aggressive alliums for rock gardens, border fronts, herb gardens, and edger for gardens or paths. It was hybridized by Mark McDonough using *A. nutans* and *A. senescens* and exhibits the best traits of both parents. The plant makes an 8" wide circular clump of narrow, deer resistant leaves. It will grow in full sun but appreciates light afternoon shade in hotter areas. Plant in well-drained soil – will tolerate dry conditions once established. Divide clumps in the spring or the fall. It is a low maintenance plant that attracts pollinators and is deer resistant.

Garlic chives, *Allium tuberosum*, is a different story. While its August to September blooming creamy white flowers are beautiful in an herb, vegetable, or cottage garden, it MUST be deadheaded if the plants are to be kept under control. It can spread aggressively by seeding and by tuberous rootstocks. It grows 12 to 18" tall in a 1 to 2' wide clump in full sun to part shade in dry to medium soil. It has up to 12" long chive-like gray-green leaves that can be used in cooking the way regular chives are used. The flowers have a mild, violet-like fragrance, and all parts of the plant smell oniony when bruised or cut. It, too, is deer resistant.

CHECKLIST By Mary Jane Bosworth

This is the time of the year that I get tired of gardening and gardening gets tired of me. It's too hot for me to be out there but also very stressful for my gardens and potted plants.

- ✓ Container plants are under the most stress. Move them to a more shaded area and keep them well watered.
- ✓ If rainfall is infrequent, thoroughly soak shrubs and flowers to encourage deep root growth.

- ✓ Make sure your mulch is sufficient for shrubs and young trees. Three to four inches of pine straw, shredded oak leaves, pine bark, hardwood mulch or leaf mold will conserve water, prevent weed growth and help grow healthy plants.
- ✓ August is a good time to transplant iris and daylilies since they will have time to become established before winter.
- ✓ Resist the urge to trim bushes now as they will develop new shoots that will not be able to withstand the winter cold. It's better to save this job until February.
- ✓ Stake up tall plants so they don't tumble during high winds or a thunderstorm.
- ✓ You can still take semi-hardwood cuttings of you favorite shrub or bush.

GARDENING ON THE WEB By Carl Shafer

Today our featured web site is "Extension Gardener Handbook". (<http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook>) This is an updated web version of the printed handbook that has been used to train Master Gardeners for many years. It is now available to everyone. Because it is on the web, there are now many live links to additional information. As you will notice, several of the chapters are not finished yet. "Lawns" and "Vegetable Gardening" are finished. Check the recommended tasks for your lawn whether you have a warm-season or cool-season lawn. As the spring-summer garden winds down, it is time to begin the fall garden. Be sure to check the other chapters and the Appendixes. This should be enough to keep you busy until next time.

THE TYROS' CORNER By Eileen Novak

It's officially summer. How can I tell? Well to start, it's hot. Not that we didn't have days in the spring when the temps jumped into the 90's, but back then, it cooled off at night. This morning when I checked the weather, the temp before breakfast was a balmy 78 degrees. THAT's how I know it's summer.

It's a good time for gardeners – the fruits of all our labor are ripening, and gracing our tables; the flowers we love are perfuming the air, feeding pollinators and adding beauty to the landscape.

What's not to like about summer? The HEAT, that's what! I can go outside and within 10 minutes the sheen of perspiration wreathes my face. Having spent a 30-year career working in air conditioned offices, it's a real shock to my system to find out after all these years that I actually DO sweat. And let me tell you, my body is making up for lost time. I used to kid my husband because he came in looking like he had stood under the sprinkler. I would tell him: "Go back out and do some more work – I can see a dry patch on your pant leg" Now I'm bending over, pulling weeds and sweat is running down my face, dripping off my nose and onto the plants below.

And do you know what the problem is? Global Warming!!!

And do you know who's to blame???. The Cicadas!!! You might not have realized that the droning noise they make is caused by them rubbing their wings or legs together. That rubbing causes noise and friction. That friction, when they rub body parts together makes heat as well as noise. So the next time you go out and are picking fruit or beans or weeds and hear those cicadas start their mournful drone, you will know for certain that is why it feels 10 degrees hotter!

