

May 2007

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**Rainbow Garden Club (RGC)
May 2007 Meeting
Special Program on
Rainwater Harvesting
Saturday, May 12th at 2:00 pm**

Home of Tom Forsyth and Glen Hawkins, 2115 Siesta Dr, Dallas 75224 (MAPSCO 64-A)

EVENT AND GARDENS

Our program will be on the topic of Rainwater Harvesting which is especially important in this time of drought and declining water resources.

Our guest speaker for this program is Brenda Cunningham, Master Gardener. Brenda is especially qualified to speak on this topic since she is a Master Gardener Specialist in Rainwater Harvesting!

With more and more cities implementing watering restrictions, homeowners are becoming more conscientious and are looking for creative ways to keep their landscapes looking their best (or at least alive).

Harvesting rainwater can help to do that and Brenda is doing her part to help people get started! Conserving water is an important part of Tom and Glen's gardens which feature two water gardens and two fountains.

The sights and sounds of water streaming down the rocks of their waterfall into their large pond is an

important part of their garden experience! Their garden features a wide array of fish and aquatic plants as well.

Their water garden has been on the North Texas Water Garden Society Pond Tour for the last two years. Glen and Tom's home is located in South Oak Cliff, just south of Kiest Park.

Make sure to visit the gardens at Kiest Park on your way to or when you leave from the meeting!

Friends of Oak Cliff Parks have done a wonderful job restoring the gardens to the original beauty from the early days of the 20th Century!

Guests will have an extra incentive to attend since Glen is an avid cook and loves to come up with new dishes to serve guests in his home. RSVP with a count of those attending to Glen at ghwawk0713@sbcglobal.net

DIRECTIONS

Coming south from Dallas on Interstate 35-E, merge onto US Highway 67 and take the *very first exit* on Kiest Blvd. Take a right on Kiest Blvd and go west to Rugged Dr.

Turn left on Rugged Dr and go south to Five Mile Pkwy. Turn right on Five Mile Pkwy and take a left onto Cloudcroft. Go up the hill and turn right onto Siesta Dr. Glen and Tom's home is the 3rd house on the right.

SPRING ARRIVES WITH RGC IN HIGH GEAR!

Spring is has arrived in North Texas! We are out in our gardens again! Isn't it wonderful! April has been kind to us in North Texas, blessing our gardens with much needed rains.

Everything is green and all of those perennials are bursting out from their winter hibernation to greet with new foliage.

Some in my garden are even sprouting buds which should bring flowers to our gardens in April and May! There is a wide array of activities and events that you can be part of this spring with our club!

Just in the next two months, we have these exciting events planned:

In this newsletter you will find more details on all of these exciting events! In preparing for this article, Barry Campbell asked me to write a few words about our club.

For those of you who are just learning about us, the Rainbow Garden Club is a group of local gardeners from North Texas. We meet on the 2nd Sunday of every month (with some exceptions)

We host special field trips for our members such as one on May 5th to the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Japanese Gardens and Westin Gardens.

This fall our group plans a field trip to visit the American Rose Society in Tyler. We also support local organizations that are committed to improving our environment and advancing the causes of conservation.

Among the local groups we support include Friends of Oak Cliff Parks and the Urban Forestry Committee of Dallas.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in gardening whether they are part of the GLBT community or our straight friends!

Those interested can visit our website: <http://www.rainbowgardenclub.com/>

Our March meeting was held at the Dallas Arboretum and was hosted by Jimmy Turner, Horticulture Director for the Arboretum.

Jimmy also manages their Trial Gardens which tests plants to determine the best plants to use in North Texas gardens.

His presentation provided those who attended with a great deal of information on good plants to use in North Texas gardens.

It is a tremendous resource that you can use to select good plants to use in your garden! You can access Jimmy's presentation that he gave at our March meeting by visiting:

<http://www.dallasplanttrials.org/Presentations/Trial%20Garden%20Rainbow/Trial%20Gardens.pdf>

RGC is a great place to meet people with similar interests, to learn from other's experiences as you plan your own garden, to be able to make a contribution to your community through our volunteer activities, and just to have fun with new friends!

We hope you will join us and we look forward to seeing you at one of our many events this spring!

Great gardening!
Tom Forsyth, President
tyforsyth@sbcglobal.net

April meeting - beautiful roses and beautiful weather!

The April meeting of RGC was held at the home of Anthony Klatt in the Kings Hwy neighborhood of North Oak Cliff. It was the first Sunday in April this year with decent weather.

The afternoon began with a social hour featuring champagne mimosas, elegant silver candelabras, tasty appetizers and a chance to visit, eat, drink, and admire the impressive collection of roses.

After a brief business meeting and announcements, Anthony received a hanging basket as his host gift from the club. Anthony also introduced a number of his friends who were attending their first Rainbow Garden Club meeting.

