

"Learn Something New Every Day"

"Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. "

Albert Schweitzer, *Beautiful Monday*.

Houston Federation Of Garden Clubs

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May 2011

Dear Friends:

This is the final Newsletter to go under this current administration's letterhead. It has been a pleasure communicating to you all the news that was fit to print about Houston Federation of Garden Clubs!! For jobs well-done, I wholeheartedly **thank Etta Guillot and Jonni Almoney** for their dedication to this process.

May will be a busy final meeting day. We will decorate the auditorium with our **Tablescape tables** and, oh by the way, it is not too late to register to do one. See the last several months Newsletters for a registration form or get in touch with Christine Morrison to sign up (**cash prizes will be awarded!**). Whether you do a table or not, please come and share the day with us – we will be **giving awards for work well-done, installing new officers** for the 2011-2013 administration, and top it all off with a **pot luck luncheon**. The Board of Directors will be hostesses for the luncheon, so please **bring your favorite dish to pass and help us celebrate the day**.

We will welcome your **horticulture exhibits** which will be placed on some of the non-Tablescape tables as centerpieces along with **potted plants** Janie Vance will furnish and have for sale after the luncheon. However, **we will not have the Monthly Horticulture Sales Table**. What we will have is **Kay Veech's Drawing table and items for sale from the infamous Federation closet!!** You never know what Linda Kuper and Mary Jo Busse might have on those tables to be either sold or given away! Come and browse.

It has been a pleasure serving as your president for the past two years. Thank you for giving me the opportunity. Thanks also goes to the wonderful, hard

working Board of Directors for making this administration so successful.

Betty

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



May 9	Federation Board Meeting
May 11	HFGC Monthly Meeting
May 15	Club rosters due to Federation Rosters Chairman
May 27-30	NGC Spring Convention, - Washington, D.C.
June 3-5	Houston Area Flower Show Judges Symposium – Hyatt Regent at Greenspoint
June 15-19	World Association of Flower Arrangers (WAFA) Flower Show - Boston

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Horticulture and Further Ideas for a Shady Garden

May 2011

By Jonni Almone

713-524-4285

Despite my claims last month and the best intentions, the front garden is still a mess. I haven't been lazy; there have been many garden club activities and a two week trip since my April column, but in my head I was busy, and I have thought of a couple more plants I will probably use.

The first one is **Katie ruellia**, *Ruellia brittoniana*, a dwarf version of Mexican petunia, *Ruellia nudiflora*. The tall original version of this plant has grown on the east side of my house for more than forty years, and I personally find it unattractive, long and bony, but you can't kill it with a gun! Periodically, I do a ruellia purge, pulling it up and digging out every piece of root I can find because when it grows too thick around the outside part of the air conditioner, it blocks air circulation and causes our repairman to shake his head and charge large amounts of money.

The dwarf Katie ruellia made her first appearance in our garden maybe fifteen years ago, when Texas A&M Agrilife named it one of their Texas Superstar plants (that is a trademarked name). It is much cuter than the original species, usually growing less than twelve inches tall and blooming prolifically all summer in full sun. I bought a dozen or so six-inch pots, divided them into small clumps, and used them at the corner of the porch as a border for a flowerbed, thinking that if it was endorsed by the Aggies, it ought to be a great plant for the garden. In just a few months, however, I was constantly finding cute little Katie babies sprouting in the grass. When you water Katie, any ripe seedpods will erupt like popcorn and fling seeds across the yard. In the year 2000, we did extensive remodeling to the house, which included removing all the bricks from the façade and stacking them on top of that bed, digging giant holes for foundation repairs, and changing the shape of the porch (with lumber stacked where the bricks had been). More than once, the construction involved a front-loader machine lumbering around, moving the bricks and lumber. The whole place was bare, packed dirt. The project dragged on for months, and the whole time, no lawn care of any kind was done in the front yard. When the construction was completed, I arranged for a landscaper to come resod the lawn. Between when I hired her and the time she started work, we got a really hard, soaking rain. In my front garden there was a sea of mud – with a semi-circle of Katie ruellia plants poking up through it where the original bed had been. Apparently you can't kill it with a bulldozer either.

So, eleven years later, I am replacing all the Saint Augustine grass in the front with native plants, evergreen and/or perennial, preferably, and I am really thinking that Katie ruellia is a natural. Clearly, she can survive whatever I do to her, or don't do for her. I already have experience with it growing in the shade, and while its blooms won't cover the whole plant, there will be a satisfactory show. A search on the Internet reveals her detractors; there are those who opine that she is an invasive devil, evil and sneaky, but since I won't have any grass to keep Katie out of, she will be welcome to propagate as she will.

