

GARDENER'S NOTEBOOK

Horticultural News and Research Important to American Gardeners

INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED FLOWER VARIETIES

Fleuroselect, an international organization that tests and promotes new ornamental plants, awards its Gold Medal to the best of the best each year. For 2011, two stand-outs joined the ranks: *Zinnia marylandica* Double Zahara™ Fire is the first disease-resistant zinnia cultivar with truly double, reddish-orange flowers; and *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Villa Roma Scarlet' is a sweet pea boasting deep red blooms on compact plants.



Villa Roma Scarlet® sweet pea



Phantom petunia

Additionally, Fleuroselect gave its new FleuroStar Award to Phantom, a new petunia introduction from Ball Horticultural's Simply Beautiful® line. This distinction recognizes exceptional innovation in plant breeding by spotlighting varieties with an off-the-charts "wow factor." Described as show-stopping and one-of-a-kind, Phantom dazzled judges with its dark, nearly black flowers with a vibrant yellow star.

Visit www.fleuroselect.com for additional information.

CITIZEN SCIENCE TAKES ON INVASIVE SPECIES IN TEXAS

Ordinary citizens can have a tremendous impact on conservation efforts by helping scientists collect data on everything from migrating birds to changing weather patterns. One highly successful program that is making headlines is Invaders of Texas, which has mobilized a small army of volunteers all over the Lone Star State to keep track of invasive plants.

While the program is the product of a "Texas-sized partnership" of numerous governmental, academic, and conservation organizations, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin oversees the training of participants—more than 1,100 in the last five years. Together they've noted more than 12,000 observations during more than 4,000 hours of data collection, saving an estimated \$71,000 in labor costs.

According to the Wildflower Center, among the important contributions of this work involves the federally listed noxious weed, cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*). A reported sighting in an uninfested region enabled Texas Forest Service staff to remove it before it could spread further. Additionally, all the citizen scientist observations are collected in an online database accessible to other researchers and conservation agencies around the country.

To learn more about Invaders of Texas, visit www.texasinvasives.org.

HORTICULTURE'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

Agriculture is well-known as a major source of climate-changing greenhouse gases—carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide—around the world, but as a sector of this industry, how does horticulture specifically stack up?

"No one has ever determined what role horticulture plays—is it a good guy or a bad guy?" says Steve Prior, a plant physiologist with the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service National Soil Dynamics Lab in Auburn, Alabama. "We wanted to look at whether it's a carbon source or a sink, and right now it looks like it's a sink."

The fact that horticulture is good for the earth is hardly a news flash for gardeners, but it's nice to have science behind it. According to the report Prior and his team published in the February 2011 issue of the research journal *HortScience*, several factors resulted in this conclusion. First, the pine-bark and other wood-based media in plant containers are carbon rich and return a lot of carbon to the soil when the plant and media both go into the garden. Trees, shrubs, and perennials themselves capture large quantities of carbon. And the fact that ornamental horticulture doesn't rely as heavily on emission-producing machinery as row crops is a plus. Also, simple tasks like mulching and composting return carbon to the soil, and using nitrogen fertilizers efficiently can reduce the nitrous oxide released into the atmosphere.

BEST DISEASE-RESISTANT BLUEBERRIES

July is national blueberry month, coinciding with peak season for this summer fruit. But one thing that can put a damper on celebrations is mummy berry, a disease that occurs "almost everywhere blueberries are grown and affects all cultivated species," says research plant pathologist James Polashock at the USDA's Agricultural Research Service Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research & Extension in Chatsworth, New Jersey.



USDA researchers James Potaschock, left, and Mark Ehrendfeldt examine blueberry bushes to determine their resistance to mummy berry disease, which shrivels and discolors fruit, above.

Caused by the fungus *Monilinia vac-cinii-corymbosi*, the disease affects blueberries in two phases: first it attacks the new growth and foliage, and then when fruit appears, it causes the berries to shrivel and turn white until they appear mummified. During a multi-year trial, Polashock and his colleagues evaluated scores of cultivars to find the most resistant ones.

Overall, among highbush cultivars 'Bluejay' appeared to be the most resistant

to mummy berry, and 'Brunswick' ranked best for lowbush cultivars. While this research was aimed at helping commercial growers choose better varieties to cultivate, home gardeners may also want to seek out these less susceptible options.

USDA MODIFIES REGULATIONS FOR IMPORTING NON-NATIVE PLANTS

Effective as of June 27, the USDA has made a slight alteration to importation

regulations for plants used in gardening and landscape design by adding a new category called "Not Authorized for Importation Pending Pest Risk Analysis," or NAPPRA. Although it might seem like an inconsequential tweak, it adds another layer of protection for gardeners and growers from pests and invasive plants and the economic and environmental damage they could do.

