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The Vine Line

Greetings to all,

Hope everyone is having a good summer. For those who have children, summer is coming to a close, as most schools resume in a couple of weeks.

This has been a challenging summer in regards to the weather. Our wet and cold winter (for the Mid-South) turned into a wet spring and a fairly hot and wet summer. The rain made it difficult for us to get spring plantings accomplished in a timely manner and the heat has been great for insects, weeds and fungal diseases. The weather has certainly taken a toll on trees both large and small. Seems like every storm there have been downed branches and more clean up than is normal. We did a lot of replacement planting of shrubs this spring. Both Camellias and Gardenias were hard hit.

On the positive side, most tree have put on more new growth than usual. In spite of predictions to the contrary, it has been a banner year for Hydrangeas of all types. The Paniculata hydrangeas are at peak right now- really a sight to behold! We are starting to make preparations for fall. Spring flowering bulbs have been ordered and so have winter flowering annuals, such as dianthus, wall flowers and violas. We will start planting these in early October and finish with tulips in early December. We are also making preparations for our fall plant sale which will be the first Friday and Saturday in October. Remember most perennials, trees and shrubs grow best if planted in the fall. They will be busy growing roots throughout the winter and will be well established the following spring.

In this issue, Sherri McCalla will tell you about how to stay hydrated while gardening in the summer heat and at the same time doing it with an herbal twist ! Kacie Crain will talk about what it is like to be a Summer Intern at the Memphis Botanic Garden. Jim Crowder has some great information about Coleus. Not that many years ago Coleus, were available in just a few varieties and all of them had to be grown in the shade. Now there seems to be an endless selection, some are for shade and some for sun, so you can plant coleus wherever you need a splash of colorful foliage. Finally Bo Kelley, the newest member of our Horticulture Team and our new Arborist, will tell you a little bit about himself. We are pleased to welcome him to our staff.

Wishing everyone a great end to summer. Remember Labor Day is only about a month away!

Happy gardening,

Rick

The Colorful World of Coleus (Solenostemon and Plectranthus spp.)



Coleosaurus

Once upon a time their botanical name was Coleus. It was a small mounding shade plant with multi-colored foliage and available in a couple of colors. It bloomed early and if you didn't pinch the blooms out, it's growth slowed down as it set seed.

Now, after years of hybridizing, crossing, back-crossing, trial and error and a good bit of luck, we have varieties that are short to tall, for shade to sun and in a wide range of colors. Plant them when you plant Caladiums. Soil temperature needs to be 60° and rising.

Coleus prefer a well-drained but moist soil. Most sun Coleus will survive in the shade, but shade Coleus wilt and cook quickly in our sun. Many new varieties are very late to bloom (if at all), but still pinch out the bloom so it continues to produce foliage.

For Shade:

The Wizard Series – These are some of the best for shady areas. They are dwarf, about 10" tall and wide with heart shaped leaves. There are a number of individual colors (Jade, Rose, Velvet Red, Golden, Coral Sunrise, Scarlet, Sunset and more) but most often you see a mix, both in seed and plants. Most of them have a slightly lobed margin, a picotee edge and a contrasting leaf color. They seldom flower and need little to no pinching. Super plant for containers.

The Under The Sea Series – There are nineteen currently in this series and the foliage is very unusual. "Bone Fish" has a magenta leaf with a chartreuse edge that is deeply lobed. It does indeed look like a fish skeleton and grows to 12" tall. "Copper Coral" has the same shape and edge with a copper-red midrib and grows to 18" tall. "Fish Net" (to 18") has a stunning chartreuse leaf with a purple midrib and veins plus a unique filigree edge. "Gold Anemone" can grow to 24" tall and it has a green-gold leaf, edged in purple and deeply lobed. My favorite is "Lime Shrimp." It has narrow, sea green leaves that are deeply lobed and edged in purple. Mature height is around 18". "Lion Fish" has narrow purple leaves with a touch of green and red. It's a tall variety to 24' or more. "Sea Urchin Copper" is a mini coleus that has narrow, willow like leaves that are a pinkish orange and grows to 6" tall. "Electric Coral, King Crab, Pink Reef, Red Coral, Sea Monkey Apricot, Sea Monkey Purple, Sea Monkey Rust, Sea Urchin Neon, Sea Urchin Red, Sea Weed, Sun Fish and Yellowfin Tuna" complete the series.

