



*SFA Mast*  
**Arboretum News**  
*Spring 2004*

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## Garden Gala Day Coming Soon!

*By Dawn Parish, SFA Mast Arboretum Research Associate*

Our spring Garden Gala Day plant sale is scheduled for April 17, and it is approaching quickly! The sales started off quietly in May of 1986 as an end of the year clean out of the greenhouses by the horticulture club. There was one card table, some lemonade and one faithful customer, Dr. Creech's mother. Word slowly spread and the sales grew. Hundreds of hungry plant enthusiasts quickly outgrew the greenhouse facilities, and then outgrew the grounds surrounding the greenhouse facilities. A few animated words and finger pointing led us to where we are today 18 years later. Mrs. Creech still comes, as do several hundred gardeners from near and far. Using the SFA intramural fields has allowed us to spread our wings for the past few sales and has helped alleviate SOME frustration. We will always have passionate gardeners vying for the last plant of a particular variety; at least now we have a little more elbow room. We are offering a huge selection of plant material and are using every available growing space to try to provide enough of each variety. So if you miss the rush at 9 a.m., there will hopefully be enough plant material to go around!

The Remains, a local musical group, will start off the sale with "Foggy Mountain Breakdown", and will continue to entertain the crowd with family-friendly, folksy music. The arboretum will be in prime form for self-guided tours or picnics. You will see many of the plants in the sale featured in

our 20 acres of trial gardens. Our goal is to offer the toughest plants around, and our extensive trials ensure that we do just that. An added bonus is the lovely setting valued by green or black thumbs, and everyone in between. If you've participated in the sales, and not visited the gardens, I invite you to do so soon!

### ***Plants in the Sale Spotlight!***

#### **Colorful Foliage**

*Alternanthera dentata* 'Rubiginosa' and 'Tricolor' – Bloodleaf - Heat tolerant annuals with unbeatable purple foliage. Mix with bright colors of coleus, pentas, Mexican sunflowers, and Indian Summer *Rudbeckia*.

*Hibiscus acetosella* 'Jungle Red' – Bright coppery-red, dissected foliage. Grows quickly and lasts a long time as foliage interest in flower arrangements.

*Hibiscus tileaceus* 'Tricolor' – Beach Hibiscus - Lack of bloom is made up for with brightly variegated foliage and bronze new growth. Although this hibiscus is best treated as an annual, plants will reach 6-8 feet in no time.

*Oxalis regnellii* 'Triangularis' –



Purple Wood Sorrell – These purple shamrocks are the treasure in any garden and are complemented with pretty lavender flowers.

## Fragrance

*Brugmansia candida* – White Angel’s Trumpet – Huge white trumpets offer a heavenly fragrance in the evenings. Blooms heavily in spring and late fall.

*Cestrum nocturnum* - Night Blooming Jasmine – Unassuming greenish-white flowers surprise with a sweet, candy-like fragrance from late afternoon into the night.

*Chimonanthus praecox* – Fragrant Winter Sweet – Just when you’re ready for spring, this early blooming, deciduous shrub offers small, waxy, yellow flowers that smell better than any perfume in a bottle.

*Hedychium spp.* – Butterfly Gingers – Honeysuckle can’t compare to the wonderful fragrance of the butterfly gingers. Colors range from white, to yellow, to pink.

*Hymenocallis* x ‘Tropical Giant’ – Giant Spider Lily – This plant makes a very bold statement with huge, succulent leaves, and outstanding white flowers.

## Butterflies

*Agastache* ‘Blue Fortune’ – Anise Hyssop – We have been so pleased with this hybrid

*Agastache*. It’s much more tolerant of our humidity and doesn’t

disappoint with dense, blue flower spikes. Butterflies and honeybees alike value the nectar.



*Aristolochia spp.* – Dutchman’s Pipe – Not only do these vines have super-unusual flowers, they are the larval host plant for the pipevine swallowtail.

*Asclepias spp.* - Milkweed- Bright orange flowers are an excellent nectar source, AND plants are host to monarch larvae.

*Echinacea purpurea* – Purple Coneflower – Large orange cones surrounded by reflexed purple petals make an irresistible combination for butterflies looking for nectar. We see more different butterfly species on this plant than on any other.



*Lantana* cultivars – Lantana – The tubular nature of these brightly colored flowers just beg for a visit from hungry butterflies.

*Monarda spp.* – Bee Balm – Highly unusual red or purple flowers are often covered with butterflies. Foliage is fragrant when crushed and makes an excellent herbal tea.



*Passiflora citrina* - Yellow Passionflower – This vine is a host plant for the Gulf Fritillary butterfly.

*Pentas lanceolata* – Pentas, Egyptian Star Flower – Clusters of bright red or pink star shaped flowers make a great landing spot for nectar seeking butterflies. Pentas are an excellent cut flower as well.

*Phlox paniculata* – Sweetly scented flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds, and are excellent cut flowers.



*Salvia spp.* – Sage or Salvia – Salvias are excellent all around plants. They’re long blooming, brightly colored, great nectar sources, and unique cut flowers.

*Tithonia rotundifolia* ‘Fiesta del Sol’ – Mexican Sunflower – You may have to swat your way through the butterflies to see these bright orange, daisy-like flowers. Fiesta del Sol is a more compact selection of this easy to grow annual.

