



August/September 2006 Volume 5, Issue 4

# M. Bloomers

## A Garden Journal

*"Flowers are love's truest language"... Park Benjamin*

### *Fragrance in Full Bloom... Gay Houston, Staff*

**Jasmine — an evocative word...** although late summer and very early fall seem a strange time to think of the magical fragrance that the very word jasmine brings to mind. Now is a great time to plan for next spring's blooms. At Martha's when a blooming plant from this large and varied genus is delivered, we place it by the door. Its sweet fragrance entices you to add jasmine to your own garden.

This large group of wonderful plants can be somewhat confusing, but in general they usually bloom with white to creamy blossoms, have shiny dark green leaves, smell somewhat like a gardenia, and thrive in our Southern climate. That said, we need to say that some bloom pink, some yellow, some only at night, and many at different times of the year.

Confederate or star jasmine are vining jasmines that do very well in our area. They bloom over the entire plant and add their great fragrance for a long period in the spring. The winter jasmine, Carolina Jasmine, is native to our area and blooms in late winter. Pink jasmine also blooms in the

spring and has finer leaves than the Confederate jasmine. All can be planted in the fall for spring blooms. They are usually evergreen in our area and need at least morning sun. Well drained, rich soil will bring about better blossoms.

Night Blooming Jasmine, *Cestrum nocturnum*, is another jasmine that does well and is very vigorous. Since it blooms at night, plant it in an area that you can enjoy during the evening hours. Sit back and watch the magic of night feeding moths as they are drawn to the plants heavy fragrance.

Another great plant that is not a true Jasmine but certainly looks and smells like one is Carnation of India, sometimes called Crape Jasmine. It is very fragrant, especially at night.

Although jasmine can be confusing, and we often have other varieties for sale, almost any do well in our area. Ask some of our great sales staff for more information and availability. Be ready for the wonderful plant that satisfies all of the senses!



*"Be like the flower, turn your faces towards the sun"... Khalil Gibran*



## *Jamaica, in Your Own Backyard... David Albrecht, Horticulturist*

**Jamaican allspice**, also known as Jamaican pepper, West Indian bay-leaf, and pimento tree, originated, as the name implies, from Jamaica. Even though it may never flower out of its native range, it does make for an interesting specimen tree in a pot on the patio, due to its large, glossy aromatic foliage, and its exfoliating bark. However, this is a Zone 10 plant and will freeze if left outside below 28° F.

Allspice is a member of the Myrtle family which also includes eucalyptus, clove, and guava. Its Latin name *Pimenta dioica* has a confusing history, because the genus *Pimenta* comes from the Spanish name for black pepper. It was initially termed this by the Spanish explorers when they discovered it in Central America in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This term was used since its shape resembles the black pepper corn, and the Spanish explorers were so intent on finding a new source for black pepper. Since the

Spaniards exclusively imported this spice to 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the name pimenta was introduced into many European languages, and still remains to this day.

The aromatic foliage smells like cloves with hint of nutmeg and cinnamon, hence the name allspice. The taste is similar, but has an added peppery flavor. The edible portion used in most cooking is the ground, dried, and unripe fruit. Allspice is used in ketchup, pickles, pumpkin pie and various cakes and candies.

Jamaica is the primary exporter of allspice, and a few other countries produce it such as Mexico, Trinidad, Cuba, and Honduras, but the quality is considered inferior to the true Jamaican allspice. The leaves dry well and are large, so they make good book marks. Allspice can also be used in potpourri.



## *Good Bug or Bad Bug?... Sharon Murry, Staff*

Our world is made up of many different insects or as many of us call them, bugs! When you see something crawling or flying around, our first instinct is to “step on it”, or “swat it”. How many of us wonder if it is a ‘good bug’ or a ‘bad bug’? Whether it is at the beach, in the desert, on the mountain tops, on ranch land or in our back yard, there will always be bugs. Sometimes it’s hard to believe that “everything has a purpose”. Although bugs can be real pests, some bugs are very beneficial. The trick is to determine which bugs are “good” and which bugs are “bad”. We do not have to be an entomologist to determine this. The “bad” bugs are those that have an adverse impact on human or plant life.

There are many ways of controlling the bad bugs while keeping the beneficial bugs healthy. Cleanliness is first, especially for indoor pests like cockroaches, ants and houseflies. After properly identifying the pest, estimate the population and then you can obtain the correct natural enemy or herbicide.


