

### Editorial

Here it is late on a rather cool Easter Sunday in April and I am taking a moment to "tour" our garden. Michael and Lorie's fine design and the hard work of our landscape crew early last spring have resulted in the multiple living areas as planned for our back yard. We have thoroughly enjoyed the spaces and so have our ducks - they still manage to climb up all the levels to come "knock" on the back door if we have forgotten to feed them.

We can actually set tables for eating on three different levels. The long seat walls have provided lots of comfortable seating places for large family gatherings and we have been delighted to note that they are also a great playground for the children. They run on them, jump off of them and play great games of hide-and-seek. The buffalo grass has made lawn mowing a thing of the past. We planted five shumard oaks in a bed that borders our neighbor's yard. They were absolutely beautiful this past fall. Obviously the beavers did not appreciate them. Dick went out to feed the ducks one morning this past winter and two of them were gone! We have thoroughly enjoyed all of our various ornamental grasses, even through the winter. And the other plants that were planted last year are now thriving. Now it is time to fill in the spaces - and to plant the basil!

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P.S. Now it's Easter Monday and something has dug up the basil already!

### Plant It and Hummingbirds Will Come

by Carolyn Oldham

The hummingbird's world centers on flowers. One "hummer" actually consumes half its weight in sugar each day, visiting flowers an average of 2000 times. The key to attracting these incredible flying machines to your garden is diversity of habitat - lots of flowers blooming at different times.

Certain plants are a must. These include all salvias, Mexican firebush (hamelia patens), cypress vine, flame acanthus, penta (especially red) and Turk's cap. Other good choices are coral honeysuckle, old-fashioned roses, cigar plant (cuphea "David Verity"), butterfly weed (asclepias tuberosa and curassavica) and Texas betony.

Plant more than one flower bed so that one hummingbird can't dominate the entire garden. Since 10% of their diet is insects, avoid all pesticides in the garden.

Hang your feeder in a shady spot if possible and change the sugar water every 3 days in hot weather. The best recipe is 1 part sugar to 4 parts water (and no red food coloring!). Regular visits usually begin in July.

Let us help you create your own hummingbird garden with all the "must-have" plants. You'll be glad you did when you see the first small jewel visit your garden!



**All three Redenta's are open until 7:00 on weekdays until memorial day.**  
(5:00 on memorial day itself)

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Items must be rung up at same time. One time use. No facsimilies. Must be surrendered at time of purchase. Expires May 18th.

## Fun with flowers by Carol Durrant

Snapdragons can cheer us with more than their bright colors. They can entertain a child (or your "inner child") if you know how to make them talk. Gently pinch the bloom just behind the bottom petals to open – and let them snap shut!

I don't remember learning the snapdragon trick until coming to Redenta's, but sipping that single tiny drop of honeysuckle nectar from the filament carefully pulled through the blossom was an early introduction to the wonders of flowers beyond color and scent.

It is fun to show gardeners the fascinating blooms of the obedient plant...reposition them around the flower spine and – they STAY! The orange tubular trumpet vine flowers are simple fun – five per hand and the kids have "witch fingers".

After their flowers are gone, Mexican petunia (*ruellia brittoniana*) has wonderfully effective seed pods. Hold a few dry brown pods in your palm, moisten and then close your hand so they don't "explode" into your eyes. When you touch the leaves of the sensitive plant (*mimosa pudica*), they fold up. When you jump on the old seed pods of the wisteria vine, they make a loud "pop". The fragrant flowers of evening primrose and moonflower open only in the evening and the bright colored trumpet flowers of the four o'clocks will not open until late afternoon.

And then when you run out of flower tricks and oddities, you can simply pick a little bouquet of begonias, dianthus and hibiscus (organically grown, of course) to sprinkle on your salad!



## profile

Linda Ledbetter and her husband Rick were organic gardeners before there was a Redenta's. I remember them coming in on a regular basis that first year we opened our Arlington store because I was practically the entire staff at that time. Linda was working in the accounting department at a company in Grand Prairie and not enjoying it much when she and Rick decided she would be happier working at a job they both knew she would love.

