



May/June 2007 Volume 6, Issue 3

M. Bloomers

A Garden Journal

"Cares melt when you kneel in the garden"...anonymous

Roses and Spring Are Here!...Gay Houston, Staff

Spring brings such great days of blooms, gentle weather, and the incredible green that South-east Texas can give us. It is always a thrill to walk about the yard or garden and see plants that looked so worn last fall, are now fresh and blooming. Some may not have made it, but what fun it will be to replace them with new and different ones. When Spring comes to Martha's Bloomers, we know that we will be working really hard, arranging plants, and helping our wonderful customers find just the right additions to their garden.

The roses have been especially popular this year. The "Knock Out" series of roses has made all of us think again about roses for the landscape. They are certainly not the only good roses for the novice or the expert gardener. Antique Roses are very popular and easy to find thanks to wonderful horticulturists such as Dr. Bill Welch, Mike Shoup, Gaye Hammond and many others. They are now readily available, and we are proud to recommend many that are easy to grow, resistant to disease, and beautiful in almost any landscape.

Try some of the lovely polyanthas that can be found in yellow, pink, red, and apricot. They are not fussy, bloom prolifically with clusters of

small flowers, and are usually very compact in size. This makes them great for a mass of blooms, a border plant, or even in a container. Cecile Brunner, Marie Pavie, and The Fairy are but a few of the best.

Belinda's Dream is a relatively modern rose, but has proven to be a favorite with everyone. As a large shrub, it can be a wonderful specimen plant that is covered with large, fragrant pink roses throughout the growing season. A very full rose, it makes a great cut flower and is very disease resistant.

Climbing roses are also great for the arbor, fence, or trellis. Red Cascade is a smaller rose that is easy to keep in bounds. The old favorite, Lady Banks, with its lovely springtime show of pale yellow or white blooms is a large climber, and has few thorns. The massive New Dawn makes a wonderful barrier or display in a large area. Climbing Cecile Brunner is also a large plant but has very good manners and will be covered with tiny pink buds that have a spice-like fragrance.

Drop by Martha's Bloomers and see these and others growing in our beds. We will be glad to see you and "talk roses". 🐾

"A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds"...anonymous



Grasshoppers... Sharon Murry, Staff

Grasshopper Season...With spring upon us and summer fast approaching, many of us wonder if this will be another year of uncontrollable grasshoppers.

Grasshoppers are difficult to control. They lay their eggs on bare soil. If possible, applying a thick layer of mulch to cover the bare soil is a good step in preventing a hatching ground.

The product, Nolo Bait™ can be used against grasshoppers. For best results, it must be applied now while the grasshopper population is barely noticeable. Nolo Bait™ is a biological insecticide that contains the spore called *Nosema Locustae* that infects the grasshopper when they eat it. In a period of 3 to 4 weeks, up to 50% of the grasshoppers that have eaten the Nolo Bait™ become infected and will die. Since grasshoppers are cannibalistic by nature, uninfected grasshoppers will eat the infected

ones and they in turn will die. The females then pass the disease on to the next generation via the egg-laying process. It is important to broadcast the Nolo Bait™ early in the season while the population is small.

Nolo Bait™ is not harmful to humans, livestock, birds, crops or water resources.

If you would like to use a foliar protection from grasshoppers, use molasses and Diatomaceous Earth. Mix 2 ounces molasses, 4 ounces DE and a few drops of liquid soap in a gallon of water. For extra potency, add 1 ounce of orange oil or garlic/pepper tea. Spray on your plants in the early morning or late afternoon. Do not spray in direct sunlight. If it rains, it will need to be re-applied.

Birds are another natural control of grasshoppers. Most birds love grasshoppers, so encourage them to your property with birdhouses and bird feeders. 

Basil – Summer's Dragon...Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm

A little-known factoid about basil is that its botanical name, *ocimum basilicum*, is derived from the Latin word for "basilisk" or dragon. And when summer arrives to bring our basil into "thunderous growth", its dragon-like behavior certainly emerges. Our difficulty usually lies with our impatience to get this favorite herb planted in our gardens. Recent cool weather and high winds are no friends to the young basil planted a bit too early.

Nevertheless, persistence is rewarded, for with the true warmth of April, May, and especially the fire-breathing of July, August, and September, basil shows its true nature. And its multitudinous forms, scents, and colors.

You should have a good supply of the great sweet basil, Genovese, as a basis for your collection. Then most people add the citrus and spicy flavors, like Indonesian Lemon and Cinnamon, among others in these flavorful categories.

Don't forget basil's ornamental qualities. The purple-leaved varieties, whether smooth or ruffled, have a great affinity for the garden

whose blooms are of other rainbow hues, and especially as companions for bright yellow neighbors.

