

THE GARDEN PATH , JUNE 2014

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Master Gardeners

PLANT OF THE MONTH - JUNE

By Marty Finkel

Enkianthus campanulatus (Red-vein ekianthus)



Pictures courtesy of Marty Finkel.

This underused shrub should have much wider exposure so that people would be aware of its many attributes for the garden – excellent flowering and fall color with a good size of around 12' to 15'. Since many are grown from seed, there is variation in growth habits, fall color, and flower color. Fall color can be ranges of yellows, oranges, and reds. There is a dwarf variety, 'Wallaby,' which grows to about 3' in height but is hard to find. *Enkianthus* will grow in sun to light shade in conditions suitable for growing rhododendrons; that is, acidic soil and supplemental water in drought conditions. There are about 10 species and many cultivars. The flowers of *E. campanulatus* are creamy yellow or light orange and veined with red and appear in May-June around the time the leaves are developing. Cultivars with deep pink to intense red flowers are available – 'Rubrum' is one, having red flowers, fiery red autumn foliage, and is smaller-growing than the species. *Enkianthus* can be seen at the JC Raulston Arboretum.

CHECKLIST FOR JUNE

By Mary Jane Bosworth

- ✓ Powdery mildew disease is common on a number of ornamentals including phlox and crepe myrtles. A white powdery growth develops on new foliage. Treatment includes pruning infected leaves, applying approved fungicides according to directions and disposing of fallen leaves in winter. When adding to your garden, look for disease-resistant varieties. Deadhead spent flowers before they set seeds. In spring this would apply to peonies and iris. This allows the plant to put its energy into building roots or forming new flower stalks or foliage.
- ✓ You still have time to set out bedding plants. Keep them well watered until the roots grow into the surrounding surface.
- ✓ It's time to transplant seedlings of annuals such as marigolds and zinnias if the stands are too thick.
- ✓ Stake tall flowering plants.
- ✓ Dig and divide spring flowering bulbs once the foliage has died down. This should be done every 3 years or so to prevent them from becoming root bound.
- ✓ Feed plants with fertilizer after the first round of blooming according to directions on the container.
- ✓ Think of fall color in the garden and start to check out nurseries for ideas.
- ✓ This is the time of year to take stem cuttings from trees and shrubs that root best at the semi-hardwood stage.
- ✓ Pruning of spring flowering bushes should be done immediately after blooming.
- ✓ For bushier pines, pinch back new tip "candles".
- ✓ Snap off the tips of your mums when they are about 6" tall so they'll branch out and have more blooms.
- ✓ Lightly feed nandinas with slow release fertilizer so that the berries will last all winter.

GARDEN TO DO – JUNE & JULY

By Carl Shafer

Always check previous TO DO lists as many items continue to be relevant and some you may have forgotten to do.

If rain does not fall, you need to provide one inch of water per week to keep the garden growing well. Use of mulch will help conserve moisture. Use of soaker hoses or drip irrigation will keep foliage dry and help reduce disease.

Continue your spray program on fruits as needed. Observe the time period required between the last spray and harvest. **Read the label.**

See “Insect Control For The Home Vegetable Garden” in the N.C. Chemical Manual for insecticide recommendations, (<http://ipm.ncsu.edu/agchem/agchem.html>). See below for organic methods. With all pesticide use, always read and follow label instructions. It is the law!

As crops mature, compost or till in plant material that is not diseased. Diseased material should be discarded in the trash.

There is still time for a last planting of many warm season vegetables. These include beans, corn, cucumbers, okra, squash, and tomatoes. Select early maturing varieties and provide water if needed. Note that “Days to Maturity” in the fall will be as much as 14 days longer due to the shorter day length and cooler nights. Note that if you want pumpkins for Halloween or winter squash maturing in late fall for winter storage, they should be planted in early July.

If you are considering a fall garden, pick up a copy of HIL 8001, *Growing a Fall Vegetable Garden*, or on the net see: www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8001.html. Note some of the cool season crops need to be set out or seeded in July. If you have the space, you may want to try planting some lettuce, spinach, and other greens earlier than the listed dates and provide some shade and extra water. See the Central NC Planting Calendar for more crops that can be planted in June and July, as well as in the fall,

(http://cals.ncsu.edu/hort_sci/extension/documents/AG-756.pdf). Also see “Planting and Harvesting Guide for Piedmont Vegetables and Herbs” for additional recommendations plus Season Extension indications. Be sure to read “How to use this Guide” and “Crop Notes”. (www.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/plantharvestguide20081.pdf)

If you are growing your own transplants, see the Feb 14 Garden Path for information and web links.

If you have extra space in your garden, consider planting a cover crop. See below.

Check “Organic Production” on the NCORGANIC web site:

www.ces.ncsu.edu/fletcher/programs/ncorganic/, for information on cover crops, season extension, pest and disease control, and other growing resources.

