



July/August 2005 Volume 4, Issue 3

M. Bloomers

A Garden Journal

"Perhaps no word of six letters concentrates so much satisfaction as the word "garden"...Richard Le Gallienne

Garden Favorites...Gay Houston, Staff


The amazing twists and turns of vines.....We constantly are on the lookout for different varieties of vines and always try to have a number to tempt you. We have several types growing around the patio and pergolas at Martha's Bloomers that demonstrate their mature appearance.

Vines are useful but their habits must be understood before planting. Size, sun requirements, and method of climbing are important considerations. They climb in three different ways: twining, tendrils, or clinging by small root like projections.

Vines that twine or have tendrils need a trellis, arbor, or some type of lattice. The long runners can be tied or woven into the support if the vine does not have tendrils. Honey-suckle is an example of this. Vines with tendrils such as the skyflower vine or coral vine will climb without much effort on your part as the tendrils will always find a way to "latch on". The "clingers" are vines such as ivy or fig ivy. They will cling to almost any surface

and can be very effective on stone or brick walls.

The planting location of a vine is very important. Most of us want a flowering vine and almost all of these will require sun for at least six hours a day. Remember to enrich the soil as vines grow rapidly and need good soil and a four to six inch layer of mulch. If the trellis or arbor is near a wall or patio, the soil may be poor so prepare the planting hole with care. Mature size of the vine is another consideration. Trimming and pruning can become tedious if space is limited.

Our favorite vines are probably the skyflower vine (*Thunbergia grandiflora*) and the Rangoon-Creeper (*Quiqualis indica*.) However, be sure and wander through the gardens and down our pergola where the coral vine, butterfly vine, Mexican flame vine and Incense passion vine are planted. They may be your favorites! And then there are climbing roses—but that is another story. 

"If you once loved a garden, That love will stay with you..." Louise Driscoll



Water Garden Fax... The Series... Karen Breneman

First of a Series—Getting

Started...songbirds, butterflies, dragonflies, hummingbirds, stress relief — all are possible with a water garden. Now is the time to install that pond you have always wanted. Deciding the style of garden and where to place it are the most difficult parts of the process. A properly placed and installed pond requires minimal maintenance and maximum enjoyment.

The first step is to find the location of utility lines by contacting the utility companies before digging. Some areas have local ordinances pertaining to water gardens, which differ from swimming pool ordinances. Check to make sure your pond meets these requirements.

Avoid placing the garden directly under trees. Roots can damage liners and leaves and other tree debris can upset the balance in the pond. Water is an attraction that can be dangerous for pets and children. Consider using lattice structures over a pond to help prevent accidents.

Location is determined by pond type: flexible liner, container in ground or above ground. Any container can be used that is rated safe for use by animals. For in-ground ponds, surface drainage and grade should be considered. If a natural bottom pond is desired the soil type is important. Location is also determined by how the pond fits into the existing landscape. It could be a central feature or a hidden surprise around the corner! If pumps are to be used, proximity to electrical connections are a consideration.

The smaller the pond the greater temperature fluctuations and therefore the less stable the ecosystem. Minimum recommended size is 50 square feet of surface area; however, small containers do make attractive gardens, but do not provide true ecosystems. Depth is also important and should range between 18 and 24 inches. Depths greater than 3 feet are not necessary and could be a maintenance or safety hazard. Deepening a pond less than 50 square feet of surface area will lessen environmental extremes.

After determining location, size, and type, it is time to dig. Follow the manufactures directions for installation or have it commercially installed. Be sure to slope all sides of the pond to allow for overflow runoff, and to prevent runoff from entering preformed ponds.

Artificial filtration is not necessary for a healthy pond ecosystem; however, water movement that allows for waterfalls and fountains adds sound to attract wildlife and increase interest.

When the pond is installed, fill with water. In small ponds, it is recommended that you treat the water to remove chlorine and chloramines. The water will turn green, but do not change it, it will only turn green again. In a short period of time the green will go and the pond will clear. Now is the time to put in plants and fish, if desired.

If you can not wait until the next series, check out my book, "Gardening with Nature in Texas".