For Sun:

The Premium Sun Series – There are at least nine and probably more in this series. They are of medium height, around 20", do well in shade and in full sun in areas with high humidity. Leaves are prone to scorch in hot, dry weather so keep them watered well. There is a wide range of colors in this series with luscious names like "Chocolate Covered Cherry, Chocolate Symphony, Pineapple Surprise, Lime Delight and Chocolate Mint" along with descriptive names like "Crimson Gold, Mighty Mosaic, Rose Lime Magic and Under The Sun." "Abigail" – This is a stunning variety with olive green foliage and the midrib, veins and edge are purple. The more sun, the more intense the purple is. Grows to around 24" tall.

"Alabama Sunset" – New growth emerges bright yellow and matures to a reddish-orange with flecks of yellow. Grows to 24" or more.

"Beckwith's Gem" – Leaf has a wide burgundy midrib, some flecks of green and a wide bright yellow edge. It grows 18" –

The Superfine Rainbow Series – There are six different colors in this series. They grow to about 15” tall, require little pinching and bloom very late in the season. Two outstanding cultivars are “Volcano” which is a deep orange red with just a hint of gold on the edge and “Multicolor” which has irregular splashes of red, yellow, pink and burgundy on a green background.

The Giant Exhibition Series – This is available in a mix or as one of five different cultivars. These are dwarf plants, about 15” tall, but have very large leaves. Most of the leaves are 6” or more long and 4” wide. “Magma” looks like a larger version of “Volcano” above, “Palisandra” is a deep purple, “Limelight, Marble and Rustic Red” complete the series.

The Kong Series – This series is known for it’s extremely large foliage, often 12” long and nearly as wide. There are five colors sold as well as a mix of all know as “Empire Mix”. These grow to around 20” tall, branch well and form a nice, well rounded overall shape. There is also a “**Kong Jr.**” series. A little shorter and with foliage about 30% smaller.

The Fairway Series – This is a very dwarf series that only grows to about 8” tall. It branches well and flowers late. It’s available as “Fairway Mix or Fairway Mosaic, Orange, Red Velvet, Rose, Ruby or Yellow”. It’s a great addition to a mixed container.

24” tall and the contrasting colors are real eye-catchers.

“Campfire” – Stunning deep orange leaves to 36” tall. Fabulous, fast growing background plant for large swaths of color.

“Darth Vader” – This is a tall, narrow variety to 24”. The foliage is narrow, irregularly serrated with a deep purple midrib and a chartreuse edge.

“El Brighto” – This one reminds me of a Rex Begonia. It has a deep purple center which is surrounded by red and a scalloped thin yellow border. Grows to 24” tall.

“Haines” - This variety has a vibrant light pink leaf with a maroon center. Grows to 24” tall.

“Oxford Street” - Bright red serrated leaves, with a narrow lime green edge. This is a shorter variety to 15” or so and it branches really well and low, which makes it a good candidate for sunny containers.

“Redhead” – Large, peachy red leaves that become more intense red in strong sun. A good background coleus at 36” tall.

“Royalty” – This one stands out in a crowd. Hot pink leaves with a dark purple serrated edge. Grows to about 18” tall.

For containers, consider some of the trailing coleus: “Trailing Burgundy, Garnet Robe, Plum Brocade, Psycholeus, Trailing Red and Salamander”. There are hundreds of varieties on the market now. Any height, any color, for any exposure!

By Jim Crowder

Below are some varieties we planted here this year.



Henna



Indian Summer



Wasabi

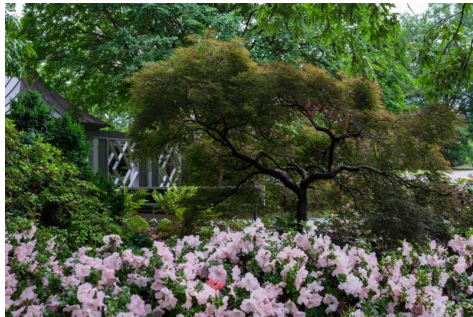


Meet the Garden's new Arborist Bo Kelly

My employment at Memphis Botanic Garden began through an internship, where I experienced the regular maintenance and upkeep of the grounds by assisting members of the horticulture department staff. I am in the process of completing the requirements for a doctoral degree in biology at the University of Memphis.

I began my internship with the intention of transitioning into a full-time position to be trained as an arborist and I believe my background in biology will allow me to learn to identify and understand common health issues that may affect the trees through the grounds.