Anthony then spoke about his roses and the problems that he has

encountered. He has had a lot of trouble with black spot this year but he is dealing with it aggressively with Miracle Grow and various chemicals.

After the talk, Anthony gave a guided tour highlighting each rose in the garden. Each guest received an informative handout about roses.

The next meeting will be at the home of Tom Forsyth and Glen Hawkins, and there will be a plant exchange. It is a perfect opportunity to share with the club the abundance of your garden.

Stan Aten
Secretary

I received this email from a couple in San Francisco, an open invitation to visit.

Editor

Hi,
 Thank you for adding us to your newsletter mailing list. Your newsletter is very good and we really do enjoy reading about what you are doing. Hopefully, our travels will take us to Dallas this year.

If any of your group travel to Northern California, please tell them to give us a call or email so that we can have them visit our gardens and conservatory in the Oakland Hills, across the Bay from San Francisco.

We are mailing a copy of "The Directory of Public Gardens". We are not listed in it but it is a (more)

wonderful resource for those of you that have the opportunity to travel.

Mark and Larry

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(Here is the email I received after asking to post the invite)

Barry,
Yes, you may put the invite in your newsletter. We host the San Francisco Gay Gardeners , Hortiphiles, the East Bay Network, and the Fellows of the East Bay, each twice a year, usually May and then again in July, all of these are gay groups.

We also allow many regular garden clubs to tour but do not entertain them. Camera clubs and artists regularly request time to photograph, paint and sketch here.

Our garden is on two acres with pathways throughout leading to a creek bed with approximately 100 redwood trees in that area. We have cut fallen redwoods into stumps used for sitting, even some guys picnic around that peaceful setting. Much of the acreage is plated with a variety of trees, shrubs and flowering plants.

We have hundreds of Iris, Cannas, Callas, Bamboo and other plants. In

our conservatory is a swimming pool, spa surrounded by bananas, ginger, bromeliads, orchids, heliconia, giant birds of paradise, hapu'u ferns from Hawaii, as well as a variety of other more common ferns.

We change the plants around very often and constantly add things we like. Hope that you and your Dallas friends can visit us someday and we want to attend a meeting of your group when we get to Texas (hopefully this year).

Warm regards,
Mark and Larry

Plant of the Month



[\(click to enlarge image\)](#)

At a glance

Latin Name: *Echinacea purpurea*
'Double Delight'

Common Name: double purple coneflower

Plant Type: herbaceous perennial

Flowers: double, rosy-pink daisies

Foliage: medium-green and coarse

Mature height: 18" in flower (more)

Hardiness: Zones 4-9

Soil: not picky

Exposure: full sun

Water usage: low

Sources: mail-order or local nurseries.

I love purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). It's tough, Texas-native, drought-resistant, attracts butterflies, perennial and heavy-flowering!

Personally I don't think any perennial border should be without one, and in recent years our choices of color, height and flower size has expanded.

Even double-flowered types are being offered. Double flowers aren't always better flowers, however, and this was especially true with *Echinacea*.

The first variety I ran across was 'Doppelganger,' also called 'Double-decker.' Reportedly, it had large fully double flowers of rosy pink.

It took me 2 years to get mine to flower and during the next 2 years, I've only had two "double" flowers.

Apparently it only makes the double flowers under cooler conditions, which interprets as 70-degree temperatures. I'm not sure that ever occurs in Texas during April and May! The few flowers of 'Double-decker' I have seen really look more like faded pink toilet brushes than flowers. I just don't like them.

I call it "Double-Don't"! In northern climes, this variety may be more impressive, but not for us Texas

gardeners. Then came 'Razzmatazz,' a truly double purple coneflower.

I liked it - double, rosy-pink daisies that were produced on 3-foot-tall stems, and they were fragrant. One thing I didn't like was its propensity to constantly lean over in heavy winds.

Although popular with retailers and a great cut flower, it's just too tall for a great landscape plant. Then came 'Double Delight,' promising to flower heavily on short stems. This one really impressed me.

It flowers quickly from small plants - I had flowers within weeks of planting them. Plants stayed short at 18", produced multiple flowers on each stem, and every single flower was a perfect double pom-pom daisy with a light fragrance.

The tough, upright, bushy habit of this perennial makes it perfect for borders or containers. 'Double Delight' is just charmingly cute and, more importantly, it didn't give up its tough purple coneflower heritage.

Ours kept blooming right through our 106-degree summer. The tight rosettes of foliage constantly sent up new flower spikes if the old ones were deadheaded.

Like all coneflowers, this variety prefers full sun and is drought-tolerant once established. Nurseries and growers should be stocking this variety late this spring. (more follows)

If you can't find it at your local nursery, look online - there are multiple places selling this variety.

May Timely Tips



Plant: Annuals that can tolerate full summer heat, include trailing lantanas, firebush, copper plant, purple fountain grass, gomphrenas, moss rose, purslane, Dahlberg daisy, cosmos, cleome, amaranthus and celosia.

