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*Coming next month:*

The Business Marketplace  
Issue and Where are they  
now? UT Gardens  
Graduates

# THE GARDEN POST

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March 15, 2005

Ever play pick-up sticks when you were a kid?

I should have paid better attention!

Taking on the challenge of being FOG's President this year has been a far bigger job than I had thought it would be since the time I was last President in 1998. We're raising a lot more funds – and trying to do many more activities – for the UT Gardens than ever before.

Without the Friends, the UT Gardens would not be the public gardens that they are today.

FOG has grown by leaps and bounds and done it all as a wholly volunteer organization. So far in a mere six weeks of tenure as President, I've logged-in 132 hours for FOG. (Not a sustainable figure for a working stiff.) These hours are just a fraction of what the entire Board and our active volunteers have devoted to planning for our projects in 2005. But what that total investment also tells me is that the Friends must direct some attention to its own health as a growing enterprise that is now over twelve years old. We're going to need to take the next baby step on the developmental path of a maturing organization. Expect to hear more about that from your dedicated and able Board in the next few weeks.

It's going to be a great year!

*Theresa Pepin, President*

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# NEWS

**It's no secret,  
so we want  
you to know:**

## Workshops and trips:

If you missed FOG member **Tim Brown's** workshop on maintaining and sharpening your small gardening tools February 26, you missed out on a terrific way to get yourself into gear for the planting and pruning season. Not to mention that you should truly feel deprived if you didn't join the merry band that went down to Atlanta for the Southeastern Flower Show on March 5!

If we get this newsletter out just a bit in advance, you might still have a fighting chance to be one of those stalwart volunteers to participate in **Dr. Stephen Garton's** workshop on dividing and

replanting water garden and marginal bog plants on March 12. (It takes a very special volunteer willing to muck-about in cold bog water in March!)

Coming up in April is the chance to make-like famous (and not so famous) French gardeners and build a tuteur or pyramidal trellis – otherwise referred to as 'vertical elements' by professional garden designers (and do it under the guidance of **Faye Beck**, one of our region's most accomplished and knowledgeable gardeners):

April 16, 2005 – Constructing a **pyramidal garden trellis**. This is a hands-on workshop and you will take home a trellis. The wooden, pyramid-shaped garden trellis/obelisk can be used as a decorative feature in the garden and provide stable support for climbing plants. We meet 10:00 a.m. in Greenhouse 11 on the UT Agriculture campus. For this workshop, you must register and pay fee by April 8. \$35.00 for members, \$45.00 for non-members. Register by calling the Infoline 865-525-4555 and sending your check to Friends of the UT Gardens, P. O. Box 51394, Knoxville, TN 37950-1394.

## News on fundraising fronts:

We're gearing up for **Blooms Days**. The 2005 Steering Group consisting of Event Coordinator Mary Collins Shepard, Theresa Pepin, Laura McFee Adams, Amy Yancey Jenkins, Sandi Burdick, Michael Moore, and P. J. Snodgrass – has been hard at work since the coldest winter nights of January planning for this onsite event. Additional members of subcommittees so far include Faye Beck, Susan Conlon, Deedee Blane, Judy Watts, Jason Spence, Dr. Sue Hamilton and the UT Gardens staff/students, Karen Petrey, Ginna Mashburn, Cindy Williams, Sandy Leach and John Hodges. We could use help from our members at this stage by telling us what you think we could do better from your own experiences attending and volunteering for this event in the last two years. If you'd like to work with this team during the planning phase, please contact us and we'll put you in touch with the right person.



# The University of Tennessee Gardens

## 2004 Best Plants Report

Dr. Susan Hamilton, Director of the UT Gardens  
James Newburn, UT Gardens Curator  
Betty Tipton, UT Gardens Assistant

There are no words to describe weather conditions for this past growing season other than “extremely wet”! Rainfall was above normal for both June and July and temperatures were below normal. Knoxville received almost 8 inches of rain in July, which was 3 inches above normal! We had the 17th wettest July on record. As a result, we had our share of root rot diseases and botrytis blight. The following categories of plants include cultivars that were top performing plants throughout the growing season in the UT Gardens.

**Business Friends** of Friends of the UT Gardens will be selling the following plants as indicated in bold parentheses by code:

- (EN) Ellenburg Nursery, 5805 Walden Drive, Knoxville, 588-5677
- (FM) The Flower Market, 4520 Old Kingston Pike, Knoxville, 584-1679
- (GC) The Garden Cottage, 116 Carr Street, Knoxville, 584-0840
- (HR) Honey Rock Herb Farm, Louisville, TN 984-0954
- (MV) Meadow View Greenhouses & Garden Center, 9885 Highway 11E, Lenoir City, 986-7229
- (MC) Mouse Creek Nursery, 276 County Road 67, Riceville, TN, 423-462-2666
- (O) Oakes Daylilies, Corryton, TN, 687-3770
- (P) Pope’s Garden Center, 3308 Old Knoxville Hwy, Maryville, 982-9217  
Pope’s Garden Center, 204 S. Northshore Drive, Knoxville, 558-8903
- (RG) Ridge Greenhouse & Florist, 148 Louisiana Avenue, Oak Ridge, 482-1465
- (S) Stanley’s Plant Farm, 3029 Davenport Road, Knoxville, 573-9591
- (WR) Willow Ridge Garden Center & Landscaping, 97 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oak Ridge, 481-3825