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will evaluate plants entering the country for their invasive potential, based on whether or not research has deemed the species a pest carrier or a pest itself. Potential threats are placed on the NAPPRA list, but this status can be appealed with new scientific research demonstrating they are not invasive or likely to carry destructive pests or diseases. The idea behind this new regulation is to keep out harmful pests and pathogens species while allowing some flexibility.

MOTH-FREE MOVES

"Before you bust-a-move...BUST-A-MOTH!" So goes the slogan of a campaign to raise awareness about the risk of



It took just a few weeks for Laura's flowers to thrive.
{ Plus 82 years of organic expertise. }




Plants have been thriving on our organic plant foods ever since we originated them for gardeners in 1929. Our Bio-tone® Starter Plus is the ideal choice to help new plantings establish fast, especially in difficult soil conditions. That's because it combines an all natural plant food with our proprietary Bio-tone microbes and mycorrhizae to help ensure deeper roots, bigger blooms, and faster growth.

Espoma. A natural in the garden since 1929.

Join our gardening community at [facebook.com/espomaorganic](https://www.facebook.com/espomaorganic)

PEOPLE and PLACES in the NEWS

In Memoriam: Dutch Bulbman Jan Ohms

Dutch bulbman Jan Ohms passed away in May at the age of 85. Over the course of his six-decade career, he is credited with supplying nearly a billion flower bulbs to botanical, public, and private gardens across the United States.

Born in Connecticut to Dutch parents, Ohms grew up in the Netherlands working in his family's bulb fields and nurseries. He studied ornamental horticulture while participating in the Dutch resistance during World War II. After the war,



Ohms returned to the United States to attend the University of Connecticut, where he earned a degree in landscape architecture and agricultural economics.

In the 1950s, after serving in the U. S. Air Force, Ohms founded his own flower bulb company, Jan S. Ohms, Inc., in Stamford, Connecticut. In the 1970s, he acquired Van Engelen and launched its well-known wholesale flower bulb catalog soon after. In 1991, Ohms diversified into the retail market by acquiring the John Scheepers mailorder flower bulb company, which had been founded in 1908 by his uncle, John Scheepers. His daughter Jo-Anne van den Berg-Ohms became president of John Scheepers

in 1994, and in 2002, John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds was launched.

"Our business not only represents my father's legacy, it's his vision," says van den Berg-Ohms. "We will continue to run the three companies with the high standards and ethical practices my father would expect."

Garden Club of America's National Award Winners

Each year, the Garden Club of America (GCA) awards 10 national medals to "organizations and individuals who have shown outstanding achievement" in fields related to its mission.

Among the honorees this year is William Cullina, director of horticulture and plant curator at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay, who received the Sarah Chapman Francis Award for outstanding literary achievement. An expert on North American native plants and their propagation, he has written five award-winning books on these subjects.



Kris Jarantoski

The GCA's Distinguished Service Medal went to Kris Jarantoski, executive vice president and director of the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, Illinois, in recognition of his efforts to make this public garden into a world leader in plant conservation research, teaching gardens, and plant collections over the last 30 years.

The Jane Righter Rose Medal for "outstanding achievement in rose culture through the propagation of new roses" was awarded to William J. Radler of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who developed the best-selling Knock Out® rose, which was introduced in 2005.

For its "outstanding achievement in environmental protection and the maintenance of the quality of life," the Pollinator Partnership based in San Francisco, California, received the Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal. This nonprofit organization works to promote and protect North American pollinators and the essential role they play in the environment.

For a complete list of medal winners, visit www.gcamerica.org.

spreading gypsy moths during a move. Introduced to Massachusetts in 1869 from Europe, this pest has spread throughout the northeast corridor despite rigorous quarantines and other control measures. As a caterpillar, this insect can devour the foliage of entire trees and bushes in short order, weakening and eventually killing them if leaves are repeatedly stripped. Gypsy moths plague more than 300 tree and shrub species and can defoliate up to 13 million acres of trees in one season.



Top: Gypsy moth caterpillars like this one feed voraciously on leaves for several months. Adult moths appear in July and August, with females laying tan-colored egg masses, above, that overwinter.

Female gypsy moths aren't picky about where they lay their fuzzy-looking egg masses—anything outdoors is fair game. Because of this, if you live in a quarantined area and are moving to a non-infested state, you are required by law to inspect any household items stored outside that you plan to take with you, and destroy any egg masses you may find.

For more information about gypsy moths and proper inspection techniques visit www.yourmovegypsymothfree.com.



GRANT ENABLES NATIVE PLANT HABITAT RESTORATION IN GEORGIA

Thanks to a two-year federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia (SBGG) in Athens will begin restoring five acres of a degraded flood-

plain habitat along the Middle Oconee River on its property. This area's native plants, such as pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), river oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), and winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), have been choked out by invasive Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*). The \$135,575

SBGG has already cleared paths like this one through the privet understory on five acres of floodplain and eventually plans to restore an additional 27 acres.

grant will allow the garden to clear the privet, then reintroduce native species, modeling the new habitat after other floodplains in the area.