As beginning gardeners you might not know how to cope with this heat. I take a bottle of ice cold water out with me when I weed or harvest, it is covered in sweat faster than I am and heats up to ambient temperature before I need my first sip. Yuck! Warm enough to make tea! But I interviewed several veteran gardeners and have a solution for you. My favorite farmer at the market told me she puts her water bottles in a small cooler to insulate them and keep them at a reasonable drinking temperature! What a nice use for the lunch cooler I used to take to work (and haven't gotten around to donating to the church sale yet).

She also told me that she goes out early and only works till 11 or so and then does inside chores in the brutal heat of the afternoon.

So beginners, please profit from the wisdom of the seasoned gardeners. If you don't you'll pass out from the heat and collapse on your tomatoes. Think of how much of the crop you'd lose, not to mention that you'd have to tie them all up again.

GARDENING FOR THE BIRDS AND THE BEES... PLUS BUTTERFLIES AND ME By Edna Gaston

Just read an interesting article from Horticulture magazine about three ways to provide an appealing habitat for hummingbirds. First, and most obvious, is “plant what they like” which means select tubular flowers and check lists of plants that attract hummers.

Second is very interesting and part of it is a little surprising – “protect them”. What’s surprising to me is this year I have seen them actually perch near our feeders. This article says that is important. These resting stations need to be out of harm’s way which includes Tweetie Pie’s “puddy cat”. The article suggests leaving some leafless branches near the feeders. Good excuse not to be too neat.

Lastly “encourage spiders” as hummingbirds use spider webs for their nests. This was quite enlightening. Always fun to find new ways to assist our feathered friends.

So let your garden go to the birds, have fun

INTERESTING TID-BITS By Marty Finkel

Hanging Baskets:

During the middle of summer, hanging baskets of flowering plants often start to look bedraggled. Here are a few tidbits to help refresh them and keep them flourishing:

Deadhead and cut back – At least once a week, deadhead to keep plants from going to seed and to encourage constant blooming. Some annual blooms, such as geraniums and petunias, need to be removed as soon as they start to wilt. To keep trailing plants from looking leggy, cut back every third stem when they start looking stretched. Plants such as fan flower (*Scaevola*), Summer Wave trailing torenias, million bells (*Calibrachoa*), and Wave petunias are examples that will benefit from this treatment.

Fertilize – Most hanging baskets use soilless potting mix because it is light weight and drains well, but it usually contains few nutrients. Use a balanced soluble fertilizer once every two weeks.

Water – Since the plants are growing in a tight space in the soilless mix, you probably will have to water once a day in hot weather. If the soil dries out so much that it pulls away from the sides, soak the entire basket in a tub of water for ½ hour so the mix will become hydrated. If you can’t soak it, water it thoroughly every two hours until the soil is drenched.

Pests and diseases – Check the baskets every other day and remove any leaves that show mold, mildew, or leaf spots remembering that disease can spread fast in these densely planted environments. To keep pests at bay, handpick the bugs, or remove the affected plant parts, or treat with a lower-toxicity labeled insecticide such as insecticidal soap, neem oil, or pyrethrin. Even these organically approved pesticides can harm bees, so apply when foraging pollinators are not active.

Replace plants – As the plants in the baskets pass their prime, replace them. If pansies and ivy were planted early in the spring, replace the pansies with verbena in June, then chrysanthemums in September.

Lost and Found Tomato:

Up until the 1960’s, the ‘Rutgers’ tomato was a preferred choice of commercial growers for canning, juice, and fresh market and was also used in breeding and selection for improved varieties world-wide. The reason is that it was a genuine horticultural improvement over other commercial varieties in many ways: pleasing flavor including juice, more uniform internal red color ripening from the center outward, freedom from fruit cracking, vigorous foliage, firm thick fleshy fruit walls (by today’s definition of tomato firmness it would be considered extremely soft). This wonderful tomato was the result of a cross made in 1928 by the Campbell’s Soup Company based in Camden, NJ between ‘Marglobe’ and ‘JTD’ (named for Dr. John T. Dorrance, a company chemist and inventor of condensed soup). After six years of field tests, its Rutgers breeder, Lyman Schermerhorn released it in 1934 as ‘Rutgers,’ an improved general use tomato for processing well as fresh market. This was in the period between WW I and WW II, during the expansion of truck farming and canning – 36,000+ acres were grown in NJ. In the 1960’s when commercial harvesting came into use, ‘Rutgers’ did not tolerate the rough machine handling so fell out of favor except with home gardeners where it remained popular. Rutgers U. did not keep original seed at their NJAES, and through the years the original Rutgers tomato line was lost. All the seeds sold today are derivative selections, and could even be different cultivars.