Linda came to work for me in the spring of 2001. Just this past December I finally convinced her to take over the responsibilities of manager of the Arlington store.

Linda is someone who cares and I now have the peace of mind knowing that my Arlington gardeners and my Arlington employees are getting all of the help they need.



## Simple Container Gardens

It is very easy to fall in love with those container gardens that are full of many different kinds of plants so creatively assembled, but do not underestimate the beauty of a single

striking plant in a wonderful pot. A specimen oleander, hibiscus, bougainvillea, sago palm, esperanza or purple fountain grass can brighten up a sunny spot. You can make a strong statement with a tall bamboo, one agave, a yucca, or just one beautiful Mexican feather grass in a great pot. Then take a moment and mulch with rainbow rock or small Mexican beach pebbles. These plants will take our sun and still thrive.

If you have a shady spot, try a small Japanese maple, a Grecian urn plant, a hydrangea, a pot of inland sea oats or even a pretty plum passion nandina.

As always, do not forget to water your new garden – we do live in Texas!



**"Gardening is a way of showing that you believe in tomorrow"**

## Summer gardening

Using a little organic gardening common sense, you can make sure your garden not only survives, but can even thrive during our north Texas summer.



**PROTECT**—Keep a minimum of a three-inch layer of native cedar or shredded hardwood mulch to protect plant roots from extremes in temperature and to help maintain even moisture. As the mulch begins to break down, it adds additional nutrients so be sure to add enough each year to keep up that three inch layer.

**WATER**—Water deeply and infrequently. Your watering habits should encourage deep root development. That won't happen if you are setting the sprinkler to run 10 minutes each day. Water 2-3 times a week and check to make sure your total for the week is about 1½ inches. Don't trust your sprinkler system. Use rain gauges and move them around to check on each station. If you don't have rain gauges, just ask for a couple of free ones next time you are at the store.

**PLANT**—Yes, you can still plant in the heat of the summer. Just remember to plant "wet to wet." Saturate the hole with a solution of liquid seaweed then soak the root ball with more of the same solution before you put the plant in the hole. After you have returned the native dirt to the hole, water everything in well. After applying your three-inch layer of mulch, water it as well.

**FERTILIZE**—Apply Redenta's Organic Fertilizer to the beds and the lawn in the middle of the summer and again in October. Apply a liquid fertilizer like Garrett Juice or Bioform at those times also as well as an application in August.

## Ground Crew discounts

Members of the Dirt Doctor's Ground Crew receive the monthly magazine dedicated to the organic approach to living, *The Dirt Doctor's Dirt*. They also receive a 10% discount at Redenta's stores on regularly-priced organic products and can attend "members only" seminars given by organic authority, Howard Garrett.

To receive information about joining and to print out Howard's free organic handouts, go to [www.dirtdoctor.com](http://www.dirtdoctor.com)

**Please present your card before the sale is rung up.**

## discussion forum

Howard Garrett has set up a great spot on his web site for organic gardeners to ask questions and share information. The Discussion Forum has only been available for two months and already there are over 500 registered users.

You can visit the site and just view the questions and answers posted there or you can register and post questions or even use your organic expertise to answer someone else's questions. Go to [www.dirtdoctor.com](http://www.dirtdoctor.com) and click on "Discussion."

## Book of the Month

We, like you, love to thumb through garden books to spark our imaginations. As we shopped at market this past winter we took the time to pick out some books we thought you would like as well. We are going to present them to you as our Book of the Month.

We have just received our latest – *new decorated garden* by Elspeth Thompson, who writes for the Sunday Telegram Magazine in Britain. She shares with us some clever ways of using such decorative elements as topiaries, potted plants, rocks and art to transform parts of your yard. We are ready to try some of her ideas.

And...the Book of the Month is always 20% off.

**"The great challenge for the garden designer is not to make the garden look natural, but to make the garden so that the people in it will feel natural." - Lawrence Halprin**

## Did you know...

### Plant of the week

Every Friday morning we feature a "Plant of the Week". Visit the store or the web site [www.redentas.com](http://www.redentas.com) to find out about this week's selection. Remember, the Plant of the Week is priced at a 20% discount.



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