"This process will be used to generate a set of recommendations for floodplain restoration for landowners and land managers who wish to address the habitat devastation caused by Chinese privet," says Jim Affolter, the garden's Director of Research and Conservation.

SBGG will also use the grant to improve a greenhouse already used to store and grow natives, put in a deer fence for an outdoor cultivation area, and run educational programs about native plants and how to re-introduce them.


To learn more about the SBGG, visit www.uga.edu/botgarden.

Written by Editorial Interns Helen Thompson and Terra-Nova Sadowski with Associate Editor Viveka Neveln.

**Go Green...
Go Grey**

Help Save the Environment
Help Save an Endangered
Manatee Today

Adopt-A-Manatee!



Call 1-800-432-JOIN (5646)
www.savethemanatee.org

Photo: Robyn Churchill

**AFTER YOU TAKE OFF THE GLOVES,
PUT ON THE BAG BALM®.**

Long a staple on the farm, the little green can is also at home in the garden. To help soften and smooth roughed up hands, chapped and chafed skin, and cuts and scrapes, dig for the Bag Balm®—the time-tested solution.



DAIRY ASSOCIATION CO., INC.
P.O. BOX 145, DEPT. AG11, LYNDONVILLE, VT. 05851/TEL. 802-828-3610
WWW.BAGBALM.COM / WEST OF ROCKIES
SMITH SALES SERVICE, P.O. BOX 48, OREGON CITY, OR 97045

GREEN GARAGE® by Rita Pelczar

With so many tools and products to choose from, what's a gardener to do to select those that will make indoor and outdoor chores easier, safer, and more efficient? How about getting the scoop from another gardener? Contributing editor Rita Pelczar reports on products she has found useful or innovative in her garden, with an emphasis on earth-friendly products and supplies. Here are a few products you may want to stock in your own "green garage" or garden shed.

OUTDOOR PROTECTION

Summer's here and so are mosquitoes, chiggers, flies, and ticks. If you'd rather not apply—and reapply—insect repellent directly to your skin, Sloggers (www.sloggerstore.com)



offers hats and bandanas with **Insect Shield®** technology, which bonds the insect repellent permethrin to the fabric. Its **Wide-Brimmed-Braided Hat** also provides UPF 50+ sun protection; I particularly like the leather chin strap that keeps the hat in place when it gets windy. The bandanas—which can be used for dogs as well as gardeners—can be washed at least 70 times without losing their effectiveness.

Don't forget to protect your hard-working hands with gardening gloves. Wells Lamont (www.wellslamont.com) **Garden Tips™** are nitrile-coated to keep out moisture, while providing excellent gripping ability. Its **Ultra Comfort Suede Garden Gloves** are very sturdy, durable, and provide good flexibility—they're great for preventing blisters while digging, raking, staking, and other heavy chores. Their stretchy back and adjustable wrist closure ensure a comfortable fit.



RECYCLED RAISED BED SYSTEM

There's still time to start a new vegetable or flower garden this season. If your space is limited, a raised bed is a good option. Filled with rich soil and compost, a raised bed can be intensively planted so you can produce quite a bit in a limited area. **Greenland Gardener Raised Bed Garden Kit** (www.greenlandgardener.com) is made from recycled sawdust, shopping bags, and milk jugs, and the attractive com-

posite has the appearance of wood. The kits are easy to assemble and are available in a range of sizes and components that allow for both horizontal and vertical expansion.

HANDS-FREE GARDENING

The **Gardener's Hollow Leg** (www.TheGardenersHollowLeg.com) is a handy way

to collect your clippings while cutting back herbaceous plants, deadheading blooms, and pulling weeds. The fabric bag attaches to a belt and can be worn on either your right or left side. It holds more than five gallons and best of all, both



your hands are still free to work. It's also helpful for harvesting crops from a ladder—like apples and hops. The 10-inch-wide ring opening and a strap handle at the bottom of the bag make for easy emptying.

CAMOUFLAGE FOR DOWNSPOUTS

I have never liked the downspouts that flank my front porch—they detract from the entrance. This year, however, I was pleased to discover the **Downspout Trellis** available from Lee Valley (www.leevalley.com). The kit consists of three semi-circular sections, each eight inches wide and three feet long, that are placed one on top of the other to cover a downspout and provide a framework for the vine of your choice to climb. I'm growing cathedral bells (*Cobaea scandens*) on mine.



A contributing editor for *The American Gardener*, Rita Pelczar lives in North Carolina. She is the editor-in-chief of the AHS's *Homegrown Harvest* (Mitchell Beazley/Octopus USA, 2010).