African Blue with its statuesque proportions and magnificent blooms draws butterflies and hummingbirds, but be sure to place it at the rear of the garden. Another tall bushy sweet basil with citrus overtones is Greek Columnar.

Basils abound in subtropical regions around the world, and we're fortunate to have many to choose from that thrive in our latitude and longitude, humidity or lack thereof, and various soils. Just be sure to provide a well-draining area with plenty of sun and generous water. If all else fails, basil can be easily grown in containers. Fertilizing keeps production levels high.

Though the time seems distant, cold winds and frost will return and our basil in the garden will turn tail and retreat. So through the next thunderous basil months, begin harvesting and freezing in oil so that no gorgeous flavor is missed when next we light the fires and furnaces of November. 

*"The garden suggests there might be a place where we can
meet nature halfway"...Michael Pollen*



Castor Bean... David Albrecht, Horticulturist

Native to the Ethiopian region of tropical east Africa, the castor bean has become naturalized in many warm temperate regions of the world, including the United States. The plant is definitely a survivor flourishing in just about any well drained area that has sufficient water and nutrients.

This is an old-world plant whose seeds have been found in Egyptian tombs dating back to 4000 B.C., where one of its original uses was to make one of nature's finest oils for use in wick lamps.

The castor bean is not a true bean at all, but a spurge or shrub-like herb. It is usually an annual that easily reseeds itself, although sometimes an established root system from one year will reestablish a new top the following year.

The scientific name for castor bean is *Ricinus communis*, where *ricinus* is the latin word for tick and *communis* means common. At the time this plant was named, some 200 years

ago, by the naturalist Linnaeus, he thought the seeds resembled an engorged tick.

Castor bean is an extremely fast growing shrub or small tree that matures from 6 to 10 feet tall with about an equal spread in one growing season. It grows best with full sun and ample moisture in a well-drained soil. The foliage ranges in color from green to burgundy with leaves up to 16 inches across. With the large leaves and the over-all open airy look of the plant, it gives a very tropical feel. The flowers are burgundy red and borne on spikes to about 10 inches in length. The seed pods are spiny and clustered on the plant.

Although castor bean seeds are poisonous to both humans and livestock, seedpods may be removed before maturity. Ricin is the active poison. It has been estimated that one ounce of ricin is 6,000 times more poisonous than cyanide and 12,000 times more poisonous than rattlesnake venom. How ironic that castor oil has been made from this plant for years. It is recommended that the seed pods be removed before maturity. 

Mom's Special Day... Melissa Rodriguez

Mother's Day is right around the corner! Cafe M. Bloomers invites you and your mother to enjoy a delicious lunch in the serene garden setting of Martha's Bloomers.

In addition to our already delightful menu, Cafe M. Bloomers will prepare two other multi-course entrees made especially for all of the sweet Moms out there.

Our menu selections will be Seafood Crepes with a lobster stock served over a fluffy bed of rice and Chicken Roulade served over a wonderful vegetable rice pilaf. All entrees will be accompanied by a "fresh from the garden" salad and a dessert from our wide selection of sweets.

On this very special day, Cafe M. Bloomers will introduce a new decadent addition to their menu...Raspberry Custard Crème Brule.

Café M. Bloomers will serve lunch on Sunday, May 13 from 11 am to 4 pm. Each delicious entrée has a set price of \$18.95 pp plus tax & gratuity.

You may call ahead 30 minutes prior to the time you plan to arrive and we will put your name on our waiting list.

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 13th!

Café M. Bloomers

Special Serving Hours

11 am to 4 pm

"A garden is a friend you can visit anytime"...anonymous



What's Cooking at the Café... Melissa Rodriguez

Ladies, Ladies, Ladies... throw in your dish towel and pull out your beach towel! Join Café M. Bloomers on Sunday July 8th at 2:00 pm, and wave in the **HOT** summer with our **Bahamas Mamas Tea!**

Have some summer fun with *The Girls* and savor a special day with decadent sweets and treats prepared by Cafe M. Bloomers.

Adorn yourself with Hawaiian leis and Jamaican beads as you are escorted to your 'table in the tropics'.

Enjoy an atmosphere of the Bahamas, your lunch will continue with cool southern cucumber sandwiches and classic egg salad sandwiches.

To satisfy your sweet tooth, each table will be decorated with an array of sweet scones, fresh fruit tarts, chocolate covered strawberries and fruit bars.

Gather *The Girls!* Call Café M. Bloomers to reserve your seat for a taste of the tropics. \$17.00 pp plus tax & gratuity.

Seating is limited.

Make your reservations confirmed by credit card today!

Café M. Bloomers

(936) 870-3277



Summer in the Garden Luncheons & Demonstrations... Tricia Barksdale, Petals 'n Bloomers

Spend your summer in the garden! The first event will be **"Cut and Come Again Floral Luncheon"** on Monday, June 18 at 12 noon.