### Annuals

**Best in Show - Celosia - (P, WR) ‘Fresh Look Red’ (MC, MV, RG, S) and ‘Fresh Look Yellow’ (RG, MV, S) AAS Winners.** Outstanding for large plumes, season-long, profuse blooming, and intense color. Self-cleaning and uniform habit. Wet and drought tolerant!

**Best New 2004 Variety - New Guinea Impatiens ‘Super Sonic Salmon 2004’.** Impressive for dark burgundy foliage against extremely large, deep salmon flowers. (MC, P, RG, S, WR)

**Best Old Variety - Ornamental Pepper** 'Explosive Embers'. Deep purple foliage loaded with purple peppers turning bright red in late summer. (MC, P, RG, S, WR)

#### Top 5 Performers:

**Coleus 'Kong'** series. Compact plants with mammoth leaves make this series dramatic and notable in the landscape. A real showstopper in the garden. Grown from seed! (EN, MC, MV, P, RG, S, WR)

**Gallardia 'Arizona Sun'** AAS Winner. Large, 3-4" blooms were loaded on plants all season-long. Compact habit growing to 10". Bright, showy red and gold color. Self-cleaning! (MC, MV, P, S, WR)

**Verbena 'Temari Bright Pink'**. Uniform habit, compact, profuse blooming, and showy color. Fast-growing habit that quickly adds large clusters of intense pink blooms to containers, window boxes, and the front of borders. Plants are resistant to powdery mildew and thrive in heat and full sun. (MC, P, S)

**Vinca 'First Kiss Blueberry'** AAS Winner. Impressive new color. Large blooms. Uniform in habit and floriferous. (MC, P, WR)

*Zinnia angustifolia x elegans* (EN, P, WR) 'Profusion Fire' (FM, MC, S) and 'Profusion Apricot' (FM, MC, S). Great new colors for this hybrid zinnia. 'Fire' is flaming red-orange and 'Apricot' is a soft creamy-apricot. Profuse blooming, self-cleaning, and uniform habit.

#### Other Notables:

*Alternanthera* 'Red Threads' - Impressive fine-textured, 1/8" wide ruby-red foliage. 'Red Threads' forms a mound 6" tall and 16-30" wide; a single plant contrasts beautifully with broader leaves and bold flowers, while a mass planting looks like a lawn of red grass! Its frilly texture and rich color are a designer's delight. (EN, FM, MC, P, S)

#### **Begonias - (EN, P)**

**Tuberous Begonia** - 'Non-stop Deep Red'. Impressive for super large blooms and its heat tolerance. Quite exotic looking! (FM, S, WR)

**Waxleaf Begonia - (WR)** 'Olympia Sprint Deep Pink' and 'Braveheart Rose Bicolor' (S). Covered with loads of flowers all season with no disease problems. Great colors for this durable landscape plant. 'Braveheart Rose Bicolor' saturates the garden with beautiful rose and white blooms in sun or shade. Fills containers and beds quickly, sets flowers early and keeps flowering all summer long.

**Hiemalis Begonia** - 'Betulia' series is impressive for its heat tolerance and incredible blooming habit. Impressive large, full flowers really stand out, making this type begonia and series a must in the garden. 'Red', 'Light', and 'Pink' were all impressive varieties of this series.

**Calibrachoa** - (EN, WR) Colorful Expressions series with 'Blue' (FM, S), 'Rose' (S), and 'Goldrush' (S). 'Milkyway Light Blue' (S) is unique with small, lavender-blue flowers but loads of them. Best for container use and not landscape beds.

**Coleus** - (P, WR) Favorite sun coleus among our visitors for their striking and colorful foliage included the seed variety 'Kong' (EN, S); 'Solar Eclipse' (MC, S), 'Purple Emperor' (MC, S), 'Fishnet Stockings', 'Gold Brocade' (EN), 'Sparkler' (EN, S), 'Saturn' from Glass House Works (EN, FM, S), 'Dabbled Apple', 'Black Prince' (MC, S), 'Old Lace' (EN, S), 'Juliet Quartermain' all from Proven Winners were outstanding.

