

Horticulture Hints

You can bury any number of headaches in a garden. Charles Barnard

November 2020

It seems that autumn may have finally found us! Being able to open up the house is such a blessing. If we could only get the occasional rain.... (Not complaining, mind you...)

There are two items in my front yard that I just have to show and recommend to all. First is false rosemary (*Conradina canescens* var. *grandiflora*). This beautiful plant is best described as a small shrub, and it does, indeed, look very much like rosemary. The

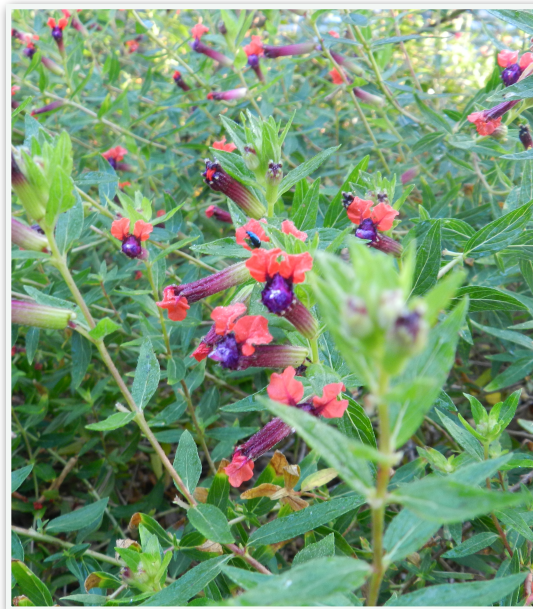


CONRADINA

shrub naturally grows in Florida pine sand scrubs and sandhills, and so my front yard is ideal habitat. The needle-like leaves of the regular *Conradina* has a dark-to-bright green color, but the 'grandiflora' variety has a grayish-green, kind of sage-y color. But the biggest difference is the abundant flowering that takes place several times a year (hence the name, which means 'abundant flower'). These beautiful pale lavender flowers cover the plant, and pollinators cover the flowers! I think they attract every known pollinator, including hummingbirds. The only downside to mine (and I have several of them) is that I

planted them too close to the path. They have gotten bigger than I expected! I got mine from Green Isle Nursery, a Florida native nursery, and the place we get natives for the annual plant sale. Perhaps a request of Janie for our (hopefully!) upcoming plant sale.

The other recommendation that I have is bat face cuphea (*cuphea llavea*). I purchased this beautiful flowering plant (I wish I could remember where) as a groundcover. The Monrovia website describes it as a shrub. I would describe my specimen as a low, sprawling shrub. It's about 18" tall, and 3 to 3 1/2' wide. It seems to take pruning well. But the best thing about this unusual plant is the flowers: it bloomed several times during



BAT FACE CUPHEA

the summer (did best with regular watering), and like the false rosemary, was literally

covered with small blossoms. Also loved by pollinators. If you plant this one, give it plenty of room to grow, or plan on pruning. As I said, I don't remember where I got it, but the Monrovia website has it for sale, although possibly not right now. But this one would be worth waiting for if it isn't available right now.

Remember, the Citrus County ban on fertilization of the landscape has begun. It is not allowed from November 1 through March 31. But there's still time to plant cool weather vegetable crops: beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, lettuce, mustard, onions, peas, radishes, spinach and turnips. Bell peppers do well anytime of the year. Annuals that grow well this time of year are calendula, pansies, petunias, Shasta daisies, and snapdragons.

Although the county ban on lawns is on, there are still the ornamental grasses. Most are in full bloom (seed) right now. The ethereal clouds of pink muhly grass are always spectacular. But a word on that: now is the best time for big box stores to sell them because they're in bloom. But now is *not* the time to plant them. If you were to buy and plant now, all their energy is going into producing those beautiful seed heads. They have little energy left to produce new roots and try to live through the winter. I've found this out the hard way. If you do buy something now, overwinter in the pot in a sheltered location. Cut back the seedheads in the spring, then plant. After winter, the plant is geared up for growing. So it's better to wait. Sorry.

Gardening is so enjoyable this time of year! Make sure you enjoy it to the fullest. And Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Happy gardening!