

"Learn Something New Every Day"

"If, I can someday see M. Claude Monet's garden, I feel sure that I shall see something that is not so much a garden of flowers as of colours and tones, less an old-fashioned flower garden than a colour garden, so to speak, one that achieves an effect not entirely nature's, because it is planted so that only the flowers with matching colours will bloom at the same time, harmonized in an infinite stretch of blue or pink. "

Marcel Proust, "Splendours. "

Houston Federation Of Garden Clubs

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April 2011

Dear Friends:

Spring is sprung – the clocks have 'sprung' forward, the wildflowers are abloomin' and March Madness prevailed! After a delightful and talented arts and flowers program in March, our attention in April will turn to the garden.

Darin Dulling will present a program on "**Garden Art Informed by Architectural Elements.**" He will offer numerous examples of classic and contemporary architectural garden art from the British Isles and beyond and offer ideas how those elements can be tailored to fit into your own landscape. Come prepared to be inspired!! Also on April 8, Betty Jean Collier has designers who will demonstrate **Tubular Designs.**

Also, Mary Lou Hakansson will have **caladium bulbs** for sale in April. And the sales tables will be loaded, getting ready to display and sell all of our accumulated "**stuff**".

The arts and flowers theme of March reminds me that you will not want to miss one of the best art and flower shows in Houston: the Garden Club of America's **Florescence Flower Show "Passages"** which will be held at the Museum of Fine Arts on April 19-20. Their show is held every two years and is spectacular, one worthy of your garden club getting together for a tour. **Federation will once again have four designs in the Art by Invitation section, Room A3 of the Upper Jones Galleries.**

Also in the Newsletter are other shows that you are invited to view. This time of the year is exhibit time for both horticulture and design – take advantage.

THINKING AHEAD: Christine Morrison says that our **May Tablescapes for a Luncheon Challenge** has thus far registered eleven clubs and/or individual who are eager to decorate a table and participate in the challenge for a prize(s). We still have more tables to decorate – so, don't be shy, think about doing one more creative thing this year!! Give Christine a call for more details, etc. For your planning information, our luncheon guests will not actually use your plates and glasses for eating purposes. Your components can either be all left on the table and our furnished plastic plates and glasses put on top, or you can remove them entirely for the luncheon part, leaving the

centerpiece, linens, etc. intact. The "gala" will be a fine ending and new beginning for Federation administrations.

"The real lowdown on gardening is....dirt" a quote from Texas Bix Bender.

Betty

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



April 1	HFGC Day Excursion to Houston Monument
April 8	HFGC Monthly Meeting
April 19-20	Florescence Flower Show, MFA Houston
April 19-22	TX Garden Clubs, Inc. Spring Convention El Paso, TX

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FIRST BOARD MEETING FOR NEW OFFICERS

The first Houston Federation of Garden Club's Board meeting of all newly elected and appointed officers will take place immediately after the Houston Federation Meeting on May 13 in the Azalea Room. We must be finished by 2:30 pm, as the Rose Society will be holding their spring plant sale and will take over the entire Garden Center.

Horticulture and Native Ground Covers

April 2011

By Jonni Almone

713-524-4285

When we moved into our house, forty years ago this April, one of the first things we did was plant a live oak tree in the front yard. At that time there was NOTHING there other than an extremely healthy crop of St. Augustine grass. As the years have gone by, flowerbeds were added and the tree grew, and grew, to be a mighty tall and wide specimen with a canopy now spanning the width of our lot. Every couple of years, we hire a tree service to thin the canopy and prune back limbs that are inclined to wander over our roof and that of our neighbor. As the tree burgeoned, the grass declined. Two years ago, we had a landscaper replace the existing sod with a guaranteed-to-be-shade-tolerant strain of St. Augustine. All that accomplished, besides using up a large chunk of money, was to delay the inevitable. I would like to confess, right now before all of you reading this, that our front yard is a disgrace, especially for someone who professes to be a gardener, and it needs to be dealt with.

This past year I started a desultory search for native groundcovers to put under the tree so that the garden could be more than scrawny patches of grass interspersed with large areas of bare dirt. Then my next-door neighbor Matt asked last month, "So what are you going to do with the yard? Because, you know, the grass isn't working." I knew that, Matt, but it takes a while for me to get started on a project. So now I am serious (shame is a great motivator!), but it isn't as easy as you might imagine. Two weekends ago, the Houston Chronicle ran a gardening article with suggestions for plants to use under trees. I was excited, until I read the list: ligularia, Asian jasmine, holly fern, and others...all introduced species. Maybe I am becoming fixated about this native plant mania, but it is truly my intention to use natives in my garden whenever possible. They belong here, they will feed birds, insects and animals, and once established, native plants are easier to maintain than exotics. The following is the result of my research. The first two of these plants are unfamiliar to me, and I am not even sure that they can be found readily from retail sources, so I am not exactly recommending them. This column is more in the nature of suggestions for plants to put in shady spots, and maybe we can try them together, or if you have already tried and have results to share, I could publish those next month.