**Cosmos 'Cosmic Red'** is an outstanding cosmos. Semi-double flowers bloom all season on short, compact plants. The color is vibrant and incredibly showy. Vigorous plants provide abundant, bright scarlet-orange 2" blooms all summer. Basically pest and disease free. This is a "no fuss" annual that will thrive on minimal care. (FM, MC, P)

**Dianthus 'Garden Spice'** series provide ever-blooming bouquets of flowers and great garden performance all year!! We have had them all year in the UT Gardens and they flower throughout all the seasons! Only growing to 6", great for a border or for containers. (MC, P, S, WR)

**Geranium** - (FM, P, WR) Vegetative types: 'Rocky Mountain' series (RG, S); 'Patriot' (S), 'Red Coat', 'Puritan', 'Quaker', 'Faith', 'Abigail', 'Beth', 'Amy', 'Anne' from Bartlett were all prolific bloomers on uniform plants with dark foliage. These selections survived the wet, rainy weather the best. From seed, "Black Magic Rose" (MC), an AAS Bedding Plant Award Winner was impressive. The unusual bicolor leaf pattern distinguishes it from all other seed geraniums.

**Impatiens** - (EN, FM, MC, P, WR) The new Xtreme series was outstanding. Varieties 'Red', 'Salmon', and 'Violet' were loaded with flowers all season and plants grew into a showy mound about 30" tall.

**Jewel of Opar 'Kingswood Gold'** - This neat, old-fashioned flower has made its way into the modern garden. Chartreuse green foliage loaded with spikes of bronze stems and flowers makes a unique feature in the landscape. (MC, P, S)

**Lisianthus 'Forever Blue'** is an AAS Winner which will provide gardeners their favorite blue color throughout the gardening season. The large 2½" single blue flowers decorate the vigorous plants. Plants have a distinct branching habit, producing loads of blooms and a dense plant. Plants will grow to 12" when mature. Proven to be heat tolerant, 'Forever Blue' plants will benefit from deadheading like all other eustoma (lisianthus). Great as a border plant or in containers. (EN, P, S)

**Marigold** - The African/American type 'Moonstruck' series was compact and uniform and covered in large, fully-double flowers. (EN, P, S)

**New Guinea Impatiens** - (FM, MC, MV, P, S, WR) 'Sonic' and 'Super Sonic' Series always put on a great show. You are guaranteed success with selections from either of these series. Favorites from the Sonic series include: Sonic 'Magic Pink' (EN, RG), 'Hot Rose on Gold', 'Light Pink' (EN, RG), 'Scarlet'. Favorites from the Super Sonic series include: Super Sonic

'Burgundy' (EN, RG), 'Salmon 2004' (RG), 'Pink' (EN), 'Magenta', 'Lilac', 'Flame', 'Red 2004'. (EN, RG)

**Pentas** (Star Flower) - The Graffiti series was short, compact and uniform with good color all season and loads of flowers. Non-stop blooming and no deadheading required. (EN, FM, MC, P, S)

**Petunia** - (P, WR) From seed, 'Double Cascade Blue' and 'Dreams Sky Blue' (EN) were weather tolerant, bloomed prolifically, and had great blue color. Also, 'Avalanche' series was a vigorous spreader. Vegetatively reproduced and groundcover types: Surfinia 'Baby Yellow Compact' (S), 'Baby Blue Compact' (S), and 'Baby Purple'; Supertunia (EN) 'Giant Pink' and 'Bordeaux' (S) from Proven Winners were all impressive. The 'Double Wave' (EN) series was impressive, vigorous, and carefree in the gardens.

**Plectranthus 'Silver Shield'**. Grown from seed and growing up to three feet tall. Great silver foliage and soft pink stems offer great texture for mixed containers and landscapes. (FM, MC, P, S)

**Salvia 'Salvatore'**. Short and compact and covered with bright red flowers all season. (MC, P, S)

**Senecio confusus** - Orange Glow Vine, Mexican Flame Vine - Loads of brilliant orange daisy-like flowers abound on this vining annual from mid-summer on. Great to attract butterflies. (MC, P)

**Sweet Potato Vine 'Sweet Caroline' series** - (EN, FM, MC, MV, P) The hottest ornamental potatoes are known as the Sweet Caroline series. They are coming courtesy of the J.C. Raulston Arboretum in North Carolina. Though the potatoes are from the arboretum, they are being marketed through Paul Michells, a partner with Bodger Botancials. There are four colors in the Sweet Caroline series: green, bright lime green, purple (actually a dark burgundy) and a bronze that has everyone talking. The bronze can best be described as rust. All of the series has deeply toothed leaves similar to the ever-popular Blackie.

**Torenia - Wishbone Flower** - (EN, GC, P, WR) 'Summer Wave Amethyst' (FM, MV, S) and 'Catalina Blue' (MC, MV, S) and 'Catalina Pink' (MC, MV, S ) from Proven Winners were impressive for their bright vibrant colors and cascading growth habit. The "Snapdragon" like flowers are produced in abundance all season long.