THE LANGUAGE OF HERBS

By Edna Lovelace Gaston

Secret meanings of herbs, plants and flowers have long been known in Europe. In more restricted times, this was how a message was conveyed. There is a theory called the doctrine of signatures which implies if a part of a plant resembles a part of the human body then it must be good for treating that body part. Floral dictionaries were written to assist in the “translations”. Some floral dictionaries even gave botanical information. During the reign of Queen Victoria florigraphy was used to communicate these private thoughts. The proper lady and gentleman should be well-versed in this language. Frequently there is a reference to the symbolism of a flower. But the same applies to herbs. Whether used in an arrangement or an herb bed, a message can be conveyed. Here are some herbs and their meanings:

Bay – glory
Burnet – joy
Chamomile – energy in adversity
Chives – usefulness
Dill – good spirits
Fennel – strength
Garlic – guard against evil
Horehound – health
Lavender – luck
Lovage – cleanliness
Mint – wisdom
Parsley – festivity
Pennyroyal – escape
Rue - disdain
Savory – interest
Southernwood – perseverance
Tansy – immortality



Just imagine what can be said by combining some of these! *Happy Gardening from Ladybug*

References/Additional Information:

>Gips, Kathleen M. *The Language of Flowers; A Book of Victorian Floral Sentiments*. Chagrin Falls, Ohio: Pine Creek Herbs, 1990
>Kate Greenway’s *Language of Flowers*. New York: Avenel Books.

THE TYROS' CORNER -JUNE

By Eileen Novak

I had always imagined gardening as a benevolent, one-with-all-things occupation. The kindly soul who nurtures plants and landscapes with a minimum of effort.

Boy, was I wrong!!!

First off, there is a limit to benevolence. That limit is weeds, or those plants which are in somewhat inappropriate places. Like my mint..... you remember the mint right? Anyone want some mint????

I bought a plant with lovely pink flowers called "twilight primrose" [*Oenothera sp.*] and put it in the rock garden. One little plant; dainty pink flowers. While it doesn't spread as fast as the mint, it's certainly as tenacious. The second year, when I realized it was trying to take over the garden, I thought "but it's so pretty when it blooms". There has to be a limit to my benevolence, because there certainly is no limit to the primrose! It is now a patch of pink blossoms approximately 6 feet by 4 feet in the front of the house. But now that they are blooming, they are too pretty to pull. Maybe next spring.

Another plant, which I still haven't found a name for, started out as a small, heart-shaped leaf (there are a lot of those out there). It looked a little like the sunflowers I had been trying (unsuccessfully) to start along the side of the driveway. Those sunflowers were no match for my husband's bushhogging efforts. While I told him that I planted things, once he climbed into his tractor, his vision narrowed to "me vs weeds". I should learn from that. The plants in the rock garden with the heart-shaped leaves turned out NOT to be sunflowers. I don't know what they were but they were 8 feet tall when I finally decided to cut them down last September. I thought I was done with them, but this year, they grew back from the roots I had been too lazy to dig out. This year, I dug them out. And dug them out again.

The first year I was here, I was still partly interested in identifying plants, so I would leave a weed to see what it turned out to be. It turned out to be a weed, and a very prolific one at that. I am no longer either curious or benevolent when it comes to the vegetable garden.

And then there are the blackberries. We had a nice patch of them in the back, and I picked them and made cobbler the first spring when we were building the house. The next spring, my husband decided to have a thinning done on the 30 acres of pines, and the blackberry glade was the perfect place for the loggers to

trample while they trimmed the branches, stacked and loaded the logs. Needless to say, it wasn't very good for the blackberries. So when I saw one little blackberry creeping in to the vegetable garden from a patch of woods several feet away, I left it, determined to have berries the next year. Well you know that didn't work very well. The one cane that snuck in gave me less than half a cup of berries because its *raison d'être* was to make more canes in the nice garden, so THEY would bear in the next year. Unfortunately I don't have enough space to allow the blackberries to colonize. You know I wound up pulling them out with great difficulty. And this year, I noticed that I didn't get all the roots. So it's time to find the leather gloves and try again to convince the blackberries that the garden is off limits. Wish me luck!

The moral of THIS story is "if it doesn't belong in the garden, take it out." Preferably when it is little and easy to pull. It IS a benevolent thing to do – for the other plants and for you because when they are huge and tenacious and like the blackberries, armed to the teeth it is SOOOO much harder.

I suppose I will have to remove the tulip tree from the rock garden now too. It's in its second year and only promises to get bigger than I can manage. But it's so pretty.....

