ROGER'S GARDENS

WEEKLY GARDENS PRODUCT UPDATE

February 18, 2007

I. GREEN GOODS

- **Dahlias! –** We are receiving our second shipment of Dahlias next week and the selection is really good. Here is a bit of information on some of my favorites. –RY

A La Mode - Introduced in 1993. 6" blooms of an unusual shade of lush apricot orange deeply tipped white. The bush is 4' high.

Baarn Bounty - Introduced in 1994. The 10" orange giant blooms blend to give it an overall bronze shade. Good depth on stiff stems. Terrific bush height 4 1/2'. Late bloomer. (Pictured)

Canby Centennial - Introduced in 1994. Named in honor of the city of Canby's 100th birthday, this variety has 7" blooms of deep rose red with a frosted edge. 4' bush has nice dark green foliage and is a good addition to any garden. Recommended as a cut flower.

Chilson's Pride - Introduced in 1984. 4" blooms of pure pink with white center. Blooms are slightly fimbriated. Bush height is 5'. Recommended as a cut flower. (Pictured)

Fire Magic - Introduced in 1991. 6" blooms of a very unusual shade of smokey fuchsia with mauve overtones - watermelon color (very hard color to describe) are held well on good strong stems. Gorgeous!! Bush height is 4 1/2'. A variety not to be missed for both cutting and color in the garden.

Fuzzy Wuzzy - Introduced in 2000. Slightly lacinated petals on this 3" cutie give it a "fuzzy look". Blooms are brightly colored pink with tips randomly sprinkled white, makes this new variety a very showy garden addition. Bush of 4' is a strong grower which should be topped. Recommended as a cut flower. (Pictured)

Hulin's Carnival - Introduced in 1954. The 4" variegated blooms are white-specked and splashed with wine purple. Some blooms may be white and some solid wine. Good stems on a 4' bush. Recommended as a cut flower.

Margaret Ellen - Introduced in 2000. Named for Margaret Gitts, 7" blooms of a very delicate color blend of cream and rose, very easy to cut wonderful long stems from the 4' bush with nice green foliage that has all of the growing habits of it's parent plant "Touch of Class". (Pictured)

Midnight Moon - Introduced in 1988. 4" blooms of pristine white blushed in a light lavender on the ends of each petal. A very nice cutflower for arranging. Very lush bush of 4' with nice foliage. An excellent garden variety that should have good show potential.

Purple Taihejo - Introduced in 1985. Large 12" purple blooms are beautiful on a lush, compact bush that grows about 3'. While not considered an exhibition variety, it is a fabulous garden plant which produces many blooms during the season. Late bloomer.

Swan's Glory - Introduced in 1985. The 6" vivid orange blooms are evenly-edged yellow. The 4' bush produces strong stems. Recommended as a cut flower.

Wicky Woo - Introduced in 1960. Attractive 4" flowers of light purple blossoms tipped white. A lovely bi-color addition. Bush height 4'. Recommended as a cut flower.

Wildcat - Introduced in 1998. Another eye popper! One of the brightest red and yellow combinations we have seen. 3 1/2" blooms are a bright yellow tipped in a magenta red. Very nice cutflower variety that produces great stems for cutting and arranging. Nice foliage on a 4 1/2' bush.

- **New plants –** Here is a bit of information on some of the new or rarely stocked plant material we have received in the last two weeks.

Camellia lutchuensis - This is a closely branched, leafy shrub, with arching slender stems. The leaves are pointed-oval in outline and 1-2" long in the current selection. The flowers are carried all along the younger stems in the leaf axils. They are nearly bell-shaped, a little under 1" long, pure white, and sweetly fragrant. Hardy to 15°F. or less. This is a delightful shrub in every way. (Pictured)

Camellia 'Shin-Akebono' - This is a robust shrub, probably reaching 10' or more in height. Its most distinctive feature is the weeping habit of the long branches; given a bit of training and some appropriate rockery, it could make an elegant cascade. The leaves are about 4" long, broad and deeply veined. The flowers are about 4" across, single with a few extra petals, cupped and colored a soft pink, set off by a large brush of golden stamens.

Cordyline 'Electric Pink' - Name says it all. A pink variegated 'Crimson Star' type. The hottest plant introduced in the country this year, easily.

