



COMPOST PILE

FOREVER IN FLOWER:

The Gardens of Glenda and Norman Balliviero

Excerpted from Louisiana Gardener magazine, July/August 2010
(Story by Betty Tujaque, Photos by Glenda Balliviero)

Upon retiring in 1996, Norman Balliviero could see his dream of traveling worldwide with Glenda, his wife, easily becoming a reality. But Glenda's thoughts on how to enjoy her leisurely days differed from her husband's as they focused on implementing lots of blooming plants around their home.

"Norman and I compromised by visiting the most noted gardens and flower shows in 28 countries and every state here," says Glenda, adding, "and in between, I get to tend to my flowers that cover 2 1/2 of our 4 acre piece of property.

As the site was previously an old homestead, there was some initial removal of unwanted trees which left live oaks, some of the pecans and good-sized camellias. Then with the aid of informative garden books and involvement in the Lafayette



Master Garden program for both, this adventuresome couple successfully crafted a marvelous array of color that transcends all four seasons.

Bridal wreath, alternating with pink Azalea indica 'Formosa' and 'Pride of Mobile', line the driveway that gracefully curves to meet the Acadian-styled home. To the right a large garden room

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Over the Garden Fence:

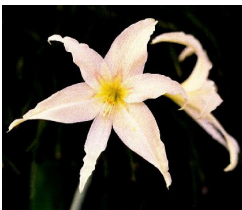
Comments on 2010 Plant Releases

Lantana is "running wild," variegated purple heart (wandering Jew) is "all over the place" and the performance of one rain lily has "exceeded highest expectations," according to reports from randomly chosen LSHR members who responded to a request for comments on the progress of their 2010 plant releases received last March. Not all reports were as enthusiastic.

Reporters included Leonard Lasseigne whose white cemetery iris grew profusely, and then turned up its toes and turned brown about 3 weeks ago. "Did it die, or did it go dormant?" he wonders.

His low-growing phlox bloomed profusely and now are multiplying. To his disappointment, neither the rain lilies nor the oxblood lily even sprouted. As a consolation, the seedlings of the pleated palm grass,

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From the President's Desk



Hope your summer has been going well and you are taking very good care of your plant releases that you received in March. It has been very hot and dry in Iowa, LA. We are, at this point, 12 inches below normal on our rainfall.

Since we experienced such a hard, cold winter, we probably shouldn't be complaining about the summer weather. I have noticed that many of my plants in the garden are blooming more profusely than they ever have before. Today I photographed a white bauhinia that was given to me by a friend from Houston a few years ago. This is the best bloom season that it has ever had. (See photo)



Keep cool and hydrated as you care for your plant treasures. We don't want to hear that you had a heat stroke while outside watering.

Marga

2011 ANNUAL MEETING DATE AND LOCATION ANNOUNCED

Mark your calendar for the next Annual Meeting to be held March 26, 2011, at the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center in Lafayette. You will be provided with details regarding the speaker and luncheon reservations in a later issue of the Compost Pile.

NOMINATIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS AND HORTICULTURE AWARD RECIPIENTS MUST BE POSTMARKED BEFORE NOVEMBER 1

Instructions for placing names in nomination are published elsewhere in this issue.

PLANT RELEASE REPORT FORM

The revised form that you received with your summer newsletter has a space to list plants that you would like to see included among later releases. Please record your wish list.

If needed, blank report forms will be available by mail prior to the meeting by contacting Ann Justice, 202 Briargate Circle, Lafayette, LA 70503. An electronic

form can be e-mailed to you if requested from ajustice@bellsouth.net. The electronic form permits the member to type in the information, copy it, and turn in a copy of the completed form at the Annual Meeting.

REPORT ON 2009 PLANT RELEASES

The suspense is over! Thanks to Rebecca Moss the results of the polling on the 2009 plant releases has been compiled and are published elsewhere in this issue. See which releases got the highest points.