What's Cooking at the Café... Pamela Hays, Staff

What's all the noise about? Café M. Bloomers and the adjoining Arbor Room are undergoing some changes. Soon you will be able to enter the Arbor Room Conference and Seminar Area from a new doorway rather than the hallway entrance that you are use to.

The Café is expanding and will soon sport a new enclosed waiting area. Most of the construction on this project will take place before and after our regular serving times so we will continue to be open and serve as usual. We ask that you be patient with us during this remodeling time. We know it is noisy...but we

are hurrying!

Exciting things are happening here!

Come and be a part of it soon.

Watch the next newsletter for our fall cooking class and fall tea party schedules.

Café M. Bloomers

(936) 870-3277



"One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides."... W. E. Johns



From the Hot House... David Albrecht, Horticulturist


What is a tropical shrub with vigorous climbing habit that produces clusters of red flowers and can grow in excess of forty feet long?

The answer is Drunken Sailors. This common name was given to the plant because of the resemblance of the drooping clusters upon clusters of flowers as they bob and sway in the wind to phalanx and phalanx of stumbling, inebriated sailors as they stroll along. Drunken sailors is better known by its other common name Rangoon-Creeper, and botanically by the name *Quisqualis indica*. The name, *Quisqualis*, Latin *quis*, meaning "Who?" and *quails*, meaning "What?", was given to this plant by an early botanist in response to his surprise of the variability in growth and flower color.

A rapid grower, Rangoon-Creeper begins to bloom in early summer, and continues until about September. The blooms open white, begin to turn pink, then to a red and finally to a dark red after several days. The fragrance is unidentifiable and somewhat sweet, but yet unforgettable. The plant also prefers partial sun to full sun.

Native to tropical Asia, Rangoon-Creeper is grown mainly for its ornamental value. However, in folk medicine, different parts of this plant have been used for intestinal de-worming and topically for treatment of skin diseases. It is reported that the seeds are sometimes used as a coconut flavoring on a limited basis. Seeds ingested in large numbers are poisonous usually causing unconsciousness.

While this plant may be considered tropical in nature, it does surprisingly well in the Brazos Valley, Zone 8. One finds this plant commonly listed hardy in either Zone 9 or Zone 10, and sometimes listed as Zone 11.

Here at Martha's Bloomers we routinely have the branches that measure approximately one-half inch or larger surviving the winter to re-bud the following spring. This includes the spring of 2003 that followed the 16°F low temperature we had that winter. Keep in mind though, we have ours planted on the southwest side of the building where it is somewhat protected. 

Planting Design... Vickie Deike, Landscape Designer


A key to designing planting beds is selecting plants that are not only individually attractive but as a grouping are cohesive. Avoid putting two different plants side by side that are similar. The more they grow, the more they will appear to be one large mass. It is more visually appealing in a landscape to clearly see variety. Placing contrasting plants side by side will make each type stand out more. There are many types of contrast that you can use in making your selections.

One type of contrast is in the form or the shape of a plant. For example upright vs. prostrate is demonstrated in the popular container planting of spikey Aloe Vera and creeping Sedum. A mounding lantana also benefits from an upright neighbor such as a Butterfly Iris. Another type of contrasting shape is open branching vs. tight branching. An open, airy butterfly bush will look good next to or in front of a tight branched holly.

Contrasting textures is another way to pair up plantings. Texture is usually described as fine or coarse. A fine textured plant will typically have small leaves that blend together and create a soft look. A coarse plant will have large leaves that are individually distinct. A tropical combination of textures would be a fine textured Firecracker Plant, *Russelia*, with a coarse textured

Canna. The coarse Cast Iron Plant and fine Harbour Belle Nandina also make a nice texture contrast and are evergreens. The soft-to-the-touch Mexican Feather Grass with pointedly coarse Yuccas or Agaves are a great low water use combination.

Color may be the most fun way to work with contrast. Bold contrasts are easy to create by pairing colors that are very dark with those that are very light. A dark plum Loropetalum with a pale silver Artemisia is a dramatic grouping. Also a highly variegated plant such as Cabaret Maiden Grass will stand out even more next to the dark glossy green Nellie R Stevens holly. Selecting complimentary colors from the color wheel will create vibrant combinations such as purple Verbena with sun-shiney Rudebeckia. Another vibrant combination, great for a hanging basket or ground cover is the chartreuse 'Margarite' mixed with the purple 'Blackie' Sweet Potato Vines.