Horseherb, *Calyptocarpus vialis*, is a shade-tolerant groundcover in the Aster family that can handle moderate foot traffic. It is a semi-evergreen herb, easily propagated, and it is very undemanding. Typically only six inches tall, horseherb has few requirements: it can grow in sun or shade, it needs low to moderate water, it is drought and heat tolerant, and it isn't picky about soil conditions. The small yellow flowers in warm weather will attract butterflies, and the foliage is interesting – the leaves are arrow-shaped with a slightly serrated edge. Unfortunately, in a really cold winter, horseherb will go completely dormant. It will return in the spring, but those of you requiring a perfectly manicured garden year-round may have to resort to covering spots with mulch or mixing in winter annuals that will provide some interest until the soil warms up and the horseherb reemerges. If you are a tidy sort, horseherb can be mowed to keep it a uniform height.

Texas frogfruit, *Phyla nodiflora*, is a member of the Verbena family that is evergreen in mild winters. Frogfruit is an excellent spreader and a good nectar plant for butterflies. It is a fairly small plant, only reaching three to six inches, and it has cute little pale pink verbena-type flowers. The fairly narrow and elongated leaves develop a reddish or purplish tinge in winter. Frogfruit is also undemanding as to growing conditions, with no preference for soil type or drainage, and according to wildflower.org, can tolerate either drought or flooding. It does not, however, take well to mowing, so if you are mowing the horseherb patch, steer clear of the frogfruit.

If one is trying for a garden without turf, there's no rule that says every plant must be grass-sized, and any garden space will be more interesting with plants of different heights. What we are aiming for in our garden is a pleasing mix of groundcovers and other plants that will provide interest throughout the year. I will be relying heavily on mulch and stepping stones to give form to the space, and there will be several varieties of small bushes, certainly some in the Salvia family, to fill in. One possibility, **Scarlet sage**, *Salvia coccinea*, is already in my garden, and it will be a good addition to the front yard. Again, it isn't evergreen, but it is fairly cold tolerant. It grows one to three feet tall, has small, oval leaves with a pungent odor, and bloom spikes of red, white, or pink.

With these species and others that I am still considering, I hope to create an attractive, usable space in front of our house, and restore my reputation with the neighbors. It may be that I am forced to use some introduced species to accomplish this, but there will be as many natives as I can find. I have a fixation to uphold.

[Once again, the factual information about the plants discussed came from <http://wildflower.org>, the website of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.]

HELP WANTED

Wanted – names of speakers who presented an outstanding program to your club recently – maybe someone from your own club. If you are willing to give a program to a garden club, please let me know. Speakers on all topics are needed, but the DESIGN Speakers List has really dwindled.

Jerry Reid, Speakers Chairman 6214 Birdwood Road; Houston, TX 77074-7526 (713) 774-0809

HOSTESS REMINDER**April 8, HFGC Meeting**

Donna Luther*

Zone 6 Counselor

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Columbus Garden Club
 Fleetwood Garden Club
 Friendship Garden Club *
 Garden Club of Sealy (The)
 Hearthstone Garden Club
 Jersey Village Garden Club
 Nottingham Country Garden Club
 Nottingham Trail Gardeners
 Olde Tower Oaks Garden Club
 Piney Point Garden Club
 Royal Oaks Garden Club
 Sprig and Sprout Garden Club
 Walnut Bend Garden Club

"FAMOUS LINES"

Far Corners Garden Study Club

Standard Flower Show

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Hermann Garden Center

12:30 – 3:00 pm

Open to the Public

No Admission

Fund Raiser Dinner and Auction

The Society for the Advancement of Floral Design (SAFD) will host its annual tablescapes gala at Northgate Country Club, 17110 Northgate Forest Drive, Houston, TX, on Thursday, April 14, 2011 from 5:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Tablescapes viewing starts at 5:30 P.M., and dinner is served at 7:00 P.M. This annual gala will showcase SAFD members and area floral designers with their creation and design of elaborate tablescapes. Tickets are \$45.00 each and are open to the public. Ticket cost includes dinner and silent auction. To purchase tickets, please call Betty Lind at (281) 251-8818, or for further information, send e-mail to jlind@comcast.net. And check out the website safdhouston.org

TABLESCAPES**May 13, 2011****"Tablescapes for a Luncheon:
A Garden Challenge"**

Details are on separate page
of this Newsletter.

**The Houston Orchid Society 2011
Show and Sale***Wonders of the Orchid World*

Location: Houston Museum of Natural
Science Main Lobby

555 Hermann Park Drive
Houston, TX 77030

Date: April 16-17, 2011

Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Judging is Friday, April 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Free Admission - Parking Available

**SPRING ROSE SHOW AND
ROSE GARDEN TOUR**

The Houston Rose Society will hold its
Spring Rose Show on April 16th from noon
to 4:00 p.m. at South Main Baptist Church,
4300 Beltway 8, Pasadena, TX. Free
admission.

