



# A Gardener's Journal

## President's Corner

### PGS Officers 2011-2012

<i>Margaret Collins</i>	<i>President</i>
<i>Tamara Hauser</i>	<i>Vice President</i>
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<i>Susan Schleppegrell</i>	<i>Hospitality</i>
<i>Randa Jessen</i>	<i>Meeting Reminders</i>
<i>Ed Richmond</i>	<i>Web Master</i>
<i>Sheryl Chambers</i>	<i>Newsletter</i>
<i>Sharon Duquemin</i>	



Wow...what a kick-off meeting we had on September 14! We had more than 50 members and guests at our first meeting of the year. All enjoyed hearing Chris Wiesinger, The Bulb Hunter, as he presented a fabulous program on heirloom bulbs.

A special thank you to Susan Schleppegrell and her hospitality committee for the wonderful snacks. Chris had bulbs and books for sale...and I need to get busy planting the spider lilies I bought!

As the weather cools and we receive a spotty shower or two, let's learn more about good gardening principles. I hope you'll join us for the field trip to Living Earth Technologies in Dallas to see how they produce compost and mulch. There are two nurseries that are favorites of mine—Jackson's on Lemmon Avenue and Northaven Gardens in north Dallas. Some of us will want to stop by and see what they have to replenish our gardens.

In November, one of our own members, Bobby Hudnall will present a program on growing tomatos. We will be meeting at the DPS station on Carroll Avenue near Town Square. Look for signs to the community meeting room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Bobby is well known as "The Tomato Man." We hope you'll join us for this great meeting. Thanks to Ken Stone for setting up the October and November meetings.

Welcome to our newest members, joining during September. We are now at our capacity of 35 members. Please welcome these new members at the meetings!

- Gay Green
- Jenny Hope
- Ehsan Moayyad
- Sally Simpson
- Pam Taeckens
- Joyce Wuetig

### Local Gardening Events

- 9/24—Iris & Daylily Sale, Fort Worth Botanic Garden
- 10/8—Fall Plant Sale, Fort Worth Botanic Garden
- 10/15—Butterfly Flutterby, Grapevine

## October Meeting - Living Earth Field Trip



We all know how important mulches, composts, and soil amendments are. They are especially important to help us maintain moisture in our drought parched soil.

To see how tree limbs, brush and grass clippings are turned into these landscape helpers, we're going to be visiting Living Earth Technologies. Started in Houston in 1985, Living Earth is the

largest manufacturer and provider of mulch, compost and other landscaping materials in Texas, with 19 locations across the state. They are also the largest recycler of green material. Since 2007, Living earth has recycled over 500,000 tons of green material - returning organic material back into the environment.

Please plan on joining us for a field trip that will be interesting and informative! See details on the next page.



## September Meeting Recap

Margaret Collins opened the September meeting with a question about which plants had thrived or died in the garden this past season. Thrivers included vitex, ruellia, knockout roses, lantana, Henry Duelberg salvia, russian sage, yellow cosmos, butterfly weed, Jerusalem sage, asparagus fern, purple heart, althea and turk’s cap. Dead and dying plants included lambs ear, hydrangea, abelia, aucuba and Carissa holly.

Since there were many guests present Margaret mentioned that the group has a few openings for new members. Margaret and Ken Stone described next month’s field trip to Living Earth.

Margaret introduced the speaker, Chris Wiesinger of the Southern Bulb Company. Chris described his background and explained that his business began as a senior project during his last year studying Horticulture at Texas A&M. The assignment was to create a business plan for a

horticulture related business. From childhood he had been interested in bulbs, particularly ones that could survive warm climates. While researching bulbs for the project he was told that bulbs for warm climates didn’t exist, however he knew from driving the Texas countryside that many bulbs thrived around old, neglected homesites. He set out to find land where he could start a business propagating these forgotten bulbs and settled in Wood County Texas. Feature articles in House and Garden magazine and the New York Times followed, and his moniker, The Bulb Hunter, was born.

The balance of Chris’s presentation was a description of various bulbs, starting with the fall flowering ones. For a detailed summary of his presentation, please see the adjacent article in this newsletter.