- For example, gecko lizards and beneficial nematodes will help control cockroaches and ant larvae, while diatomaceous earth will help control those that get away.
- Mosquitoes are pests and as everyone knows, may carry the West Nile virus and other diseases. Bats, purple martins, hummingbirds, spiders and many of the ‘good’ bugs love to dine on mosquitoes.
- All wasps are generally considered ‘good’ bugs. The Mud Dauber wasp’s favorite food is the black widow spider. Of all the species of spiders, only two are generally considered ‘bad’, the Black Widow and the Brown Recluse. One of the most beneficial garden spiders is the giant black and

yellow Argiope. It looks like it might be mean, but it in fact will capture moths, whiteflies, mosquitoes and many other ‘bad’ bugs. It is known for spinning zig-zag webbing across the center of its web and it will always be upside down. (Although, spiders are not considered insects, we included them as beneficials.) Trichogramma Wasps are very beneficial. They look like tiny gnats and parasitize their eggs inside the host egg. They are known to control caterpillars.

- Lady Beetle or Ladybug, as it’s more commonly known, is a very beneficial insect. They love to eat the aphids that ruin your roses and tomatoes. They also eat mites and other small pests. Their main enemy is human applications of toxic chemicals.

Lacewing is another very beneficial insect. Get to know the larval stage—it looks like tiny alligators. The adult lacewings feed on aphids, thrips, mites, mealy bugs, corn earworms and many other ‘bad’ bugs. The adult lacewings can be green or brown, are approximately ¾” long and have veined, ‘lacy’ wings.

These are only a few examples of the good and bad bugs you will probably see in your yard. Get to know what they are before you stomp on it or swat it. Malcolm Becks “Texas Bug Book” is a good reference book on good and bad bugs. Martha’s Bloomers also carries live lady bugs and beneficial nematodes and you may purchase a mail-in kit for Trichogramma Wasps. Be careful when applying toxic chemicals to your landscape or garden as the chemicals will kill the good and the bad. Once you start observing the insects in your yard, you may find it very interesting understanding their purpose on earth.

**Editor’s Note:** Beware of products advertising to kill all the bugs in your yard. They kill the good ones too. 

*“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better”...Albert Schweitzer*



## *Roses... Vickie Deike, Landscape Designer*

**Roses...**often we are asked what would be a good evergreen, flowering shrub to use as a foundation planting up against the house. As far as a flowering selection goes, options are somewhat limited. Many people would like to use azaleas because of their tremendous show in the spring. However, since most of the Brazos Valley has unsuitable growing conditions for the azalea, it is not always a good recommendation. But, there is a fairly new shrub that we have been keeping my eye on and whole-heartedly recommend to anyone in our area, and across the state for that matter. This shrub has beautiful dark green foliage and more flower power than any other plant we know. We have used it as a specimen planting and as a hedge in many different gardens and it has performed beautifully each time. What is this miracle shrub you ask....well, actually, it is a rose, the Knock Out Rose.

Before you stop reading because "roses are too difficult to grow", let me explain. The Knock Out is a virtually disease free, maintenance free plant that blooms constantly. There is no need to dead-head and almost no need to prune, unless you want to maintain it at a certain height. The Knock Out was introduced in 2000. Since then it has been designated as a Texas Superstar™ plant and as an EarthKind™ rose (both are programs run by Texas A&M University). These designations have been received because of its ability to not only grow, but thrive in less than ideal conditions across the state with little to no care. To learn more about these programs visit <http://aggie->

[horticulture.tamu.edu/](http://horticulture.tamu.edu/). The Knock Out is evergreen so it can be used as a foundation planting. Without pruning it can reach a 4'-5' height. With shearing it can be maintained at 3'. The blooms are considered red, however I would call them a vibrant pink. It does need a minimum of 5 hours of full sun, more sun would of course encourage more blooming. Because of the success of the Knock Out, variations of the rose have been developed. There is a Pink Knock Out, which is a light pink color. There is a Blushing Knock Out, which is a pale pink. The latest addition is the Double Knock Out, which is the same color as the original, "red", but it has more than double the petals per flower for a ruffled look and is a bit shorter, growing 3' to 4'. Keep in mind that while these variations have been derived from the original Knock Out and are advertised as having the same disease resistant / maintenance free qualities they have not received the Texas Superstar™ or EarthKind™ designation that the original has, at least not yet.

If you want to be on the cutting edge of this new disease free generation of roses, you will want to also pick up a Home Run Rose which was just introduced this year. The Home Run is a cross between the Knock Out and another unnamed rose. It was developed to have the same qualities as the Knock Out, only even more resistance to powdery mildew. It is more compact at 3' to 4' and is a darker red color. It has not been named as a Texas Superstar™ or as an Earthkind™ rose but with Knock Out for a parent it is definitely an "up and comer".



### *Start Planning Now for Your Cool Fall Afternoon Retreats!*

*Martha's Bloomers' Landscape Department offers the following Services*

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*"The man who carries a cat by the tail, learns something that can be learned in no other way"...Mark Twain*




## *What's Cooking at the Café...Melissa Rodriguez, Staff*

Join us for Italian Day on the first Thursday of every month! Enjoy our delicious Italian Cuisine and our homemade Wine-a-Ritas! Bon appetite!!!