Often the stronger the contrast the more successful the look is. Try using all three types of contrast in selecting just one pairing. Of course, Martha's Bloomers Landscape Department can work with you to develop a custom landscape plan as well as do the installation for you. For any landscaping needs you may have please call 936-870-4111 and ask for Vickie. 

"What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." ...Ralph Waldo Emerson



Be a Winner... Shirleen McDonald

We will be expanding the next edition of A Garden Journal. You can win two ways! Send us your greatest recipe or your best gardening tip.

Just send in your favorite recipe. The winning entry will be tested by our Café. For those of you who would rather be in your garden than in your kitchen, submit your favorite flower or vegetable garden tip. If your entry is selected to be featured in A Garden Journal, you will receive a gift certificate for two for lunch at

Café M. Bloomers.

Or just ask our horticulturist a gardening question. If your garden tip or question is published in A Garden Journal, you can be a winner too!

Just send your recipe, garden tip or question to: gardenjournal@marthasbloomers.com.

Watch to see if you are our next winner!



Take Stock in Stock... Tricia Barksdale, Petals 'n Bloomers

In Horticulture, when we think of the Cruciferae family, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts and Broccoli come to mind. However, their closely-related cousin, Stock, is a favorite design flower. Who would have thought that such a beautiful, fragrant member of this family also exists? Even using just a few stems in an arrangement can perfume an entire room.

Native to the Mediterranean region, it was named for Matthiola incana, in honor of the 16th Century botanist, Pierandrea Mattioli. Colors range from white, peach and lavender to dark magenta and purple. The unique flower shape provides height yet some fullness as well.

Stock is long-lasting as a cut flower, approximately one week. This attribute, coupled with year-round availability and a sweet fragrance, makes stock worth taking stock of!

Don't Miss our Summer Floral Demonstration and Luncheon

Sizzling Summer Soirée

Monday, July 18

Two seatings: 11 am and 1 pm

\$25 per person—limited seating.

Call Café M. Bloomers to make your reservation confirmed by credit card!

(936) 870-3277



Tea for Two at the Café... Pamela Hays, Staff

The taking of tea with friends is one of life's leisurely pleasures. Confidences and quiet laughter flow as freely as the tea itself, while bonds of friendship form.

The tradition of afternoon tea, however, began as a solitary affair.

"The tradition of afternoon tea, however, began as a solitary affair."

Anna, the seventh Duchess of Bedford, and lady-in waiting to Queen Victoria, was troubled with a "sinking feeling" while suffering

the long stretch between lunch and dinner. Her cure? A daily dose of tea and cakes.

We invite you to join our monthly Sunday dose

of sweets, savories, and friends. Please call Café M. Bloomers at 936-870-3277 to make reservations for the following tea. All reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card. \$15.00 per person.

"Girls Just Want to Have Fun" Tea - Sunday, July 10 - 2 pm to 4 pm - anything goes... we will have a "girls day out tea party". Calling girls of all ages... join us for summer themed foods and fun!

Café M. Bloomers

(936) 870-3277



"I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers"... Claude Monet



Orchids for Dummies...Dr. Rainer Fink, Orchid Specialist

Orchid care is simple with a basic understanding of the normal living conditions of the plants in your collection. Orchids require us to provide three general growing conditions: light, water and air movement.

Most orchids are epiphytes (Cattleya, Dendrobium, Phalaenopsis, Vanda, Oncidium and all inter-generic crosses thereof), meaning they naturally grow in trees and don't ever have water standing at their roots. Some orchids are terrestrial like the Paphiopedilum, Phragmipedium or the now popular Nun's Cap Orchid (Phaius), which never want their roots to become completely dry (the Phragmipedium can be watered three times a day).

Light...light is measured in foot-candles (the amount of light one candle makes one foot from the source). We also refer to the desired light at the leaves of our plants in foot-candles. The attached table lists commonly found orchid types, light requirements and growing locations (in order from 1 = ideal to 3 = acceptable) for Central Texas. Commercial growers pay close attention to the total number of hours of sunlight each plant gets per day.