For afternoon shade, include coleus, impatiens, caladiums and begonias. Warm-season turf grasses, including Saint Augustine, bermuda, hybrid bermudas, zoysia and buffalo grass.

Summer- and fall-flowering perennials are widely available this month. Most grow and bloom best in full sun. Plant them into well-prepared garden soil. Tropical color for beds and patio pots: bougainvillea, hibiscus, allamanda, pentas, Mexican heather, mandevilla, dipladenia.

Prune: Spring-flowering shrubs and vines to desirable forms. Climbing roses by 50 percent after they finish flowering.

"Pinch" growing tips of fall asters, copper plants, mums, coleus and other

plants that tend to grow lanky, to encourage branching. Mow lawn at recommended height to encourage low, thick turf.

Fertilize: High-nitrogen lawn fertilizer to promote vigorous growth. Patio pots, hanging baskets and even flowers and vegetables in beds, with complete-and-balanced water-soluble fertilizer with each watering.

Root-stimulator monthly to new balled-and-burlapped and bare-rooted plants. Iron additives to correct chlorosis.

On the Lookout: Caterpillars ("B.T." for looping types, Sevin for others). Nut sedge ("nut grass") can be controlled with Image applied between May 15 and September 15, two applications, 30 days apart.

Broad-leafed weed killer (containing 2,4-d) will control any non-grassy plant, including poison ivy, clover, dichondra and others.

Bagworms begin to feed on evergreens this month. Control with Sevin or "B.t." when they're still small and active. Early blight of tomatoes causes lower leaves to be yellowed in large blotches.

It will defoliate the plants and ruin their fruit. Apply labeled fungicide. Powdery mildew can be held in check with registered fungicide.

Wild About Texas Garden Styles and Native Plants, by Andrea De Long Amaya



A native plant garden does not have to look like a lot of weeds! Nor should it. Thoughtful designers can use Texas native plants to create successful gardens reflecting just about any style including naturalistic, formal, and the continuum between the two.

How a garden is designed dictates the style of the garden, not whether or not the plants used are native. Any well-designed garden, naturalistic or formal, should have good structure and composition. Although not typically associated with them, native plants can be used to create formal gardens.

Employing clean lines, well-defined borders and simple and massed plantings of single species achieve formal effects. Maintenance is typically tidy and controlled and the color palette limited.

Symmetry, narrow views on a focal point, and geometric forms are often relied on. Materials chosen for hardscape features also contribute to the overall flavor of the landscape.

Using "natural" forms such as curves and overflowing borders adds a naturalistic flair. Plantings may be seasonally dynamic and more complex than a formal garden and incorporate a loose color scheme and broadly framed views.

Maintenance is critical to keeping a naturalistic garden attractive and not "weedy," but may be more loosely executed.

Hours spent maintaining a naturalistic garden may be less than for a formal garden, but a more skilled eye for making subtle artistic decisions and proper plant identification is often required.

Many gardeners find comfort in the organization and predictability of a formal garden while others enjoy the dynamism and freedom of a naturalistic landscape.

Native plants can provide the basis for any style while conserving natural resources and preserving regional identity.

David Fross of the California Native Plant Society reminds us: "This is the way we make gardens here, these are the plants that tell us we are home."

About the author: Andrea DeLong-Amaya is the Director of Horticulture at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.

May Events

**Dallas, every Thursday,
May 3- Aug 2**

Enjoy a concert on the lawn each Thursday evening, from 7:30-9:30 pm. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs, and either bring your own picnic or order a pre-made picnic basket or boxed dinner to enjoy at the concert.

Visit www.dallasarboretum.org, and click on "events" for more information. Dallas Arboretum, 8525 Garland Road, Dallas. (214) 515-6500.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Our club's roots began to grow in 1992 in the gardening chat rooms of the Internet.

Two local gardeners found each other and agreed that gay and lesbian gardeners should organize and utilize their talents to aid not only one another, but also our community.

The organization grew and today our members represent all levels of gardening skill and knowledge and enjoy sharing their gardening skills with each other.

All gardeners, from novice to master, are invited to join Rainbow Garden Club of North Texas. Annual membership dues are \$15 per

household, renewable at the beginning of each new year.

Dues help to pay for the printing and distribution of the newsletter. Other fund raising events, including annual plant sales and plant raffles, help to fund community beautification projects.

All current paid members have the right to vote at meetings. Benefits of membership include: Field Trips, Monthly Meetings, Educational Programs, Community Projects, Monthly Newsletter, Networking, Discounts, Food and Fellowship. To join the club, please complete the form below.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

E-MAIL

PHONE

COMMENTS

Please send your check for \$15, payable to "Rainbow Garden Club," to:

Rainbow Garden Club
PO Box 226811
Dallas TX 75222-6811