Petals 'n Bloomers will host an interactive luncheon that will start off with a stroll through the gardens here at Martha's Bloomers. Tricia Barksdale, Horticulturist, Floral Designer and owner of Petals 'n Bloomers will point out plants that will actually grow in this area of Texas and will work nicely in floral bouquets.

Cafe M. Bloomers will prepare a summer menu that will cool you off and please your palate. After the meal, Tricia will demonstrate methods of arranging the summer annuals, herbs and shrubs cut prior to the luncheon.

The table decorations (each one will be different) will inspire you to take this information and go home to fill your rooms with flowers! Join your friends at **"Cut and Come Again Floral Luncheon"** on Monday, June 18 at 12 noon. Cost is \$22.00 pp plus tax & gratuity.

Don't miss the **"Second Annual Luscious Lily Luncheon & Fund Raiser"** on Monday, July 16 at 12 noon. This fund raiser for Breast Cancer Awareness will begin with a scrumptious lunch by Cafe M. Bloomers.

Each table will be set differently using all kinds of lilies — Stargazers, Callas, Orientals, Peruvians, to name a few. After the meal, Tricia Barksdale, owner of Petals 'n Bloomers, will

demonstrate techniques for working with these majestic flowers. The lily has been adopted by the educational Breast Cancer Awareness organization because of its beauty and resiliency. Join us for our second year to herald this fine organization. Join us Monday, July 16 at 12 noon for **"Luscious Lily Luncheon"**. Cost will be \$22.00 pp plus tax & gratuity. Luncheon seating is limited.

Call Cafe M. Bloomers at **936-870-3277** to make your reservations confirmed by credit card.

Coming Soon! "Trunk Show & Book Review for Grandmother's Buttons", a twenty year old jewelry company. Susan Davis has turned the contents of her grandmother's button boxes into a nationally known jewelry company, selling in all 50 states. Her hand-made, eclectic jewelry has been sold in many prestigious museum shops and boutiques, as well as featured in national magazines.

In 1995, she turned St. Francisville, Louisiana's historic bank building into a retail store, button museum and jewelry studio. **Beautiful Button Jewelry** was published this spring as a culmination of Susan's journey. Watch our website and email announcements for the date and time of the **"Trunk Show & Book Review for Grandmother's Buttons"**.



"He who plants a garden plants happiness"...anonymous



Calendar of Events...

Saturday Seminars - and they are Free!

"Basil, Basil & More Basil" - Saturday, May 12 at 11 am. Presented by Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm.

"Tropical Gardens in Texas" - Saturday, June 2 at 11 am. Presented by A.B. and Linda Fields of Pecan Lake Farm.

"Attracting and Identifying Birds" - Saturday, June 9 at 11 am. Presented by Jerry Walls, Director of Christmas Creek Nature Preserve and Park Naturalist, Lake Houston Park.

"Snakes of All Kinds" - Saturday, July 14 at 11 am. Presented by Jerry Walls, Director of Christmas Creek Nature Preserve and Park Naturalist, Lake Houston Park.

"Lesson's from a Rose Rustler" - Saturday, Sept. 29 at 11 am. Presented by Mike Shoup, Antique Rose Emporium.

Luncheons, Teas, Book Reviews and other Special Events

"Mother's Day" Lunch - Sunday, May 13. Cafe M. Bloomers will offer a special Mother's Day Menu. Lunch will be served from 11 am to 4 pm. \$18.95 pp plus tax & gratuity. You may call ahead 30 minutes prior to the time you plan to arrive and we will put your name on our waiting list.

"Cut and Come Again Floral Luncheon" - Monday, June 18 at 12 noon. Presented by Tricia Barksdale, designer, Petals 'n Bloomers. \$22.00 pp plus tax & gratuity. Seating is limited. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.

"Bahamas Mamas Tea" - Sunday, July 8 from 2 pm to 4 pm. \$17.00 pp plus tax & gratuity. Seating is limited. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.

"Second Annual Luscious Lily Luncheon" - Monday, July 16 at 12 noon. Benefiting Breast Cancer Awareness. Presented by Tricia Barksdale, designer, Petals 'n Bloomers. \$22.00 pp plus tax & gratuity. Seating is limited. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.

"Trunk Show and Book Review for Grandmother's Buttons" - Date to be announced!

For luncheon & tea reservations confirmed by credit card,

call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277.

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.

We welcome your suggestions for future seminars.

Please email to: suggestions@MarthasBloomers.com

For Luncheon, Tea and Cooking Class reservations confirmed by credit card,
please call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277.



Store Hours Mon-Sat 9am - 6pm Sun 11am - 5pm Martha's Bloomers (936) 825-7400

Café M. Bloomers, a Tea Room (936) 870-3277

Cafe Open Tues-Sun (Closed Monday) Serving Lunch 11am - 3pm Desserts until 4pm