## Shade

*Anemone* sp. 'Alice' – Pink Anemone – A graceful addition to the woodland garden with long lasting pink flowers and nicely textured foliage. It won't disappoint!

*Aquilegia chrysantha* – Yellow Columbine – Perfect for deciduous shade, these cool season perennials offer spurred yellow flowers in mid- to late spring.

*Camellia* spp. – Camellias – We are offering some selections from our extensive camellia collection in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden.

*Farfugium japonicum* (formerly *Ligularia tussilaginea*) – Leopard Plant – These clumping shade lovers make a unique, non-invasive, groundcover. We are offering seedlings from our collection and have some truly unique forms available.

*Hydrangea macrophylla* cultivars – Hydrangea – We've picked the best of the best from our vast *Hydrangea* trials in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. Mopheads, lacecaps, and other unusual forms are included.

*Hydrangea quercifolia* – Oakleaf Hydrangea – this popular *Hydrangea*, native to the southeastern US, offers large white blooms, great fall color, and interesting bark, making its interest last beyond one season.

*Pachysandra terminalis* 'Green Sheen' – We have been very pleased with this shade loving ground cover for quite some time. Plants spread, but not aggressively, and reach a manageable height of 6 inches.

*Strobilanthes dyerianus* - Persian Shield – A colorful annual for the shade. Long, lance-shaped leaves are a dark, iridescent purple that adds a punch of color in places we don't expect it.



## Native

*Gaillardia aestivalis* var. *winkleri* 'Grape Sensation' – Purple Selection of Winkler's White Firewheel – This endangered species is easy to grow despite its classification. Purple petals surround dark purple centers.



*Gaura lindheimeri* 'Pink' – Pink Gaura – Spikes of pink flowers bloom freely throughout the summer. Deadhead to encourage repeat bloom.

*Hibiscus coccineus* – Texas Star Hibiscus – A native, perennial hibiscus with bright red flowers.

*Hibiscus dasycalyx* – 'Neches River Rose Mallow' – A perennial hibiscus with pretty white flowers sporting a dark red throat.

*Liatris pycnostachia*, *L. spicata* – Gayfeather – Tall spikes of dense purple blooms are perfect cut flowers and attract butterflies.

*Phlox nivalis* ssp. *texensis* – Texas Trailing Phlox – This endangered phlox offers a literal carpet of bright pink blooms from March into April.

*Rhynchospora latifolia* - Star Rush – This grass-like native has bright white bracts resembling shooting stars. They prefer a wet, sunny spot.



*Rudbeckia maxima* – Swamp Coneflower – Evergreen, silvery foliage makes a pretty backdrop for towering stems of bright yellow flowers. Likes wet feet, but easily tolerates average garden soils.

## Roses

*Rosa* "Caldwell Pink" – Found Rose – This petite shrub rose offers a multitude of bluish pink flowers. Excellent for low hedges.

*Rosa* 'Mutabilis' – China Rose – Often called the butterfly rose, this ever blooming variety boasts orange buds, opening with yellow petals, “fading” to light pink, and finally to a dark pink.



*Rosa* 'New Dawn' – Climbing Rose – This rose boasts the title of the first plant ever patented. Thank goodness patents run out in 20 years, and it was patented in 1920. A vigorous climber with big clusters of soft pink flowers will look good on any archway or arbor.

## Outstanding Annuals

*Angelonia angustifolia* 'Hilo Princess' – Summer Snapdragon – Hot weather seems to make this cheerful tropical produce even more bright purple flowers. An occasional shearing will bring out even more blossoms.

*Cleome hasslerana* - Spider Flower – Tall, yet narrow plants offer an excellent punctuation, peeking through other plants in heirloom or cottage gardens. Flowers resemble long-legged spiders with their graceful, wavy stamens.

*Coleus* – Sun Coleus – Brightly colored foliage is the name of the game. Many selections are available to fit the color combination you are looking for. Plant with Purple Fountain Grass, Pentas, Indian Summer Rudbeckia, Mexican Sunflower, and Melampodium for a bold statement.

*Nicotiana glauca* - Flowering Tobacco – These compact hybrids offer spikes of pretty, star-shaped flowers. We have a dark pink, white, and peach.

*Orthosiphon stamineus* – Cat Whiskers – Extraordinary flowers have prominent stamens that extend like the whiskers of a kitty cat. Heat-tolerant and excellent as a cut flower.



*Ricinus communis* – Purple Castor Bean – Towering plants easily reach 7 to 10 feet in one summer. Sometimes more. Bold, dark burgundy foliage looks kind of like a Japanese Maple on steroids. Stand back and give this guy some room!



*Tecoma stans* 'Yellow Bells' – Esperanza – Bright, yellow tubular flowers are sure to catch everyone's eye. This plant can't quite decide if it's a shrub or a vine, so be creative. Make a standard, keep it trimmed and bushy, or offer a pretty metal structure for some support.

*Torenia fournieri* – Wishbone Flower – What a cute addition to the annual scene! Small, cup-shaped flowers have lightly colored throats with dark, contrasting lips. Provide with afternoon shade in the summer. Excellent container plants!

*Turnera ulmifolia* – Yellow Alder – Pretty, bright yellow flowers contrast well with dark, shiny green foliage. Flowers open in the day and close at night with a succession of new flowers appearing each day.