Grevillea 'Firesprite' - This beautiful hybrid Grevillea created by Merv Hodge was the result of crossing the stunning long-styled red flowering Grevillea longystyla with the beautiful yellow-flowering Grevillea venusta. This plant is new to the US but reports from Australia are that 'Firesprite' grows to 9-12 feet tall (possibly to 15') by 6-8 feet wide with 10 inch long leaves that are divided into 3 to 5 narrow (3/8") lobes and are bright green on the upper surface and pale brownish cream below. During much of the year, but more so in the warmer months, appear the showy upright 5 inch tall racemes of waxy flame red with green colored flowers. It is somewhat similar to the cultivar 'Long John' but has a slightly less upright habit and paler broader foliage. Plant in full sun in a well drained soil and irrigate occasionally to regularly. Cold hardiness is not well documented on this plant but it is likely to not be very hardy. Both parents come from the more tropical Queensland, though Grevillea longistylla grows in mountainous areas and is known to tolerate light frosts - hybrid vigor may make this plant hardier but to be safe we are only listing it to 30F as this is the temperature we know it had endured so far. It is a beautiful cut flower and a University of Sydney study indicates that the flowers exhibit

fairly good vase life (9.25 days). It is great for a large specimen or as a large screening plant and it can be pruned to a neat rounded shrub. Attractive to birds.

Polypodium californicum 'Sarah Lyman' - An interesting cultivar of the California polypody fern with finely divided leaves. A wonderful addition to the shade garden where it is perfectly adapted to our dry summers. With the first coolness of autumn the fiddleheads emerge and unfurl. Energetic bright green frilly foliage thrives all winter and into spring. Goes dormant late spring or early summer where it waits out the dry season returning dependably again in the autumn. Grows 12 to 15 inches tall and slowly spreads.

Protea 'Pink Ice' - A very attractive Protea that has silvery-pink flowers from fall into winter on a dense shrubby plant with attractive linear leaves. Grows 6-7 feet tall and 4-6 feet wide. A hybrid between P. compacta and P. susannae, which are both hardy plants. From these parents this hybrid has acquired frost tolerance to low 20's F and ability to tolerate a wide range of soil types.

II. POTTING SHED

- **Stainless Steel Fountains –** The new stainless fountains, in the lower lath are displays, for now. We are special ordering these fountains, only. The timeline is 2 weeks. There is information in the buyers office file under Castle & Carmel. – S.C.
- **Shear Sharpening –** The shear sharpening service is now $12.99 per pair. Hand pruners and loppers are still ok for service. No hedge clippers, please. – S.C.
- **Discontinued Fountains & Pots –** We are saying goodbye to Avila's Garden Art. No more special orders after 1/20/08. The different fountains that are marked with a green sticker, from all of the vendors, are for sale right off the sales floor. These particular fountains will be discontinued for the 2008 program, but are available for special order. – S.C.
- **Mediterranean Pottery –** Rogers has received a shipment of this wonderful authentic antique pottery. These pots range from 150 – 600 years old. The smaller pots were used to produce cheese. The larger pots were generally used as water storage. They are displayed towards the front end of Central Park. More will be arriving, in the coming weeks. The Extra Large antique pots, at the tip of central park, are for sale. They are on consignment, with Rogers. – S.C.

- **Concrete Wall Art –** The new wall art, that is hanging in the breezeway between the buyers office and the call center, is for sale. It comes, basically, in two colors. Patina green/blue, and Amber. The colors do vary. But the base color stays the same. Special orders are available. Turn time is 4 weeks, on a special order. If a guest wants a certain piece in the any color displayed, they can order it. The $100.00 dollar minimum still applies. Again, these are concrete pieces. Not light weight material. – S.C.

- **“Modular” Garden Set** – Create your own gardenscape with this new modular bench/ planter/ fountain system. These sleek contemporary components can be arranged in a wide variety of configurations to suit your garden space. Each component is ordered individually. Every planter box can be used as a fountain. So don’t forget to order the fountain assembly unit. The components also work well as single benches, planters or fountains. The Modular system is ONLY available in the VERDE finish. – S.C.

THE COASTAL GARDENER:

Daily Pilot
Newport Beach and Costa Mesa, California

Camellias, Queen of the Winter Garden

Saturday, January 19, 2008

Japanese camellias are the queen of winter gardens in Orange County, so the next two or three months is when we all love to drool over them. Their glossy, evergreen leaves, large variety of sizes and shapes, and relative ease of care have made them a focus in many local gardens. It is the common Japanese camellia varieties, with their large, multi-petal flowers, that will dominate much of our flower scene for the next three or four months.