LSHR MAIL AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

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Kumquats, the Smallest of the Citrus Fruits, are as Easy to Grow as to Love

Both the Nagmi kumquat (*Fortunella margarita*) and the Meiwa kumquat (*F. crassifolia*) enjoy the climate of our humid coastal South. Reaching a height of six to eight feet, they grow best in full- to part-sun, in light, porous soil with good drainage and a pH of about 6.

The trees are available in nurseries and usually planted in winter from mid-December to mid-February. Balled or container-grown, they should be planted so that the tree sits at least two-inches higher than it was in the nursery to allow for settling. A saucer of soil around the trunk will slow run-off of water.

In early spring and again in June, the trees should be fed with a fertilizer formulated for citrus plants, or with a 5-10-5 plant food that contains trace elements. Fertilizer should be applied under the trees and just outside the spread of the branches so that the feeder roots that lie near the surface can assimilate nutrients.

Mulching all year with pine straw or a similar organic material protects fine feeder roots and retains moisture.

When the trees have become established, the inner branches can be thinned out and the outer branches lightly pruned to the desired shape. After this initial pruning, only trimming of dead or withered branches should be necessary.

Unlike picking oranges and grapefruits, when kumquats are picked in quantity for later use, they are



removed by clipping with scissors. When pulled away from the stem, an open scar forms on the fruit, inviting spoilage.

Because kumquats flower on new wood, cutting the fruit with the leaves attached is a beneficial form of pruning employed by commercial growers.

Kumquat trees, which are hardier than other citrus, will survive temperatures as low as 18 degrees, but not for many days. Gardeners in cool climates often grow the trees in large pots, wintering the plants indoors near a sunny window or in a greenhouse.

Indoors, the need for water decreases. Fertilizing once a month with 20-20-20, or applying a slow-release fertilizer in spring and again in summer, encourages indoor fruit production.



Nominate New Members and Candidates for the Horticultural Medallion Award Before November 1

- Nominations should be sent to membership committee chair, Dr. Ellis Fletcher, 341 Orangewood Dr., Lafayette, LA 70503 or USLFletch@cox.net or LSHR@cox.net.
- Nominations will be accepted any time. They will be voted on by the Board of Directors at the Fall Board Meeting and must be postmarked prior to November 1st of each year.
- Nomination of an individual for membership is acceptable by e-mail since the date of electronic mailing is indicated. Reasons for nomination are not required.
- Nomination of an individual for the Horticultural Medallion Award requires a post-marked envelope along with the letter of recommendation and a handwritten signature. It is mandatory to include reasons justifying the nomination of an individual for the Horticultural Medallion Award.

KUMQUAT MARMALADE

Scrub, cut into quarters and remove seeds from enough kumquats to be equivalent to two large Valencia oranges (about 2 cups kumquats). Do the same with 2 large lemons. Simmer both fruits together in 3 cups water for 5 minutes. Let stand, covered, for 12-18 hours in a cool place.

Reserve water and remove fruit. Chop fruit coarsely in a food processor. Return fruit to the water in which it was soaked, and boil one hour. For each cup of fruit and water mixture, add 1 cup sugar. Boil until the juice is at the point of jelling, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat. The mixture will continue to jell as it cools. This should fill 4 jelly glasses.



FOREVER IN FLOWER

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enclosure houses a mature Chinese fringe tree along with a redbud, Taiwan cherry, crabapple and pavonia. Growing up the imposing metal arbors are *Solanum jasminoides* (white potato vine) and *Passiflora foetida* (love-in-a-mist passion vine). Eight antique roses also share the expansive space with a mixture of clematis vines. Grouped in a circular bed are 30 varieties of daylilies.

Upon exiting through the exterior gate, the casual stroller is beckoned further by the orchard of sumptuous fruit-bearing trees and shrubs. Fig, pear, loquat, orange, lemon and persimmon are flanked by rows of blueberry and blackberry bushes. A small veggie garden nearby offers produce in both warm and cool periods.

"My garden is my bit of heaven," claims Glenda as she enthusiastically expounds on the attributes of her Japanese magnolia 'Jon Jon', *Cassia splendida*, *Loropetalum chinense* and yellow *Rosa Banksia* (Lady Banks' rose). Sentimental value is attached to many of her plants since she has received rare offerings from other gardeners. She also has fond family memories, such as a handsome Southern magnolia seeded by their granddaughter, Abbey.