**Next meeting October 12 —**

**Depart The Lodge— 9:30 am**

**Living Earth Tour— 10:00 am**

## October Field Trip

As we mentioned on the first page, we’re taking a field trip to Living Earth Technologies for the October meeting. We’ll be caravanning from The Lodge. Please be at The Lodge ready to leave at 9:30. Our tour starts promptly at 10 and is expected to last an hour.

For those of you who would like to meet us there, the address is:

1901 California Crossing  
Dallas, 75220

The location is on Northwest Highway between Loop 12 and 114.

For anyone interested, we’re trying to put together a group to visit a couple of great Dallas nurseries. If you can stay with us longer that day, please plan on a little plant shopping!

## Fort Worth Botanic Garden Fall Plant Sale



Saturday, October 8, is the Fall Plant Sale at FWBG, from 9:00-2:00. Choose from a wide assortment of trees, shrubs, grasses, ground covers, perennials, vines, and spring-flowering bulbs. The sale features many specialty plants grown at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. In addition, rose, African violet, begonia, iris, daylily, cactus & succulent, and daffodil societies will be selling their plants. will be selling

Other vendors will be selling garden-related merchandise as well. Garden staff will be on site to answer your plant questions. BYOW (Bring Your Own Wagon) for loading plants! In “The Grove,” the wooded area west of the Trial Garden and the Japanese Garden parking lot. This is one of 2 plant sales they have at FWBG each year and it’s a great fund raiser for the garden.



The Perennial Garden Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating its members on gardening topics specific to the North Texas area. The primary focus of the group is native and adapted drought tolerant perennials and grasses. Our purpose is to promote, encourage and share ideas with other gardeners regarding the implementation of native and adapted perennials in the suburban Texas landscape.

## Pictures from September Meeting



## Bulbs for Southern Gardens



Chris Wiesinger, a.k.a. The Bulb Hunter, began his discussion of bulbs for warm climates with a tale of his search since childhood for a red tulip that could survive hot summer weather. He continued

with a rundown of his recommendations, starting with fall flowering bulbs.

Oxblood lily (*Rhodophiala bifida* "Oxblood Lily") and spider lily (*Lycoris radiata*) are two favorites. Oxbloods flower just about the time school starts and are sometimes called school house lilies. After flowering their tops remain green throughout the winter. Another great feature is that they don't need dividing. Chris suggested mixing bulbs with other low perennials such as fall asters for a bolder presentation. Southern fall crocus (*Sturnbergia lutea*) is another fall bloomer that grows well in clay.

Chris referred to bulbs that bloom in January and February as season extenders since they provide color when everything else is brown. He described the Roman hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*) as a small, fragrant bulb that blooms for 1½ months. For small bulbs like this it is best to plant a large mass for greater effect. The lent lily (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*), another early spring bloomer, is a trumpet shaped narcissus that's existed since Roman times.

Chris explained that some bulbs set seeds, and these are the ones that will spread over a large area, i.e. "naturalize". Other bulbs that don't set seed will grow into a larger clump but won't spread. Grape hyacinth is an example of a seed-setting bulb for the South.

In mid March the white iris (*Iris x albicans*), otherwise known as cemetery white, blooms along with redbuds and the snowflake bulb (*Leucojum*). The snowflake bulb is a good replacement for the northern lily of the valley but has no fragrance.

In April the Byzantine gladiolas (*Gladiolus byzantinus*) bloom. Chris reminded the group that it's important to let the foliage of bulbs die back before digging and transplanting. If that's not possible then it's best to dig after they bloom. The hardy amaryllis (*Hippeastrum x johnsonii*) is another great spring bloomer.

Summer bloomers include the underutilized rain lily which will bloom 3-5 days after a rain and exhibits 3-6 bloom cycles. Other underutilized bulbs include the crinum lily (*Hymenocallis liriosme*) and the red spider lily (*Lycoris radiata*). Crinum is a little difficult to use with other perennials due to its stout form.

Chris brought his presentation full circle with the revelation of an elusive red tulip for our climate, the *Tulipa praecox*.



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