As most any gardener who has one knows, a mature, well established camellia in a garden is a surprisingly low maintenance and durable plant, often surviving with almost complete neglect. I can point out some large camellias on the old El Toro Marine Base that haven't been watered or fertilized in nearly seven years. They're fine.

In fact, my experience has led me to conclude that if you are struggling to grow healthy camellias it's more likely because of something you *shouldn't* be doing, not something you *should* be doing. I'll explain.

Foremost, camellias are surface rooting plants. No, their roots aren't large and buttress like a ficus. So you won't see the roots. But it is these small, delicate feeder roots, all in the top two or three inches of soil, that do almost all the work for the plant. Don't disturb these roots.

If you welcome this first bit of knowledge, many of a camellia's other cultural needs will make sense to you. Most notably, since the tiny feeder roots of a camellia are just beneath the soil surface, never cultivate beneath a plant; not to dig in fertilizers, not to plant annual flowers and especially not to just to make the soil look pretty. I'm still dumbfounded; why do gardeners still think that scratching the surface of the soil in their garden is a good idea?

Since we mentioned fertilizers, this is another area where you may be doing something that you shouldn't be doing. Japanese camellias set their flower buds along their stems and the process begins about Labor Day, a bit earlier for a few varieties and a bit later for others, but early September is a good benchmark. Once these buds are set, a camellia stops growing leaves, stems and roots – completely.

You see, a camellia isn't like most of the rest plants in your garden, which grow and bloom simultaneously. Camellias spend half their year producing foliage, stems and roots, generally from about April until September. Then they switch modes completely. During the other half

of the year, from about September until April they spend their days producing buds and beautiful flowers.

The trouble is that when fertilizer is present, principally nitrogen, at any point during the *flower* portion of the year, the camellia doesn't know how to deal with it. Unfortunately, the result of this misapplied fertilizer is to see your prized camellia buds on the ground, unopened. What a tragedy! Camellias are very mild feeders anyway.

Finally, as most of you who grow camellias already know, these are acid-loving plants. This means they need to be maintained in soil with a low pH. For most you, the soil pH outside your window is about 7.0 or 7.5. Camellias want a pH of 5.0 to 6.5. On countless visits to gardens I see camellias with pale foliage and stunted or little new growth. Camellias should have deep, dark green leaves, not pale leaves. These plants don't need more fertilizer. Fertilizing isn't the problem. The true problem is that the soil is not acid enough. I wish I could shout to each of these gardeners with pale, stunted camellias *"Don't keep feeding your plant, that's not the problem. In fact, that may be causing more problems. Lower the soil pH – make the soil more acid - and your camellia will turn dark green and start growing again!"*

What's the best way to lower soil pH? Not necessarily with fertilizer, although when you do feed you should only use organic cottonseed meal or a similar acid forming product. The best way to get your soil pH down is to consistently maintain a surface mulch with an acid planting mix. These mulches are usually labeled *Azalea-Camellia Planting Mix* on the bag. Just keep a nice two to four inch layer of this over the roots of the plant; remembering not to cultivate. In a while, your camellia will be deep green and growing again.

To learn more about camellias, different varieties, their care and their culture attend a free meeting of The Orange County Camellia Society or attend their big Camellia Show this Saturday and Sunday. Find out more at www.occamellias.org.

Ron Vanderhoff is the Nursery Manager at Roger's Gardens, Corona del Mar

Questions from Readers

January 19, 2008
Question:
I want to plant a yellow rose. There are dozens to choose from and everyone has a different opinion of which one is the best. I promise, you'll be the final word. Whatever you suggest, I'm doin' it!

Angie
Costa Mesa

Answer:
Wow, what power; and what responsibility you have granted me. I dare not provide a flip answer. Oh yes, definitely I suggest a relatively new variety called 'Julia Child'. It has everything; stunning, well formed flowers that open slowly, a strong fragrance, a nice, well branched habit and great disease resistance. Yes, that's the one.

THE COASTAL GARDENER:

Daily Pilot
Newport Beach and Costa Mesa, California

A Horticultural Icon Comes to Visit

Saturday, January 26, 2008

What do you say to your idol, your hero?

