

2012 PLANT OF THE MONTH

JANUARY

Sophora affinis – EVE'S NECKLACE

Eve's Necklace is a graceful small native tree that is well suited for use in residential landscapes. This tree puts out a wisteria like bloom in the late spring that hummingbirds love. In the winter the black seeds form a pearl necklace like string that often stays on the tree for more than one winter. Eve's Necklace will grow in full sun, part shade or even dappled light. This tree needs to be planted in a well drained area for best results. You can expect your tree to reach a height of 15 to 30 feet. In the wild they often seed and form a thicket, often under larger trees.

FEBRUARY

Juniperus virginiana – EASTERN RED CEDAR

Eastern Red Cedar has to be one of the toughest plants in the state – it does get a bad reputation because it causes some allergy issues for many people, however I recommend it to anyone looking for a screening material that is very low maintenance and does not require a lot of water. You can expect to see about 30 – 40 feet in height and the plant is easily shaped. You can expect it to do well in any well drained soil and will grow in full sun or in part shade.

MARCH

Ungnadia speciosa – MEXICAN BUCKEYE

This is a beautiful little specimen tree that is way under used. Mexican buckeye will please you with it's beautiful pink blooms in the early spring just as the foliage starts to come out. In summer the seed pods ripen and open revealing another seasonal surprise. In the fall the foliage turns a golden yellow. Mexican buckeye will grow 8 – 12 foot and needs well drained soil. Go ahead and give this little tree a try you will be glad you did.

APRIL

Calylophus – CALYLOPHUS

This pretty little perennial will bloom from March to November and all it needs is a well drained area and some sunshine. Calylophus works wonderfully in a rock garden or draping over the border on your landscape bed. If is beautiful planted in mass and really makes your red Knock-out roses stand out.

MAY

Stemodia tomentosa – WOLLY STEMODIA

What a pretty little perennial groundcover for use in a well drained area. Wolly stemodia is a low growing perennial with small fuzzy silver leaves – the flowers are small and delicate and appear mostly after rains. This plant looks wonderful growing around soft yucca, red yucca and even under desert

willows. At the nursery we have it growing in the native test garden and it looks wonderful. So wonderful that most customer will ask about it. In a mild winter this plant will remain evergreen. Give it a try you will be glad you did.

JUNE

Malvaviscus drummondii – TURK’S CAP

What a wonderful perennial, beautiful red flowers that attract hummingbirds and butterflies, and this plant will do well in full sun or in a shady area. This plant masses out beautiful and grows to 3 – 4 feet. The larger leaves give a tropical feel and works well in a pool landscape. Turk’s cap does well in most soil situations but does prefer soil that is well drained. Make sure that you find a place or two for turk’s cap in your landscape.

JULY

Passiflora incarnate – PASSIONFLOWER

Passionflower is a fabulous vine that is rather well behaved and works well in your landscape beds or even in a container. The tendrils on this vine will grab hold of anything for support and yet it will not take over your entire landscape. The passionflower blooms most of the season and the scent of blooms is very pleasant especially in the evenings. The blooms are very intricate and exotic. Passionflower is a larval plant for the Gulf fritillary butterfly.

AUGUST

Salvia greggii – AUTUMN SAGE

A perennial that is always blooming – a gardener’s dream come true. There is not a landscape that should be without this Texas Native. Salvia greggii is very happy in full sun and will also tolerate some light shade. This plant will adapt to most soil types but requires that the soil be well drained – it works well planted on a berm. To keep it blooming month after month trim off the spent blooms as needed. In order to keep this plant nice a bushy it is recommended that you prune it back to about 4 – 6 inches in the early spring. Salvia greggii comes in white, pink, red, purple, coral, and salmon. Hummingbirds love the blooms on this plant and will entertain you all summer.

SEPTEMBER

Clematis terniflora – SWEET AUTUMN CLEMATIS

This is the easiest of all clematis to grow and it puts on a big show when in bloom. Autumn clematis blooms at the end of August into September with very fragrant white blooms that engulf the entire vine. This is a great vine to cover a fence, arbor or hide an unsightly view. Autumn clematis self seeds, so you will have young plants to share with friends and neighbors. Like all clematis the Autumn clematis like its roots shaded and it’s foliage in the sun. Any well drained garden soil will do and the plant is very drought tolerant once established.

OCTOBER

Callicarpa americana – BEAUTYBERRY AMERICAN

A large native shrub that is colorful, loves the shade and attracts birds and other wildlife. It gets my vote. American beautyberry is easy to grow and not very demanding. The plant requires well drained soil and is very drought tolerant and once established will survive solely on rainfall. American beautyberry is fast growing and will reach a height of about 6 feet. It is recommended that you trim these plants back to 12 inches in winter to encourage more compact growth. In the spring you will see small inconspicuous blooms that in the fall turn into the large purple berries that last throughout winter, or until the birds discover them. American beautyberry is stunning planted next to a mass of Turk's cap – give it a try.

NOVEMBER

Tagetes lucids – MEXICAN MINT MARIGOLD

A bright addition to any full sun perennial border. Mexican Mint Marigold grows to about 36 inches in height and creates a nice small green shrub and then in fall as the nights get longer and cooler it breaks out in full yellow bloom. Mexican Mint Marigold is a great companion plant to the Fall Aster with its blue blooms. Mexican Mint Marigold grows well in any soil that has been amended with organic matter and is well drained. A bonus of this plant is the scented foliage that can be used in cooking in the place of tarragon, the licorice scented leaves are very relaxing.

DECEMBER

Viola x wittrockiana – PANSY

Who doesn't love pansies. This is one happy tough annual. Plant in your landscape or container in fall and enjoy blooms until May of the next year. Pansies come in hundreds of color combinations, so there is something for every gardener. Plant pansies in well drained amended soil for best results. Once established pansies require very little watering, the winter rains are normally adequate, however please check the soil for moisture before a hard freeze and water if needed to help protect the roots from the cold.