Rose Garden Tour - April 17th from noon
til 6:00 p.m. This year's tour features
Hospitality Apartments, a facility that
provides free temporary housing and a
comfortable environment for families in
need who are receiving treatment at Texas
Medical Center. The address is 7300
Bertner, Houston, TX 77030. Maps and
information about the other rose gardens on
the tour will be available at Hospitality
Apartments and www.houstonrose.org.
Free admission.

BROMELIAD SHOW AND SALE

The Bromeliad Society/Houston, Inc. will
hold their annual plant show and sale on
April 30 and May 1 at Mercer Arboretum
and Botanic Gardens (22306 Aldine-
Westfield Road). Bromeliad growers will
be on hand during sale hours to answer
questions.

SHOW HOURS:

Saturday, April 30, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, May 1, 11 am - 4 p.m.

SALE HOURS

Friday, April 29, Noon - 5 p.m.

Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, May 1, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

BROM. MOUNTING WORKSHOP

Saturday, April 30, Noon - 1 p.m.

Sunday, May 1, 2 pm - 3 p.m.

Website: bromeliadsocietyhouston.org
Charlien Rose (713)-686-9969

**"THROUGH THE GARDEN GATE"
Friendswood Heritage Gardeners'
Garden Tour & Bazaar**

Sat., April 30 and Sunday, May 1
Garden Center is open to public 10:00 a.m.
to 5:00 p.m. both days. (112 W. Spreading
Oaks, Friendswood, TX)
Plant sale, Flower Show, Drawings, Garden
Accessories available. Garden Tour Tickets
are \$10.00 – advance purchase \$7.00. Tour
from 12 to 4 p.m. Sat and 1 to 5 p.m.
Sunday. Tours are of Friendswood
backyards. (Tour maps are on the tickets.)

**HERBAL SPRING FLING
29th Annual Herb Day Symposium
Saturday, April 30, 2011
Houston Civic Garden Center
1500 Hermann Drive**

Attendance is by pre-registration only.
For complete information and
registration form visit [www.herbsociety-
stu.org](http://www.herbsociety-stu.org)

**"Beauty is in the Eye of the
Beholder," A Daylily Flower Show**

Presented by Houston Daylily Society and
Houston Hemerocallis Society
Admission is Free
Saturday, May 21, 2011 - 1:00 to 4:00 P M
Includes Plant Sale that will start at 10 A M
Gethsemane Lutheran Church
4040 Watonga, Houston, Texas 77092
Contact Sara Chumley 713-461- 0573 for
any questions.

**Nassau Bay Garden Club
Flower Show**

**"Floral Interpretations of Artwork"
Open to Public on May 14 from 2-5 p.m.
Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake, 2000
NASA Parkway in Nassau Bay, TX**

**FLORESCENCE
April 19 – 20, 2011**

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston – The
Caroline Wiess Law Building at
1001 Bissonnet

A biennial event to showcase floral and
horticultural arrangements with museum
works. Presented by – River Oaks Garden
Club, The Garden Club of Houston, and the
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and themed
"Passages". Open to the public with regular
museum admission. For additional
information on events go to website
flohouston.org or contact by email
florescence@mfa.org

CLOSET CLEANOUT AT HFGC

The Federation closet will be cleaned out
and some really good things from it will be
for sale at the April and May meeting.

HFGC EXCURSION

Looking ahead to October 6, 7, & 8, 2011,
a Kerrville Safari is scheduled for
\$555.00. (Limited to 40 persons) Details
for both tours are in the February
Newsletter and website
houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

HFGC meets on the second Friday of each month (Sept. – May).
Program at 10:30 A.M. followed by a short business meeting. Refreshments from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M.
Houston Civic Garden Center; 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004

April 8, 2011

Houston Federation Meeting

The Program will begin at 10:30, followed by a short business meeting.

Program: "Garden Art Informed by Architectural Elements"

Speaker: Darin Dulling
Botanical Horticulturist, Environmentalist
And Landscape Designer

Darin Dulling is the first U.S. citizen to hold both the Royal Horticultural Society of Certificate of Training and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Diploma. He established Thailand's first Botanical Garden on behalf of Queen Sirikit. He resides in Greenwich, Connecticut where he is the proprietor of Dulling Designs, LLC. If your landscape needs a make-over then this is the program not to miss.

At the April 8 Meeting

Ways & Means

- Plant Sale - Bring plants for the sales table
- Things & Such Sales Table
- Monthly Drawing Table

Horticulture Exhibits – Share a prized bloom or specimen from your garden.

Design Exhibits: "Tubular Designs" – Betty Jean Collier

Drawing Items

You can still donate stuff for the drawing items, but don't forget to check out the good stuff from the HFGC closet that will be available for sale in April and May.

**“TABLESCAPES FOR A LUNCHEON: A GARDEN CLUB CHALLENGE”
REGISTRATION FORM**

Decorate a table for six for the May luncheon.
Must include table settings, linens, and a centerpiece
Entries can be by an individual or by a club.
Set-up time is between 9:30-10:30 on the morning of the 13th.

Name of Club/Individual_____

Phone #_____ Cell #_____

Email address_____

Tablescape Title/theme_____

For more information and to register, contact Christine Morrison

281-589-0565. email: brioche111@hotmail.com

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