

# LSHR Plant Report for 2015 Releases

By Glenda Balliviero

The 2015 LSHR release plants were rated by all of the members on a scale of 1 to 3, 3 being the highest. Having had a warm winter and also lots of rain were both pluses for the results of plant ratings. Another plus was more of the plants survived this year than in the past several years. The reports also indicated that more members were actually planting in pots versus the ground and were using the information on the release sheets in planting.

The plants voted as Tops for 2015 were:

# 1 Pelargonium 'Mary Helen' GERANIACEAE (Mary Helen Geranium) with a 2.47 out of 3.0



**#2 Salvia 'Silke's Dream' LAMIACEAE (Silke's Dream Salvia)**

**With a 2.39 out of 3.0**



**#3 Acalypha wilkesiana 'Musaica' EUPHORBIACEAE (Musaica Copper Plant) with a 2.38 out of 3.0**



**Below are the individual ratings for all 11 plants released in March of 2015. Both positive and negative remarks were reviewed and each member's rating was compiled together to come up with the overall ratings.**

**1. *Acalypha wilkesiana* 'Musaica' EUPHORBIACEAE (Musaica Copper Plant) ---2.38**

**This tropical shrub with large multi-colored leaves in shades of orange, bronze and green with red to orange markings was one of the favorites of the members. The beautiful variegated foliage colors were considered very different and showy. The continuous colored foliage throughout summer and fall was one of the highlights. Only a very few considered unattractive; however, never do 100 per cent think alike. Many were thrilled that it takes easily from cuttings thus making it possible to carry over. Only a very few had tiny insignificant flowers.**

**Insects/Disease: Mites, mealy bugs**

**2. *Alstroemeria psittacina* 'Variegata' ALSTROEMERIACEAE (Variegated Parrot Lily) ---2.32**

**This fast growing herbaceous perennial with gray-green leaves and irregular creamy edges was considered superb for the showy and beautiful foliage. Since it grows from rhizomes it was considered slow to start but gorgeous. Only very few reported flowers; however, most**

members reported planting in shade which of course would affect flowering. Several said it disappeared and never returned; however, it does go dormant in late summer and will be seen as spreading when it does emerge. Since the reports were submitted in March it is understandable that there was no sight of the plants. Of course it is necessary to put markers so that they are not overlooked and planted over. Propagation by division would be very easy should you want to have in other areas. Several reported they had composted because they were afraid to release in the garden due to its invasiveness. The release report indicated that it spread by rhizomes; therefore, planting in an area where it would be allowed to spread would be best. Unfortunately, armadillos were destructive to several plantings.

**Insects/Disease: Root rot. Snails and slugs loved it.**

### **3. Camellia sasanqua "October Magic Inspiration" THEACEAE (October Magic Inspiration Sasanqua) ---2.35**

These healthy upright shrubs produced medium to large double white beautiful ruffled flowers of great interest. The flower pattern edged in magenta-pink truly made a beautiful show. Many considered the dark green leaves with new bronzy-red foliage in spring a plus. Very few had blooms and many said very slow growing; however, most looked forward to future growth and blooms.

**Insects/Disease: Black spot on leaves, powdery mildew, sooty mold and snails**

**4. Clerodendrum wallichii VERBENACEAE (Bridal Veil Clerodendrum) --  
--- 2.18**

**The beauty of this vigorous shrub from foliage to flowers was hailed by most of the members. Spectacular, unique and abundant flowers on a vigorous growing plant were a great plus and since they produce late fall blooms they certainly would be welcome at that time of year.**

**The gorgeous loose panicles of white cascading flowers definitely are becoming to the common name Bridal Veil. If it was planted in part shade or in a pot which was placed in part shade it will be reaching a height of nearly 7'. Several wanted to have more of these beauties so they propagated by cuttings. Many indicated they survived drought. Several said died back in winter but in March was beginning to come back. One met up with a lawnmower and didn't survive.**

**Many felt that this should not have been a release due to its invasiveness. Lesson coming from the old retired teacher now: "Never judge a person by their family!" Each and every one of us is different and all must be given a chance to prove ourselves before being looked down on by others. Just like in families not all have the same characteristics. Some grow slowly while others shoot up like a bean stalk. Some are disciplined while others are unruly. Unfortunately, the name Clerodendrum was immediately related to the Cashmere flower that is very invasive. But then think of the Bleeding Heart which is so beautiful and impressive and yes, a Clerodendrum, too. With all the technology in today's world all one has to do is google the name and would have immediately gathered great information on this wonderful plant. Unfortunately, I lost mine and I would have been very glad to take those tossed out.**