Willing to experiment beyond the zone she resides in, Glenda holds bragging right to the boundless bloom in spring of her pink rhododendron, as well as her Kwanzan and Yoshino cherry trees. With the extreme cold temperatures of the preceding winter, even the yellow-flowering forsythia made an impressive display.

As the heat of summer slips in, hydrangeas, gingers and a *Bauhinia galpinii* (red orchid tree) illuminate the left side of the home, while daylilies, lantana and plumbago herald the passerby near the road.

Bringing it all together are the perfect light-hearted and whimsical touches in the form of statuary and ornamental features. They focalize and create interesting vignettes when centered in a mixed group of plants in both shady and sunny locations.

The best asset to the garden though is Norman, who has built the beds, along with the fences and arbors. Their time together in the garden is always shared with Snuggles, the dog, and Socks, the cat. After 23 years of teaching young children, Glenda now views her plants in the same way, as truly a labor of love.

COMMENTS

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released several years ago, are volunteering all over the place. Leonard suggests that these may need a firm hand.

Aline Arceneaux reports some successes, but like most of us, some failures, as well. Looking first at the failures, the copper rain lily bulb is still there but has not sprouted. There were two vitex in her release box. She planted one in front of the house and the other on the side of the house, they have both died.

However, all of her Prairie Sunset bulbs came up and have re-bloomed, and although her purple heart has not bloomed, it has shown increase.

President Margo Racca up-potted her release plants immediately, and she swears that they, like the lantana, are all growing and most blooming. She is especially enchanted by the little purple blooms of #8, the *Vitex rotundifolia*. Foliage on #6, the Oxblood lily, is only about 6 inches high but she has great hopes that it will be mature enough to bloom next spring.

Margo's purple heart is not only wandering but blooming. She has grown this one before and claims that the variegation is exceptional and that it loves the south Louisiana climate.

Ellis Fletcher does us proud with an amazing report on the Prairie Sunset rain lily. He planted a group of bulbs of the release *Zephyranthes* 'Prairie Sunset' in a community pot and declares that they have exceeded expectations.

The bulbs were obtained from our 2010 speaker, Chris Wiesinger, a collector of southern bulbs and owner of Southern Bulb Company. Every bulb not only produced a perfect flower but has re-bloomed.

Prairie Sunset is rumored to have multiple cycles of re-bloom during the season. Buds are a deep rosy-pink and flowers open to a peachy apricot, fading to a light pink. As color fades, there are about a dozen nearly parallel darker "veins" running the length of each floral segment. Seed, sown immediately upon ripening, germinated rapidly and with high viability.

Only time will reveal if seedlings are true to the parental form as 'Prairie Sunset' reportedly is a hybrid between *Z. 'Capricorn'* and *Z. candida*.

2009 PLANT RELEASE REPORTS

While 2009 may not have had the hurricanes of years past (thank you!!), it had its own trials, especially the longest and coldest winter this area has seen in quite some time. The freezes and extended cold took its toll on many members' 2009 plant releases. Every year some plant loss & variations in growth is expected but this year many members reported losing several of their releases. These losses made writing this report more difficult than years past. Based upon the reports received, there was no clear favorite among members this year, with several plants having averages in the range of 7.3-8.3. Least favorite was clearly the *Podocarpus* though it had a few fans including one member said it had 'good fall color' and another who said 'it grew like crazy' left it outside in a pot without watering over the winter'. Most members found it very slow growing.

1. *Callicarpa dichotoma* 'Duet' VERBENACEAE (Chinese White-Fruited Beautyberry) – Avg. 6.4; Many lost to winter weather or other causes but those that survived ranged from 8"-36" tall; did not bloom the 1st year. Pests/Problems: None.

2. *Gardenia augusta* 'Fukurinkoba' RUBIACEAE (Variegated Japanese Gardenia) – Avg. 7.7; Plants were reported to have tolerated the cold (some with minimal protection); also found to be 'very attractive with nice variegation', 'amazing plant'. Pests/Problems: None.