**Vinca** - (FM, P, WR) 'Jaiio Dark Red', 'Sunshower White', 'Sunglow Scarlet with Eye', and 'Sundress White w/ Eye'. The Titan series: 'Burgundy' (MC) 'Polka Dot' (EN, MC) and 'Lilac' (EN, MC) all had large, showy blooms.

**Zinnia** - The Magellan series was covered with loads of double flowers and was self-cleaning. Extremely disease resistant looking great late into the season! Beautiful, large 5- 6" blooms are radiant on plants 15-19" tall. (EN, FM, MC, P, WR)

## Ornamental Grasses

*Eragrostis elliottii* 'Wind Dancer' - Love Grass grown from seed. Impressive blue foliage and large billows of soft plumes growing to 3'. (MC)

*Pennisetum macrostachyum* 'Burgundy Giant' is the larger cousin to red pennisetum. It kind of looks like red fountain grass on steroids with its overall coarser texture, greater height and larger flower spikes. The species name, macrostachyum, comes from macro, meaning "large," and stachyum, meaning "spike." So, it stands to reason that *P. macrostachyum* would have larger flower spikes than most other Pennisetums. (P, S)

### *Saccharum arundinaceum* - Plume Grass, Hardy Sugar Cane

This hardy sugar cane will perform well down to zone 6! The handsome gray-green foliage resists lodging and provides a wonderful tropical feel and vertical accent to the garden. The effect is heightened in fall when flower panicles are produced in large numbers and tower to as much as 15'. The plumes begin as soft pink, open to silver, and will look great through the winter. (S)

## Perennials

*Coreopsis grandiflora* 'Rising Sun' - FleuroSelect Winner 'Rising sun' presents a color breakthrough in double flowered Coreopsis. This outstanding perennial variety produces masses of golden yellow flowers with mahogany bases all summer long within the first year of planting. The double, fringed blooms of this easy to grow beauty provide color impact in summer gardens. The fact that *Coreopsis grandiflora* 'Rising Sun' is early and has a compact and neat habit makes it ideal for professional production as well as for the creation of spectacular containers and stunning border fronts. (EN, MC, P)

*Cuphea micropetalia* - Tall Cigar Plant - A tender perennial native to Mexico. Grows 3-5' tall and 3' wide. The hummingbirds have wars over the flowers of this plant. The long tubular flowers are perfectly suited for their long bills. The colors draw them in as well. Flowers are bright gold, orange, and red. The plant slowly spreads by runners. Considered a hardy annual as plants are hardy into the teens but the above ground growth will die back in the mid 20's. The main blooming season is in the late summer and fall. Use as specimen or in mass of 3-5 plants. Nice cutflower. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil. Propagate by division or cuttings. (EN, MC, P)

*Dahlia* 'Ellen Houston' - Rich flowering double orange/red flowers; incredible dark black leaves. Grows to 18-24". "Classic Summertime" has soft yellow flower that is a striking contrast to its dark, weathered bronzy leaves; large plant; 2-4'. (P)

*Gladiolus* 'Flevo Junior' - A dwarf selection with striking deep blood red flowers; each petal veined with white, an echo to its white stamens; dark green leaves; a very dramatic statement! (P)

***Ruellia brittoniana* (Mexican Petunia, Texas Petunia)** - A tender perennial which produces tubular blue, purple or pink flowers all summer. Likes good, fertile soil with moisture, but survives dry spells once established. Prefers sun to part-shade. Use towards the back of a flowering border either in mass or as specimen, or as the centerpiece in a container. (EN, FM, MC, MV, P, S, WR)

***Salvia involucrata* 'Bethellii' - Rosebud sage.** Flowers are unique knobby, rose-pink buds that look exactly like old-fashioned rounded rosebuds. The buds burst open into delightful, 2" long, deep pink blossoms. 'Bethellii' shoots up to 5' tall by late summer taking its pink flowers to the sky, where it can mingle with chocolate-colored *Saccharum* 'Pele's Smoke'. Flowers from mid-August to frost. A tender perennial. (MC)

***Salvia madrensis* - Forsythia Sage.** A huge yellow-flowered salvia! Forsythia sage is a very large and robust salvia that can get as much as 10 ft tall with a spread of 4-5 ft. The square stems are very distinctive, with well developed ridges on the corners, and they can be more than 1 inch across. Forsythia sage grows in a spreading clump. It has large, bright green, heart shaped, rather rough leaves. The leaves and the spreading branches are produced in pairs, originating on opposite sides of the stem. The flowers are canary yellow and borne in 12 inch spikes from early fall until first frost. Forsythia sage is a tender perennial and will require winter mulching. (FM, MC)

***Tradescantia hybrid* 'Zwanenburg Blue'** from Mouse Creek Nursery flowers abundantly off and on all summer. 'Zwanenburg Blue' has narrow purple-veined foliage that is medium green with clusters of brilliant blue flowers. (MC)

## Tropicals

***Acalypha wilkesiana* - Copper Plant, Jacob's Coat (EN, P) - 'Obovata' (MC) and 'Chartreuse' (MC).** Spectacular foliage to complement lots of different color schemes. 'Chartreuse' is valued for its creaming yellow and bright green foliage which is unusual in the world of *Acalypha*.