Currently, I am curating the Live area of the garden throughout the Live at the Garden Summer Concert Series. In addition to daily horticulture duties there, I have been conducting basic tree care throughout the gardens, which include: pruning dead limbs, removing detached hanging limbs, and removing dead trees. I have also begun pruning the Yoshino Cherry trees along Cherry Road in effort to ensure their health and maintain their beauty. Through MBG, I plan to continue learning not only tree identification, but also appropriate care techniques on my way to becoming a certified arborist.



Hello fellow gardeners,

I hope you all are enjoying the summer, even on the hot days! As one of the horticultural interns at the Memphis Botanic Garden, I want to take the time to introduce myself.

My name is Kacie Crain, and I have lived near the Memphis area for all my life. I graduated from Northwest Community College in 2015 and transferred schools in 2016. I will now be entering my final year at Mississippi State University. I am pursuing a bachelor's degree in horticulture, with a concentration in floriculture and ornamentals. I will be graduating in May of 2019.

The Memphis Botanic Garden was the first facility to come to mind when I began searching for an internship. Along with the diversity the garden



"Fauxade" to Keep Cool

I saw a humorous posting the other day about how hot it has been lately (ex: 8am Hot, 11am Surface of Mars, 2pm The Face of the Sun, 8pm Monsoon, Repeat), and heartily agree with the sentiment. It has been hot and humid; day in and day out. This is the time of the year most of us in Horticulture take a good loooong look at what we do for a living, and why.

We work in conditions that no sane person would accept (the general

offers, beauty radiates from every acre of the grounds. This internship would not have been possible without the sponsorship and funding of the Little Garden Club. I cannot express enough how excited I was to be chosen as an intern for the gardens. These past few months have been incredibly educational, and I have gained some much-needed experience in my career field. It has been a pleasure and a blessing to have this opportunity.

A majority of my time has been devoted to caring and maintaining the Little Garden Club Sensory Garden. The beginning of my internship started with preparing the flower beds for seasonal plantings to create focal points throughout the garden. We incorporated Angelonia, Caladiums, Coleus, Pennisetum, Scaevola, and Torenia to keep the formal design of the garden. As part of my experience at MBG, I have also been asked to complete a project for the Sensory Garden. With the support of the Little Garden Club and inspiration from my boss, Kyle McLane, we decided on creating a brochure for the garden.

The brochure will be used to inform the MBG visitors about the purpose behind the design and construction of the Sensory Garden. Our brochure will also list certain plants and trees of the garden. Additionally, the brochure will include pictures that complement the landscapes. I am thrilled to complete this project.

I hope that the contributions I make to the garden will become permanent additions for MBG.

Have a great rest of the summer!

By Kacie Crain, MBG intern



consensus is that there is no sane Horticulturist!). How do we manage (the heat, not the insanity)? We drink water, and electrolyte drinks, and more water, and electrolyte drinks, and, well, you get the picture. We try to alternate working in the blazing sun with working in the shade. Whenever we can, we take our breaks in an air conditioned building for a few moments. I, personally, keep telling myself that some poor souls have to spend good money to sweat out impurities in a sauna!

As you guys know by now, I pretty much live in the Herb Garden. I decided that there just had to be a better alternative to that sickly sweet electrolyte beverage that was developed for Florida football players (have you READ those ingredients? *shudder*).

I make an easy, quick, herbal "Fauxade" that I have been drinking lately and it seems to help. I make my usual cold-press herbal water by taking a handful of herbs that I like (such as basil, holy basil, sage, thyme, rosemary, Texas tarragon, etc.), I twist, wring, and otherwise bruise the herbs, place them in the bottom of a pitcher or even the stainless steel water bottle I carry with me, fill the container with ice, then fill again with water. For best flavor, wait at least an hour, but it can be drunk immediately.

You could also add sliced strawberries, lemons, oranges, cucumbers, hot peppers, etc. for more color and additional flavor. If you wish to make it more as an electrolyte replacement drink, you could add a pinch of Himalayan salt, and a tablespoon of organic, raw, apple cider vinegar. For an even better electrolyte "punch" coconut water can be substituted for the regular water. If you have been to any of my classes, you will know how to make an herbal "shrub" (the drink, not the plant).

If you have not, and or don't know what a shrub is: come to my next Herbal Work Study on Saturday, August 11 on Herbal Beverages and learn how to make this. Shrubs were

used in the pioneer days to help stay hydrated while working in hot weather. Check the Memphis Botanic Garden website or Facebook page, or call me at 636-4134 for more information. Until next time: stay cool, hydrated, and herb on, my hot and sweaty friends!

By Sherri McCalla, curator of the Herb Garden at MBG

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