Enter Dr. Orton of Rutgers U. and Pete Nitzsche, agricultural resource management agent of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Morris County, who started a quest for the old original Rutgers tomato strain. In 2011, Campbell's Soup Co. provided them with Marglobe and JTD seed, and the possibility of recreating the cross of the original 'Rutgers' (or close to it) became a reality. From these crosses, plants that most resembled the documented attributes of the original tomato were selected, and from these further field trials were run in 2013. In 2015, as a result of taste tests among varieties selected for color, shape, disease resistance, and ship-ability, a winner was selected that November. It was named '**Rutgers 250**' in honor of the University's 250th anniversary. Information for this tidbit was from Rutgers New Jersey Agriculture Experiment Station new releases and from njfarmfresh@njaes.rutgers.edu

HERB OF THE MONTH By Edna Gaston

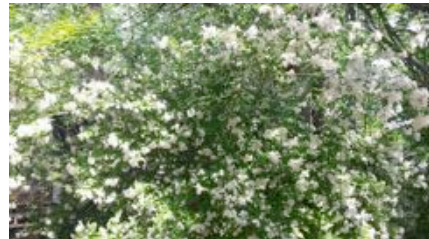
Ever since we purchased this part of our property in the mid 90's there has been a small deciduous shrub that grew nicely with no additional attention. It is close to the property line but sincerely doubted that either the previous owner or our neighbor had planted it. It was a nice summer screen.

However, this spring it was a blaze of blooms. This peaked my interest. I took pictures and sent to some very knowledgeable friends. No one could identify it. When our monthly Extension Master Gardeners meeting included a trip to Niche Gardens I showed the pictures to one of the staff and it was immediately identified. It is *Kolkwitzia amabilis*, common name Beauty Bush. He said this was a very old-fashioned plant, commonly found in undisturbed rural areas – this describes our home perfectly.

So now the research was on – it tolerates clay soil, again that's our yard, deer resistant but now safely within our tall fence, likes full sun, very showy flowers and has very few if any problems. Pollinators love it. My kind of plant and so happy to have it part of the landscape.



Close up with bees

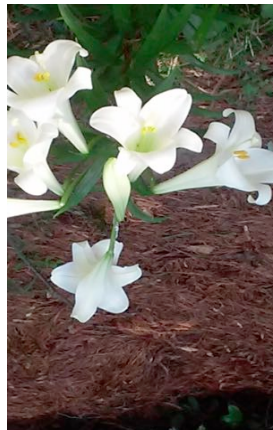
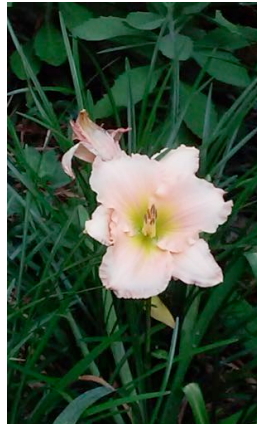


Large view showing arching branches and many flowers

Both photographs by Edna Lovelace Gaston

SOME PICTURES By Fern Boyd

Some June 2016 garden blooms: astilbe "Amethyst", daylily "Broadway Baby", easter lilies blooming this year after being planted after church use last year.



Some July 2016 garden blooms: monarda, a thrift purchase somewhat burgundy and feverfew been here forever, daylilies from Mr. Jones at Warrenton Farmers' Market planted last year, echinea "Cheyenne Spirit" and "Purple D'oro" daylily.



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