***Anisacanthus wrightii* - Hummingbird Bush** - This herbaceous shrub is covered with light orange to dark red tubular flowers that regularly bring in the hummingbirds from June to October. Although it usually freezes back every winter, once established, Hummingbird Bush attains 3-4' in height and width and thrives with little water. The self-fertile plant throws its seed quite some distance and forms colonies if given the chance.

***Canna* 'Cleopatra' and 'Australia'** - Like a black hole in the garden, *Canna* 'Australia' draws every eye with the deepest, darkest burgundy-black leaves ever seen in the world of cannas. No other canna comes close to the color saturation of these glossy, 18" leaves! Not only that, but 'Australia' holds its rich color through the season without fading – a first among dark-leaved cannas. And if you think the foliage sounds good, you should see it when its brilliant stoplight-red flowers top the 5' stalks from summer to frost! Exotic *Canna* 'Cleopatra', with its unusual burgundy and green leaves marbled in a broad, almost ying-yang pattern, has got to be the most unusual canna. 'Cleopatra' also produces some solid burgundy stems as well as a few all green ones (prune these out to prevent them taking over), and get this:

flowers are sometimes solid red, sometimes pure yellow, occasionally half yellow/half red all in one blossom, but often yellow speckled with red! (MC, P)

*Colocasia esculenta* 'Nancy Revenge' - Variegated elephant ear. The 2' leaves unfurl green, but as temperatures heat up, they develop a creamy white patch along the mid-vein that then slowly spills out along side-branching veins. Mature leaves are dazzling, especially since 'Nancy's Revenge' shoots up to 6' tall, making sure no one will miss the show. This species is also among the hardiest of colocasias, guaranteeing its return in areas where many elephant ears fail to put in a repeat performance. (P, S)

*Hibiscus tiliaceus* 'Variegata' - This unusual variegated hibiscus has huge heart shaped tropical leaves which are speckled, splashed, and striped in shades of green, cream, pink, and deep burgundy. An excellent splash of color and interest for a sunny garden or patio. It is grown for its foliage, and the new growth is so brilliantly maroon as to appear to be blooms from a distance. (P)

*Homalocladium platycladium* - Ribbon Plant, Tapeworm Plant. Ribbon plant is one of the most intriguing plants I've ever seen. A definite conversation piece in the garden! You've likely never seen anything like it. These flat stem segments keep adding new joints to grow into an upright, somewhat arching plant 2-3' tall. Tiny leaves match the stems in color but don't compete for visual attention.

*Pseuderanthemum atropurpureum* - Caricature Plant - 'Tricolor' is a beautiful selection with thick, burgundy and pink leaves. Grows to 3' tall with a striking erect form. (P)

*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis* - Porterweed. This plant was considered a weed for so long but now is being cultivated for the best of gardens. Available in purple, bright salmon-pink, and red. Grows to 3-4' and flowers long colorful spikes.

*Xanthosoma atrovirens* 'Albomarginatum' - White-variegated Elephant Ear. This is one wow plant in the garden! Its deep green arrowhead-shaped leaves bear wide, irregular blocks and bands of gray-green, soft sage green, rich cream and pure white. At the tip end, the leaves curl to form a pouch that sometimes proves watertight, making a nifty little cache-pocket for visiting insects to drink from. Grows to 2-3'.

## Selected Herbs

Polish Amaranth, *Amaranth cruentus* (FM, P, S)

Love-in-a-Mist, *Nigella damascena* 'Persian Jewels' (HR, P, S, WR)

Golden Feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium* 'Aureum' (HR, P)

Purple Ruffles Basil, *Ocimum bacilicum* 'Purple Ruffles' (FM, HR, P, S, WR)

Thai Basil, *Ocimum basilicum* 'Siam Queen' (FM, GC, HR, P, S)

Ornamental Pepper, *Capsicum annuum* 'Varengata' (HR, P, S, WR)

Flowering Tobacco, *Nicotiana* 'Sensation White' (FM, HR, P, S, WR)

Bloody Dock, *Rumex sanguineus* (FM, HR, P, S, WR)

Salem Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Salem' (FM, GC, HR, P, S, WR)

Hardy Sugar Cane, *Saccharum arundinaceum* (S)

From the Director of the UT Gardens Dr. Susan Hamilton

## 2005: A Banner Year

For all of our events to be successful, the Gardens need to be full of new and exciting plants. We are well underway in filling up our greenhouses with seedlings and transplants being grown for their debut in the Gardens. New selections of tropicals, sun coleus, and assorted perennials, annuals, and herbs are all part of the palette of plants you can look forward to enjoying this year.