Summer's heat keeping you out of the kitchen? Let Café M. Bloomers cool off your kitchen by

letting us prepare your summer meals and deserts.

Call Café M. Bloomers today at 936-870-3277 for a complete list of our entrées and fresh baked goods! 

## *Floral Design Tips...Tricia Barksdale, Petals 'n Bloomers*

Dr. James Del Prince, featured writer for Flora magazine, suggests using some principles from art when designing with flowers. One principle is to "avoid a sore thumb". No single part of the arrangement should be so strong as to negate the rest of it. Just as a sore thumb makes one unable to think about anything else, so does a glaring focal point.

A second principle recommended by Dr. Del Prince is to "keep everything connected". For example, if you have a large yellow sunflower in your arrangement, you may want some other yellow flowers. You could place another large item, such as a gourd or artichoke in the composition. Or, you could scatter smaller sunflowers throughout the design. Any one of these three options would allow your arrangement to flow from one


component to the next.

A final thought mentioned by Del Prince is to "include secrets". As a designer, one doesn't want the audience to merely glance at an arrangement. Obvious and predictable receive only drive-by attention. We want to pique their interest so they will linger and enjoy the hidden surprises. To sum up these design tips in my words:

Nix the Bullseye

Flow with a Theme

Surprise Them!

**Happy flowering! And, if you haven't started designing yet, why not?! **

*Martha's Bloomers has one of the largest selections of beautiful ceramic pottery in the State of Texas!*

**All Colors!**

**All Sizes!**

## *Be a Winner...Shirleen McDonald, Staff*

**Patti Weedon is the sixth winner of our Be A Winner Contest!** She received a gift certificate for two for lunch at Café M. Bloomers! Patti submitted this great chocolate cinnamon sheet cake recipe.

### **Chocolate Cinnamon Sheet Cake**

Sift together in large bowl:

2 cups sugar                      2 cups flour  
1 tbsp. cinnamon                1 tsp. soda

Mix in small saucepan and bring to a boil:

1 cup hot water                  2 sticks butter  
4 tbsp. cocoa

Add saucepan mixture to flour mixture.

Mix until smooth:

2 eggs                                1/2 cup buttermilk  
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Bake @ 400 degrees in a greased and floured 13x9 pan for 20-25 minutes.

### **Butter Cream Cheese Icing**

Cream together until smooth:

1 - 8oz. pkg. cream cheese            1 stick butter

Add:

1- 1 lb. box powdered sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract                  1 cup chopped nuts.

**Spread icing on cooled cake and enjoy!**

If you want to "Be a Winner" just send in your favorite recipe, garden tip or question to [gardenjournal@marthasbloomers.com](mailto:gardenjournal@marthasbloomers.com).

Please keep your recipes or garden tips coming and watch to see if you are our next "Winner"!



*"Summer afternoon - summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language"...Henry James*



## *Calendar of Events...*

### **Saturday Seminars - and they are Free!**

“**Hummingbirds**” - Saturday, August 12 at 11 am. Presented by Jerry Walls, Director of Christmas Creek Nature Preserve.

“**Planting for Butterflies**” - Saturday, August 26 at 11 am. Presented by Karen Breneman.

“**Orchids**” - Saturday, September 9 at 11 am. Presented by Rainer Fink, Orchid Specialist.

“**Planting Bulbs for Spring**” - Saturday, October 21 at 11 am. Presented by Margaret Cherry, TMCNP #496.

“**Holiday Decorations**” - Saturday, October 28 at 11 am. Presented by Tricia Barksdale, Petals 'n Bloomers.

“**Orchids for Christmas**” - Saturday, December 2 at 11 am. Presented by Rainer Fink, Orchid Specialist.

### **Luncheons & Book Reviews**

“**Interesting Women and their Gardens**” **Luncheon & Book Review** —Monday, October 2 at Noon. Books to be reviewed are: Elizabeth and her German Garden by Elizabeth van Arnim and Onward and Upward in the Garden by Katherine White, edited by E.B. White. Book review presented by Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm. Tablescape based on gardening themes will be designed and discussed by Tricia Barksdale, designer, Petals 'n Bloomers. Lunch will be served by Café M. Bloomers. \$25 pp.

“**Madaline Hill, Texas Herb Pioneer**” **Luncheon & Book Review** —Monday, October 16 at 11 am and 1 pm. Book review on Southern Herb Growing by Madaline Hill and Gwen Barclay will be presented by Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm. Herbal themed tablescapes will be designed and discussed by Tricia Barksdale, designer, Petals 'n Bloomers. Lunch will be served by Café M. Bloomers. \$25 pp.

**Call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277**

**for reservations confirmed by credit card.**

For more information on our seminars, visit us at [www.MarthasBloomers.com](http://www.MarthasBloomers.com).

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