Louisiana irises might do well out front, too, at least down between the sidewalk and the street where the summer sun can shine on it. I looked on the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's website, so that I could give you particulars about native irises, and there was nothing listed about Louisiana iris. Sally Wasowski's *Native Texas Plants* book explained why: Louisiana irises are hybrids from several native iris species. Wasowski says four, but an iris website lists five: *brevicaulis*, *giganticaerulea*, *fulva*, *nelsonii*, and *hexagona*. Louisiana irises come in a wide range of colors, from whites through blues to dark purples, and there are lovely yellow, pink, and orange varieties available as well. They grow to a height of two to three feet, and the blooms will be carried on spikes higher yet. They do well in partial shade with moist soil, and a single plant can form a three foot wide clump in two years. Then, in the spring after they have finished blooming, you can separate the clump and plant the rhizomes in another place or share them with friends. Plant the rhizomes with the tops exposed because they don't appreciate being planted too deeply.

The plan for the garden is beginning to take shape, and maybe by next September, there will be progress to report. Have a nice summer.

[Information was taken from www.wildflower.org, from www.louisianas.org, from Sally Wasowski's book *Native Texas Plants*, and from www.texassuperstar.com.]

TABLESCAPES

May 13, 2011

**"Tablescapes for a Luncheon:
A Garden Challenge"**

If you have signed up for a "Tablescape", please be sure that you have a card on the table that includes the theme or title and the club or individual's name.

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

Individual Renewal Membership

After May 1, 2011 Please send all checks to the new *Membership VP for Federation*, Daphne Light - 19410 Kessington Ln. - Houston, Texas 77094-3443
Ph #832-321-5679 – dlight1215@aol.com

"Latest In Irrigation Systems"

Earl Krause will demonstrate the newest equipment for automated watering systems at the Houston Rose Society Meeting on May 12, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1515 Hermann Park Drive, Houston, Texas. Free admission.

Spring Plant Show

May 21 & 22

204 E. Houston St.

Sponsored by the Men's Garden Club of Houston

For additional information call Bob Smith at 281-426-4065
Highlands TX 77562

DAY LILY FESTIVAL

Sunday, May 15, 2011

8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

3122 County Road 237

Alvin, TX 77511-8690

281-331-4395

neshimek@comcast.netwww.cityscope.net/~neshimek/**Garden Club/Affiliate Presidents and Treasurers**

Rosters have been mailed to all Treasurers of Federation Garden Clubs and Affiliates for updating for the 2011-2012 Federation Directory. Please ensure your Treasurer has received this. Rosters are due to be returned by May 15. If you have questions, please contact me: Arlene Skaggs, HFGC Roster Chair - phone: 281-894-8218 - email:

houags@aol.com**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

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

Saturday, 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 and Garden Accessories are 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.)

"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 - Gethsemane Lutheran Church 4040 Watonga, Houston, Texas 77092

Includes Plant Sale, beginning at 10:00 A M

For any questions, contact Sara Chumley 713-461- 0573.

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

HFGC Closet Cleanout

The Federation closet has been cleaned out and some really neat things from it will be displayed at the May meeting. All will be for sale.

My Last Newsletter

I had no idea what I had bitten off when I agreed to do the Federation Newsletter. Little did I know the "horrors" of bulk mailing! There was always an unpleasant "surprise" waiting for me at the post office. But, I persevered with the help of my assistant editor and President, Betty Scholar. I thank you Betty. I also thank everyone who contributed articles to the Newsletter and Joni Almoney in particular. I never had to remind her to get her "stuff" to me. And also, thank you Daphne Light for getting me started and for your encouragement. And thank you Sid (husband), who has folded Newsletters faithfully alongside me.

I understand that the Newsletters will be emailed next club year in lieu of snail mail. Good move! Have a great summer and "Learn Something New Every Day". Etta Guillot

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

**May 13, 2011
Houston Federation Meeting**

Hostesses: Board of Directors

**"Tablescapes for a Luncheon: A Garden
Club Challenge"**

Join us for the Installation Luncheon at tables
designed to win a prize.

"Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it".
Confucius –From the May 2010 Newsletter, my favorite.
Which quote was your favorite? Etta Guillot

At the April 13 Meeting

**Bring a dish to share for the Garden
Club Luncheon**

Ways & Means

- Things & Such
- Monthly Drawing

Awards will be given.

Monthly Horticulture Exhibits are encouraged.

YES, Kay Veech will have drawing items.

Giant Federation Closet Clean-out!