For nearly twenty years I have been enamored by Dan Hinkley. I have walked in his garden near Seattle on four occasions. I have spoken with him only once before, while standing in the midst of his spectacular garden, considered by many as the most significant private garden in North America. I have read every word of his books, his magazine articles and his catalogues. For me, and many others, he is the nation's ultimate plantsman. Dan Hinkley is the Sir Edmund Hillary of horticulture.

So I was overwhelmed when I received a call that he wanted to visit with me and talk about plants and gardening. I was mystified. What do I say?

Perhaps you don't recognize the name. Dan Hinkley searches the world, literally, for plants that will enrich the gardens of the rest of us. When he discovers a candidate, perhaps in Asia, Africa, Europe or The Americas, he adds it to his garden and to the gene pool of well over 10,000 varieties he has already grown.

Dan Hinkley is an extraordinary person. He is always on the move. Most times, he is on his way someplace, either to explore for plants, speak on plants or learn of plants. His passport is riddled with stamps, from places like Korea, Japan, Nepal, China, Taiwan, Chile, Tasmania, South Africa, Turkey, Sikkim, Bhutan or dozens more.

Plant Explorer Dan Hinkley being guided across a treacherous river somewhere in Asia.

Despite the vast number of plants he has amassed, he relentlessly explores the world in search of more. When he finds a plant, perhaps on a cliff overhanging a remote mountain pass, he first sets out to understand its home and its neighbors. What is its natural habitat? It's soil? It's fondness for sun or water or nutrients? Perhaps this plant might have a comrade with variegated leaves or another flower color? He collects copious amounts of seed; almost never harming the wild plants and labels them carefully with exacting detail. When back in his garden, he grows it, tests it, evaluates it, and ultimately shares it.

The plants Dan Hinkley brings back from these distant places are not for the meek or mild. These are plants from the far reaches of the world. I have had the fortune of stepping into countless gardens, with striking plants in spectacular arrangement. You would recognize the

names of these famous, picturesque gardens, both private and public: Huntington, Longwood, Kew, Butchart and others roll from the tongues of avid gardeners.

But at Dan Hinkley's gardens the plants are not only beautiful, they are unique; frequently unknown. The plants in his gardens are true rarities. Not one or two unusual plants, here and there, scattered among the recognizable mainstays that make up nearly all gardens. At a Dan Hinkley garden, the *entire* garden is rarities. His gardens are a horticultural trivia of the plant world.

Years ago, when I first walked into Dan Hinkley's Heronswood garden on Washington's Kitsap Peninsula, I consumed half of the day investigating the first twenty feet of plants, and there were five more acres to go. It was overpowering. The plants were foreign. These were aliens. They were plants from another world; with unpronounceable names, artfully combined and masterfully grown. A flood of texture, fragrance and blossom that filled the senses. Imagine an artist, toiling for years to create beautiful works of art on canvas panels. Then, in one moment, after years of labor, a dozen new colors you had never known of or even thought about were handed to you. Imagine your enthusiasm. That is how I felt.

Hinkley's stature in horticulture is unparalleled. He speaks throughout the world. He is profiled in The New York Times. Martha Stewart gushes about him. He writes for Garden Design Magazine. Yet, for weeks at a time he still sleeps in primitive conditions in a tent in the mountains of Nepal or perhaps in a river valley in Tasmania, eating local fare and rising before sunrise to explore nature's hidden gardens.

What could Dan Hinkley want to talk to me about?

Turns out, he just wanted to talk about plants; and that's what we did. We walked and talked, stopping at interesting plants along the way. We talked about the plant; touched them and smelled them. We shared stories of where they came from, what their neighbors were, how well they grew and maybe other forms of the plants that we had heard of and lusted over.

In the end, Dan Hinkley is a plant explorer. So he came to Newport Beach and was still a plant explorer. He found a few more plants, learned about them, learned of their neighbors and learned their stories.

Ron Vanderhoff is the Nursery Manager at Roger's Gardens, Corona del Mar

Questions from Readers
January 26, 2008
Question:
I so enjoyed the timely article on Japanese Camellias in today's LA Times! Thank you. Do you advise no fertilizer at all; using only mulch to maintain a proper pH balance, or would you advise fertilizer only during the growing half of the year, April to September?
Lauren

Answer:
I suggest feeding lightly during the first half of the growing season, beginning about April. Use organic cottonseed meal and do not cultivate it into the soil. Of course, always maintain an acidic mulch over the roots as well.

