

HABERSHAM GARDENER

Volume I, Issue 2

All the Dirt That's Fit to Print

May 1996

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- ✿ Easy, Cost-Effective Ways to Irrigate -- Even When You're Gone
- ✿ Accessories & Folk Art to Embellish Your Garden!
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- ✿ Your Checklist for May: What to Do in the Garden

FREE EXPERTISE

Several of our staff members have backgrounds in design. Set up an appointment with us to in bring your container (or its dimensions and description) for *FREE* design advice and help in plant selection.

HELP US TO GROW!

Share this newsletter with a friend. Maybe they'll want to be on our mailing list, too.

Call us at (404) 873-4702 for a free subscription.

CONTAINER GARDENS... WITH A KICK!

Half a whiskey barrel overflowing with orange marigolds and pink petunias might fit in just fine at the corner filling station, but is that what you want on *your* patio?

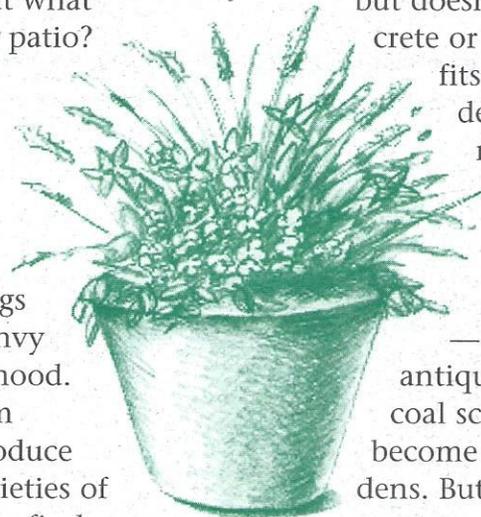
With a few basic design principles in mind and several flats of annuals at hand, you can create container plantings that will be the envy of your neighborhood. Inside, Habersham Gardens will introduce you to several varieties of choice and hard-to-find annuals that do well in the South. But first, some basics of container gardening.

Choosing a Container.

Materials available include wood, clay, concrete and plastic or fiberglass. Mixing pots of different materials within the same area can create a hodgepodge, so go for some continuity. Remember that clay is porous and wicks water away from plants, so these plantings will require more water.

(One trick is to spray the inside of terra cotta pots with a water sealer before planting.)

Plastic holds moisture in well but doesn't age like concrete or clay and never fits into the garden as well as natural materials. Keep an eye open for something a little different — old tubs,



antique boxes and coal scuttles can all become container gardens. But unless you want to water two or three times a day, never use any container less than 12 inches in diameter or square!

Selecting a Style.

Container plantings can be conventional and formal, or they can be wonderfully informal. Formal plantings are generally symmetrical, consisting of a tall central plant or shrub with mid-size, upright plants around it and trailing plants to cascade over the edge. For an informal planting, anything



(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

goes. Usually it will be 'overplanted,' so that plants are spilling out of the pot in all directions. Again, a variety of heights, including trailing plants, should be included. And don't forget to consider color — hold up plants at the nursery to see how you like their hues together.

Considering the site.

Your container will stay beautiful all season if you first choose its site and then select plants that will do well there. Will it get morning, midday or afternoon sun? Our staff will be happy to make recommendations about plants.

Caring for your container.

Because they dry out faster than plantings in the ground, container gardens will likely need water everyday. This leaches nutrients out of the soil, so extra fertilizer is needed. Feed once a month, or try a slow-release fertilizer that can be mixed in with the soil at planting time.

The practice of removing spent flowers can also prolong the life of the planting.



TRY THESE UNCOMMON ANNUALS THIS YEAR!

 *Setcreasea pallida* (purple hearts). Grown for trailing foliage so purple it's startling! Combines well with silver foliage and lavender flowers — try it with verbena or pentas. Full sun.

 *Scaevola*. Fan-shaped, lavender-blue flowers. Delicate and perfect to trail over the edge of pots — try it with bright pink petunias. Half to full sun.

 *Helichrysum petiolaris* (licorice plant). A spreading, trailing subshrub with tiny, furry silver leaves. Use it in nearly any container planting — it will weave in and out of its companions at will. Full sun.

 *Pentas*. An upright grower and relentless bloomer. Butterflies love it. Comes in white and pink to red shades. Half to full sun.

 *Ipomoea batatas* 'Blackie' (black sweet potato vine). Grown for its large, deep burgundy foliage. Perfect for providing contrast against green foliage in containers. Use it to show off light colored flowers — pale pinks, lavenders and blues.

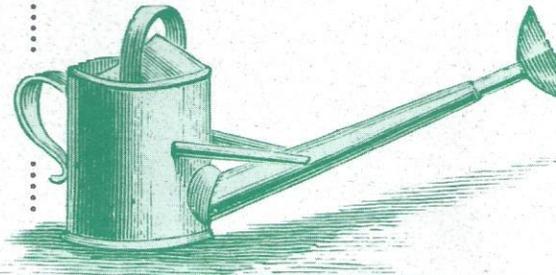
 Banana trees. Available with green or reddish foliage, these little trees will grow to two or three feet in a season. Bring a tropical look to your patio! Hint: plant a trailing verbena or lantana at its base.

 'Wizard' coleus. This large leaved, mainly upright coleus has shocking chartreuse foliage! In a container garden, it's a natural with yellow flowers.

 Trailing red coleus. A small leaved gem, its burgundy-wine colored foliage is exquisite weeping over the edge of its pot. Combines easily with scarlet flowers.

 *Strobilanthes*. A must-see and a conversation piece. Leaves are vivid purple with metallic silver variegation. Perfect with *Helichrysum* or other silver plants.