In preparation for the Perennial Plant Association (PPA) conference here in Knoxville in July, leading perennial producers from all over the country have sent us cutting edge varieties of the newest perennials on the market. I am proud of the collection we will offer in the UT Gardens and the national exposure we'll get this summer.

In the next few months, be sure to check out the renovated annual test and display beds. We have torn out all of the straight linear annual color beds and will raise the soil level by about 18 inches. These sweeping, free-form beds will allow us to trial and also display plants in a more pleasing and dramatic manner.

Again this summer we will offer the 'Books & Blooms' reading program in cooperation with the Knox County Libraries. The program will offer a variety of fun activities for kids along with the traditional story time. Watch for details soon.

Finally, we are growing a long list of unusual plants for the spring plant sale scheduled for Mother's Day weekend – everything from sedum and cacti to new varieties of sun coleus and exotic tropical plants. I guarantee a sale that any plant enthusiast will not want to miss!

Remember that there are many ways you can volunteer to help in the Gardens. Transplanting in the greenhouses, labeling plants in the gardens, mulching, weeding, and planting – we can use your help. If you'd like to volunteer, contact our Volunteer Coordinator Susan Conlon at 974-7324 or email [sconlon@utk.edu](mailto:sconlon@utk.edu).

I look forward to seeing you in the Gardens! – *Susan Hamilton, Director of the UT Gardens*



The Friends of the UT Gardens awards its 2004 'Thinking Outside the Pot' Award to **Vicki Baumgartner**.

Her innovative membership promotion project won us many new Friends in 2004!

From the Graduate Student Staff of the UT Gardens Emily Smith

## Plant of the Month: Yucca

For years gardeners have cringed at the site of *Yucca filamentosa* in the landscape, but this traditional plant is experiencing a revival in popularity. Once considered the stable “plant by your mailbox” kind of plant, Yucca species, especially *Yucca filamentosa*, are becoming the focal point in mixed perennial borders.

Commonly referred to as Adam’s Needle, *Yucca filamentosa* is a member of the Agavaceae family. The evergreen leaves are sword-like and measure about 1 to 1.5 feet long and 1.5 to 4 inches wide. Sword-like is an apt description. The leaves are very sharp and pointed at the ends. They are also basal, meaning that they originate from one point at the base of the plant, often forming a rosette shape. The margins of the leaves are adorned with several tiny, white curly threads that peel back as the leaf grows. If you do not care for this “un-manicured” look, these threads can be removed.

Yucca provides interesting texture year round. During the winter months, assorted varieties are on display at the UT Gardens in Knoxville, adding color and texture when the weather is gray. During late spring to early summer yucca becomes a true garden star, as 4-foot to 6-foot stalks of white flowers appear. Each stalk can hold several dozen sets of flowers, making the plant an impressive focal point in your garden.

*Yucca filamentosa* is most impressive when planted in mass. They also work well in rock gardens, mixed borders and natural areas. All yuccas require dry, sandy soil and full sun to part shade. They also boast a characteristic that most gardeners find very appealing. They are LOW MAINTENANCE plants. Basically, if you plant your *Yucca filamentosa* in the right location, the plant will thrive.

A number of variegated selections are available on the market. Color Guard and Gold Sword are just two examples in which the sword-shaped leaves have a gold variegation running down the middle. Ivory has a cream variegation to the leaves. For a true white variegated form, try Variegata.

I know many gardeners who have negative impressions of this plant, but if you put your prejudice aside and try one in your garden, you will be amazed with the amount of texture and drama that yucca will add to your landscape.

– Emily Smith



# Great Gardening Books of 2004

See them at UT's Pendergrass Library or check Amazon.com

*Gardening with clematis: design & cultivation.* Linda Beutler. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2004. "All shrubs and trees were put on the planet to support and enhance clematis." Each companion gets its own authoritative chapter with thorough cultivation information. Many photographs of this endlessly varied and beautiful genus inspire experimentation.

*The commonsense gardener.* Stefan B London: Frances Lincoln, 2004. First leaf through to see all the photographs and get an idea of the outline and scope. Then go back and linger on the glorious color plates. Finally walk with Stefan through his 30-some years of experience, and heed his challenge to pass the craft of home gardening down to our children.

*The gardener's A-Z guide to growing organic food.* Tanya L.K. D. North Adams, MA: Storey, 2004. Encyclopedia of 765 vegetables, herbs, fruits and nuts and instructions to control 201 pests and diseases using companion planting and allies. Also: cultivation, propagation, storage, varieties – did I say "encyclopedia?"

*The complete idiot's guide to rock and water gardening illustrated.* Carlo A. B and Bill Gutman. Indianapolis, IN: Alpha, 2004. Of course you aren't an idiot, but you will find "The Least You Need to Know" summaries at the end of each chapter VERY useful. Well documented with illustrations and diagrams.

