

Plant sale ushers in fall planting season

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office

If you ask most homeowners about their vision of an ideal landscape, masses of seasonal color would most likely be among the top responses.

Since lifestyles can be on the hectic side at times nowadays, homeowners also want the landscape to provide tranquility and comfort.

In addition, landscapes that contain the right plants also can reward the family with the delightful movement and brilliant color of butterflies and hummingbirds.

We experienced a record drought and record heat wave in 2011. This year's growing season has been a delightful contrast as rainfall and temperatures have been rather decent. As I stepped outdoors last Sunday after the generous rainfall ended, I was delighted to feel a cool breeze even during midafternoon. The fall season is finally here and that means it's time to establish plants in your landscape.

An important step toward achieving an ideal landscape is to select landscape ornamentals, perennials and vines that are adapted to our sometimes fickle local growing conditions.

Perennials, which flower abundantly with little effort make this an attainable goal. Ornamental grasses are also becoming a key element in the landscape design and are vital in developing a low



COURTESY PHOTO BY Heidi Sheesley

Choosing the right plant, such as the Yellow Butterfly amaryllis, can provide tranquility and comfort from your landscape.

maintenance landscape.

When the mission is an ideal garden, where can you obtain plants that do well in our Upper Gulf Coast growing environment? Whether you're establishing a new landscape or enhancing an existing landscape, a good starting place is the upcoming annual Ornamental and Perennial Sale sponsored by the Galveston County Master Gardeners.

This year's seminar and sale will be conducted on Saturday at the Wayne Johnson Community Center in Carbide Park at 4102 Main — FM519 — in La Marque. The plant sale will be held from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

A good crowd of local gardeners attended last Saturday's program on Perennials and Ornamentals for Gulf Coast Landscapes presented by Heidi Sheesley of TreeSearch Farms Nursery.

One of the program participants asked if Gardener Frank would be on-site to welcome visitors. I had to chuckle on that one as I know Gardener Frank as Frank Jackson, a longtime resident of Santa Fe and one of the many Master Gardener volunteers who will be assisting with the sale. Frank always apparels himself in bib overalls and sports a gardener's hoe and hat to the delight of visitors to the plant sale.



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Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

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More than 120 types of perennials, vines, ornamental grasses and flowering shrubs will be available including many hard-to-find varieties. As mentioned, an army of Master Gardeners will be available to assist with any questions.

For additional information, contact the extension office at 281-534-3413, ext. 1-2 or visit my website listed with this column. Proceeds from the sale will be used toward development and maintenance of the Horticulture Demonstration Garden located at Carbide Park in La Marque.

