

July 2010

Sacramento Garden Notes

Written and Published by

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For those who missed out on Echinacea 'Tiki Torch' last year, it is available again.

Economics finally hit home:

In well over 25 yrs of selling plants, there has ALWAYS been a predictable pattern of sales starting out low and building to a spring high, then declining again to a lower level for the rest of the year.

The peak might go up or down according to the year, the exact dates might vary, but the general pattern was ALWAYS the same.

Not this year however, the first sale in Feb was gang busters, so expecting an even bigger spring I stocked up on plant material.

However the spring surge never materialized, instead sales have drifted lower with each sale since that first one in February.

So I am facing facts and announcing that this will be the last season for The Benefit Plant Sales.

I will keep the published Plant Sale schedule for as long as plants last, and continue publishing Garden Notes, but it looks like I'll have to go into bankruptcy at the end of the year.

Between loses this year, and carryover debt from the debacle last year with the city, I just can't carry the debt load any longer, especially since the charge card companies have jacked up interest rates.

Each sale scheduled will have reduced prices from the one before and hopefully by the end of fall, I'll have cleared out everything.

I have lots still coming along from cuttings and seed, so should have plants for the whole schedule, though I expect the patented plants will sell out earlier and I DO NOT plan on buying more. (see page 4 for dates and discounts).

I'm hoping to eventually have fund raising sales again after get through all the legal work, (possibly under a different ownership) but that is for the future to decide.



Brunnera 'Jack Frost' is a good colorful foliage plant for filtered shade or shade, with bright blue flowers resembling forget-me-not in spring.

July Garden Notes:

While we can dream of cooler weather, July generally is a warm to hot month with

temperatures from the mid 90's to low 100's not unusual.

While it is hot, dry and watering is a constant chore, there are things that need doing to get things shaped up for later on towards fall.

Spiderworts or Tradescantia that have ended their spring bloom often look lanky and ratty, they should be cut to within an inch or two of the ground, and will resprout new foliage and a new bloom cycle for late summer color.

Hostas which are bug eaten, or burnt (except H. 'Krossa Regal') can be cut back and will produce new clean foliage for late summer and fall.

Some items that have gotten too tall can be cut back now and will still grow and bloom for late summer and fall. Included here are Penstemon, Perennial Sunflowers, Asters and Chrysanthemums.

July is the time to trim foliage on, divide and reset overgrown Iris. They will establish and grow a bit this fall.

Items NOT to trim after mid-July include Rhododendron, Camellia, deciduous Magnolias and Dogwood. These plants start setting next years buds late July and early August.



Agave 'Spotty', is an unusual deciduous succulent that comes up with spotted foliage and a bloom spike that can reach 6 ft. The cluster of spidery looking, brown and green blooms is unique and hummingbirds find them very attractive.

It stands sun, heat and is drought resistant. I'll have a FEW (8) of these at the July Sale, you might want to reserve one.

can be trimmed or cut back in July (this is European style pruning). This makes it easier to see what your doing, slows over abundant

growth, and will cause more branching within reach.

The picture following this on the next column is a "Dwarf" cherry that was so happy it sent up 5 foot shoots this spring, which I cut back to 2 foot and you can see the new buds coming out which will give it better branching and keep it smaller than those large shoots would have resulted in.



Other plants that can benefit from a July haircut (pruning) include Veronica that has finished blooming (will often rebloom after trimming), items that may have burned in our recent hot weather and fall bloomers such as Pineapple and Mexican Sages to keep them smaller and more compact.

With all the watering the heat makes necessary, potted plants especially will benefit from a feeding, as will many yard plants. Remember less more often is a great rule on feeding!!

When spraying pesticides or fungicides in hot weather, avoid spraying when temps are over 80 degrees or you may burn the plant. If you have to spray, do it early in the AM or late in day near sunset to avoid burning plants.

In hot weather, we often use the yard later into the evening. Remember that LIGHT colors show up better at night than dark colors such as red or purple. Whites, light pinks, light blues and most pastels show up better at night, a fact people often overlook when planting!



Chasmanthium latifolium 'River Mist' is a new variegated form of this easy to grow grass, normally grown for the flat seed heads that are used in dry arrangements.

This new variegated form adds color from the plant, as well as the seed heads (which are also variegated). Grows 24-36 inches tall in sun or part shade.

Look ahead to fall planting:

While the box stores are carrying fewer and fewer bulbs for fall planting each year (and the packaged ones they do sell are more often NOT as labeled), the fall planted winter and spring blooming bulbs still add a lot to a garden.

So plan ahead and look at ordering your bulbs online or by mail. One the best I've found is Brent and Becky's Bulbs. Their homepage is: <http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com>, you can download a catalog, or shop online. To order a catalog by mail, send your request to:

Brent and Becky's Bulbs
7900 Daffodil Lane
Gloucester, VA 23061
Toll-free: (877) 661-2852:



Above: Louisiana Iris 'Peaches and Wine'



Calocasia nancyiana shows a bright yellow, white strip down the center of mature foliage. A distinctive and different "Elephant Ear".

Assorted notes and observations –

I've found a number of items thought of and listed as "shade" plants, will actually stand a LOT more sun than expected.

Many of the Heuchera and Heucherella have surprised me with how much they will tolerate, as have the Dicentra, although I've also noticed that some of the newer yellow leafed varieties of Heuchera and related genera need more shade than average or they scorch.

Conversely, many so called “sun” plants seem to do fine with just morning or in some cases filtered sun. For those who have hot sun spots in summer but shade all winter, I’ve found it is often better using “sun” lovers rather than shade plants, since most of the shade items burn in that hot summer sun. If you have such a spot (like I have on the north side of the house), ask me about plants that work rather than just guessing!

One thing I’ve found is that that sunny summer north side is good for growing summer veggies, since they are done by the time the area becomes mostly shaded by the house in the late fall.

Also, many “sun” lovers will stand winter shade since they are basically dormant.



Rudbeckia ‘Henry Eilers’ is a recent introduction not commonly seen in nurseries yet.

It generally grows 3-4 ft. tall in full sun and produces masses of flowers that attract butterflies and can be cut.

It is a true perennial, deciduous to the ground in winter that likes sun and a drained soil. Drought resistant when established.

Bottom Col. 2, Baptista australis – a Blue Flowered, midwest US native, sun loving, drought resistant that is the Perennial Plant of the year for 2010.

BENEFIT PLANT SALES Are
Ending —Plant Close Out Sales
While plants last
Cash and check ONLY!

July 17/18 - 35% OFF !

August 21st & 22nd - 40% OFF

September 18th & 19th– 40% Off

October 16th & 17th. 45% OFF

All of the above sales will be in the COVERED parking area on 18th St, behind the Gifted Gardener store at 18th & J Streets.

Hours will be 10 AM to 4 PM

Fall yard sale at 1689 Vallarta Circle on November 6th & 7th, 9am to 4 pm.

Final Clearance!



Some of the plants that will be at the July Sale (subject to prior sale).



Bletilla yokahama 'Kate'



Gold Variegated Honeysuckle



Euphorbia p. 'Bonfire'



Echinacea 'Kim's Mophead'



Louisiana Iris 'Jeri'



Lousiana Iris 'Wow Factor'



Coreopsis 'Citrine'



Echinacea 'Firebird'



Echinacea 'Tangerine Dream'



Hibiscus 'Kopper King'



Rudbeckia 'Henry Eilers'



Hosta Wide Brim



Geranium 'Purple Pillow'