–Sandra Leach, FOG Board Member and Head Librarian, UT Agriculture/Veterinary Medicine Pendergrass Library



## Coming Up

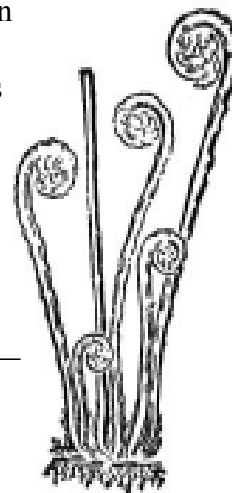
### On the calendar:

March 15	DEADLINE	April 15 Newsletter
March 28		Board Meeting, 7:00 PM
April 16	WORKSHOP	Making a Trellis/Tuteur
April 25		Board Meeting, 7:00 PM
May 7	SALE	Spring Plant Sale
May 15	DEADLINE	June 15 Newsletter
May 17	IN THE GARDENS	Twilight Walk, 6 PM

## Spring into Action

Like upside-down seahorses young fern fronds emerge, curled tight with potential.

The strength of promise fuels the season — buds, shoots, and hearts rife with hope of the possible.



©Bettie Corey

# HELP!

We need to do a better job of speaking at length with our volunteers about the kinds of work they're qualified and eager to do. If you have a human resources background and enjoy speaking with the wonderful people who sign-up to volunteer for FOG to get a better idea of where they'd best fit, please let us know ASAP. Call the Infoline 865-525-4555 and we'll return your call immediately.

We need to do a better job of getting the word out in publicity about our events. New board member **Laura McFee Adams** – also a FABULOUS gardener 'way out in far West Knoxville – has risen to the challenge and is working like a fairy godmother to update our list of media and calendar outlets. We especially need help in filling-out community calendar templates and faxing/ mailing event information to outlets that don't accept email postings. (Not hard, just takes a bit of time.) If there's a favorite outlet you know about that FOG events are not yet showing up in, would you please let us know ASAP? Call the Infoline 865-525-4555 or drop us an email at [friendsoftheutgardens@utk.edu](mailto:friendsoftheutgardens@utk.edu).

We need someone who can write news/advertising/marketing copy better than Theresa Pepin tries to do when she wants to sell our members on coming to the events we offer that are just SO much fun and SO worthwhile to our mission of fundraising in support of the UT Gardens. Anyone? Let her do other things she does better, please? Yes, call the Infoline or email.

## In appreciation:

Our special thanks to volunteers **Faye Beck**, **Ann Lamb** and **Nancy Robinson** who worked the Annual Membership Meeting in November. Nancy also led a wreath-making workshop for FOG in December.

**Meleah MacMahan** of the Knoxville Community Food Coop (soon to become the Three Rivers Market in its new incarnation) assisted with dinner and welcoming at the January board meeting and orientation for new board members. Her hospitality and assistance on a very busy evening were indispensable.

Notes of appreciation have come back to FOG from: **Kerry Harkins**, a FOG member who has volunteered assistance with the membership database for several years; and **Henry Lenoir**, the unfailingly gracious driver on many of our bus trips.

Special thanks to FOG Board Member **Sandi Burdick** for undertaking this project of matching the **Best Plants** with the **Best Business Friends** in East Tennessee. Your patronage is very much appreciated. Please mention you saw plant availability listed in the UT Report and the Friends of the Gardens newsletter.

# MORE NEWS



For 2005-2006, the **Secret Garden Tour** will transform into **Secret Garden Parties** through the generosity and magic of a whole lot of Friends. This series of dates in exceptionally beautiful gardens will offer private touring, with food and beverage provided by hosts and helpers as well as special features. We've always struggled with several problems in planning for this big two-day tour in May: Many of our finest private gardens are not at their

peak in May; some tiny, treasured gardens cannot bear the traffic of nearly 700 people on one weekend; and with difficult locations the logistics of busing become a costly factor. So this year we've taken a leaf out of the catalogs of the Knoxville Symphony League and Knox Heritage – two other organizations in Knoxville that make it worthwhile to live in this glorious part of East Tennessee – and come up with a series of floriculture and garden visits that are all just as much varied as they are pure delight. Catalogs for this series will be available by post to members first and then at Blooms Days in late June. Spaces will be limited so we're giving you this very early piece of advice – even before we've wrapped-up the catalog – don't wait to reserve your space or you'll be stranded on waiting lists! Steering Group members for this event include Chair Julia Huster, Mary Spengler, Sherry Chobanian, Theresa Pepin, Debbie Allen, Pam Reddoch and Priscilla Siler.