 *Oxalis*. Resembles a larger, more ornamental version of clover. A burgundy-purple leaved version is available, as is a green-leaved variety with pink flowers.



IRRIGATION SERVICES

Have you ever set out the sprinkler and then forgotten it, only to find the vegetable garden flooded out? Or gone away for a few days, returning to find it was just long enough for your lawn to turn crispy in Atlanta's heat?

If you're a busy homeowner, consider installing an automated irrigation system. Many people don't investigate this option because they believe it will involve ripping up their yard. *Not so!* To run the water lines, experienced workers take up narrow strips of sod and then replace them. "When we're finished, it's hard to even tell where we've been working," says Tony Stout, Habersham's manager of irrigation and landscape lighting.

For irrigation purposes, most

landscapes are divided into zones, which are automated independently of each other, based on how much water they need. For example, turf requires more water than shrubs, sunny areas more water than shade, etc. "We aim to get just the right amount of water coverage without wasting," Tony says.

If you grow roses or perennials, consider a drip irrigation system. Designed literally to drip water right at ground level, these systems are excellent for water conservation. Their real value, however, is the fact that they don't spray water on foliage — reducing the chance of fungal diseases. Call us for a customized proposal, and make your life a little easier!

"To a gardener there is nothing more exasperating than a hose that just isn't long enough."

- Cecil Roberts
quoted in the
NY Times
May, 1951

HABERSHAM GOES BUGGY TO SUPPORT THE RAIN FOREST

Habersham Gardens is now carrying a line of products known as the RAIN FOREST VILLAGE COLLECTION. These goods feature some of the most unusual and visually interesting insects and butterflies on the planet — all species that currently exist in huge populations in the quickly disappearing rain forests, and will disappear as well if nothing is done to save them.

The show-stopper is a series of acrylic paperweights, each encas-

ing an exotic species of insect. Kids especially are amazed by the size, unusual coloration and diversity of these insects. The products make great gifts for nature enthusiasts and a portion of the proceeds go to promote rain forest conservation. They are currently housed in the cashier's cottage, so please ask to see them.

EMBELLISHING EDEN

Rustic twig plant stands. Fancy-work iron benches and arbors. Giant painted lady bugs. These things apparently have nothing in common, but they all somehow caught the fancy of Habersham general manager Deborah Harrison.

A collector by nature, Deborah combs garage sales and flea markets wherever she goes, looking for folk art and other items that might qualify as garden or sun-room ornaments. In fact, the charming tulip-design shutters on the nursery's cashier's cottage were copied by Habersham's carpenter from an old, weathered pair that Deborah salvaged from a junk shop.

Some of her treasures end up at her home, but most are for sale at Habersham Gardens. Deborah has whimsically put them to use throughout the nursery — so keep your eyes open. That bench or trellis you're admiring as part of the decor might be wearing a



price tag. The collection is eclectic and ever-changing, so stop by often. You wouldn't want to miss out on something that Deborah has hand-picked just for you!

VIEW TEN GORGEOUS GARDENS THIS SPRING!

The Gardens for Connaisseurs tour will take place on Mother's Day weekend, May 11 and 12, rain or shine. This is your chance to see some of Atlanta's finest private gardens, including one created by Ryan Gainey at his home. Call the Atlanta Botanical Garden at 404-876-5859 for a brochure and ticket information. Highly recommended!

"Gardening: Man's effort to improve his lot."

-Anonymous

MAKE NEW FRIENDS...

at the Georgia Perennial Plant Association. Monthly meetings feature a drawing and guest speaker.

May 15,
June 19 &
July 11 at the
Atlanta
History Center
(7:30
pm).



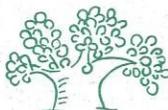
Your May Checklist:

What to do in the Garden

- ✓ Weeds: In flower and shrub beds, pull by hand or smother with a thick layer of mulch. In areas away from other plants, (spaces between flagstones, etc.) boiling water from the tea kettle is an old-fashioned, organic approach. Some pre-emergents are safe to use around flower and shrubs, but also discourage self-sowers like cosmos and larkspur. The most environmentally friendly herbicide is still glyphosate, the ingredient found in Round-Up.
- ✓ First-year perennials perform best when planted early, allowing root systems to become established before June's heat.

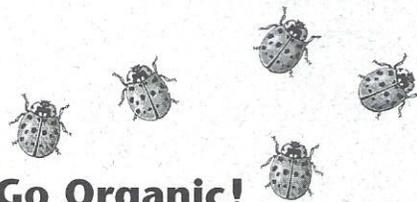
Plant annuals and bedding plants now. Summer annuals like marigolds and zinnias that are to be started from seed can be sown directly into fine soil.

- ✓ Summer vegetables like tomatoes, squash, beans and melons can be set out from transplants.
- ✓ Stake all tall flowering plants, like foxglove, as insurance against a sudden thunderstorm. The general rule is to use a stake two-thirds the height of the flower stalk.
- ✓ Turf: Water! Continue to fertilize Bermuda and zoysia; give fescue its last application of fertilizer for the season.



"One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides."

-W.E. Johns



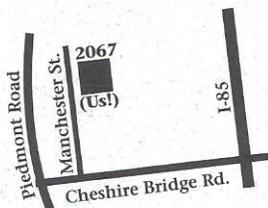
Go Organic!

Don't forget the ladies in red! Hungry ladybugs are currently available at Habersham, complete with instructions for release. Guaranteed to wake up with a voracious appetite for aphids!

Praying mantis cases are also available, each containing hundreds of hungry baby mantises.

Habersham Gardens

2067 Manchester Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30324



(404) 873-4702

Nursery Hours

M-F 8:00-6:00
Sat. 8:00-6:00
Closed Sundays

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