THE COASTAL GARDENER:

Daily Pilot

Saturday, February 9, 2008

Want to Conserve Water? Roll Out the Barrel

A few days ago it rained. I'm sure you noticed it. Rain fell on your roof, ran into your gutter, travelled to the end of the gutter and ran down the downspout. Hundreds of gallons of water travelled this path. Through some clever engineering, your downspout sent this water directly to the street, where it mixed with hundreds more gallons, then fell into the city's storm drain. A while later this rainwater, initially pure and clean, rushed into the Pacific Ocean. But, by the time it got to the ocean it wasn't pure and clean anymore.

Rain barrels, like this one in my garden, are easy to install, conserve water and reduce coastal pollution.

Water conservation and watershed protection is now a responsibility for local gardeners and environmentally conscious homeowners. Last week in *The Coastal Gardener* we talked about ways a home gardener can allow more water to percolate into the soil, thereby cleansing it of pollutants, as well as recharging Orange County's huge underground aquifer.

We discussed exchanging hard non-porous surfaces with permeable alternatives like decomposed granite, gravel or new-generation porous hardscapes. Alternatively, we suggested breaking up solid concrete walks, separating the pieces a few inches, planting the interim areas and allowing water to percolate through and into the soil below. We mentioned swales to slow water down and allow it to infiltrate the ground. We even questioned if the underlying conviction of moving rainwater off our property as quickly and efficiently as possible was a worthy goal.

In addition to allowing rainwater to percolate into the ground, home gardeners in Orange County are now beginning to "harvest" water as well. In many parts of the country rainwater harvesting is one of the fastest growing techniques of home water conservation. Harvesting rainwater simply means collecting it, storing it temporarily, then re-using it at a later time.

The easiest and most practical way of harvesting rainwater is to collect the water that runs through your rain gutter downspouts. Diverting this water into a storage device, called a rain barrel, instead of into a storm drain, is simple. Almost anyone can set up a couple of rain barrels in an afternoon and they'll be filled with water once the next storm arrives.

A rain barrel, specially made just for this purpose, is usually placed on some bricks or concrete blocks near the downspout of your roof gutter. A diverter is then attached to the downspout which allows you to either send the water into the barrel or bypass the barrel if it is full. That's it. Free water.

If you want to get started harvesting rain water I suggest buying barrels specifically made for this purpose. Well made rain barrels are durably constructed, exclude mosquitoes and have a hose coupling already attached. I ordered mine from www.aquabarrel.com and couldn't be happier. I put a large concrete block under each barrel and installed a diverter on each of my two downspouts that I simply flip to either "fill" or "bypass".

Most people are surprised how quickly roof water will fill a rain barrel. Just a moderate rain storm will fill my two barrels to the top in about 45 minutes or an hour. For example, just a quarter inch of rainfall over a 3,000 square foot roof will provide 450 gallons of water.

My 60 gallon rain barrels at home are filled with water that I can use later, when my garden needs it. I pay nothing for the water and, because the water isn't picking up pollutants, I'm keeping the ocean just a little bit cleaner. The water in these barrels also required no energy or electricity to bring to my garden, and it's free of chlorine and fluoride.

In a few days it will be raining again. What if you encouraged that water to percolate into the soil, where it would be cleansed and would replenish our underground aquifer? What if you harvested even more of that pure, clean rainwater and didn't have to turn on the garden faucet next month? It's not that hard to do.

Ron Vanderhoff is the Nursery Manager at Roger's Gardens, Corona del Mar

Questions from Readers
February 9, 2008

Question:
Some of my houseplants are sticky. I don't see any pests, but I know that something is wrong. What should I use?

Doll, Newport Beach

Answer:
You have a sucking pest feeding on these plants. Most likely are either scale or mealybug, but a few others are possible. Sucking pests deposit a sweet and sticky residue on plants as a byproduct of their feeding activities. This clear material is commonly called "honeydew". If you look very carefully, you might be able to see the pests. If not, just sacrifice a leaf or two, put them into a plastic bag and bring them a nearby garden center. We should easily be able to tell you what pest it is. Once we know what we're dealing with, we can prescribe an effective treatment.