**Insects/Disease: None**

**5. Hibiscus hamabo MALVACEAE (Yellow Hibiscus) --- 2.08**

**We take pride in saying that this perennial shrub was brought to America by Ken Durio, Opelousas horticulturist, and became a wonderful pass-along plant by the family. It dearly loved the heat as long as it was kept watered but was very slow to grow. Its beautiful deciduous leaves are impressive but only a few actually bloomed their first year. The bright yellow flowers with crimson centers were impressive. Many indicated leggy; however, full sun was indicated on the information sheet which certainly could have affected the shape and the blooming.**

**Insects/Disease: Spider mites, fungus, leaf drop and stem rot**

**6. Pelargonium 'Mary Helen' GERANIACEAE (Mary Helen Geranium) --  
--2.47**

**This old heirloom geranium variety from south Texas was considered the top plant of the 2015 releases. It was considered an Excellent plant, very vigorous and living up to its expectations of handling exceptional heat and drought tolerance. Several indicated they were the best geranium they had ever grown. Another plus was that they were considered exceptionally healthy plants when received. The clusters of beautiful flowers showed great variance in color ranging from medium-red to orange-red to dark pink flowers. The intermittent blooms throughout the year added even more beauty to**

the garden. Most members put in containers and many brought indoors to overwinter; however, the others left outdoors. Of course, this past winter was considered very mild so this may vary in ordinary years. Those placing in the ground in areas with good drainage were also well pleased. The beautiful foliage was also considered a great attribute. Those that planted in the shade indicated that they were leggy and a few others indicated that overwatering was destructive. Two great pluses were these plants were not able to be purchased commercially and propagation from cuttings was easy.

**Insects/Disease: None**

#### **7. Prunus x 'Purple Pride' ROSACEAE (Burgundy-Leafed Chickasaw Plum ---2.09**

The foliage was the characteristic that got the most attention with this plant. It was considered to have a beautiful leaf color, attractive foliage coloration and pretty burgundy leaves. Overall the majority considered not impressive indicating it was slow growing, skimpy branched, tall and leggy and not a full plant at all. No one reported blooms or fruit. One member planted at a family camp in Grand Isle.

**Insects/Disease: None**

#### **8. Salvia 'Silke's Dream' 2.39**

This salvia being a cross of *S. darcyi* x *S. microphylla* certainly was rated high by most. Butterflies and hummers were attracted to the tall 15" spikes of dark orange-red flowers and most of the members

loved it since it was a fast grower and a great bloomer with colorful showy flowers that were persistent in blooming till late fall. A few felt it was not as good a performer as expected and a couple said they had no flowers. Many bloomed throughout most of the past warm winter and most of those that died back were coming back in March. Many considered the foliage unattractive. One member said it was too thirsty for their garden.

**Insects/Disease: None**

#### **9. *Tabernaemontana divaricate* APOCYNACEAE (Pinwheel Jasmine) 2.31**

This perennial shrub with beautiful glossy-green foliage produced beautiful non-fragrant white five petaled whirly flowers in clusters. It grew fast and most indicated that the showy blooms were a favorite of many. Many planted in containers and brought indoors on cold nights. For those planting in the ground some carried over through winter and others took cuttings with most being successful. The greatest downfall was lack of fragrance.

**Insects/Disease: None**

#### **10. *Taxodium x LaNana* TAXODIACEAE (Hybrid Bald Cypress) 2.25**

This release was truly special since it is a Stephen F. Austin Gardens advanced selection from the breeding program on the Nanjing Garden of Nanjing China. Actually it has been known to grow up to 80+ feet. This cross of Montezuma Cypress and Bald Cypress was especially



selected for salt and alkalinity tolerance. Many felt they weren't distinctive (looked like other bald cypress) and actually didn't grow as quickly as predicted. One said it had grown to almost 5' along a ditch which was usually very wet. Those that planted in full sun grew much faster than in part shade. Many indicated they were not drought tolerant. The biggest highlight was there would be NO knees. More than half indicated that it never lost the foliage; thus, feeling it was very hardy. We must remember that this past winter was very warm. One planted in Grand Isle and another along the waterway (almost considered swampy area) of former community of Point Pleasant in Plaquemines Parish which tends to have mostly brackish water. One member's husband wants to make a Bonsai. Several said they were favorites in Texas.

**Insects/Disease: None**

#### **11. Turnera ulmifolia 'Trailing Yellow' TURNERACEAE (Creeping Buttercup 2.16**

Most members said this creeping form of yellow turnera with dark green foliage produced abundant flowers from spring through fall. There were just a couple who indicated it did not bloom. One member said hers spent the winter stashed in the greenhouse and it was still green thus able to bounce back. Several indicated that it didn't like dryness or hot sun, others said it was not drought tolerant and took time to recover once dried out while one indicated it melted in mid-day heat. The plant release form did indicate that it did not like afternoon sun. It was described by one as having nice sweet little blossoms. Most put in hanging baskets and some used as a ground

**cover. Several thought the leaves were beautiful and the prostrate growth pattern was a plus. A couple did propagate cuttings.**

**Insects/ Disease: None**