3. *Leucocseptrum japonicum* 'Golden Angel' LAMIACEAE (White Shrub Mint) – Avg. 6.3; Along with the *Callicarpa*, this plant had the highest losses. For the plants that survived, members reported sizes from 6"x 24" to 12" x 24"; also they liked the showy foliage. Pests/Problems: None.

4. *Michelia figo* ssp. *skinneriana* MAGNOLIACEAE (Skinner's Banana Shrub) – Avg. 7.3; 'Great plant with nicer growth and flower than older *M. figo*'; sizes ranged from 10"-36" with most reported as 24" tall. Pests/Problems: One member reported powdery mildew; freeze damage to leaves.

5. *Ocimum citriodorum* 'Pesto Perpetuo' LAMIACEAE (Variegated Basil) – Avg. 8.3; 'beautiful color and texture', 'lights up a shade area', 'wonderful scent', 'loved it – it made great pesto'. Pests/Problems: None.

6. *Pittosporum tobira* 'Shiina' PITTOSPORACEAE (Variegated Dwarf Pittosporum) – Avg. 6.0; Did not seem to grow well for many members but for others it was very healthy (8"-12"). Pests/Problems: white flies were reported by a member.

7. *Podocarpus lawrencii* 'Purple King' PODOCARPACEAE (Purple King Podocarpus) – Avg. 5.1; Most reported that it grew little or not at all, but for one member it grew 'like crazy' when it was left outside all winter in a pot without additional watering; 'good fall color'. Pests/Problems: None.

8. *Reineckia carnea* LILIACEAE (Japanese Lilyturf) – Avg. 6.3; Members found it 'vigorous', 'tough, not bothered by winter', 'great plant', but 'did not bloom'; others did not like its resemblance to *Carex*, *Liriope*, & 'nut grass'. Pests/Problems: 'leaves eaten up by insects' (pest not identified) according to a member.

9. *Ruellia graecizans* ACANTHACEAE (Red Spray Ruellia) – Avg. 7.7; Members reported it blooming throughout the summer, some continuously; 'thriving in the shade', 'tough', & 'thriving despite drought'. Pests/Problems: A couple of members voiced concerns over reseeding and possible invasiveness; No other problems reported.

10. *Sedum* 'Neon' CRASSULACEAE (Neon Sedum) – Avg. 7.8; 'beautiful pink blooms', 'great flower color', 'tough' & 'has multiplied'. Pests/Problems: None



From the Compost Pile Editor

With all the talented gardeners, horticulturists and research scholars among our members, I would hope that we could publish more from you and less from me.

Please inundate me with your writings, opinions, events, pictures to broaden our content. LSHR is blessed with not only talent, but that rare commodity, cash, to publish whatever our hearts' desire in the way of a magazine that reflects horticultural research in our region, our state and in our country. I'm counting on you to make this a publication that earns a position of respect among our peers.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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From the Editor's Desk

A Favorite Plant Release

A Favorite Plant Release

By Ellis Fletcher

Penstemon tenuis, a 1989 LSHR Plant Release, is one of my all-time favorites. Numerous, lavender to violet-purplish blooms, about 3/4 inch long, adorn spikes of the native Gulf Coast Penstemon or Beard Tongue. Seedlings with lighter colored flowers, some almost pure white, are not uncommon.

Although heaviest flowering occurs from early spring to early summer, blooms may be enjoyed nearly all year as a result of prolific self-seeding and the practice of dead-heading. Deadheading not only promotes flowering later in the season but eliminates unwanted seedling development.

Long-lasting spikes, often 18-20 inches tall, serve well as cut flowers. In the photograph, there were 187 potential or actual flowers (tight buds, expanding, open, spent and seed capsules). These short-lived perennials may be grown successfully as annuals. Plants are completely hardy and are tolerant of soil reaction and soil type. Although tolerant of soil moisture and light intensity, best performance normally occurs in partial shade. Flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