Daily Pilot
Newport Beach and Costa Mesa, California

THE COASTAL GARDENER:

Aloes are a Spectacular Addition to Local Gardens

Saturday, February 16, 2008

Most casual gardeners probably don't know the difference between an Aloe and an Agave. They're so similar, even expert gardeners often have to look twice before offering an opinion. Both are succulent plants, and feature large, thick, tapering, pointed leaves. They both like sunshine, are simple to grow and don't require much attention from their owners. Hence, both are popular in our coastal gardens.

When pressed about Aloes, most people think of the medicinal species, *Aloe vera*. Extracts from *Aloe vera* leaves appear in thousands of beauty, medicinal, skin and hair care products. *Aloe vera* is a fine species, but it no more defines an Aloe, than a guppy would define a fish. The word *Aloe* refers to about 400 species and countless hybrids, varying from wiry, creeping, vining plants, like *Aloe ciliaris*, to stout 20 foot trees, such as *Aloe bainsii*. But most Aloes in local gardens are small to moderate sized clumping varieties.

Aloes have been in our Orange County gardens for over a hundred years, but they are currently going through an explosion in popularity. It seems everyone now has an Aloe or two somewhere in their garden.

Aloes at the UC Irvine Arboretum are currently in full bloom and quite spectacular, worthy of a visit.

Aloes belong to the family Liliaceae, which contains such diverse plants as Alstroemeria, Easter lilies, onions, mondo grass, agapanthus and tulips. Each species of Aloe varies in the degree of heat, drought or moisture it tolerates. Even seasoned gardeners confuse Aloes with Agaves. Both fill similar needs in a garden, providing supreme elements of form, structure and drama wherever they are placed.

But Aloes and Agaves are really quite different and offer an insight into the paradox of plant diversity on our planet. Aloes and Agaves are a classic example of a phenomenon known as convergent evolution, whereby unrelated organisms evolve independently, but with similar traits due to having to adapt to similar environments. Aloes occur only in Africa, while Agaves are only from the America's. They never saw each other, nor did they ever have a common parent. But on both continents both evolved in similar environments - long periods of drought, high summer heat and nutrient poor soil. Although a continent away from each other, both appear surprisingly similar and fill the same ecological niche.

Convergent evolution is an interesting topic. Ants and termites are another example of the same principle. Both have similar lifestyles, look similar and even have similar social networks. However, ants are descended from wasps, while termites appear to have descended from cockroach-like insects.

Aloe plants produce a rosette of leaves that vary in size and color with the species. Most types remain ground-hugging all their lives and produce offsets, which are sprouts that appear at the base of the stem or in conjunction with surface roots.

To propagate an aloe, simply separate one of these offsets with as much root material as possible. Place it in a pot of fast draining cactus mix and water it sparingly. Within a few months the new little plant will have filled the pot with roots and be ready to plant into the garden.

In Orange County, Aloes bloom in winter or early spring. Most are in full bloom right now and are easy to spot in gardens. They produce long stems that arise between the leaves. The size of the spike can be quite large and spectacular and the flowers quite showy, usually in bright tones of red, orange, gold and yellow, or in any combination of these colors.

The arboretum at UC Irvine, has a large collection of Aloes, most of which are in full bloom right now and worth seeing. The plants here are large and mature, many planted over thirty years ago by my friend Dr. Harold Koopowitz, who was the director of the arboretum for over twenty years. At one point the arboretum had amassed an impressive collection of over 130 Aloe species, although I suspect there are now many less. Nonetheless, this is a great time to visit the arboretum, see different Aloes in full bloom or just watch the Allen's and Anna's hummingbirds dash from flower to flower.

The UCI Arboretum is located at the corner of Jamboree Blvd and Campus Drive and is open Monday through Sunday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Admission is free.

Ron Vanderhoff is the Nursery Manager at Roger's Gardens, Corona del Mar

Questions from Readers
February 16, 2008

Question:
I want to plant tuberose, but haven't been able to find any in the nurseries. What gives?

Matt, Costa Mesa

Answer:
Tuberose (*Polianthes tuberosa*) are sub-tropical plants, originating in Mexico and portions of Central America, although no wild plants now exist. They are best planted from dormant tubers, which are similar to bulbs. The optimum planting time is about March in Orange County, with flowering in late summer. Nurseries should be receiving the dormant rhizomes within the next two or three weeks.