INTERESTING TID-BITS FOR JUNE

By Marty Finkel

Bees Update: Bee populations across the US are declining due to various factors, including natural predators of bees such as Varroa mites, diseases such as American Foulbrood, and misapplied insecticides. In some cases, a hive of bees can totally collapse in a few weeks with the sudden disappearance of its worker bees (Colony Collapse Disorder a.k.a. CCD). Certain systemic pesticides are receiving particular scrutiny. These insecticides are absorbed by the plant and circulated throughout to protect them from piercing/sucking and chewing insects – so since bees don't eat plants, how could they be they harmed? It's also in the pollen, and bees may visit a flower 10 times when it is in bloom. One plant can have hundreds of flowers, so when you do the math, the bees could be exposed to the pesticide not once but ten times multiplied by the number of flowers on the plant.

What can we do to help protect bees? If you need to use insecticides, read the instructions and follow them carefully (especially look for precautions you may need to take to protect foraging bees). Also, since bees are vital, is the plant really worth risking their harm if another, less insect-susceptible plant can be

used? Also, why are the insects attacking the plant – is the plant stressed by being in the wrong place, or by the weather (too hot, cold, dry, wet)? For help in finding sustainable solutions to pest problems, contact your Vance/Warren County Extension office at 252-257-3640 or 252-438-8188. (In part, material for this tidbit came from an article by Michele Wallace, Horticulture Agent for the Extension Service in Durham County in the May-June issue of “Triangle Gardener.”)

Two June events at the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill will honor National Pollinator Week: A tour of a honey beehive on June 1 focusing on the role of bees that pollinate one-third of the world’s food supply. On June 21 there will be a tour of the gardens focusing on the plight of native pollinators and how native plant gardening plays a role in pollinator conservation. There is no fee, but you must pre-register at 919-962-0522 or contact ncbg.unc.edu

Factors affecting cold damage to plants include: In addition to how cold it got, how suddenly the cold arrived is an important factor. Normally, plants go through a series of chemical changes that prepare them for cold conditions, but if there hasn’t been time for slowly dropping temperatures, plants that normally would survive may be killed. Another factor is how long the cold lasted – one night of extreme cold may injure a plant, but if it stays that low for 2 or 3 days or longer, the damage may be fatal. How bare the soil was is another factor – since we don’t usually have a blanket of snow in this area to insulate the ground, mulch will help. It can ameliorate the freezing and thawing of the ground that occurs when sunny days are followed by much colder nights that can break roots of new plants and heave them out of the ground. How well-established the plants are is a factor, also, in that plants that are recently planted are always more vulnerable to the cold because they don’t have the extensive root system that provides anchorage and hydration. That’s why it’s good to get trees, shrubs, and perennials in the ground in September and early October in the South – the root system has a longer time to grow. Also, a well-rooted plant versus one with skimpy roots will survive better, so sometimes leaving a one-gallon size plant to grow another year before planting out results in better survival.

This tidbit comes from the April 2014 issue of the Avant Gardener: The world’s largest poppy, up to twice the size of its nearest relative, the oriental poppy (*Papaver orientale*) is the Iranian crimson-colored poppy, *Papaver bracteatum*, which has blooms up to 10” across on thick, straight stems up to 4’ tall. It was discovered in northern Iran in 1821 by John Lindley, an English botanist. The crimson flowers have a satin-like sheen

with black patches at the base of the petals. They are easy to grow from seed, bloom in the spring, and are hardy from zones 4 to 8. Plants form a rosette of fern-like leaves the first year and flower the second.

GARDENING FOR THE BIRDS AND THE BEES...PLUS BUTTERFLIES AND ME- JUNE

By Edna Lovelace Gaston

As mentioned before there is a wonderful listserv for bird watchers and butterfly observers. Not long ago this link was sent <http://www.dpr.ncparks.gov/nbnc/> which lists butterflies spotted throughout the state. By clicking on a state map species in a particular county can be listed. While not complete, here are some recent sightings in Vance and Warren counties:

Eastern Swallowtail, Pearl Crescent, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Common Buckeye, Sleepy Orange, Carolina Satyr, Red-spotted Purple, Zabulon Skipper, Gemmed Satyr, Silver-spotted Skipper, American Lady, Monarch, Spicebush Swallowtail, Question Mark, Northern Cloudy Wing, Little Woody Satyr, Silver-Spotted Skipper, Southern Cloudy Wing, Juvenal's Dusky Wing

Honest, I did not make up these names. To me it is amazing the great number we have in our area. Now I need to pull out my butterfly reference book and get ready for warm weather. My favorite book is the Golden Guide “Butterflies and Moths”. As the cover says the pictures are in color and access is easy. It’s small so convenient to tuck into a pocket when working outside. When I purchased this book it was only \$5.50 but who know how long ago that was! But this is definitely not the only guide. Roger Tory Peterson has a great book along with many others – great reason to go to a book store.

So get ready to identify some of our wonderful pollinators. Grab your book and check out the web site.

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and conform to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension Agent.

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