Sales of our new **Gardening Guide** have been very good with an amazing 600 sold thus far. We couldn't do it without the businesses who are helping us sell the guides locally – The Flower Market, Stanley's Greenhouses, Ellenburg Landscaping & Nursery, Impromptu Home and Garden Accessories, Pope's Garden Center in Maryville and Knoxville, Ridge Greenhouse and Florist in Oak Ridge, Willow Ridge Garden Center in Oak Ridge, Mouse Creek Nursery, in Riceville, and our newest location Meadowview Greenhouse and Garden Center in Lenoir City. Special thanks to the *Knoxville News Sentinel* for promoting tips from the guides every month and mentioning the outlets where they are available for sale.



Other Friends in our area have news, too:

Distinguished FOG member **Ruth Pardue** is at it again, teaching yet another series of her masterful classes for UT Non-credit. Check out the courses offered through UT Non-Credit by calling 865-974-0150 or [www.outreach.utk.edu/ppd](http://www.outreach.utk.edu/ppd).

Garden Society FOG member – **UT Arboretum Society's** "Carolina on My Mind" Spring Garden Tour will be April 7-10, 2005. Call Fran Scheidt at 865-584-0467 regarding itinerary, cost and reservations.

FOG members **Mike and Brenda Stansberry** send out a nice, pithy *News from the Creek* that includes mention of several other FOG members, in turn. (Winter newsletters are such welcome gardening news. Tell us if you've a favorite.) It's hard to believe that Beaver Creek Nursery is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Get on their mailing list by calling 865-922-3961.

Garden Club FOG member – **The Knoxville Garden Club** brought Don Haynie to speak on Wednesday, March 2 (notice received too late to get in to our previous issue). Don't miss their 41st Talahi Plant Sale on April 9, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the HGTV Walk at the World's Fair Park (trolley shuttle available for designated parking areas). Coming up on May 11, mark your calendar for the visit of well-known plantsman and nurseryman Andre Viette. He also hosts the live, nationwide call-in radio program "In the Garden." Mr. Viette will speak on "Easy gardening with no work" at the KMA Auditorium at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 11.

## Renewing and new members include:

### *Student Friends*

Cathleen C. Rose

### *Individual Friends*

Patricia Van Leeuwen

Margarette Arnold

Laurie T. Rush

Marjorie L. Jones

Bennie M. Jean

Cindy Williams

Mrs. Beverly (Wilhelmina)  
Williams

Mary Tebo

Pat Rimmer

Lydia Birk

Mitzi Rouse

Patricia Stogner

Mary Frances Drake

Debra Lord

Ann R. Davis

Ruth Pardue

Jessica McGee

Susan K. Krisle

P. J. Snodgrass

Damaris Olsen

### *Family Friends*

Dennis & Linda Hopkins

Jerry & Brenda Davis

G. B. Denton

John & Dawn J von Weisenstein

Claudine & Helmut Boehme

Coy & Laurie Crutchfield

Rush & Beth Fielden

Mike & Brenda Stansberry

Kathryn O'Day & Steven Cuneo

### *Contributing Friends*

Carolyn Crowder

Suzanne Kurth

Conni H. Collins

Nagwa Hultquist

### *Sustaining Friends*

Mary & Chris Albrecht

### *Patron of the Garden*

Henry McIlwaine

### *Business Friends*

Volunteer Lawn, Inc.

Honey Rock Herb Farm

Oakes Daylilies

Custom Marble & Design

Meadowview Greenhouse  
& Garden Center

Exterior Design Services

Stanley's Greenhouses

### *Garden Club/Society Friends*

The Garden Club

West Knoxville Garden Club

### *Adopt-a-Bed*

BRONZE

Mineko S. Lewis

Jerry & Brenda Davis

PLATINUM

Knoxville Garden Study Club

Additional contributions have  
been received recently from:

Knoxville Garden Study Club  
in honor of Priscilla Siler

Fi-Shock - Gold Sponsor for  
Blooms Days 2005



97 Oak Ridge Turnpike • Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830  
(865) 481-3825 • Fax (865) 482-3084  
Email: willowridge2000@aol.com



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# THE GARDEN POST

## Do you enjoy your fOG membership?

If so, please share the experience with your friends and encourage them to support this worthy organization. A \$25 Gift Membership is a great way to remember someone on a special occasion. Find a membership form to print and send in at [www.friendsoftheutgardens.utk.edu](http://www.friendsoftheutgardens.utk.edu) or call the Infoline at 865-525-4555.

The Secret Gardens and Blooms Days get all the attention and flattering press for raising funds in support of the UT Gardens – Knoxville’s “best kept secret” – but who do you think REALLY gets us off the ground each year and pays the bills for the UT Gardens as a public garden? YOU DO!

It is your continuing MEMBERSHIP in this organization that makes the UT Gardens possible and worthwhile to visit. The UT Gardens would not exist without you. They will not get even better without you. They won’t be truly great until we enlist a LOT of our friends to join us.

In our last several years our organization has grown by leaps and bounds to take on more and more of the costs of developing this outstanding community resource. We can do so because you RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

Please do so now. Thank you!