Generally in Central Texas, we can grow our plants outside all year long until the night temperatures fall to below 55 °F. Bring them inside to protect against freezing. Avoid placing orchids directly on the ground to avoid slugs and other undesirable insects getting a free meal.

Water...water most orchids once a week

whether they need it or not. Re-pot plants in a very porous material to avoid standing water at the roots. Change the potting material slightly and water on a set schedule. Orchids tell us through the thickness of their roots their water requirements – thin roots indicate more water, thick roots indicate less water. Plants that want a little more water (paphiopedilum, phragmipedium and other small rooted orchids) are potted in our general mix with a little peat moss added to retain the water a little longer. Plants with thick roots (phalaenopsis, vanda, cattleya and other thick rooted orchids) are potted in our regular mix. Orchids with pseudobulbs (large water storing bulb where the leaves come from) will begin to shrivel when the plant is not getting enough water.

Air movement...a constant gentle wind blows in the natural growing environment of epiphytic orchids. If growing your orchids inside, a simple circulating air fan will work great. Avoid air conditioning blowing directly on the orchid. Cold air is very low in humidity resulting in rapid drying of the plant. For plants growing outside during warmer weather, nature will take care of the wind for you.

The diversity of flowers and plants is extraordinary, many orchids have a wonderful fragrance. A reliable information resource is close at hand at Martha's Bloomers and we are willing to help if any problems occur.

Anyone can grow orchids with a little help!!



Type of Orchid	Light Requirement	Growing location
Cattleya and crosses including Brassavolla, Epidendrum, Sophronitis, Lalia, Potinara Also for Oncidium, Odontocidium	Medium to High 3000 to 4000 foot-candles 2-4 hrs morning sunlight/day	1. outdoors under tree 2. sunny window (2 hrs or early morning sun) 3. fluorescent lights (14 hrs/day – 3" away from bulb)
Dendrobium, Strap Leafed Vanda	Medium to High 3000 to 4000 foot-candles 2-4 hrs morning sunlight/day	1. outdoors under tree 2. sunny window
Phalaenopsis, Paphiopedilum, Phragmipedium	Low to Medium 1000 to 3000 foot-candles 2-hrs of filtered morning sunlight/day	1. fluorescent lights (16 hrs/day 6" away from bulb) 2. shaded window or outdoors with significant shading

"There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!"...Rose Tyleman



Calendar of Events...

Saturday Seminars—and they are Free!

“**Hands-on Water Gardening**” - Saturday, July 9 - 11 am. Presented by David Albrecht.

“**Herbs and Flowers—Now & Later**” - Saturday, July 16 - 11 am. Presented by Tricia Barksdale, Petals ‘n Bloomers and Gay Houston.

“**Common Garden Insects—Friend or Foe**” - Saturday, July 23 - 11 am. Presented by Karen Breneman, Author, Gardening with Nature in Texas.

“**Easy Ways of Organic Gardening**” - Saturday, August 6 - 11 am. Presented by Sharon-Murry.

Teas, Luncheons & Dinners—Call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for your reservations confirmed by credit card.

“**Girls Just Want to Have Fun**” Tea—Sunday, July 10—2 pm to 4 pm. \$15 per person.

“**Sizzling Summer Soirée**” Luncheon & Floral Demonstration by Tricia Barksdale—Monday, July 18. Two seatings: 11 am and again at 1 pm. \$25 per person. Individual tables decorated in different themes.

For more information on our seminars, visit us at www.MarthasBloomers.com.

To Register for Free Saturday Seminars: Call (936) 870-4044 or
email: registration@Marthasbloomers.com.

For Cooking Classes, Teas and Luncheon Reservations confirmed by credit card,
please call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277.

We welcome your suggestions for future seminars.

Please email to:

suggestions@MarthasBloomers.com



Return Service Requested

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Store Hours Mon-Sat 9-6 Sun 11-5
Martha's Bloomers (936) 870-4111
Tea Room Serving Tues-Sun 11—4
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